

LA JOURNÉE DE LA FRANCOPHONIE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE

On March 25, 2015, five hundred ten high school students attended the annual *Journée de la Francophonie* celebration at the University of Delaware.

During this day-long event, area high school students as well

as a group of French exchange students

from Fontainebleau

conversed, danced,

and learned about French cultures from all over the world. To facilitate this interaction,

University of Delaware students

had prepared poster presentations of various Francophone regions. As

the high school students visited each region and conversed

with UD students, the UD hosts stamped the visitors' "passports" which were then entered in a drawing for French-themed prizes.

Both the high school and university students had positive reactions to the events of the day. University students

were particularly pleased to have had the opportunity to converse with native speakers from Fontainebleau, while high school students were happy to have interacted with their UD hosts. One of the most popular regions was Cameroon due to the authentic Cameroonian dress of one UD host as well as an authentic Cameroonian soccer jersey (see photo).

A highlight of the event was the Afro-Caribbean dance lessons led by dance instructor Dee Faison. Hundreds of students eagerly participated as Ms. Faison taught students the history, meaning, and execution of particular dances.

Five schools chose to perform on stage, singing French songs, performing French dances, and reciting French poems and fables. Student response to the performances was extremely positive. Overall, student and teacher response to the day's events was enthusiastic as evidenced by the e-mail messages received after the event.

This message came from the President of the Delaware AATF Chapter: "What a great day! ... Teachers, thank you for making the necessary arrangements to bring your students. The performances were a hit; my students have not stopped talking about Glasgow's rendition of



"Alouette!"

Other messages from the teachers echoed the above sentiment: "It was

great to see some of you yesterday

at Franco- phone Day at UD. It was a

very well attended event

and the student performers did a

great job!"

"Today's event was terrific!

My students really enjoyed it. And judging from all the other groups there, so did all the other schools!"

"I know that this was an enormous amount of work on your part and we are grateful. Thank you for all of your efforts on this event. My students were asking me when we boarded the bus if we are going to come next year!"

One particularly positive message came from a teacher whose students performed: "Thank you very much for all that you do. My kids had an amazing time! I'm really glad that we were able to expose them to the French culture and show them a great time.

Thank you to everyone involved in making this day a memorable day for our students.

My students can't wait for next year. They want to learn more about the culture, learn more dance moves from the wonderful dance instructor and of course create another remix..."

He ended his message with the following:

"I will surely join the AATF."

As the messages indicate, much work preceded the success of the day. University students worked for weeks on their posters, gathering information, images and materials. Fliers were distributed to teachers and the university community to advertise the event. Rebecca Kalmbach, President of the Delaware Chapter of the AATF, created an activity so that students would engage in meaningful interactions during the day. Finally, all

of the events, materials and scheduling was organized and overseen by Donna Coulet du Gard, instructor of French at the University.

Everyone is extremely grateful to the AATF for its generous donation. Without this funding, hundreds of students would not know the excitement of learning French and about French culture.

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