

LA JOURNÉE INTENSIVE EN FRANÇAIS 2015

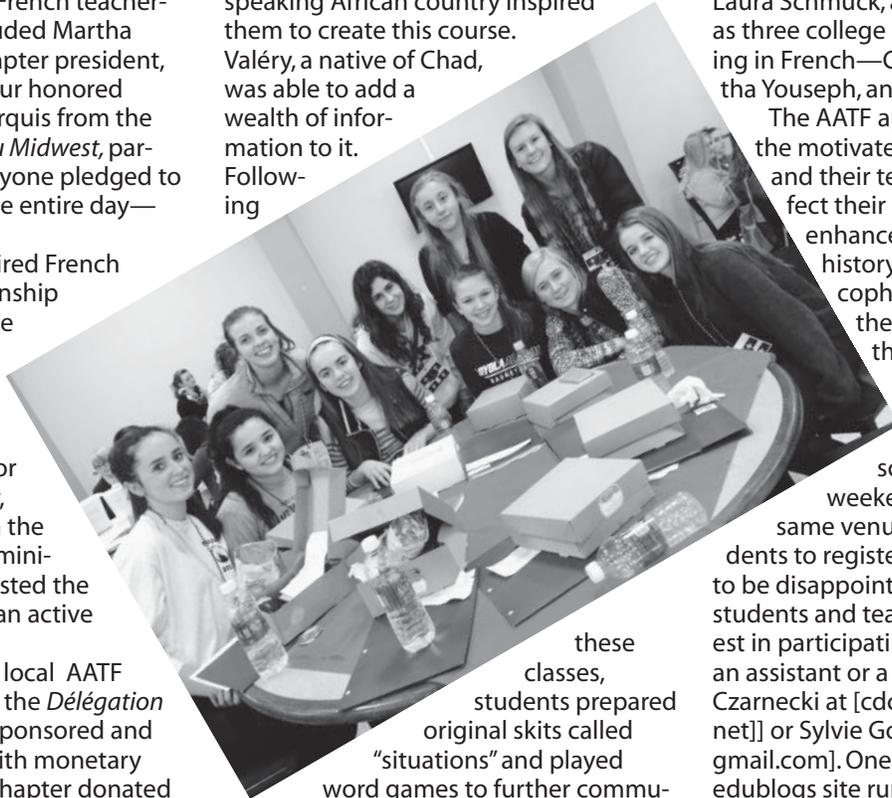
On March 7, 2015 126 persons from 26 area schools participated in the seventh annual *Journée Intensive en Français*, our Chicago/Northern Illinois AATF Chapter's all-day French immersion program uniquely for high school students. 95 high school students, 8 French teacher-participants, which included Martha Behlow, our AATF chapter president, 22 staff members, and our honored guest, Monsieur Eric Marquis from the *Délégation du Québec au Midwest*, participated this year. Everyone pledged to speak only French for the entire day—from 7:45 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Donna Czarnecki, retired French teacher from Lyons Township High School, directed the program and was assisted by Sylvie Goutas, French professor at Wheaton College. Beth Landers, French professor at Dominican University, was the liaison between the immersion staff and Dominican University which hosted the event. Beth also played an active part in the day.

The national and our local AATF organizations, as well as the *Délégation du Québec au Midwest*, sponsored and supported our efforts with monetary grants. In addition, the chapter donated prizes for everyone who upheld the pledge. The French Cultural Service in Chicago supplied prizes that were given out at the *Distribution des Prix* at the end of the day. One student from each of the four groups, one teacher participant, one staff member, and several schools, Loyola Academy, Rochelle Township High School, and Geneva High School, which have sent the maximum number of students for several years and whose teachers have worked as assistants and staff members for *La Journée Intensive*, were all awarded the French Cultural Service prizes.

After checking in, participants passed through customs, ate a French breakfast of *chocolat chaud et croissants*, and played lively board games. Students were divided into four groups. All four groups attended a class which dealt directly with French-speaking Québec, either *Vive le hockey! Contes du Québec*, led by Rebecca Léal, or *Venez au Carnaval à Québec*, taught by Eileen Walvoord. In addition, the groups were assigned to either *La Semaine du goût*, presented by Jane Castle, or *Découvrons le Cameroun!*, presented

by Kathy Kendrigan, her daughter, Caitlin, and Caitlin's husband, Valéry. Both Cathy and Caitlin had received a Fulbright Group Projects Abroad Scholarship to study in Cameroun during the summer of 2009. Their experiences in this French-speaking African country inspired them to create this course. Valéry, a native of Chad, was able to add a wealth of information to it. Following



these classes, students prepared original skits called "situations" and played word games to further communication in French.

All of these classes and activities helped the participants attain the program's and the students' personal goals of furthering their competence in the French language and of enhancing their knowledge of French-speaking cultures.

The day ended with a songfest of a variety of French folk and popular songs led by the assistants, and Breton and Haitian folk dances as well as a contemporary French line dance, presented by Donna Czarnecki and Pat Olderr. These were followed by the highlight of the day, a *Chasse au Trésor*, created by Beth Landers and held throughout the Dominican Priory campus. Groups of students had to understand and follow French clues to find the various stations and then either answer cultural questions or carry out a variety of activities successfully before moving on to a new station. French t-shirts were awarded to all the members of the first two groups that completed the *Chasse au Trésor*.

The AATF chapter thanks the staff members mentioned above as well as the following assistants who actively

participated before, during and after the immersion to make *La Journée Intensive* an outstanding event: Christina Anderson, Cynthia Benson, Iona Bermon, Julia diLiberti, Judy Fields, Liz Martinez, Lynn Robinson, Tom Sapp, Stephanie Saul, Laura Schmuck, and Jodie Sloan, as well as three college students who are majoring in French—Carolina Talavera, Samantha Youseph, and Amanda Wall.

The AATF applauds the efforts of the motivated young participants and their teachers as they perfect their speaking competence, enhance their knowledge of history and culture of the Francophone world, and promote the continued learning of the French language.

We are already planning our next immersion. It is tentatively scheduled for the first weekend in March 2016 at the same venue. We encourage students to register early next fall so as not to be disappointed. For information for students and teachers or to express interest in participating in the immersion as an assistant or a teacher, contact Donna Czarnecki at [cdczarnecki@sbcglobal.net] or Sylvie Goutas at [sylviegoutas@gmail.com]. One can also consult our edublogs site run by Marnie Goodfriend: [www.aatfjournéintensive.edublogs.org] for more information as well as pictures of previous immersions.

We are grateful for the grants that we have received to put on this immersion day. We couldn't have done it without the support of AATF National Headquarters, the Chicago/Northern Illinois AATF Chapter, the *Délégation du Québec au Midwest*, and the French Cultural Service in Chicago.

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