



## Share the Learning: Host an Exchange Student

By Craig Anderson (Lexmark International, Inc) and Judith Anderson (Longmont Public Library)

Last spring, Aaron, our high school aged son came home and told us that we needed to have a foreign exchange student live with us. He knew this for a fact because a friend of his, an exchange student from Germany, told him that the perfect student was available. We had never thought about an exchange student, but decided to find out more. After contacting the representative from the Global Insights organization, we learned about Niklas.

Niklas played tennis like our son. He liked to ski and loved American sports. Tennis, skiing and a love of all sports would make him a perfect fit for our family. Three months later, Niklas moved into our house – all 6'2" of him. We thought it would be a good opportunity to learn about another country and to give Aaron the opportunity to have a "brother."

We did learn about another country and culture but mostly we taught Niklas about America. Not everything is profound. He learned that you can eat hamburgers from fifteen different chain restaurants. We learned that Germans hardly ever eat out. (Niklas reports that he hasn't had a hamburger in the three months since he returned home). Americans drive white cars and Germans drive black cars and all teenagers think it would be great to drive The Autobahn. We celebrated American holidays like Halloween and Thanksgiving and trimmed the house with Christmas lights (Not quite as many as National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation).

We were able to show him the sights from Rocky Mountain National Park to Bryce Canyon to Las Vegas (the place he wanted to visit most). To complete his American sports experience we attended Rockies, Broncos, Avalanche, and Nuggets games. Something we would not have done if he

had not been visiting. We enjoyed watching both of our sons (American and German) compete in high school sports.

While we were teaching Niklas about America, he was sharing his culture and life experience with us and others. His teachers told us how much they and the other students appreciated his contribution to discussions in History and English class. At the dinner table we would talk about the day and what was new. This was after we got past the teenage responses that now came in stereo: "How was school?" Answer: "Fine" and "What happened today?" Answer: "Nothing". With all teenagers you have to be persistent.



Foreign exchange students come in all sizes and nationalities. This past year's Global Insight's group came from Germany, Brazil, and Denmark. While our family has a teenager, exchange students can be the older sibling for a young family or live up the house for empty nesters. You don't have to take trips and spend lots of money. It is really about a family experience. If you are considering hosting, check into the organization that is sponsoring the student and talk with parents – some groups take more care in making matches than others.

We have spoken to many host families both before and after our time with Niklas and they all report the connections are amazing and they would all do it again.

There are 27 organizations that have been approved by the St. Vrain School District for placing students in the District's high schools. High school counseling offices have the complete list. It is a good idea to contact your high school early in the process as each school has a cap and may not be able to take all students in a given year.

Hosting an exchange student and sharing the learning will change your life!

June 2010 Issue No. 3

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### Upcoming Learning Opportunities

**Summer Saturday**  
Sandstone Ranch  
July 3

[www.ci.longmont.co.us/parks/park\\_list/overview/SSR\\_District\\_Park.htm#programs](http://www.ci.longmont.co.us/parks/park_list/overview/SSR_District_Park.htm#programs)

**The Spot—Teen Outdoor Programs**

Longmont Recreation Center  
July 13-15  
[www.ci.longmont.co.us/rec/teen/index.htm](http://www.ci.longmont.co.us/rec/teen/index.htm)

**Gentle Yoga - (beginner)**  
Longmont Senior Center  
July 14 - 28  
[www.ci.longmont.co.us/sen\\_ctr/sports/index.htm](http://www.ci.longmont.co.us/sen_ctr/sports/index.htm)

This is just a brief listing of the upcoming learning opportunities, please visit [LifeLongmontLearning.com](http://LifeLongmontLearning.com) for more information.

### We're Interested in Hearing From You

Let us know how you're able to spread positive lifelong learning information in your community. As a way to inspire your fellow Learning Ambassadors, we'll include results and your good ideas in upcoming issues! Send your experience and results to Karen Roney at [karen.roney@ci.longmont.co.us](mailto:karen.roney@ci.longmont.co.us).



## Sister Cities Program Provides Opportunity to Learn about New Cultures

*Written by Leslie Anderton, Longmont Sister Cities Association*

Learning about a foreign culture is a most educational and rewarding experience. When that experience includes the opportunity to live with a foreign family rather than just seeing that country as a tourist that experience is truly enhanced.

Since 1991 over 200 students and adult chaperones from Longmont and the St. Vrain Valley School District have had the opportunity to participate in an exchange program with Longmont's Sister Cities: Chino, Japan and Ciudad Guzman, Mexico. Participants spend 10 days living with a family in one of Longmont's sister cities. After the 10 days in the foreign county the Longmont students and their new friends return to Longmont for another 10 days to enjoy activities in and around Longmont.

Longmont began its sister city relationship with Chino, Japan in 1990 and with Ciudad Guzman, Mexico in 1995. Since the beginning of these relationships the

Longmont Sister Cities Association has sponsored a summer student exchange with each city. Students attending the St. Vrain Valley School District who are in grades 8-11 may apply to be part of this cultural exchange program. Students are responsible for raising funds for their travel expenses but the foreign families host the students while in Japan or Mexico. Chaperones are selected from applicants who live and/or work in the Longmont area. The chaperone expenses are paid by the Longmont Sister Cities organization.

Are you interested in finding out more about the Longmont Sister Cities Student Exchange Program and other cultural programs sponsored by Longmont Sister Cities? If so, please take a next step to become involved:

- Visit the Longmont Sister City website at [www.longmontsistercities.com](http://www.longmontsistercities.com)
- Plan to attend the annual "Thanksgiving in August" potluck

when the foreign ambassadors are in Longmont this summer. The event is scheduled for August 7. See the website for more information.

- Join the Longmont Sister City Association to become part of the fun.
- Apply to become part of the exchange program as either a student ambassador or as a chaperone. Applications will be available on line beginning in December and are usually due by mid-January.



## Plant Projects with Kids

*By Robert Cox and Shirley Marken, Colorado State University Cooperative Extension agents, horticulture.*

The family that gardens together grows together. Pardon the parody, but gardening is good for families. And, if parents enjoy working with plants, it's a good likelihood that kids will learn to enjoy plants, too.

Parents who want to develop kids' interest in gardening can begin with some plant projects that are just plain fun. You also can add to the list of kids' plant projects by perusing these books: "Let's Grow - 72 Gardening Adventures with Children", by Linda Tilgren, or "Kids Gardening - A Kid's Guide to Messing Around in the Dirt", by Kim and Kevin Raftery.

**Do plants use water?** - Fill jars with water and add food coloring. Place a celery stalk or white daisy and stem in the jar. As transpiration takes place, water is pulled through the stem. The colored water will color the celery stalk or daisy petals. Another way to discover that plants use water is to split a white carnation stem into two equal parts with a knife, from bottom up to the flower. Put each stem piece in a separate jar containing different colored water. You'll get a bicolored flower.

**Sponge Garden** - Sow leaf lettuce seeds in the holes of a moist sponge and keep sponge moist in a shallow pan placed in a well-lighted area. The young plants will form masses of foliage. If you use a water-soluble fertilizer in the water, you might even have a "crop" of leaf lettuce to eat.

**Eggheads** - When cooking eggs, carefully crack and save lower two-thirds of shell intact. Wash and then draw mouth, eyes and nose with a felt tip pen. Fill shells with potting soil. Sprinkle grass seed on surface (ryegrass works well) and gently press seeds into soil. Water gently, put egg shells in egg carton and cover with lid. Keep soil moist but not soggy. The sprouts become "egghead hair" and can be clipped with scissors to keep short or go for the shaggy look.

For even more plant projects you can do with children, please visit the Colorado State University's Cooperative Extension website at [www.coopext.colostate.edu/4dmg/Children/projects.htm](http://www.coopext.colostate.edu/4dmg/Children/projects.htm)



## Options for Reading Outside the Book

Excerpts from *Reading is Fundamental's "10 Options for Reading Outside the Book"*. For complete list, please visit [www.rif.org/parents/tips/default.msp](http://www.rif.org/parents/tips/default.msp)

During carefree summer vacation, let your kids explore ways to think outside the book. Here are some ways to keep kids reading in ways they might not have imagined.

### Cookbooks

Even if your children would much rather eat out than cook, cooking is a good opportunity to get kids reading. Give them a cookbook and a pack of Post-Its, and let them pick out several recipes they'd like to try this summer. You can also make the meals together as a family activity.

### Song lyrics

Rare is the child who doesn't love music. He or she may have already found the liner notes in the CDs, but encourage them to read along as they listen to songs. Also, your child can search for lyrics online and sometimes learn about the songwriter's stories behind the songs.



### Food and product labels

Have your kids read the cereal box, bag of chips, soda can, suntan lotion bottle, bug spray, or anything else that is lying around. It won't take them long to scan the words, and they'll learn more about what they're putting in or on their bodies.

### Backs of videos/DVDs

Rather than picking a movie based on its packaging, take your kids to the movie rental stores selection of older picks. Have your kids select a movie based on the story description on the back of the box challenge them to find a good story based on the plot rather than the marketing.

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## Nature Detectives Club

Did you know the Boulder County Parks and Open Space Department offers a great outdoor family activity? Kids 11 years and younger are invited to join the Nature Detectives Club, an interactive and engaging way to foster children's appreciation of nature while enjoying a family visit to a local park.

Families can join the club by participating in self-guided tours and activities on Boulder County Open Space. Each Nature Detectives Mystery Guide takes families on an exploration of a specific county open space trail. Each guide has a map of the park, and four to six mysteries to solve along the trail.

The guides include activities that highlight the natural surroundings and history of each location. Kids don't need any special knowledge or equipment -- just curious minds and a sense of adventure.



Families will find Mystery Guides at six county parks: Betasso Preserve, Caribou Ranch (closed for elk calving April 1 through July 1), Carolyn Holmberg Preserve at Rock Creek Farm, Meyers Trail at Walker Ranch, Walden Ponds Wildlife Habitat, and the Agricultural Heritage Center. These places represent the wide variety of wildlife, plant life and cultural history found throughout Boulder County.

Mystery Guides can be picked up and returned at Nature Detective Club mailboxes at trailheads. Families and groups can also request Mystery Guides to be sent to them by calling 303-678-6201. For more information regarding this program, please visit [www.bouldercounty.org/openspace/Nature\\_Detectives.htm](http://www.bouldercounty.org/openspace/Nature_Detectives.htm), or [www.bouldercounty.org/openspace/recreating/index.htm](http://www.bouldercounty.org/openspace/recreating/index.htm).



## Activities for Children While Traveling

This is a sampling of activities found on the "Family Education" website you can do with your children while traveling in the car.

### Collect a Sentence

What new and exciting things can you do with the things you see while you're traveling? Turn them into sentences, of course.

Give your kids a time limit -- say, five minutes -- and let them use that time to "collect" words they see out their windows. These can include the names of objects, descriptions of the items they see and hear (such as "blue" for the sky, "tall" for skyscrapers, "rumbling" for motors, and so on) and actual words your kids cull from signs. Your kids can choose whether to list the words they find on paper or to simply remember them. When you call "time's up," your children use the words they've collected to create as many sentences -- serious or zany -- as they can.

Your family can work as a team to create as many sentences as possible. Alternatively, you can ask kids to see how many sentences they can build by themselves, using either words they've collected on their own or taken from the family's pool of words. Your children's goal then might be to beat their own "personal best" number of sentences from the previous round.

So perhaps now is a good time to practice collecting a sentence. Look out the window. What do you see? -- a tractor, a cow, farm hands, and flower beds. Well, how's this for a silly sentence? "The farm hands put the tractor to bed and the cow covered it with flowers!"

### Snork!

Here's a great car game that can easily be adjusted to the ages and skills of your children. The point of the game is to have everyone try to guess the identity of an object while one person supplies clues.

To play, one person picks an object that you pass frequently, such as a signpost, a green car, a gas station. Then, each time the car passes a matching object, he or she calls out "snork" (or some other nonsense word). Everyone else tries to figure out what the item is by looking around when they hear the word "snork" and taking a guess.

To increase the challenge, you can make the object very specific. For example, instead of a green car, the person may pick a green car with four people in it that's traveling in the opposite direction. Then, when someone makes a partially correct guess, the chooser can let the guesser know that the answer is close, but not close enough.

The game can also be varied by picking items that come up more or less frequently. But, be careful. If someone picks fence posts, it may all come down to "Snork, snork, snork, snork, snork . . ."

For information regarding additional activities in a variety of situations, please visit: <http://fun.familyeducation.com/>



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## About LifeLongmontLearning

LifeLongmontLearning is a community-based, City-sponsored movement to increase access to learning opportunities available in our area. It is the vision of this effort's leadership—which represents government, education, community and business—to ensure that all children enter school ready to learn; for all students to acquire the education and skills to be successful in the 21st century; for all working adults to improve their employability in a changing world; and for retired adults to continually enrich their lives. For more information, visit [www.LifeLongmontLearning.com](http://www.LifeLongmontLearning.com).