

## FRENCH IMMERSION DAY

On Saturday, March 5, 2016, approximately 146 persons from 28 Chicago-area schools participated in the 8<sup>th</sup> annual *Journée Intensive en Français*, an all-day



French immersion program for high school students. The participants included 113 high school students, 14 French teacher-participants, 19 staff members, and two honored guests, Madame Kerith Iverson, *Attachée aux affaires publiques et gouvernementales de la Délégation du Québec au Midwest*, and Monsieur Vincent Floreani, *Consul de France* in Chicago. Martha Behlow, President of the Chicago/Northern Illinois AATF Chapter, which sponsors the program, was also present. She brought some of her own students as well!

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. Dr. Landers also played an active part in the day. Teachers from Chicago and its suburbs taught the main classes and assisted with all the various activities. The staff represented not only high school French programs but middle school and university programs as well. Several university French majors from Wheaton College and Dominican University were also given the opportunity to get involved.

The national and local AATF organizations and the *Délégation du Québec au Midwest* sponsored and supported this effort with monetary grants. In addition,

the *Alliance française du North Shore* gave a generous grant which was used to hire a Senegalese Drumming Group for one of the main afternoon activities.

The French Cultural Service of the Consulate of Chicago and the Chicago/Northern Illinois AATF Chapter helped by donating some of the prizes for those who upheld the pledge to speak only French. Everyone had pledged to speak only French for the entire day—from 7:45 a.m. to 4 p.m.—and everyone received several prizes as they left at the end of the day.

The participants ate a French breakfast

of *chocolat chaud et croissants*, passed through customs, played board games, attended cultural and communicative classes, and sang and danced to the beat of *djembé*, African drums. The Senegalese drummer and singer, Idy Ciss, and his *djembé* players not only entertained the students, but involved them as well in French African song and dance. Students prepared original skits called *situations* and played word games to further communication in French. Two of the cultural classes, “Le Temps des cathédrales” and “La Joconde, moi!” centered on the culture of the Francophone world, specifically art and architecture, and the others, “Le Mystère en mer” and “Mon/ma Coloc Idéal(e),” communication. All



of these classes and activities helped the participants attain the program’s and their personal goals of furthering their competence in French and of enhancing their knowledge of many of the facets of French and Francophone cultures.

One of the highlights and the culminating event of the day was a *Chasse au Trésor* on the Dominican University campus. Working with a group, students had to understand and follow French clues to find the various stations and then either answer cultural questions or successfully carry out an activity before moving on to a new station. Prizes were awarded to the first two groups that completed the most stations in the time allowed.

The AATF applauds the efforts of these motivated young people, their teachers, and the entire staff of the *Journée Intensive en Français*, 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.

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