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Georgia's Waldorf High School Offers Unique Exchange Program

Academe of the Oaks offers global perspective through student exchange spanning 3 months

ATLANTA - The only Waldorf high school in Georgia, Academe of the Oaks is intent upon developing students' global perspective. Academe's foreign exchange program is integral to the school's mission to cultivate a strong sense of ethical responsibility, imagination, inner strength, diverse and deep knowledge, and the ability to work and communicate in a global context.

Students at Academe of the Oaks apply during their freshman year to participate in the exchange program; the exchanges typically take place during the sophomore year. Participants commit to hosting a student from a Waldorf high school overseas, and to living, in turn, with that student and his (or her) family. Students spend about six months with their exchange partners—three months in the US, and three months overseas. Recent exchanges have taken Academe students to Argentina, Austria, France, Germany, Israel, Italy, and Switzerland. Fully immersed in the language and culture of their hosts, students maintain continuity in their studies through the international Waldorf curriculum.

Students who have completed a foreign exchange speak enthusiastically about the program. William, an 11th-grader at Academe of the Oaks, says that traveling to Switzerland was a humbling experience. "We know that the world is a big place, with innumerable people and languages and cultures," William said. "However, being put in one of those places you know very little about is the best way to really learn that."

Eva Handschin, school director at Academe of the Oaks, explains: "We strive to foster a socially conscious student at Academe of the Oaks and our exchange program offers the real-world experience they need to become globally aware." Handschin is justifiably proud of her students. "Discovering the culture of a new country is an opportunity that not everyone is offered. We're proud to have a student body that understands this and takes full advantage of continuing their Waldorf education in a different setting."

The program continues year-round. Savannah, a 10th-grader at Academe, welcomed her exchange partner at summer's end; she will depart for Germany in the spring. Savannah will investigate her options for college abroad while she is on exchange.

Brooke, also in the 10th grade, hosted her exchange partner, Olivia, this winter; they will be together again in Argentina this spring.

For more information on Academe of the Oaks and the exchange program, please visit www.academeatlanta.org.

ABOUT ACADEME OF THE OAKS

Founded in 2002, Academe of the Oaks offers the international Waldorf high school curriculum and is focused on redefining high school for today's world. Academe of the Oaks strives to provide a global education by combining the sciences, the arts, environmental stewardship, and a hands-on approach to learning in a rigorous college preparatory program. Academe of the Oaks is located in Decatur, Georgia. For more information, please visit www.academeatlanta.org.

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