

AFS EXPLANATION

City Council Meeting - 2023

We are here tonight to share the AFS experience. The AFS program began in 1947 when the volunteer ambulance drivers from WWII, and WWI, organized a student exchange program of hosting in the USA some children from French and German families who had sheltered American soldiers during the war. The AFS program then started in Independence in 1959 when Phil and Lenore Weeks hosted a girl from Osorno, Chile, and Independence has hosted over 434 students since then.

Thanks to former Councilmember Page, Dan McGraw, Kathy Vest, and Matt Mallinson, all graduates of Van Horn, we have determined that Van Horn started in the AFS program in 1962, but we still need additional information. So, we would be pleased to hear from anyone with additional AFS information about Van Horn. Likewise, additional information is needed about the AFS history at Fort Osage prior to 1989, although recently we received significant helpful information from Dick and Ann Franklin.

Being closed down for 2021 by COVID and 2022 by my inaction and the lingering efforts to have a minimum of personal contact, we are back here in 2023.

So, tonight the Independence AFS organization would like to introduce the 2 students who have been at Truman all year, and the 1 student who has been at William Chrisman since January of this year. These students will be leaving Independence in early June on their way back to their home countries. As we approach the end of the year, we sincerely hope they will be returning for visits in the next few years now that they have become a part of the extended families of some Independence residents. We anticipate that a number of members of these Independence families will also in the next few years be visiting these students in their natural parent's homes and continuing to remain in contact as they start their own families. For most of the people involved an ongoing relationship has been established. I know that's true for my wife and me.

The students here this year will now introduce themselves.

- Afnan Nayli Nur Fadhli, Malaysia hosted by Melissa & Tim Shirley, Chrisman**
- Danilo Jakovljevic, Bosnia and Herzegovina hosted by Melissa & Bill Thornton, Truman**
- Rehan Edres, Philippines hosted by Maryvec Hemingway, Truman**

Being a leader of the AFS program, we have determined that Van Horn started in the AFS program in 1963, but we still need additional information. So, we would be pleased to hear from anyone with additional AFS information about Van Horn. Likewise, additional information is needed about the AFS history at Fort Osgood prior to 1989, although recently we received significant helpful information from Dick and Ann Franklin.

The AFS organization would like to introduce the students who have been at Truman all year and the students who have been at William L. White since January of this year. These students will be leaving Independence to carry on their way back to their home countries. As we approach the end of the year, we sincerely hope they will be returning for us in the next few years now that they have been a part of the extended families of some Independence residents. We anticipate that some of our members of the Independence families will also be visiting these students in their home countries and contributing to making it a great year and their own families. I know that a tremendous amount of the people involved in the program have now established a strong relationship with the AFS staff and me.

The students here this year will now introduce their home