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A FSYF Newsletter

Fall 2017

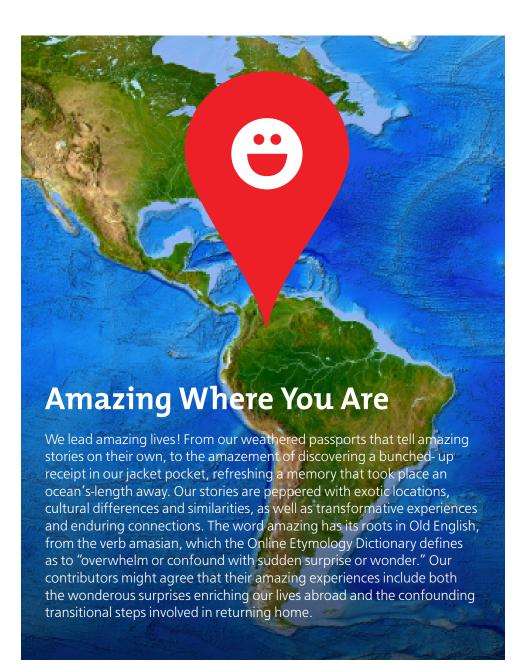


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A special thanks to McGrath Real Estate Services for their generous support of this newlsetter

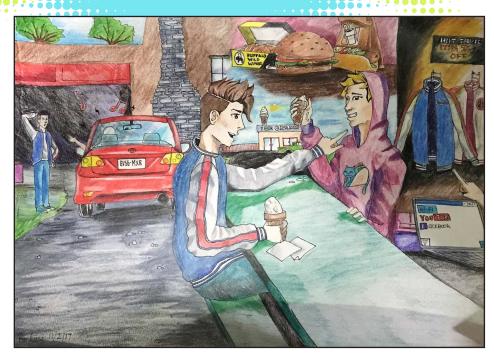




Back in the US

Ben Leese, age 15, Maseru, Lesotho





Tropical Storm Selma

Timothy Pouring, Age 14, San Salvador, El Salvador

One of the things I love about El Salvador is the rainy season, a 5 month period of daily rain. To finish off this year's rainy season, El Salvador was hit by Tropical Storm Selma. Selma was the second tropical cyclone formed in the Pacific ever to make landfall in El Salvador. Although it threatened almost all of El Salvador with flooding, the full force of the storm missed us. Luckily, school was still canceled.



Landing at Home

Vidalia Freeman, Utah State University, Salt Lake City, UT

Flight's uncanny feeling Lies deep within my bones. Change has been my constant, Five countries I've called home.

Now so newly landed, My feet touch solid ground. Such new stillness shakes me; How can I settle down?

Timid, I stand trembling, My hand is at the door. Then kind roommates greet me Three freshmen, one sophomore.

Fall brings familiar flurry Of new classes, clubs, and friends, Yet once a week, each Sunday I call home once again.

Some mornings now at sunrise, I run along with dawn, Down twisting mountain trails: New flight calls me on.

Beyond my shelter's comfort There's one who needs my hand, To pull them past the threshold, To help them learn to land.

My footsteps find new journeys, My life brims with dreams and plans. Yet home will have its place, For I've found somewhere to land.

Home

Isaac Burkhalter, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA

As an Foreign Service kid, the concept of reverse culture shock is a familiar one, and although it exists, it shouldn't necessarily be viewed in a negative light. Becoming acclimated to a foreign environment can, without a doubt, make it difficult to readjust to the environment back home. When the "horrors" of culture shock are drilled into your brain at every guidance class and school assembly, however, it can be blown a bit out of proportion.

When I was younger I was a cultural sponge, as I am sure many others in my position were. Moving from place to place was a normality for me, and by the time I was six I had lived in six different countries and had six different homes. It was only on my first four-year tour back in the US that I realized how abnormal my lifestyle really was compared to others my age. Leaving my house in the US for Japan at the end of seventh grade was more overwhelming than any departure before, and for the first time I felt the overbearing self-consciousness of being an outsider in a foreign country.

Japan was a cultural hybrid, somehow managing to blend its own brand of hard-nosed traditional conservatism with the other boundary-pushing, liberal facets of its society. It was a place where my dad could go to work in a place surrounded by skyscrapers and twenty minutes later be back in our townhouse built in the 1960s. This ability to seamlessly incorporate two complete opposites was something I would come to admire, but at the moment, it only made it more difficult to fit in. Over time, I grew to accept Japan. Though it didn't happen immediately, I slowly began to soak it all in embrace the culture as my own, just as I had numerous times before.

Five years later, I was one of four thousand people who moved out of their houses to attend the University of Virginia. This time, however, it wasn't just me. Four thousand people were experiencing what I had experienced countless times before, and suddenly my abnormal lifestyle was a normality. While everyone else was running about, worrying about where to go, how to get there, what to wear, what to eat, and what to buy, I was busy doing what I do best: soaking it up and embracing my new home.

The Rhine River Cruise (And Going to Boppard)

Ethan Kahler Aldridge, age 9, Frankfurt, Germany



The Rhine was a spectacularly large river. It was breathtaking! And we (lucky us) were going to take a satisfying, cruise-tour on it to Boppard! I was so excited, I could jump into the river! (Not literally because there's probably leeches and loads more stuff

that's bad.) BONG...BONG! Went the ship. The gates opened and a swarm of tourists pushed, stomped and tripped onto the boat. Sadly, we were in the very, very, very back of the line. "C'mon Mom, let's get on!" I said enthusiastically. "Sweetie, we need to be polite, and wait for everyone to get on before we go." "But... But..." "We'll wait." She finished like she meant it. She gave me that you-will-do-what-l-say look and I gave out a sigh.

After we got on the boat, surprisingly, there were just enough chairs to seat everyone being my little sister, my mom, my dad, my grandpa, my grandma, my aunt, and me. 7 seats, not including an extra seat to put our sweaters, for my mom a coat, my grandma's cane, and any extra stuff that we don't want in our laps. I looked up, and this was now the best boat I've ever been on. There was an actual slide on the boat. "Mom, can try that slide out?" "Um... OK, but just be careful.". I ascended the ladder and turned around, and there it was. It went from the third floor to the second one. — The first floor was a half restaurant half ballroom, the second floor was the outside deck, and the third floor was mainly just to get to the slide, but it was also a balcony. -1was so excited! This was my first time going on a slide on a boat. I sat down, pushed and slid! Even though it probably didn't happen, it felt like I was sliding down the slide while I was being pushed by the boat! It was awesome.

"We're approaching our first castle." The captain said over the loudspeaker. We were heading between two mountains. The wind was raging with power. I had to hold on to my hat... Literally. We all grabbed our stuff while Mom put on her coat. I thought Seriously!!?? Mom needs a coat!?. Actually, I also needed a sweater. I still don't understand how the guard towers for the castle had holes in the walls for windows, and they aren't freezing to death.

The castle was giant! I could almost see those two tiny specks at the top of that hill, waving down at us. Thankfully, they didn't have holes for windows, they had stained glass windows. It almost looked like Neuschwanstein!

After about 15 minutes of wind, and more wind, we finally decided to go downstairs to the half-diner-half-ballroom room. I was a little thirsty so I ordered a Coke, but my Mom didn't approve. So, I ended up getting Apfel Schule. (Apfel Schule is fizzy Apple Juice. You could basically call it Apple Soda without the sweetness.) It tasted less bitter than usual. So, I drank it, which is something I don't usually do with Apfel Schule. We sat, and talked... and sat, and talked... But anyways, after about 25 minutes, I was bored. So, I asked my mom "Mom, can I go out on the second deck?" "Sure, sweetie" "Thanks, Mom!" I called back as I ran up the stairs.

When I got upstairs, this is what happened in precise order: A gust of wind hit me, and I almost fell over, I saw that our chairs were scarcely staying in place, and I imagined them just soaring off, into the water. Then, I thought, what if that happened to me?!, and decided to go back inside. Once I got back inside, the warmness hit me like a punch to the stomach, although, unlike a punch to the stomach, I felt better. This time, I savored the warmth, but I usually complain!

Stop after stop, castle after castle, mountain after mountain, we slowly, but surely made our way to Boppard. "Are we there yet?" I asked constantly. "Almost." My dad kept saying. After at least a half-dozen times, it was our stop. I was so happy to get off the wobbly boat and onto dry land, I ran down the ramp. Boppard, here I come! I thought after we were on the cobblestone streets of Boppard. I didn't see many half-timber houses², surprisingly. But, we did see lunch.

A pizzeria it is. We ordered, ate and I said that it was very good (I don't usually say that since I'm a picky eater.) and that I was happy to go back here, but we can't. After lunch, we strolled around town, sadly not buying souvenirs, but taking in the town. It was as big as a dandelion, compared to Frankfurt Am Main³, but it was still fun to go to.

I'll treasure this trip forever, being my second boat ride... ever. I hope you enjoyed my story!!!!!!

³Frankfurt Am Main is where I live, and Main is a bigger river than Rhine. You pronounce Main mine.



¹ Neuschwanstein is a big, big, big castle we went to about 1 month before going on the Rhine River Tour. Neuschwanstein is very famous in Germany. You pronounce Neuschwanstein Newshvanstine. ² Half-timber houses are concrete houses with wood beams supporting the walls.

The Clock

Zara Kepler, age 11, Annandale, VA

The hand print that was left
On the memories we have made
Will guide us on our way

In my heart I will never forget the times we have saved So, I am sad that the time went so fast But cheerful for the memories of the past

I wish I could turn back time, but it would never be the same And now the shining star of life will Illuminate the future

How sweet, the candy of the past is gone Though the laughter of the future will Make the sky smile in my mind

I will never forget that had prints that was carved in my heart
Though the love that makes me thrive
will speed up my future with every touch
So, I'd like to say thank you for all the times that the clock couldn't say.



Embrace the Adventure!

FSYF is proud to announce the

2018 Academic Merit Award

Awards:

First Place: \$4,000 Sponsored by STG

Second Place: \$2,000 Sponsored by FSYF

Eligibility:

High School seniors and gap-year dependents who plan to attend college in the Fall 2018 are invited to apply. **FSYF membership is required.**

About FSYF:

The Foreign Service Youth Foundation strives to encourage, support and celebrate Foreign Service youth worldwide.



Deadline:

February 05, 2018

Go to www.fsyf.org

for instructions and application

1 year: \$20 3 years: \$50 Lifetime Membership: \$150 Join at www.fsyf.org/joindonate

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Contact us at: www.fsyf.org (703)731-2960 fsyf@fsyf.org



It's Amazing Where I Am

Marianna Karagiannis, University of Chicago, Chicago, IL

In many ways, despite the struggles of uncertainty and questions of where I fit in, I see growing up in the Foreign Service as an incredible privilege. I got to immerse myself in cultures as more than a tourist, and discover my own values along the way. While living abroad, I had a sort of dual identity that can be difficult to concretely describe. I considered myself American, and a representative of our country, yet I would pick up on customs and traditions of other countries that made me stick out when I visited the US. My culture, then, also included the "Americans Abroad" community, as I like to call it. This sense of belonging with a group of other students and families, with their own backgrounds and few similarities other than the country in which we were living, gave me a sense of home in times when I was most confused about where I belonged. I took things for granted living in the US, like the availability of my favorite foods or just being able to easily speak to anyone I came across. Living abroad was challenging, but it gave me perspective that I cherish. Perspective on the struggles of other communities, and the faults or idiosyncrasies of my own. Perspective on the different ways I could approach life, and perspectives on what education can look like. In the US, I attended public school, which I liked but had challenges, particularly with overcrowding or budget concerns. In Bulgaria, I attended a small private school that was completely unlike what I have now grown used to, and completely unlike the local public schools in the same place. I was truly given an opportunity to understand, and I regret every chance I let slide past.

I remember being very homesick, but even more just unsure where to consider my home. Small things like fast food ads would remind of the US, and I would remember my friends (this was a little before social media was really used). Yet, I remember my awe in seeing a hawk moth for the first time, and relishing the smell of roasting peppers as I stumbled over the cobblestone streets. Even eight years later, I still consider each country I lived in as a part of me, and continue traditions I collected along the way. Growing up in the Foreign Service opened me to a world of challenges and possibilities, and sometimes all I need is a smell and I feel like I am right back overseas with my new friends, old hobbies (some things stay constant, at least), and open doors. I am grateful to those who helped me, from teachers at schools to classmates who welcomed me without question, and to the women selling tomatoes at the market to the staff who organized cultural events. It can be hard, and at times I felt alone, with no way to easily myself, but my experience as a Foreign Service child developed a resilience, excitement, and awareness in me that I hope will carry me far in life.

It's Amazing Where I Am

Gillian Hales, age 12, Brussels, Belgium

It's amazing where I am.
It's amazing to eat the food, and see the places.
It's amazing to see the stars
In the darkest sky.

MY favorite feeling is running into the fields, Or eating gelato and waffles. My mom loves taking pictures And visiting castles, With swords and shields.

My sister oves the people, And all the new friends she can make And my dad loves fishing, On the lakes.

It is not bad
Living in a new home
Where there is so much to see.
We travel
To far off lands
To sight see,
And play in the sea.

It's is amazing where I am.

Belgium

It's Amazing Where

Catherine Norton, age 13, Hong Kong, China

remember now. Where are you from?

Umm, well. What do you mean?

Where are my parents from? Where was I born? What place did I love the best? Did I live in the same country twice? What do I consider home?

That last one, I can answer for you.

My home is the feeling of fear. Not knowing where you'll belong to next. What is your house like? Are there going to be others like you near by? Are there gonna be guards? What about gates? There's always big, heavy, metal gates.

My home is that mournful look in your eyes as you stare at the long gray roads that seem to go on forever. Soon that's what you'll be, just a gray memory in the long expanse of the mind's drawers.

My home is the growling of the airplane engines. I knew we couldn't stay here forever, it's time for us to move on.

My home is that feeling when your gut drops as the angry winds lash at the plane. I smile. What will happen next?

My home is the feeling of anticipation. Looking down from the plane and seeing it for the first time. What new adventures await you here?

My home is that feeling of inexplicable gratitude. Dedicated to the person who came to get you after your journey. When you're tired, hungry, and smell like chemicals. Gratitude to the person who will show you how to live in your new home.

You know that question? What is it? Oh yeah, I My home is that feeling of true wonder. Staring at the glass of water in front of you. What's different about it? Why can't I drink it?

> My home is that crawling feeling of confusion. Staring at my plate and questioning whether or not what's on it really is edible. Calm down, just try it.

> My home is that little happy dance you do when you've made your first friend.

> My home is that moment when you realize that you are finally viewed as "part of the group".

My home is that bubble of excitement in your stomach as you sit around the dinner table waiting for the announcement that will determine your future.

My home is feeling of deep sadness. Watching the face of a dear one spiral when you tell them that you're leaving, and may never come back.

My home are the silent tears that stream down my face as we stand on the airport threshold. Forming little puddles by the wheels of my suitcases.

My home is knowing that wherever you go, a piece of you will always belong to that adventure you once had. That country. All those stories of pride, and embarrassment. The invaluable lessons that come with diversity. Knowing that sewn in your heart is the thread of change, a true traveler's heart. And you know that once it's sewn, it will stay there forever.

New Home

Caleb Mears, age 14 years, San Salvador, El Salvador

This was me, the one on the far right, at my new house in El Salvador. I had just arrived with my family to start my dad's new job at the American embassy. It was very important as it was also the same day I would start the 8th grade here in El Salvador, After living here for a bit more than a year, I've come to really love El Salvador and the many features it has.



Oktoberfest

Camryn Carswell, grade 12, Ramstein, Germany



Germany is famous for celebrating Oktoberfest. Most people think of beer when they think of Oktoberfest, but beer was not the origin of the celebration. Oktoberfest began in 1810 as a wedding celebration between

Bavarian Crown Prince Ludwig and Princess Therese von Sachsen-Hildburghausen. All the citizens were invited to the celebration, and since then, Oktoberfest has grown to include a carnival type atmosphere, and lots of beer.

The biggest Oktoberfest celebration in Germany is in Munich in Bavaria. This year Oktoberfest begins on Saturday September 16th and ends on Tuesday October 3rd. At noon on September 16th, the mayor of Munich will tap the first keg of Oktoberfest beer. The first Sunday of Oktoberfest there is a big parade in the streets of Munich. The Oktoberfest grounds are called Theresienwiese, which is located in the center of Munich.

Traditional foods served at Oktoberfest include:

- ·Breseln large soft pretzels
- ·Hendl roasted chicken
- ·Kartoffeln potatoes
- ·Weisswiurst white sausage
- ·Schweinshaxe pork knuckle
- ·Lebkuchenherzen large, decorated gingerbread heart necklaces
- ·Mass (Masskrug) the large 1 liter steins of beer

People dress in traditional outfits, lederhosen (leather pants) for the men, and dirndls (dresses with aprons) for the women. The women's dirndl apron tie is significant: tied on the right means the woman is married or "taken"; tied on the left means the woman is single or "available".

Although the biggest Oktoberfest is in Munich, villages all over Germany have their own Oktoberfest events during the celebration period. People of all ages can enjoy Oktoberfest. There are carnival type rides, bands, food stands, and of course beer. As we approach the start of the Oktoberfest season, Prost! Cheers!

FOR THE PARENTS

Road Trip Tips by International Auto Source (IAS)

Most parents approach long road trips and driving vacations with a bit of apprehension. Sure, today's connected kids can amuse themselves with electronics, tablets, phones and DVD players. But as a parent or a passenger you'll never escape that infamous question, Are we there yet?

Whether you are driving around the US, or routes less familiar during your international post, hitting the road with your kids doesn't have to be hours of electronic induced silence or sibling squabbling. These easy ideas are a great way to ensure a fun and educational trip on the road ahead, anywhere in the world you go.

- 1. The alphabet game: This is a fun game to play with numerous topics. For example, restaurants: Go in order with the passengers in the car naming restaurants with the letters of the alphabet. You may be first and have "A", you would list a chain restaurant that starts with A, then, the next person would be "B" and name a restaurant that starts with the letter "B". To make it more challenging, put a time limit for each person to come up with an answer. Next round you could try countries!
- 2. **Cookie sheets:** This is perfect for multiple uses. This inexpensive and easy to find household item can be used as a magnetic board, dry erase marker board, a lap desk or a portable table for meals on the go. Fun tip: Glue a small pillow on the bottom of the cookie sheet to make it a comfortable lap desk for your child. The edges on the side of the pan will allow markers or magnets to stay on the pan during turns and bumpy roads.
- 3. Landmark scavenger hunt: Make a list of landmarks and signs you are likely to see or visit on your journey. This will allow the kids to see what's around them and enjoy the views of a new state or country. A point system can be created for each item and a prize can be awarded to the person with the most points at the end of the trip. For example, if you're traveling to New York: 1 point for each stop sign, 2 points for the Empire State Building, and 5 points for state crossing sign "Welcome to New York".

- 4. Car and kid friendly treats: Virtually everything in grocery stores and markets are available in "On the go" sizes! Take advantage of these and pack a small plastic bin or shoe box with a small ice pack for fun and healthy treats. Yogurt with a straw, ants on a log (celery with peanut butter and raisins), sliced fruit, nuts and hard boiled eggs, are portable snacks that everyone enjoys. Keep a small plastic bag accessible for trash to help keep the car clean and don't forget to pack some baby wipes to clean sticky fingers after snack time!
- 5. Car color bingo: Print out car color bingo sheet, available in a multitude of sites on the internet. When you see a car with the color of your bingo spot put a mark on the spot. First person to get bingo receives a small prize.

Making memories one road trip at a time will help engage your children and allow for an enjoyable ride for the whole family.

The Diplomatic Car Program by IAS is a proud supporter of the Foreign Service Youth Foundation. Each vehicle delivery between September 1, 2017 and April 30, 2018 will generate a donation to the programs and efforts of the FSYF.

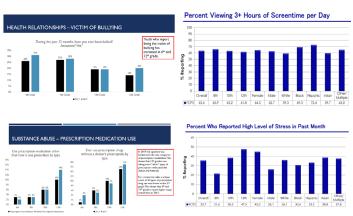


Re-entry: Learning About Your Community

by Kim Deblauw, FSYF Board Member and Programs Committee Chair

Getting to know your community when you are back in the States can take some time but there are some great tools that can provide some insight.

The Centers for Disease Control offer U.S. communities a survey tool for assessing youth risk behavior. Many school systems in the DC-MD-VA area post the results on-line and offer discussion sessions. The tool is used to identify risk behaviors such as personal safety, use of alcohol and other drugs, bullying, dating abuse, mental and sexual health, nutrition and physical activity. Middle and high-school age students respond anonymously to encourage candid answers. The information is used to help the community respond to educational and developmental needs of youth. Reports on trends and school-specific results may be available.



Area reports:

Alexandria: https://www.acps.k12.va.us/Page/460 **Arlington County:** https://apcyf.arlingtonva.us/youth-risk-behavior-survey-2017-results/

Fairfax County: https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/demogrph/youthpdf.htm

Loudon County: http://slideplayer.com/slide/8701657/ **Maryland:** http://www.mcps.org/departments/student_ services/youth_risk_behavior_survey https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/ccdpc/Reports/Pages/ yrbs.aspx

District of Columbia: https://osse.dc.gov/service/dcyouth-risk-behavior-survey-yrbs

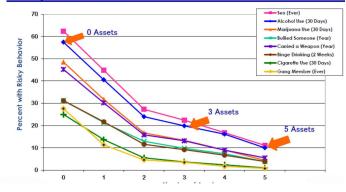
Some communities pair the Youth Risk Behavior Survey with the Search Institute Developmental Assets survey. This survey also collects anonymous responses to questions about how youth rate various sources of support for their development, including relationships with family, peers, community; feelings of empowerment;

boundaries/ expectations; commitment to learning; values; and social competencies. The more assets youth perceive, the more likely they will do well in school, show resiliency, care for their own health, value diversity, be financially responsible and exhibit leadership qualities. High numbers of assets



are also linked to lower engagement in risk behaviors.

Three to Succeed Family-Based (Grades 8, 10, 12)



Alexandria City: https://www.acps.k12.va.us/Page/460 Arlington County: https://apcyf.arlingtonva.us/what-are-developmental-assets/

Fairfax County: https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/

demogrph/youthpdf.htm

Loudon County: http://slideplayer.com/slide/8701657/

Other ways to learn about your community include:

- •PTA or school info meetings, community town hall sessions, library lectures
- Volunteer activities at school or in local community
- Neighborhood listservs, community blogs and websites



Congratulations to Our Submission Winner!

Marianna Karagiannis in Oregon won the \$30 Gift Card for Amazon. Congratulations Marianna!

Do you want to win a gift card too? Everyone who sends in a submission to the newsletter will be entered into the drawing. Winners are randomly selected. So send us something for our next issue and YOU could be the next



Where in the world are our contributors? Is your post on this map?

About the Foreign Service Youth Foundation Since 1989, FSYF has helped Foreign Service youth embrace the adventure of an internationally-mobile childhood by encouraging resilience and fostering camaraderie. Global programs include: a Foreign Service youth-written newsletter, an adult newsletter, five annual contests, and two scholarships for college-bound seniors. D.C.-area events include: re-entry seminars for high school and middle school students, a college admissions workshop, teen/tween game nights at Oakwood Apartments, and a Fall welcome back picnic. FSYF also assists FLO and AAFSW in providing emergency support to families evacuated from overseas. For more information, visit www.fsyf.org. CFC code 39436.

Contributors Wanted

for the fall issue of FSYF Youth newsletter *Here, There and Everywhere*.

We want submissions from **YOU**,

your life as an FS Youth, your Post, your thoughts...



What can you send in?

We accept contributions of all genres including, but not limited to:

- Reports
- Art work
- Interviews and profiles
- Comic strips
- Riddles
- Word puzzles
- Poetry
- Recipes from Post
- Tips about moving to your post, or starting a new school
- Advice columns
- Etc., etc., etc.

Who can contribute?

American Foreign Service kids of all ages and in all locations are welcome to contribute. However, we would particularly love to see teens participate more.

Please include:

If you submit, please include:

- Your name
- Your age and grade
- Your post and school
- Photos to accompany your submission (optional but appreciated)
- Photo of yourself (optional but appreciated)

Topic of Next Issue: Green Dream

Imagine that you lived in a perfectly green world. Describe how the air, water, and ground feel in a place without any kind of pollution.

The deadline for submissions is **April 1, 2018.**

FSYF gratefully acknowledges our newsletter sponsor:



FSYF also thanks the following sponsors for their generous support:



















