

I am Lindsay Way, and I'm a senior at Albion College studying French and Sociology. I spent the spring 2010 semester studying abroad in Grenoble, France, and concluded my study abroad experience with a month-long internship through the sister city committee in Noisy-Le-Roi/Bailly, France. Going into the internship, I had no idea what to expect. I had no idea how my interests in education made for me being offered an internship at a local farm, the *Ferme de Gally*, but when I learned of this internship placement, my reaction was one of open-mindedness and adaptability because I understood that this is what participating in a cross-cultural exchange requires.

The *Ferme de Gally* is a dynamic organization that caters to the community in many different ways. At the pedagogical section of the farm, the *Ferme Ouverte*, school groups, children, parents, and grandparents attend workshops where they learn to bake bread, plant gardens, produce honey, make apple juice, and make butter, as well as learning about farm animals. On weekends, the "pick-you-own" fruit and vegetable fields are filled with families lugging wheelbarrows and boxes full of fresh food. The farm also has a store that sells gardening implements and a wide array of local food products. Through my daily observations of business on the farm, I quickly realized that the *Ferme de Gally* plays an important role not only in educating the public, but also in building a sense of community.

In addition to the internship, my home stays with two different host families allowed me to learn more about the culture and the cities of Noisy-Le-Roi and Bailly. When comparing my experience in Grenoble to my experiences in Noisy-Le-Roi and Bailly, I experienced more connection to the community by virtue of the fact that I was part of a sister city initiative that united the two cities. This allowed for a richer experience because I was not there as an individual university student, but rather as a small part of the ongoing initiatives connecting our communities.

At Albion College, we are taught to think in historical and cultural contexts that reach beyond our campus. Inherent in doing an internship abroad is the ability to be flexible and open-minded in order to fully appreciate being in a new and unfamiliar place; however, this learning did not end when I returned to the United States. I am now beginning a thesis that explores the *Ferme de Gally* and its unique use of tradition and innovation in educating the public, building community, and upholding strong traditions regarding food production and healthy agricultural practices that have been sustainable for generations. Just as it took some flexibility to understand exactly how I would apply my Albion College classroom learning to an internship at a farm, my future planning will require that same adaptability and creativity as I strive to apply what I've learned through this internship experience to my career after graduation. My internship through the sister city committee has changed my outlook on my career goals and future plans: I would like to continue to be involved with community development and agricultural education.

The sister city connection, by definition, is a way to reach across international borders and make lasting connections among community members at home and abroad. However, it is also a tool of introspection, as it teaches us to compare and contrast our own values, beliefs, and practices in a larger context. Ultimately, the sister city connection between Noisy-Le-Roi/Bailly and Albion is an excellent learning tool for both communities.

Many thanks are in order to members of the delegation, both in Albion and Noisy-Le-Roi/Bailly, as well as employees of the *Ferme de Gally* and my wonderful host families who welcomed me with open hearts. The members of the sister city committee are constantly striving to branch out and expand the programs offered to people of all ages in our communities. As someone who has gained so much from this sister city connection, I am excited to see initiatives between Albion and Noisy-Le-Roi/Bailly continue to grow.