

# InterExchange 2024: A Year of Global Connection



# Table of contents

A message from our CEO	2
Impact of our exchange programs	3
Extending the reach of exchange programs	4
Enhancing the participant experience	9
Shaping the future	14

# A message from our CEO

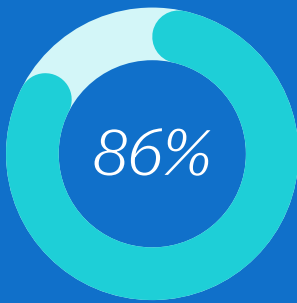
InterExchange is dedicated to fostering people-to-people diplomacy, a mission that has guided our work since our founding. Inspired by the Fulbright Hays Act of 1961 and the principles of international exchange it promotes, each year we strive to expand the reach of our programs, enrich the experiences of our participants, and contribute to a more peaceful, cooperative, and prosperous global community. In 2024, we partnered with hundreds of American host families, summer camps, seasonal businesses, and corporations to provide opportunities for participants from 60+ countries to broaden their cultural awareness, experience new environments, build lasting friendships, and develop skills that will stay with them for years to come.

InterExchange's dedicated staff takes pride in offering our participants safe programs in amazing communities across the country and locations around the world. The American host employers, community leaders, and local citizens we partner with value cultural exchange and recognize the many benefits the programs bring. We cultivate relationships abroad and support young leaders who will build the bridges of greater cross cultural communication and mutual understanding. Each new connection becomes a lifelong bond. Each program alumni and American host who share their experiences with their friends and family inspires the next generation of participants and hosts, and further enhances the richness of international exchange.

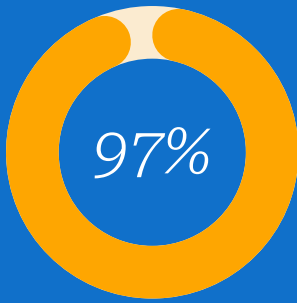
We're pleased to share some of the highlights of our work in 2024 and hope you will find our story impactful and inspiring.

-Christine La Monica-Lunn  
President and CEO

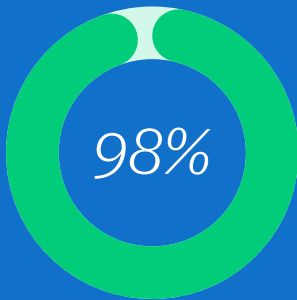
# 2024 InterExchange program impact



participants have a more  
favorable view of the  
American people



participants increased  
their personal and/or  
professional skills



participants had opportunities  
for making cultural  
connections and sharing

*Extending* **the reach  
of exchange programs**

# Camp Zambia Program

In early 2024, Camp Program Director Christian Smith visited Lusaka, Zambia, marking the beginning of an exciting partnership between the Camp USA program and a former InterExchange participant who now works with both Africa Youth Awakens and Camp Botswana. During his time in Lusaka, Christian gave a presentation about the Camp USA program, and conducted a series of interviews with young Zambians who were eager to become camp counselors in the United States.

Christian's efforts were successful, as in the summer of 2024, Zambia became the newest country represented by InterExchange at 20 different summer camps across the United States. A group of 30 Zambian counselors made the journey to the U.S., where they participated in camp life and contributed their talents to the vibrant camp community. These counselors actively immersed themselves in American camp traditions, learning popular camp songs, playing games, and celebrating quintessential U.S. events like the 4th of July. At the same time, they shared their own rich cultural heritage, introducing their fellow counselors and campers to traditional Zambian food, music, and games, further deepening the cultural exchange.



By adding Zambia to the growing list of countries represented at Camp USA, the program strengthened its commitment to working with new countries and creating pathways for young people to participate in the American summer camp experience. This was a significant milestone in the effort to expand cultural exchange and provide young people from all backgrounds with the chance to grow, learn, experience our culture and values, and contribute to a global dialogue of mutual respect and understanding.

# InterExchange Foundation

At the InterExchange Foundation, we are committed to fostering meaningful, long-term benefits for young Americans and the communities they serve while abroad. In 2024, four fellows used combined awards of ~\$40,000 to pursue a transformative volunteer project in Greece, Italy, Cambodia, and Australia. One of the cornerstones of our Foundation's work is its ability to offer funding for customizable projects that are tailored to both the interests of the participants, as well as the specific needs of the host community. These projects are not one-size-fits-all; rather, they are developed collaboratively between the fellow and the host community, ensuring that they are both relevant and impactful. This approach empowers participants to take ownership of their projects and engage meaningfully in the local context, helping to create lasting change in the community.

By providing financial support, the Foundation removes barriers to participation, ensuring that young Americans have the resources they need to bring their projects to life and make a meaningful contribution to the community. Programs like the Christianson Fellowship offer unique opportunities that create lasting impact on participants, communities, and the world at large.

## Elizabeth Trudel, Christianson Fellowship recipient

“

I'm deeply motivated by my desire to help to break down the barriers displaced people face in accessing education. Throughout my experiences, I've seen how language skills can either empower individuals or isolate them, and I want to contribute to creating an inclusive learning environment for those most marginalized. The work of Better Days resonates with my passion for combining human rights with practical education initiatives, particularly for refugee youth. I'm driven by the belief that education is a fundamental right, and I'm eager to be part of a project that directly tackles these inequalities.”





## Meet our 2024 fellows



**Caroline Schauder** is developing a web app for REMADE in Cambodia to help them track their efforts to eliminate textile waste and educate people about sustainable fashion.



**Lila Williams** is in Trieste, Italy, working closely with mental health patients, learning about their lives, and exploring how Italy's model of holistic care could help shape mental health support back home.



**Spoorthy Reddy** is tackling healthcare barriers in Melbourne, Australia, by supporting a community hub that connects families to crucial medical and social resources.



**Elizabeth Trudel** is in Greece, teaching language skills to refugee youth and creating a safe, inclusive space for learning and self-confidence. She believes that education can open doors to brighter futures.

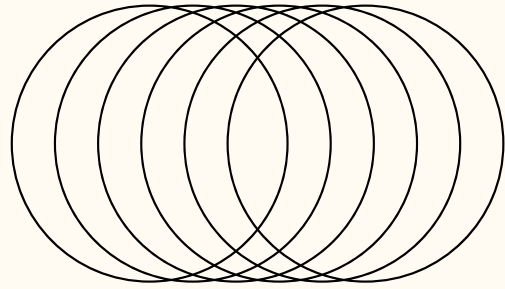


# American Summer Exchange

At InterExchange we strive to make the wonders of cultural exchange as accessible and enjoyable to as many people as we can. Our innovative [American Summer Exchange](#) program offers young people from around the U.S. the unique opportunity to spend their summers working alongside international students at iconic seasonal locations like Acadia National Park, the New Jersey shore, and the Blue Ridge Mountains. Participants gain a deeper understanding of other cultures and a deeper appreciation of US regional traditions and culture while gaining valuable work experience!



Participant Leo Hill at YMCA Blue Ridge's café and ice cream shop!



**One parent touted the benefits for her high school graduate:**

“

Spending the summer working and living on “campus” was an excellent way for my graduating senior to get a taste of college life before adding the pressures of a demanding academic schedule to the mix. They made friends from all over the world, flexed their self-sufficiency skills, and enjoyed a scenic part of America that reignited their love of the great outdoors. And on top of that, they started college with some extra money in their pocket! It was the perfect amount of time for a pre-college experience.”

*Enhancing* the participant  
experience



## Summer of safety initiative

Our commitment to participant safety was in the spotlight this year through our Summer Safety Initiative, centered on a targeted bike light distribution program. Recognizing that many of our participants use bicycles to explore their host communities, we transformed this simple safety need into an opportunity for greater community connection and participant support.

The initiative reached exchange visitors across key summer destinations, including Old Orchard Beach, Maine; Lake George, New York; and Bethany Beach, Delaware.

Through strategic partnerships with local Chambers of Commerce and community support groups, we distributed hundreds of bike lights to participants. A notable collaboration with Ocean City, Maryland's Lights for Bikes Campaign exemplified our integrated approach to participant safety.

The impact extended beyond just providing safety equipment. Working alongside the Ocean City Police Department and Maryland Department of Transportation, we ensured participants received crucial education about local road safety practices, acknowledging that traffic rules vary significantly across cultures. This comprehensive approach – combining practical safety equipment with education – created a foundation for participants to confidently explore their host communities.

Our site visits across 23 states amplified the initiative's reach, allowing our staff to personally connect with participants and distribute additional bike lights while verifying program quality and safety standards. This hands-on approach reinforced our dual commitment to both physical safety and cultural exchange, ensuring participants could fully embrace their American experience while staying secure in their new environment.

# Unforgettable cultural experiences for au pairs

Our dedicated Local Coordinators play a pivotal role in shaping the overall experience of our InterExchange Au Pairs, helping to ensure that their time in the U.S. is not only enriching but also memorable. In 2024, these coordinators organized an impressive 741 events across 57 communities in the United States, offering Au Pairs countless opportunities to engage with both their host families and the broader local communities in meaningful ways.

From the excitement of baseball games in the summer to the cozy charm of ice skating and festive holiday parties in the winter, these events provided Au Pairs with authentic, hands-on experiences of American culture. They also offered Au Pairs a chance to bond with other

participants from around the world, building a network of friendships that extended well beyond the individual placements. Our 2024 events were just one example of the dedication InterExchange has to providing our participants with amazing cultural experiences.

We were recently offered a special glimpse into the lives of our participants and host families as we rounded out the year with the announcement of our annual Super Au Pair contest winner. The Super Au Pair contest recognizes the heroic acts that our au pairs perform every day that enhance the lives of their host families. This year's top prize went to [Carla García Herrera](#) of Mexico, who bravely helped the Sharkey family through unexpected transitions during 2024. Congratulations, Carla!



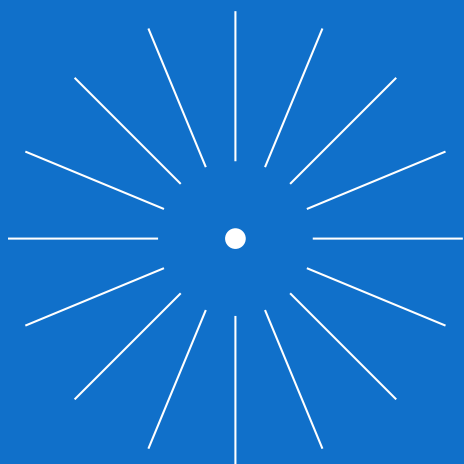
Host Family Day in San Francisco



Super Au Pair 2024 Winner



Au Pair Cluster in Texas—Pumpkin Patch Visit



## Building welcoming host communities

Much of the success of [BridgeUSA](#) programs is due in part to the welcoming host communities around the USA who whole-heartedly embrace the spirit of cultural exchange and understand the value of the programs' economic impact. They often serve as allies to ensure that each exchange program participant has a safe and rewarding experience, and returns home with a new appreciation for U.S. culture and American hospitality.

InterExchange is proud to work with [Summer Work Travel \(SWT\) Community Support Groups](#) around the country—often comprised of local law enforcement, religious organizations, chambers of commerce, and other community members—to help share their knowledge of the United States and ensure the wellbeing of our Work & Travel USA participants as well as those of other SWT sponsors.

**Here are of a few of our  
2024 highlights from these  
collaborative efforts:**





## Cape Cod Host Employer Forums

This past spring, ahead of the busy tourist season on Cape Cod, representatives from InterExchange convened with host employers, housing providers, U.S. Department of State representatives, and other visa sponsors in Hyannis and Provincetown, Massachusetts, to equip local host employers with knowledge and tools to enhance the SWT program on the Cape. In addition to general BridgeUSA program updates, discussion topics included housing, transportation, participant safety, and mental health.



## Port Clinton Welcome Event

On July 29, the city of Port Clinton, Ohio, hosted an event for about 200 SWT participants who were excited to work alongside the local community to keep Port Clinton businesses running during the busy summer months. "We couldn't survive economically without these kids," said Port Clinton Mayor Mike Snider, who served as the event's host. "There's just not enough people to meet demand in the summertime."

Participants were treated to live music, dancing, games and dinner grilled by Port Clinton Safety Service Director Tracy Colston and Port Clinton Police Chief David Scott. "We want to send them back as ambassadors for America," said Becky Davis, Regional Account Manager for InterExchange.



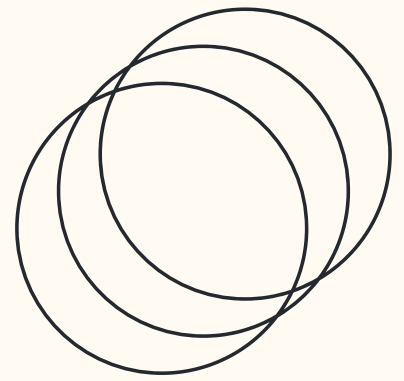
## Community Support Group Summit in Myrtle Beach

In November, InterExchange participated in the BridgeUSA Summer Work Travel Community Support Group Summit in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. The summit was a national gathering for communities that host SWT participants, bringing together a broad range of stakeholders, including the U.S. Department of State, local law enforcement and government officials, and community leaders to discuss the SWT program and its impact on both participants, host employers and the local community. There was special emphasis on housing and transportation, as well as participant safety and mental health, highlighted by the groundbreaking for a brand new participant housing facility. Presentations also underscored the economic and cultural benefits program participants bring to communities by filling seasonal jobs and contributing to the local economy.

*Shaping* **the future**



# Introducing Customer Experience at InterExchange



At InterExchange, we believe that the exchange experience begins with us, and we're committed to providing exceptional support throughout the journey. To strengthen our customer-focused approach, we've introduced a new role this year: Customer Experience Manager. Alex Cohen has stepped into this position, bringing a wealth of expertise to lead our efforts in ensuring a seamless experience for all our participants.

Through customer journey mapping and interviews, we have already begun to develop a customer-centric strategy aimed at refining our processes and program delivery. For example, our Career Training Customer Experience Research project provided valuable insight into our participants' experiences throughout the program. We interviewed participants to better understand their satisfaction with our application process, website, and communication. This helped us refine our services to better meet their expectations. We also conducted a Customer Experience project for Au Pair USA, where we interviewed Host Families to gather feedback on our current systems and processes. Their insights led to meaningful improvements to our matching system, many of which are already being implemented and are



shaping future enhancements. Through projects like this, Alex will continue to implement continuous feedback and improvement processes.

Additionally, he is leading research and design projects in partnership with CX consultants, enabling us to apply best practices and industry-leading strategies through both digital and non-digital aspects of the customer journey.

By reporting back to the organization on the impact of these improvements, Alex ensures that we continue to offer an outstanding experience for everyone who chooses InterExchange. This new role is a vital step toward making every participant's exchange journey as rewarding and seamless as possible.

# Fostering global STEM leaders

In 2024, a remarkable 25% of InterExchange Interns and Trainees participated in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) internships in the U.S., marking a significant milestone in both the organization's mission and the broader field of international exchange. This achievement highlights the growing prominence of STEM fields in global exchange programs and underscores the importance of cross-cultural collaboration in tackling the world's most pressing challenges.

The partnership between InterExchange and the [U.S. Department of State's STEM Initiative](#) has played a crucial role in expanding opportunities for young professionals from around the world to engage in high-level STEM internships in the U.S. These internships

represent more than just professional development—they are part of a larger effort to build a network of skilled, culturally aware individuals who are prepared to lead in an increasingly interconnected world. Through their experiences in the U.S., these STEM interns and trainees gain not only technical knowledge, but also the critical skills of cross-cultural communication, collaboration, and leadership that are essential for creating sustainable, positive change on a global scale.

Sebastien, Engineering Trainee  
from France



# Promoting exchanges through advocacy



Rep. Jack Bergman (R-MI 1) with InterExchange participants on July 26, 2024.

InterExchange remains committed to shaping the future of exchange programs through ongoing educational advocacy outreach efforts. In 2024, we held meetings with sixteen Congressional offices representing seven states during the annual Alliance Advocacy Day. We also participated in the Alliance's Summer of Action advocacy initiative. With this initiative, the exchange community, and InterExchange, raised awareness about the benefits of international and cultural exchange programs by engaging with Congressional offices and staff at a district level. For example, over the summer, Camp USA and Lions Camp Badger hosted Nicole Leonard, Field Director for Rep. Marc Molinaro (R-NY 19), for an immersive visit exploring the benefits of BridgeUSA exchanges and the Camp USA program. Work & Travel USA and host employer, Mission Point, also welcomed Rep. Jack Bergman (R-MI 1) for a warm meet-and-greet with InterExchange participants, highlighting their experiences working in and exploring their host community in Michigan.

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