

Visitors from U.K. enjoy visit



John Harvey
Sheffield, England

John Harvey, retired dean of students, Sheffield College, was instrumental in the partnership for the Fulbright Exchange program with Clackamas.

Andy Tickner
Isle of Wight College

Andy Tickner is Student Liaison Officer at the Isle of Wight College, located on the south coast of England.

"I wish we had another week or two. We've had such a busy schedule. I think it will take me a week to go home and sort this all out. The first week was a whirlwind. I think I'm just now settling in. But we've got jobs to go back to and desks with piles of work waiting for us," Tickner said.



Lynda Dix
Neath College

This is the tenth visit to the U.S. for Lynda Dix, manager of student services at Neath College in Neath, Wales.

"It has been a wonderful experience for me because I never spent time with a family," said Dix, "it's always been as a tourist. What I love about this college [Clackamas] is that student's are really number one. I have really enjoyed my stay and I would really love to come back."

John Fontaine
Tamworth & Lichfield Colleges

John Fontaine, head of student services, had some rather interesting events happen to him during his first visit to the States.

"This was my first experience with U.S. public transport. It took me 20 minutes to work out the route, the timetable and where to put the money in. I put in a folded dollar bill that didn't work and I had to find another one and find the right ticket validation. I got on the Max and it went one stop. Then there was an announcement that this was where it was terminated because of road work in downtown Portland."

Despite this, Fontaine is looking forward to returning to Oregon on a home exchange sometime in 1998.



Ian Yarrell
Mid Cheshire College

Ian Yarrell, student services manager at Mid Cheshire College, said "Coming on a trip connected with work provided a whole different perspective than coming as a tourist. You get a much better feel for what a country is like. What impressed him most about Clackamas was how students' needs come first.

"I will walk away with the feeling that anything is possible," said Danbury after visiting Clackamas and some other local community college campuses.

"Even when you can't get exactly what you want, there is a way to get you as near to where you want to be," Danbury said.



Dith Danbury
Lewisham College

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Fulbright exchange family enjoys America

Laney Fouse
Editor-in-Chief

Imagine for a moment you've been asked to pack up your family and move several thousand miles away from home to live in someone else's house and work at their job.

For the past seven months this is exactly what Ged Desforges, his wife Jan and daughters Nancy and Peggy have done. Desforges and his wife Jan are part of the Fulbright exchange program conducted between Clackamas and Sheffield College in England.

Desforges, who exchanged positions with Debbie Baker, is the director of continuing education at the Harmony Center. His wife Jan, who did research in parallel computing, is sharing her expertise in the instrumentation of Datatel into student services at Clackamas.

"There are some things about going home that I'm looking forward to. But I really like it here and I really enjoy it here. I like the people, I like the country, I like the work and I like the college," said Desforges.

Even though his homeland is several thousand miles away, he does not feel homesick.

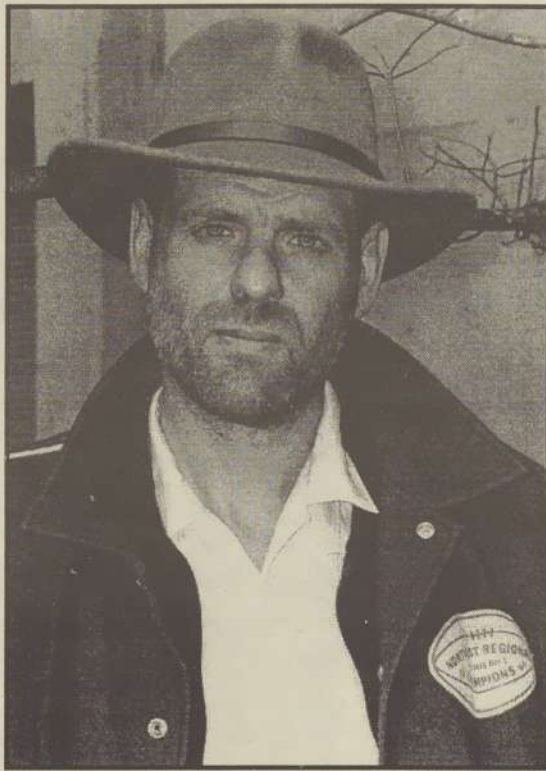
"I'm not desperate to get back. Most of the ties I have are moveable ones. People come to see me here. My brother and my sister have come to see me and that's quite nice," said Desforges.

Traveling to England is no longer a one-year trip. A flight out of Seattle, according to Desforges, would put him home in just a few hours.

"The distance might seem like a long, long way from home but it just seems very comfortable here. I feel very much at home here," admits Desforges, "and I think it suits my personality. I think I'm much more suited to here than in some ways to England."

The Fulbrighter acknowledges he sometimes felt as if he was swimming against the tide in England whereas here, he feels much more comfortable.

"I'm not the sort of person who looks back and thinks, oh gosh, I wish things [were different]. I'm happy wherever I am really and



JOEL CORESON / Clackamas Print

Ged Desforges is a Fulbright Exchange administrator from Sheffield College in England. Desforges exchanged positions with Debbie Baker, continuing education director for Clackamas.

it's never really affected me," Desforges said.

Working at Sheffield College

His work at Sheffield College involves working with students ranging in age from 16 to 18. Desforges is the foundation studies manager at one of the six Sheffield sites.

"The foundation studies manager looks after students who come to the college with no qualifications and puts together a program of study for them which will hopefully get them in a position where they can move on into either work or further qualification or whatever," said Desforges.

In England, everyone is required to stay in school up to the age of 16. If they do not have a job they cannot access any social security payments.

"What tends to happen is that kids leave school at age 16 and discover they have no money because they are not working. In Sheffield the unemployment rate is quite high," said Desforges, "And so there are no jobs for young people with no qualifications to go into."

Sheffield's economy was built on the steel and coal industries, which were dependent upon each other.

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"[For some] this tends to be a new start. They might have had difficulty in school for different reasons. They might be late developers or they might have had all sorts of problems which is why they don't have qualifications," said Desforges.

Many of them end up in Desforges' program at Sheffield. Once there, a curriculum is developed based on what they are interested in, what sort of career they might want in the future and perhaps most important an opportunity to build their confidence.

"Through a program of vocational qualifications they can move through to becoming a successful student and move into a job. It's a program that really doesn't fit anything over here," said Desforges.

Building student confidence

Besides developing new skills, much of Desforges' work with students lies in personal development.

"What we tend to do is literally build students' confidence with the fact that they are able to do lots of different things. Desforges admits, "it's a real hard job because you tend to find that a lot of the violence and the real hardships students face and produce in themselves are caused by a lack of esteem."

There is, according to Desforges somewhat of a "futility touch" to helping students succeed. He explains it like this.

"I don't know if it's quite similar to here but a lot of the small businesses, corner shops, restaurants, will be run by the ethnic minorities. [This is because] they will work for long hours for nothing. The second generation of young kids between 10 and 20 just don't want that. They see what's around and they want a part of that. And yet the prejudices stop them from getting it. There are some real problems caused by that," said Desforges.

So how does an educator help a student understand education is one way out?

"The only way I have found to work is to really value the individual and try to get people to be aware that every individual is a real value. It's not just words. They only way I think you can do that is by action. That's where I start," Desforges said.

"In England, you would very rarely hear anybody say 'You've done a really good job' or 'What you're doing is really worthwhile. You never get any feedback. If no ones saying anything to you, you must be doing a good job. And

"To come here and see how well an organization can run... it's just fantastic."
Ged Desforges
Cont. Education director

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