

Information for Interested Students and Parents

People to People – Sheboygan Chapter Sheboygan--Córdoba Student Exchange

The Sheboygan Chapter of People to People International has been sponsoring an annual exchange with Córdoba, Argentina since 2004. All Sheboygan County high school students are eligible to participate in this unique program. Those who have done so have made life-long friendships.

Applicants are usually sophomores or juniors in their second or third year of Spanish. Applications should be returned by the end of November and the selection of students, which will include a family interview, is usually completed in early January. Since classes in Córdoba are conducted in Spanish, applicants should be strong students and have good study habits. The Argentinean students arrive in mid-late July and depart in early-mid January. The Sheboygan County students leave for Argentina in mid-February, returning in late July or early August. Essentially they will miss the second semester of their junior or senior year.

Córdoba, Argentina:

Founded in 1573, Córdoba boasts many colonial style cathedrals and buildings. Like many other cities in Latin America built by the Spanish, the city was designed using a grid system and is void of intimidating skyscrapers making it easy to navigate despite its size (population: 1.5 million). Córdoba, the second most important city in Argentina, is called the “Heartland of Argentina.” It’s located at the intersection of the routes that went from Chile and the Alto Peru (Bolivia) to the port of Buenos Aires, and during the colonial period was Argentina’s most important city. Some 300 years later, Córdoba has retained its rich colonial heritage, as shown by its culture and architecture. The Río Primero, forms Córdoba’s main natural landmark, and its urban center is the Plaza San Martín, named after Argentina’s great liberator; it is the site of the city’s cathedral. South of the plaza is Calle Obispo Trejo, a pedestrian friendly avenue filled with some of the city’s most illustrious colonial buildings.

Córdoba has many beautiful parks, historical places, museums and different attractions. There is the colonial architecture of the cathedral on Plaza San Martín; the cabildo (city hall) that dates back to the 17th century; the Obispo Mercadillo House built at the beginning of the 18th century; the Religious Art Museum, Monserrat School, the city’s oldest school, dating back to 1685, Jesus Sociedad, the oldest church in the country; and the prestigious National University of Córdoba, which attracts thousands of students from other parts of the country and the rest of South America.

Because Córdoba attracts so many students to its university, it is not surprising that there are also schools for foreigners who wish to study Spanish. Europeans, particularly Germans, make up the current majority of foreigners studying at these schools. Gus Christensen, an American student who studied for four weeks through AmeriSpan’s program in Córdoba, had the following comments for anyone interested in learning Spanish in Latin America: “It is a very comfortable

city. It's so easy to feel at home, and the people are so friendly. It is easy to find culture, good food and good nightlife. But, you're reminded that you're still in Latin America because the bus system doesn't always work too well. I was also able to go horseback riding and enjoy the countryside about a half hour outside of the city."

Expectations of the Sheboygan County host family:

1. Provide the visiting student with his or her own bed-preferably in a separate room.
2. Spend time with their Argentinean student and include him/her in family social activities and show him/her places of interest in and around Wisconsin.
3. Participate in People to People activities and gatherings for exchange families.
4. Provide transportation for the student.
5. Provide parental supervision at all times.
6. Meet the Argentinean student on arrival at airport and transport to airport for departure.
7. Join the People to People Sheboygan Chapter. (Annual membership: \$30/family)
8. Exchange students and parents help with the People to People Brat Fry by selling tickets, volunteering as necessary and working one or two shifts the day of the event.

Cost:

The cost of the program includes the round trip flight (\$1,300 –\$1,600) and the personal expenses of the Sheboygan student while in Córdoba. Plane ticket costs change from year to year. Personal expenses range from \$600 to \$1000. The expense of having another member in the family for almost six months is offset by the fact that there will be one less family member at home while your student is in Córdoba. It may also be helpful to consider that the money you are now spending on your student here (allowance, music lessons, shampoo, clothes etc.) can be the personal expense money for him/her in Córdoba. If your student is now driving, you can cancel his/her car insurance for the approximately six months they will be away, as they will not drive in Argentina. Each year People to People provides the participants with a stipend of \$500 – \$600, which is the money raised through the annual fundraising events. The amount varies from year to year, and depends somewhat on the number of students selected. The Sheboygan Area School District and the Plymouth School District provide the Argentinean students with cafeteria meal tickets, activity tickets, a yearbook and book rental. Arrangements may be slightly different at other area schools. Membership in the YMCA and other community organizations are also sometimes available.

School and Grades:

Parents and students often have questions about the exchange's possible effect on graduation requirements and class rank. In the Sheboygan Area School District and several other area high schools, the GPA is frozen; students may be granted elective credits on a pass/fail basis (no grade). However, in Sheboygan's weighted grade system, other students will take honors courses while your student is gone and his/her rank may change. All graduation requirements must still be met, which may mean taking second semester US History and the missed semester of English in the senior year, along with whatever other classes are needed. Other schools may have different procedures—one should check early on with the high school to prevent later misunderstandings.

Other Questions:

You may have other concerns about having an unknown person in your family for a time. If your student is selected to participate, the exchange committee will provide more information and suggestions. However we know that you might want some of your questions answered before you decide to apply! The advice that has worked for many others is to treat the student as you treat your son/daughter--it is just too difficult to have a guest for five or six months. An advantage to this program is that your student will be going to live in your Argentinean student's home, so the exchange is really between families. The committee uses the application information to make the best matches possible.

The Argentinean students will arrive here with at least four - six years of English, so communication is not a big problem. You may have to speak a little slower at first and explain some slang. (On the other hand, the American students go to Argentina with far less experience with the Spanish language, and they will find that it will take them longer to get up to speed.) You will need to help your Argentinean student enroll in high school, and help them make good class choices. You can also help them get involved with things that interest them, which may or may not be what your son or daughter is involved in. Very few of our extra-curricular activities are available through the schools in Argentina and they are usually happy to try out all sorts of new things here--sports, musical productions, clubs and the like. You will NOT have to entertain them!

You may have many more questions as you try to decide if you want to apply. Please feel free to call and ask questions—we've been in the same place! If you have school related questions, we can try to put you in touch with a parent from your school that has participated recently. (Receiving an application does not obligate you to apply.)

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You may also contact any of the following Córdoba exchange committee members:

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(revised 10.23.09)