

A woman with blonde hair, wearing a blue baseball cap, sunglasses, and a light blue baseball jersey, is performing a yoga pose (one-legged balance) on a rocky ledge. She has her hands in a prayer position. The background features a vast, layered canyon with red and brown rock formations under a clear blue sky. The overall scene is bright and sunny.

cīee®

J-1 PROFESSIONAL EXCHANGE PROGRAMS

The many adventures of our participants.



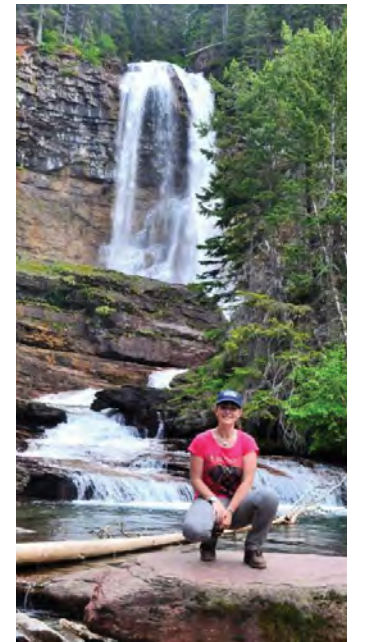
A SMART CAREER MOVE. A PROFOUND CULTURAL EXPERIENCE.

CIEE's Internship USA and Professional Career Training USA programs offer fantastic cultural exchange opportunities for students and professionals from around the world. As one of the largest intern and trainee sponsors designated by the U.S. Department of State, CIEE strives to provide programs that offer our exchange visitors immersion in American culture through a quality training experience related to their field of study.

In an effort to show how important these programs are to our participants, we've asked them to share their stories in their own words and pictures – which you'll find on the following pages.

2016 in Review

- Sponsored participants from more than 80 countries
- 797 trainee participants
- 5,363 intern participants
- 24 Research Scholars
- Top sending countries: France, Ireland, Germany, United Kingdom, and South Korea
- Over 35% of participants trained in the fields of Management, Business, Commerce, and Finance
- 92% of survey respondents reported satisfaction with their overall program experience
- 91% of survey respondents would recommend the CIEE programs to others
- Over 3,400 U.S.-based organizations hosted at least one intern or trainee participant through CIEE



CIEE's Mission

Founded in 1947, CIEE is the world leader in international education and exchange, delivering the highest-quality programs that increase global understanding and intercultural knowledge.

We provide participants with skills, competencies, and experiences that elevate their ability to contribute positively to our global community. ■



I am living the real American life and dream right now.

SVENJA NICOLAI, GERMANY

12 MONTH TRAINING IN AUDIOVISUAL MEDIA WITH SAINT CLOUD IN SALT CITY, UT

A new country, new city and new people—with the professional career training USA it has been and still is way more than only that to me! Combining the fact of getting work experience in a job I am interested in within a new and exciting environment, spending time with local co-workers and new friends that are all pulling together and furthermore becoming a part of the American culture—I am living the real American life and dream right now which is overwhelmingly great and beyond everything I could have ever thought of!

My co-worker and I right away became very good friends so he even asked me to go on a spontaneously day trip a couple weeks ago—a road trip from Los Angeles to the Yosemite National Park in California! No question to me, of course I'd loved to join, so we headed our way up there at 3 a.m. in the morning where I took this amazing photo that couldn't describe better what this year, my U.S. adventure-year really means to me. Me getting settled, enjoying the view and expanding my horizon! I had to break out of my comfort zone in Germany and of course leaving my family and friends back home wasn't easy at all, but now I can say it's been all worth it cause what I am experiencing right now is seriously the best time and is going to add so much to my personal life for sure! I am very grateful and appreciate the chance CIEE provided to make this adventure happen! This photo speaks more than thousand words. Enjoying the moment—every day!

Big thanks to CIEE! ■



KYLE FLANIGAN, NORTHERN IRELAND

12 MONTH INTERNSHIP IN FINANCE AND WEALTH MANAGEMENT AT UBS FINANCIAL SERVICES IN WEEHAWKEN, NJ

An internship in the United States is as rewarding as it is challenging. On one very memorable occasion, I presented new analysis to a working group that consisted of Managing Directors, Executive Directors, Associate Directors—and me. Almost all of the hour-long discussion was focused on my findings and, in one regard, this meeting is symbolic of my entire experience: if you put in the work, you'll more often than not see the results. ■

If you put in the work, you'll more often than not see the results.



I would highly recommend this program and the opportunity to work abroad to everybody.

THOMAS FRECH, GERMANY

6 MONTH INTERNSHIP IN MANUFACTURING ENGINEERING AT HYDROMAT INC. IN MARYLAND HEIGHTS, MO

I gained a lot of different skills [during this internship.] First of all, I improved my CAD skills very much. I also improved my Visual Basic for Applications programming skills in Excel, as well as my ERP system skills. So all in all I would say I gained a lot of new experience in electronic data processing.

My English skills improved enormously, as well as my understanding of American culture. I am able to use the gained knowledge and experience in my future career. My English skills, especially, are very useful in today's business environment.

I would highly recommend this program and the opportunity to work abroad to everybody. It is vastly useful and valuable for the future to gain a new approach to how projects are successfully finished. In addition, it is helpful to expand your entire mindset, too. In any internationally positioned company, you are able to use your gained English skills, as well as your experience in international procedures of projects. Further, intercultural competence is an advantage for your entire business career. ■



ROMAIN VERNEYRE, FRANCE

6 MONTH INTERNSHIP IN IMPORT/EXPORT BUSINESS AT AIRSCHOTT, INC. IN WASHINGTON DC

I am on the photo with 2 housemates, Kate Thorson and Haian Abdirahman who is gay and was so happy to be there (Kate and me also of course). This photo was taken the DAY of gay marriage adoption within all the United States of America. This photo is special to me because it was an incredible and historic day, we were talking about this Obama success and saying ‘Imagine the White House with rainbow color on it... no way it’s impossible !!’ and then we arrived there... From my French experience this photo represents to me the huge diversity and tolerance you have in your country which I admire, and I hope France will have the same level of intelligence one day and that’s basically what means America to me like everything is possible, Diversity, Opportunities, Tolerance. ■

AMY FREEMAN, UNITED KINGDOM

12 MONTH INTERNSHIP IN TOURISM MANAGEMENT AT THE GREENWICH COUNTRY CLUB IN GREENWICH, CT

From this internship I gained many skills including, outstanding customer service, money handling, phone etiquette, product knowledge, time management and managerial skills.

I had the chance to travel the whole of America in the month of Feb. I visited Miami, New Orleans, Austin Texas, Grand Canyon, Las Vegas, LA, San Francisco and Breckenridge Colorado. I had the time of my life. I also went to Basketball and baseball games in NYC and celebrated the 4th of July and Thanksgiving. All was so much fun. I could not encourage anyone to do this Internship any more! I loved every second and would want everyone in the world to take part. ■

“Learning the culture behind the face of your friend is the best way to appreciate and build respect for them.”

6 MONTH SOUTH AFRICAN INTERN TRAINING IN HOSPITALITY AT THE BROADMOOR IN COLORADO SPRINGS, CO REFLECTS ON THEIR EXPERIENCE AT AN ENGAGE USA EVENT



KAIDI KASENOMM, ESTONIA

12 MONTH INTERNSHIP IN MARKETING AT EMBRACE HER HEALTH IN SAN FRANCISCO, CA

Breathe. Take in that moment. Listen to yourself and see your surroundings. Step, step, step. Feel your legs burning, listen to your heart racing and don't forget to drink your water. Explore. Laugh. Be silly. Don't think about the road behind you or what is still yet to come. You may stumble on a moving rock, you may sprain your ankle, but the pain will pass and you will learn to be more careful. You gain new skills and meet fellow travelers. Just step forward and don't give up. At some point you may think you are almost at the top, only to realize there's a higher peak behind it. And then another one, and another. But that's okay because you have your new friends beside you and you have each other's back. This is your adventure. And finally, when you do reach the top, you will see it was all worth it. You will sit down and see new mountains to conquer. But just for a minute—enjoy. Breathe. Take in that moment. And travel on. This is me at the Mount Tallac summit (CA) after a strenuous hike from 6400 ft to 9735 ft with fellow interns and US friends on the Labor Day weekend 2015. ■



RACHEL CLANCY, IRELAND

11 MONTH INTERNSHIP IN VISUAL COMMUNICATION AND DESIGN AT HILL HOLLIDAY IN BOSTON, MA

This photo was taken at Twitter's headquarters in New York, the lovely people I am surrounded by are the Art Director's Club Portfolio Night All Stars. This year, I entered a competition held at my sponsor agency called Portfolio Night. Portfolio Night is an international portfolio review night where junior level creatives have their books reviewed by senior copywriters and art directors. I ended up winning and going forward to represent Boston at a week-long competition in New York—The All Stars. During this week I got to meet the other winners from all over the world as we competed in teams on a brief from the mega agency J. Walter Thomson. My time in America has been defined by the incredible opportunities I've had to develop my skills as an art director and designer, the inspiring people I've met, the spectacular places I've visited, and the friends from every corner of the world I've met here. And that's what this picture means to me! ■



EDOUARD BELLIN, FRANCE

12 MONTH INTERNSHIP IN GLOBAL BRANDING AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AT FIRSTBORN MULTIMEDIA CORP. IN NEW YORK, NY

This photo was taken at the horse-racing facility Belmont Park with my entire ad agency as part of our annual company outings. Our Founder (bottom right hand side in yellow shirt) and CEO (orange tie) in this photo represent exactly what our company is about – a big united family that truly knows how to work hard and play harder. This event has been my best experience in the US thus far, and I am looking forward to the next few months with this crazy bunch! ■



KELLY CRISINEL ANDREO, FRANCE

12 MONTH INTERNSHIP IN EVENT PLANNING AT KATIE O' WEDDINGS AND EVENTS IN TROY, NY

In this picture, I am on the left in the pink dress, surrounded by all my coworkers! This picture has been taken this summer at the Saratoga Polo Club at my very first Polo game! To help me learn more about America and the traditions in my area, my boss and my coworkers all took the day off and brought me spend the day at the Polo club! On that picture, we are actually stomping the divots! In the middle of the game, everyone go on the field and stomp the divots. It was one of the funniest day of my summer! ■

MAARJA NOMME, ESTONIA

8 MONTH INTERNSHIP IN TOURISM MARKETING AT VISIT AURORA IN AURORA, CO

This is me enjoying a full-on adventure filled day at Great Sand Dunes national park in Colorado. My fellow intern and I went on a hike and then had a blast sand boarding on the dunes. Just like on that day, every day in the US has been an adventure in their own way. There is just so much to see and do in here. ■



SOPHIA ZHYLKO, FRANCE

4 MONTH INTERNSHIP IN AQUACULTURE AND FOOD PRODUCTION AT THE PACIFIC AQUACULTURE AND COASTAL RESOURCES CENTER AT THE UNIVERSITY OF HILO IN HILO, HI

Traveling with friends, at Big Island of Hawaii. This picture represents happiness. I took it in July at the Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park. I am with my Brazilian roommates and a new friend. I went two times at the public observatory center of Kilauea: once during the day and the second time by night! It was amazing! This picture is special to me because it is the best experience that I had on this island so far. I have never imagined seeing an active volcano in my life, especially because I'm from Europe. During the night the landscape was scary and unreal, the sky and the smoke were red! We were too far to see the lava but it was already awesome! ■





I think that fostering dialog by creating connections with local students and children is a great way to reduce cultural misunderstanding and conflict.

LYDIA HADDAG, ALGERIA

10 MONTHS INTERNSHIP IN INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION AT ONE TO WORLD, NEW YORK, NY

Working for One To World is more than an internship abroad, it's the adventure of a lifetime! As a person who is naturally passionate about cross-cultural understanding, this experience has given me a broader, more nuanced perspective of the world. As part of the Enrichment Programs team, I contribute to the development and planning of events for international university students to help them feel at home in New York City. It's a responsibility I never would have imagined having at 20 years old!

Because of the diversity of our programs (community visits, volunteer activities, career workshops, etc.) I have been able to gain insight into non-profit management in the U.S. Even beyond that, I've met talented and inspiring people from all over the globe, which has been an incredible opportunity to learn about different cultures. For example, I am in charge of organizing a monthly Cultural Cuisine gathering in order to discover food from the five continents. Since September, we've dined at Vietnamese, Moroccan, Mexican, Japanese, Italian and Ethiopian restaurants across the city. I will always remember the reaction of the waiters when they take a look at our attendance list and see the different nationalities sitting together at a single table! Some of the students who regularly join the dinners have become really good friends. Now in addition to the monthly series, we get together in our free time to have "potlucks" and share recipes from our respective backgrounds.

Being a Fellow in an organization that is strongly involved in international education has also given me the opportunity to fully grasp the meaning of Global Citizenship. For instance, in the framework of the Global Classroom program, I've led interactive workshops in public schools in Brooklyn and the Bronx. Through this program I've been able to share about Algeria, my home country, through the lens of various themes like women's rights and sustainability. I think that fostering dialog by creating connections with local students and children is a great way to reduce cultural misunderstanding and conflict.

Thanks to One To World, I've been able to escape the hustle and bustle of The Big Apple and explore other parts of the country, like when I spent five days in Pennsylvania celebrating Thanksgiving with an American host family. My hosts, who were also our tour guides, were the most adorable and welcoming people I could expect. They arranged a visit for us to see an Amish farm and they even drove me to Philadelphia because I had never been there before. This immersion into the American way of life was one of my favorite programs so far. I will never forget these days in Lancaster County and all the wonderful people I met. I am still in touch with my hosts and they are planning to come visit me in France next year!

Living in New York helped me grow, both personally and professionally. I feel lucky to be part of an organization that celebrates international education by bringing students together. As I'm writing to you today, I only have two months left and I'm realizing how much I will miss what made my experience so unique: no matter where you come from, One To World has the power to turn complete strangers into friends, and friends into a worldwide family. ■



JAMESLY PIERRE, HAITI

3 MONTH FINANCE AND HOSPITALITY INTERNSHIP AT THE VANDERBILT IN NEWPORT, RI

This photo was taken on June 25th in Newport, Rhode Island with my colleagues : Alex Pendergrass, F&B Supervisor, Brandon Materese, Guest Services Manager, Jocelyn Evans, Guest Services Agent, and Pravin Bhaite and Andrei Golban, F&B servers. This photo is so special to me because when I first started working in Newport I had no idea where my internship was going since it was my first time working in hospitality, but the support of these guys has helped me gain confidence in what I could do and also gave me a better understanding of this industry. Through this internship, I have learned that America is a very diversified community, and as you can see in this photo we are from different countries such as: India, Moldova, Haiti and the US and we all have the same objective, which is to contribute to the success of this company. I think that America is what it is today because of its ability to embrace diversity. For me, America means a lot. It means opportunity and diversity, since it has provided golden opportunities to people from all over the world to grow economically, professionally and personally. As many other people, I intend to take advantage of this opportunity so I would be able to contribute one way or another to the workforce in my country, Haiti. ■



I think that America is what it is today because of its ability to embrace diversity. It means opportunity and diversity ...

CAROLA TRINKL, AUSTRIA

12 MONTH INTERNSHIP IN MARKETING AT RB INTERNATIONAL FINANCE LLC IN NEW YORK, NY

Me & All of NYC - These are the hundreds, maybe thousands of people that rushed to see Ghostbusters at the opening night of the HBO Film Festival at Bryant Park on June 22. For me this shows what NYC is all about: different people coming together (for me this meant friends from Austria, Italy, India and Mexico), waiting for 4 hours in the heat to see a movie and getting up all at the same time to dance full of energy once the movie has started. This was one of the greatest experiences I have had, the sheer magnitude and feeling of togetherness was amazing. This evening and a lot of other experiences this year taught me a lot about how to overcome differences, enjoying life side by side and learning so much from it. This is NY and in a way this is also what makes this country as a whole so great for me. ■



JESSICA AHLQVIST, SWEDEN

7 MONTH INTERNSHIP IN HOSPITALITY MGMT. AT HILTON MIAMI DOWNTOWN IN MIAMI, FL

This is a picture of me and a colleague from work and his wife, teammates and friends. This day he took me to watch them play a baseball game in South Beach, Miami. This photo is important to me because the only person I knew before was my colleague from work, but all of them made me feel a part of the team and their family! A mix between south America, the US and Europe! So I have learned more about the American cultures, sports. This photo is one of many that represent being a part of a family, but also that everyone is welcome to join. Also that people trying to make you feel a part of the 'family' and I am really happy that people from my host organization does not only treat me like family at work but also when not working. ■



EDWARD LAANE, ESTONIA

12 MONTH TRAINING IN CANCER RESEARCH AT DANA FARBER CANCER INSTITUTE IN BOSTON, MA

Together with my new friend Puru and with Sidney Farber and Jimmy, at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, a world-renowned cancer treatment and research center in Boston, Massachusetts, August 24, 2015. Puru, my best friend in America teaches to me all the secrets of lab work and genomic instability assays. Dr. Sidney Farber, a father of modern chemotherapy and Jimmy, a young cancer patient represents the spirit of America. This photo has a deep meaning for me as it remembers me the power of cooperation and friendship. America means democracy, respect to all people and to life, but most of all the rights and leadership, pursuit of Happiness. Together, Sidney Farber and Jimmy made Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and The Jimmy Fund possible, which have transformed lives of so many people around the world. Together they have given to the cancer patients a chance to be happy and win the greatest prize "the prize of life!" ■

EMMANUEL BANUELOS GONZALEZ, MEXICO

10 MONTH TRAINING IN MARKETING AT SPORTS ENDEAVORS INC. IN HILLSBOROUGH, NC

This is the picture of the whole summer crew of the company I work for Soccer.com (Sports Endeavors Inc.) After driving from Hillsborough, NC visiting a lot of cities all over the US like Cleveland, Detroit, Chicago, Kansas City, Denver, Salt Lake City and Portland, we arrived to the Seattle ECNL Soccer Tournament to set the official merchandise store. This picture is special to me because it represents the end of a journey in which I had the opportunity to experience the American culture and make a lot of new friends. There were 11 international trainees and 9 American interns we all bonded so well and formed a great group of friends that discovered historic places, sports venues and beautiful natural attractions. America now means a place to make friends and to discover a beautiful land in every corner I see. ■



DENIS HORAN, IRELAND

8 MONTH INTERNSHIP IN THEATRE MGMT. AT MUSICAL THEATRE FACTORY IN NEW YORK, NY

This photo was taken at my first internship at a new nonprofit in midtown called the Musical Theatre Factory on one of our salon nights in February. It's me with a gang of my friends who were my coworkers and other attendees. It was a really amazing night and we all sat around, listened to new work, got to know each other and it turned into a sing-a-long evening. I picked this photo because it represents all that I had built in America at the time. I had made so many new friends by taking chances which paid off. Again, to me, America means anything is possible if you go out and chase your dream! ■





IYAD ALTAHRAWI, PALESTINE

4 MONTH INTERNSHIP IN INTERNATIONAL GOVERNMENT RELATIONS AT THE COCA-COLA COMPANY IN ATLANTA, GA

With Coca-Cola associates at Turner Field in Atlanta watching the Braves vs. Giants San Francisco after work hours. This was if the many activities we used to have after work where interns from all departments, associates and high executives spend time together. It's definitely one of the most exciting moments I had during my time in the U.S. ■

America is rife with everyday learnings. We keep on learning. And as we go on with the learning we meet people they become our friends and eventually become part of our life.

MARIE FRANCIS DOMINE, PHILIPPINES

12 MONTH HOSPITALITY INTERNSHIP AT THE BALTIMORE COUNTRY CLUB IN BALTIMORE, MD

Sweet summer vacation to Hershey Pennsylvania: beaming with delight in this snapshot of me and my Baltimore Country Club colleagues at Hershey's Amusement Park last June 2, 2015 in Pennsylvania, USA. It has been a sweet day for the four of us spending a day in Hershey's Park, the biggest and most popular of all Hershey attraction. By the way, if you love chocolates you are going to love this place! Of course a visit to Hershey isn't complete without learning about its super famous chocolate so a visit to Chocolate world is a must! The people in this shot had been the closest buddies I had in my internship journey up to now. I clearly remember the first time we arrived here in US mixed with excitement and anxiety however I could say that it really help a lot that we have each other to enjoy and look forward for things that America wants us to experience. Now, for almost six months of my stay here in the U.S., I grew up and I'm thankful to America for inspiring me to become independent and mature, where I could make a difference in my own ways and means. America is rife with everyday learnings. We keep on learning. And as we go on with the learning we meet people they become our friends and eventually become part of our life. This is indeed the sweetest experience I had! ■





KITIJA KRŪMIŅA, LATVIA

12-MONTH INTERNSHIP AT SAP LABS IN PALO ALTO, CA

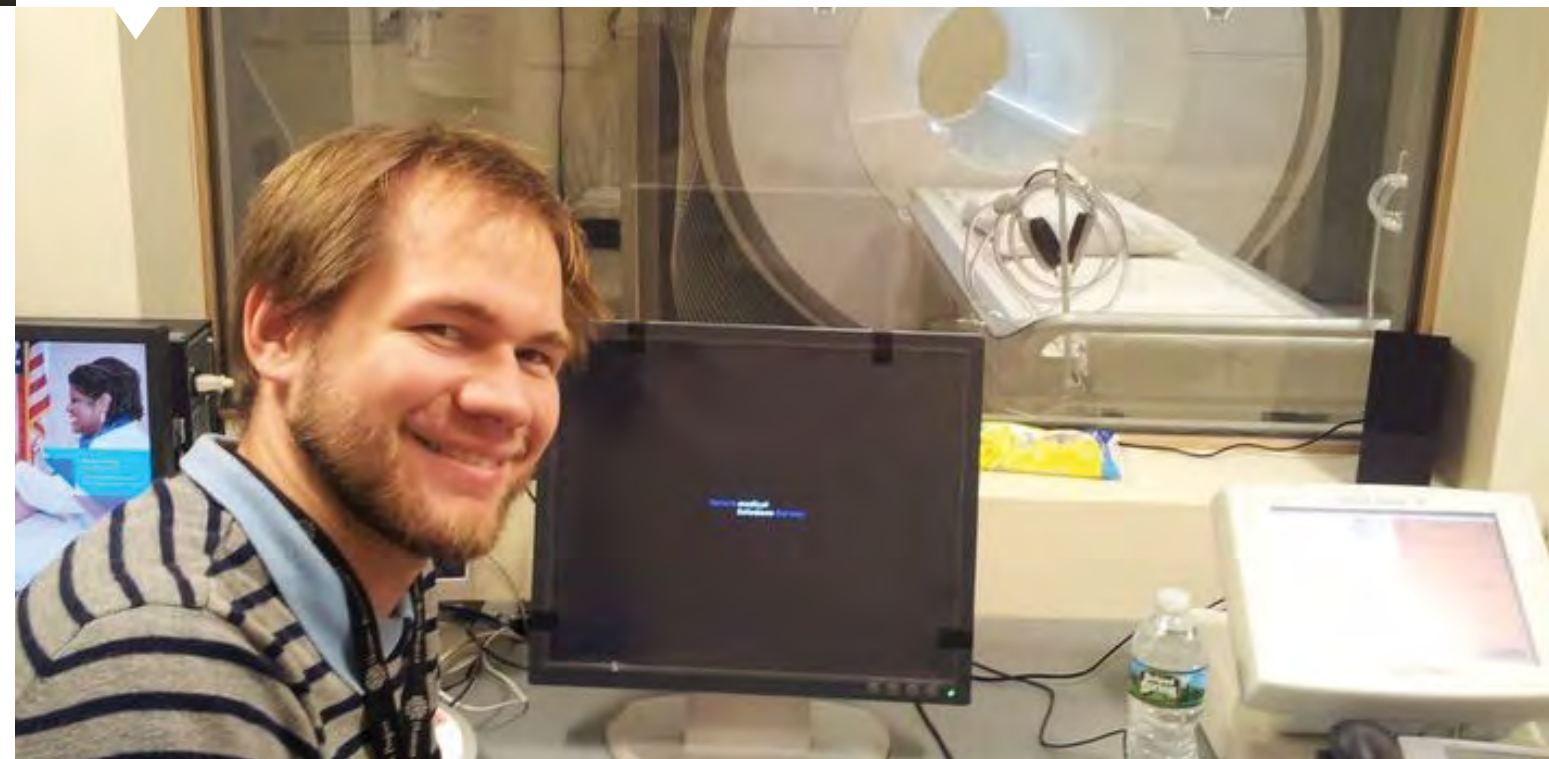
About a year ago, I came to California with a lot of inspiration to learn and experience life in America. I had an internship at a big enterprise software company, SAP. I worked in one of the offices called “SAP Innovation Center Silicon Valley.” It is a place where a lot of interns work on exciting projects using the newest technology. I got to work on multiple projects where I learned to listen, communicate, and do my programming work with team members. Thanks to the smart and interesting people who have come to California from all over the world, this internship has made me more confident and has improved my perception of life – now I see much more opportunities in my future career. Since I have been at SAP for about a year, I have seen how hard the competition is for interns to find internships. I am very thankful to the BAFF program that gave the funding to make this internship much easier for me! ■

ZOLTAN KLIMAJ, HUNGARY

6-MONTH INTERNSHIP AT FEINSTEIN INSTITUTE IN NEW YORK, NY

I am very thankful for HAESF and CIEE for allowing me to participate in this internship program. I used this opportunity for improving my knowledge in my field and my language skills, discovering the United States, meeting with new people, and networking. I enjoyed it and I am very thankful.

I tried to make it as productive as possible for work, professional development, and a personal experience point of view. I could visit an ICML 2016 conference in June and plan to go to RSNA 2016 in three weeks. I could go to meet-ups and symposiums, participate in lectures for the radiology residents at the North Shore University Hospital, improve my knowledge in neuroimaging by working in Dr. Ashesh Mehta’s lab, and work with Dr. Miklos Argyelan. I visited many places, friends, and acquaintances in the United States. The “enrichment trip” in New Orleans was awesome! In summary, thank you HAESF/CIEE for this life-changing experience! ■



SAFIA DWORJACK, FRANCE

CITY OF SAN JOSÉ, CA

When I learned I landed the position to work on an environmental program for the City of San José in California, it was a dream come true.

California is a very appealing state with its beaches and its yearlong sunshine. It is also, for an environmentalist like me, the state where innovation and challenges make your everyday job exciting. In the heart of Silicon Valley, I had the opportunity to attend many conferences and workshops to build my skills and knowledge in the environmental field. I took the opportunity to speak at a conference (This Way to Sustainability) at Chico State University, to present the program I was working on. For my job, I engaged local businesses in an energy-efficiency program, Step Up and Power Down, to help them reduce their energy consumption. Being so close to the local community, and building trusting relationships in a culture and language which were not mine was very rewarding.

I had the chance to work 8 hours a day with awesome young women who gave me a deep dive in the American/Vietnamese culture (30% of the population in San José is Vietnamese, the biggest in the United States).

I have also been part of a young graduate program in sustainability, where I was able to meet 30 American students who shared my passion, and allowed me to discover the challenges and hopes of my generation in this leading country of the United States. I had the honor to be selected in the I-LEAD program in Washington D.C. — a 6-day workshop with 58 other J-1 interns from 30 different countries. Through workshops and activities, I was pleased to discover many kind-hearted young people, which galvanized me to continue in my work to make a difference in my country.

Back in France, I am proud I had his experience as it made me grow as a person and gave me professional experience that I already see is making a difference in the job market. If you have any hesitations about this experience, I would say go for it as it will be an amazing experience that will make you stronger on so many levels. ■



RIHARDS GEDERTS, LATVIA

12-MONTH INTERNSHIP AT MANHATTAN RESIDENTIAL BROKERAGE FIRM ELEGRAN REAL ESTATE IN NEW YORK, NY

Baltic-American Freedom Foundation (BAFF) intern, Rihards Ģederts from Latvia, was interning in one of the top Manhattan residential brokerage firms — Elegran Real Estate. From working closely with the experienced management team and professional agents, Rihards learned the characteristics of a successful real estate business.

He was responsible for creating and implementing direct marketing campaigns and coordinating the international team of real estate interns. Routinely tasks sustained of some of his routine tasks included market research, managing customer relationship program, data gathering using different software tools and involvement in several projects. Working in an international environment helped him to understand out-of-the-box thought processes, which nowadays has a significant importance.

As Rihards mentioned, he has grown both professionally and personally after BAFF opened the doors to the most exciting and internationally diverse market in the world — New York City. ■



LAIMA EGLITE, LATVIA

THE BROOKLYN FASHION + DESIGN ACCELERATOR IN
BROOKLYN, NY

What surprised you the most about U.S. life, society, or culture?

To be honest – everything! This was my first time in the United States, and from the minute I landed in the JFK airport, something surprising and new appeared in American culture every day. The biggest difference I noticed was the size of everything. Buildings, cars, and the scale of everything was larger in America.

My first month here I visited MetLife Stadium in New Jersey to attend a Coldplay concert, and I had never seen such an enormous complex built mainly for sports events. Also it's not correct to compare to my home country because the population here is different by tens of millions of people.

In society, everybody is super friendly and open. It's much easier here to start conversations with strangers and find new fantastic additions to your friend group.

U.S. culture in general is really patriotic and I wish my country had the same love of our own symbols, flags, and politicians. American flags are everywhere — on trains, taxis, planes, and outside buildings. Life in general here is very dynamic. Maybe it's only New York City, but life here never slows down and it keeps pushing me to be better and achieve more.

What does your international exchange experience mean to you?

My international experience was the second main reason why I came here. First was my professional growth, but international experience has become just as important. After being in the United States for four months, I can truly say that I have become more open minded and accepting of

different nationalities and their cultural background. The reason why I didn't have this before is really simple: my home country has only about eight nationalities living there. Here in the United States it's the opposite, especially New York. There are so many communities and international people. It's always a big honor to meet new people and listen to their story, how they ended up in the United States and the life they have now. I really hope that my story will inspire other young people to try this program.

Why did you decide to come to the United States for your exchange program?

I had several reasons. Mostly my personality. I'm a person who cannot sit in one place for long and I love challenging myself. I love living out of my comfort zone and this feeling keeps driving me on. Another reason was pursuing my long wanted dream. Since I was a little kid I have always wanted to move to the United States, especially New York, and to try my luck there. The rest is history, and I can truly say that every single day I have to pinch myself to believe that I'm really living my dream now. And I can only say that I love it and enjoy it very, very much.

What was the single most influential and meaningful experience of your J-1 Exchange Visitor program?

Probably, my work. I'm really lucky to be working in a field that I have education in. It's clothing manufacturing and fashion industry management. The people I met at my work are remarkable and inspiring. I see how hard they work and how much they sacrifice to succeed. This feeling and environment pushes me every day to be a better person and never give up on my own dreams.

How do you plan to use the skills and knowledge you gained from your exchange program when you return home?

My main goal when I go back is to inspire people, mostly young professionals. So many young people are scared to try this opportunity, to step out of their usual work/study schedule. I want to be an ambassador and give public speeches at universities and schools, sharing my experience and the intellectual growth of my journey in the United States. I also plan to use my network. People in my field (that I have met here) could really help to build better business relationships, and building bridges can help economies in both countries. ■

I have become more open minded and accepting of different nationalities and their cultural background.



KITJIA KRUMINA, LATVIA

BALTIC-AMERICAN FREEDOM FOUNDATION (BAFF) GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP PARTICIPANT, SAP INNOVATION CENTER, PALO ALTO, CA

What surprised you the most about U.S. life, society, or culture?

When I arrived in the United States, the first thing that surprised me was the people. Complete strangers were smiling, caring, and helping with everything that I needed. People helped me a lot on the first day of my arrival, by guiding me to my new accommodations in Silicon Valley. As it was quite a long route from San Francisco airport to Palo Alto — I got to experience a lot of warm and pleasant attitudes towards me.

As I was having my internship in Palo Alto (sunny California), I will never forget the charming environment in the SAP Innovation Center office where people are working in flip-flops and shorts, having enjoyable lunches, playing foosball, and also competing with managers in soccer and volleyball when there were team outings!

What does your international exchange experience mean to you?

This international experience has been a life changer. I have improved my skills in patience, listening, communication, confidence, self-control, and the feeling of freedom! By freedom, I mean that I could see places and meet people by just renting a car and taking a road trip across many U.S. states.

The United States is definitely the place where you can travel and achieve big changes in life. Different food, and different traditions from very diverse people. It is not the place — it is the people! Sometimes it was not easy, because I had to change my opinions and thoughts about things from my previous life. For hard times, I used running as my meditation tool, relaxing and calming my mind. This experience made me feel better about my own life and the world itself.

Why did you decide to come to the United States for your exchange program?

I decided to come to the United States because I felt that I didn't know a lot about the world and at the same time I had stopped learning in life. There is something about us (people) — we have to challenge ourselves to achieve our own goals, not lose focus, find inspiration in life and keep learning from the world. I felt the urge for all of those things. I got tired of watching the National Geographic channel and never getting to those places — so I came here, inspired and full of dreams.

How do you plan to use the skills and knowledge you gained from your exchange program when you return home?

When I return home, I will try to make things better by sharing what I have learned. I will try to encourage and inspire more people to think about experiencing the United States because it is a place you can grow, accomplish goals, keep dreaming, and enjoy being a happy person! ■

I-LEAD, WASHINGTON D.C.

Funded in part by a grant from the U.S. Department of State, the Intern Leadership Enrichment and Development (I-LEAD) program is an experience-based program for J1 intern exchange visitors that focuses on skills development in leadership, entrepreneurship, community impact, and alumni engagement.

Two cohorts of 60 rising leaders each were selected to attend a week-long seminar during 2016, either in Washington D.C. during May or in Seattle during August. Selected interns engaged in a rigorous curriculum developed and directed by CIEE in partnership with three respected youth-serving organizations – Ashoka, Street Law, and the World Justice Project. The program’s immersive curriculum created an environment for program participants to initiate change personally and professionally, as well as in their home communities. Interns selected for I-LEAD were encouraged to make lasting connections with their fellow exchange visitors as well as become citizen ambassadors when they returned home. ■



WEIJIE ZHAO, SINGAPORE

C3NANO INC. IN HAYWARD, CA

I'm very interested in entrepreneurship, as well as technology and engineering. I'm interning in the Bay Area, the hub of innovation in the United States some would say, so it really excited me to have the opportunity to come here to learn about it.

My internship experience has been really interesting and enlightening in many ways. Not so much in the technological aspect, but in how people communicate — their values and beliefs are very different. My workplace is quite diverse, as we have four different nationalities. Even people with the same nationality can share different beliefs, different ways of communicating, different values. ■



CAROLIN RICHLI, GERMANY

IDEXX LABORATORIES, INC. IN WESTBROOK, ME

I am doing an internship in the field of biology, at the company IDEXX Laboratories in Portland, Maine. IDEXX is a biotechnology company, and I'm working in research and development in the water business.

My experience in the United States so far has been great. In Maine, all the people are welcoming and friendly. I was lucky because I found a roommate at the beginning. She's American and she's like family to me. IDEXX is really great, the atmosphere is great, the majority are happy with their work. IDEXX is known for treating their employees in a good way. I feel comfortable here.

I'm really happy that I'm now here and have the opportunity to intern in the United States and to meet so many Americans. It's a great adventure here. I do a lot of networking, I really enjoy that. It's fascinating to see that I can adapt so quickly to another culture. It feels like home here.

I would definitely recommend doing an internship in the United States. You can only gain experience – whether it's a bad experience or good, I hope it will be good — but you can only grow. It's good for your career, and you can also develop social skills. I can only recommend it. My company here in the United States is really supportive. ■

LINA VILEMAITE, LITHUANIA

ELEGAN REAL ESTATE AND DEVELOPMENT IN NEW YORK, NY

My name is Lina, and I come from Lithuania. I'm working in a real estate company in New York, doing finance.

It's been very challenging to live in New York, because it's such a huge city, and I come from a small city, in a small country. New York is so intense. Living there was a great challenge for me personally, not only in a work environment, but in general.

I would definitely recommend an internship in the United States. A lot of people hear about the United States, how life is here, and they have a lot of impressions about people, and life, and businesses. But it's so different when you actually come here and experience it on your own. I definitely advise young people to come here. ■



ASHA BAKER, AUSTRALIA

DOWN UNDER ANSWERS IN SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

I am Asha, and I'm from Australia. I'm doing my internship in Seattle, at a travel specialist, Down Under Answers. We plan and book holidays for Americans to go to the South Pacific.

The internship itself — I've learned a lot about how to run a business and how to not run a business. Key factors within my company are learning that organizational structure is important, and that communication is key to many things. If you don't have either of those, it's very difficult to progress and to have high standards in the work that you do.

I have a wonderful group of friends. I play ultimate frisbee, so I got to know a great bunch of people in Seattle. They're very outdoorsy. We do things on the weekend, whether it be climbing, snowshoeing, skiing, hanging out with friends, throwing a frisbee. That side of things, interacting with the locals and having great friendships, has been awesome. And I was lucky enough to find a house by myself within a week and a half.

Doing an internship anywhere in the world is definitely beneficial. It helps you grow, and it helps you develop as a person and an individual, and helps you see the good and the bad things in life. ■



MANDY PITSCHER, GERMANY

KLINGELNBERG AMERICA, INC. IN SALINE, MICHIGAN

My name is Mandy Pitscher, and I am from Germany, near Cologne. My sponsor in America is CIEE and in Germany it's Travelworks.

I am interning in Michigan, and I work for the company KlingelInberg (KlingelInBURG as Americans say it), it's a German company. I've worked for this company for more than four years. Now I'm in the American department.

It was my idea to come to America. I heard about this kind of program at my university. They had a presentation — I went there, heard it, and was totally sure that I wanted to go to America and do this. So it was my university who offered me the opportunity to do a semester abroad.

Most memorable experience in the United States so far

A road trip to Lake Michigan. I didn't expect the nature to be so beautiful over here. It was awesome, I was impressed by the size of the lake. I'm impressed by all the huge stuff over here. Americans really love their space and their room, that's what they aim for.

Would you recommend an internship in the United States to others?

Definitely. I think that every student should do that, really everybody. It's an experience that nobody can explain to you or tell you about. You have to just do it. It's really good for your personality, for your character. You focus more on yourself, although you are more connected with others.

I wanted to participate (in I-LEAD) because it was an awesome offer to go to Washington, D.C. I've never done something like that before. I really like to be in contact with people, and sometimes observing is also good, but I like to talk to people, to be connected. If you put that on your resume it's something special, because there are not many people that have the offer to go here.

(At I-LEAD) I learned to talk to an audience. I'm always a little bit — not afraid, but my heart beat goes up if I have to talk to a large number of people. I've improved that, definitely, but even more important than that — I learned to listen. Sometimes you only have to lean back and listen to what the other person is saying. To listen to their ideas or their opinions, and that's really impressive.

My goal for the future is to have a career as an engineer. I love my work, I really have a great passion for what I do. I would love to have a patent one day, to bring technical innovation. But I also want to be more responsible for staff and projects, because I feel like this is the way I want to go, and I feel even more sure of that now. ■



MOHAMED HUSEIN, UK

INNOPHOS NUTRITION, INC. IN SALT LAKE CITY, UT

I was always passionate about coming to the United States, so when I was accepted, I was so excited! I realized that a lot of the big chemical companies are multinational and are looking for people who have international exposure, cultural intelligence, intercultural communication skills, flexibility and adaptability. There's so much advantage to being an intern outside of your own country. You're able to get out of your comfort zone.

I really enjoyed it. I really believe that it was one of the best choices in my life, to challenge myself and come to the United States. It was difficult at the beginning, but everything comes through learning. It was an awesome experience. I've learned so much, Last year I learned more than I learned in the past three years in my degree. ■

MARTA LANGE, LATVIA

HOUSTON METHODIST HOSPITAL IN HOUSTON, TEXAS

My name is Marta. I'm from Latvia, from Riga, and I'm here thanks to the CIEE program, the BalticAmerican Freedom Foundation. I'm doing an internship in Texas, at Houston Methodist Hospital, which is a really awesome place to do an internship because in the medical field, they're one of the leaders here in the United States. I'm really happy to be there. My internship is in the cardiovascular department, which is not only where they actually treat patients, but also do the research. I'm doing research assessing radiation safety and also doing research on ultrasound diagnostics, so it's really dynamic and so, so, so interesting.

How did you find your internship?

First I wanted to do an internship in one of the biggest medical device companies like Siemens or Philips or General Electric, you know, which is the first idea that comes into your mind when you think about United States. But then I was offered this wonderful opportunity to come to Houston, because there have been other interns before me. My supervisor, Dr. Zsolt Garami, is really awesome, because he's very active in engaging with foreign students and welcoming them in their departments. So I got in contact with him and we did an interview, and yeah! We both felt that this is going to be a very good opportunity for me.

Would you recommend other people do internships in the United States?

Yes, I would really recommend it, and not only because it's just something that you can do when you're young and after you finish your university. It's also something that will broaden your view on the world, and it will help you to not only learn professional skills but also to learn social skills and soft skills. Like at the event, I-LEAD, we met with 60 people from 30 countries, which is really awesome. I feel like this is a world congress! This was an awesome leadership workshop. It is important to not only be professional in your field, do your research in four walls and that's it – you have to communicate with people. It's like a professional internship without borders.

What's been your most memorable experience in the United States so far?

I've been here for only five months, so this is kind of a middle point of the whole internship. I think the first exciting moment was the enrichment trip, which is part of our Baltic-American Freedom Foundation Program's event, where all the people from the Baltic States met for the first time in the program. That was a point where I understood that I'm not the only one with all my problems, that there are also other interns with the same problems, the same challenges. That was really awesome. I think the enrichment trip in Austin, the event here in D.C., and the leadership workshop, are the most memorable moments so far in this internship. ■



I-LEAD, SEATTLE, WA



ZIVILE MARIJA VAICEKAUSKAITE, LITHUANIA

I am extremely fortunate to be here, as I think it's not only a great professional experience to gain new knowledge and develop my professional skills, but also to experience a new culture and build cultural awareness, which is of great importance working in my field. ■



HERMANN RICHTER-KOCH, GERMANY

I would recommend an internship in the United States because I think it's important to challenge yourself with adaptation to a new culture that is different from home. Even though Germany and the United States are not that different at first look, there are things that are very, very different, and that's a challenge that can make you better in so many ways. ■

MELANIE GALAND, FRANCE

I would definitely recommend an internship to all of my friends. It's a very enriching experience and you get to not only improve your English, but also work in a different environment with a different culture. You get out of your comfort zone and you're pushed to work with people you have never worked with before, and that's a really good experience in my opinion. ■



MONIKA LEMPART, GERMANY

When I was 5 years old, I saw the TV show "Full House" for the first time, and since then it was my biggest dream to come to the United States for a longer period of time. And now I am finally here for an internship of my dreams. It will be a challenge for me to be far away from familiar surroundings, friends, and family. But with my wonderful new friends on my side, everything will be great! This picture shows me and my new friends in Chicago on September 4, 2016. It is special for me, because it was our first trip together and definitely not the last one. ■



ENGAGE USA

Engage USA is a series of intercultural events offered to in-country intern and trainee participants. Engage USA provides 90 minutes of intercultural programming and a platform for participants to connect with each other and CIEE. Guided interactive exercises help interns and trainees develop new skills to navigate the international training environment. Participants share the culture of their home country and reflect upon their time in the U.S.

In June four events hosted at the Broadmoor in Colorado Springs, CO reached fort-five participants. Three events held in Boston in July were attended by twenty-one participants. Engage USA attendees represented the following countries: Botswana, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, the Philippines, Poland, Scotland, South Africa, and Spain. ■

KERSTIN MATSCHITSCH, AUSTRIA

I had a great experience and learned a lot, on a personal and professional level. My experience here in the United States was awesome as I gained a lot of self-confidence, met interesting people, was part of another culture, and learned a lot about how business is done in the United States. I improved my personal and professional skills within a short amount of time. ■

LAURA ATO MORENO, PERU

Doing an internship in the United States has helped me to enrich what I've already learned in college. But there is always something new and interesting to learn, and these three months have been so far the best. I enjoy working here, and my English has improved a lot! I have had the chance to work in this area (Lutsen, Minnesota) before but with a different company, and I have never felt so important and proud of myself like I do now. I think it is important for companies to be concerned with the students, talk to them, engage them, and place them in positions where they can have the chance to actually LEARN more than what we learned at school.

I couldn't feel more confident and happier with the actual company that I am working with. The owners are just such nice people who are always motivating me and my coworkers. They definitely have a nice internal communication area and I think all of us enjoy working here, especially because we don't compete against each other. We are a team! I am very grateful for working in such a nice company! ■

NYC MARATHON

CIEE's intern and trainees community participated enthusiastically in a weekend of cultural exchange culminating in the opportunity to volunteer at the New York City Marathon, which was coordinated by the U.S. Department of State.

The weekend began with a Saturday welcome reception hosted by the U.S. Department of State. Daniel Katyl and seven CIEE intern and trainee joined roughly 300 J-1 participants, J-1 sponsors, and Department of State Private Sector Exchange employees on the 24th floor of the prestigious U.S. Mission to the United Nations building. Overlooking breathtaking views of the East River and New York City, J-1 participants and sponsors spent the afternoon building community with each other while learning about the different J-1 categories, as well as the different cultural experiences each participant is having in the United States. The reception was culminated by an uplifting speech by Deputy Assistant Secretary for Private Sector Exchanges Keri Lowry. Keri spoke on the importance of J-1s understanding the cultural values of volunteerism, philanthropy, and civil engagement during their time of cultural exchange.

Sunday morning, starting as early as 6:30 a.m., Daniel and 30 CIEE J-1 intern and trainees joined 1000 J-1 participants in volunteering at the New York City Marathon. Daniel and the CIEE J-1s help set up the mile 6 fluid station. It was an incredible feat, with the collaboration of hundreds of volunteers, to turn an empty street into a well-organized station that provided the 50,000+ marathon participants with the hydration needed to keep going. In this experience, the volunteering J-1s learned the importance of working together with complete strangers, from many different cultures and backgrounds, in order to rally around a common goal of supporting the marathon participants. As the marathon volunteers and participants were from places around the globe, the comradery among citizens of so many different nations spoke to the true nature of J-1 visitor exchange programs: cultural exchange and global diplomacy.

Sunday concluded for Daniel and 15 CIEE J-1s with a much deserved pizza party in the Park Slope neighborhood of Brooklyn. During this time, many CIEE J-1s shared their experiences from the day and from their internships. They shared how incredible these volunteer opportunities are while in the United States, and how they hope to have more volunteer experiences while on their J-1 visa. While it was a relaxing time after a fun but tiring day, many intern and trainees used this time to form potential friendships with other J-1s in NYC, exchanging contact information and planning times to get together in the near future.

Overall it was an incredible weekend of cultural exchange, and an experience that each participating person will not soon forget. ■





Founded in 1947, CIEE is the world leader in international exchange, delivering the highest-quality programs that increase global understanding and intercultural knowledge. We provide participants with skills, competencies, and experiences that elevate their ability to contribute positively to our global community.

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