Italian students make the trek overseas to experience America, Rider style

By Nick Greco

The Lawrenceville campus was transformed into its own Little Italy for two weeks in July 2005. It marked the start of the pilot program called Study Tours, which is a way to incorporate a foreign exchange program into an educational vacation during the summer. Forty-seven Italians, ranging in ages from 14 to 22, boarded a plane and, for almost all of them, made their first trip to the United States.

President Mordechai Rozanski, professors Selma Goldstein and Mary Amato of the English Department and Lisa Chiavuzzo and Jacki Nodes, recent graduates from Rider's education program, formulated a curriculum. Dave Keenan from Student Affairs and Diane Bouak, the director of Business Operations, along with junior Karson Langenfelder, also helped out.

“It was a unique and enjoyable experience that seems so normal to me is what Kamm. “Their reactions to an experience to be involved in a pilot project that opens doors at Rider to the international student community,” said Goldstein.

Each day held events for the Italians to experience. They began their days with classes from 9 a.m. to noon, where the focus of the lesson was speaking English.

“I had a lot of fun not only working with the students in the classroom, but also taking them out to Princeton and, for almost all of them, made their first trip to the United States. Professor Selma Goldstein and Mary Amato of the English Department, who was involved,” said Goldstein.

The trip to New York seemed to be the biggest hit. While in the city, the students were divided into four groups and given a specific place to research in midtown Manhattan. They spent time in the library researching and writing scripts that had to be presented and videotaped on location.

The two weeks ended with a talent show. Those involved with the program, including the orientation staff and some students from Lawrenceville High School who study Italian, all attended to show their support. Following the show was a small reception in the Fireside Lounge, which served at the culmination to the week.

“As an Elementary Education and Communication major, it was not only a worthwhile experience for the Italian students, but for me as well,” said Kamm.

“To be able to devote my time to communicate with students from a different culture is a memory I will always have.”

This program raised Rider’s profile and is another step in the right direction, according to those who organized the event.

Study Tours returns to campus in November for a re-evaluation. In the future, the University can expect more from this program because of the positive feedback from the Italians and those involved on campus, organizers said.

“The program not only benefited the Italians, but also enriched everyone who was involved,” said Goldstein.

Q&A: What are you most looking forward to about the SRC?

“Well, I’m a senior. So, I’m out of here after this semester. I’m really not going to get much use out of it, but I’ll probably just play basketball in there.” — Mike Gottlieb, senior

“I’m looking forward to less of a walk to the gym. The problem was we’d have to walk all the way across campus for it, and now we don’t.” — Joe Sabatino, sophomore

“The weight room. The other [one] is small. I heard this one’s air-conditioned and what not. We pay a lot of money. Hopefully, it’ll be a good payoff.” — Sallah Khan, junior

“Since I’m on the dance team, I’m most definitely excited about our new dance room because of all the mirrors, and we have a sound system.” — Adrian Jones, freshman

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