

DIVING INTO FRENCH: *PLONGÉE FRANCOPHONE*

How do you improve your French language skills without going to France? Attend a French Immersion weekend in North Carolina!

That is what 29 students and teachers from Broughton High School in Raleigh, Roanoke Rapids High School, and Franklin Academy High School in Wake Forest did this past April.

The weekend gave French students an opportunity to immerse themselves completely in the French language. Students played games, went on scavenger hunts, watched movies, made *crêpes*, ate meals,

wrote poetry, listened to presentations, learned a traditional dance, sang traditional songs...all in French!

How did the teachers convince the students to come? "My parents had signed me up for the trip, and until we arrived there I had mixed feelings about it; but now reflecting back I see that I grew more in French, and made some awesome new friends to help me along the way. I am looking forward to the next few years in French, and going on the trip," said Taylor Kassay of Franklin Academy.

"It was important to me to organize this weekend because our opportunities to practice French outside of the classroom are so limited. I wanted to give students the chance to be completely immersed in the language without having to spend the money to go overseas, because so many of our kids just don't have those means. The time constraints of daily class routines are not long enough to allow the students to really use their skills and improve upon them," said Franca Gilbert, French teacher and organizer at Franklin Academy.

One student, Zeke Love, from Broughton High School, had this to say: "This French Weekend was one of the best

experiences I've had in my life. One of the best ways to learn a language is to be restricted to speak it and only it. And to have that restriction placed on you in a group of people passionate about the language, with coordinators who are fluent in the language and willing to help those not as proficient, and in a comforting environment for an entire weekend was truly a liberating experience for me. It offers a rather cheap alternative to actually going to France; great people, plenty of activities, and the chance to connect with other students from other schools that you might have never known otherwise. I can only hope that it gets bigger and better next year!"

Franca Gilbert, Franklin Academy High School, Jeff Pageau, Roanoke Rapids High School,



Richard Dubois, Broughton High School, and Liz Skube, Franklin Academy Middle School, collaborators in this

were one-of-a-kind event. Jeff and Franca also serve as Advocacy Co-Chairs for the North Carolina AATF Chapter.

This weekend was made possible by grants from the AATF, North Carolina Chapter, Franklin Academy Parent Group (FAPS), Franklin Academy Box Top Funds, and Marc and Marlena Kassay, parents of students at Franklin Academy. We also received gift certificates. These certificates were given to the students as prizes.

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