

Celebrate February 2007: *Discover Languages* Month



*These language students from George C. Marshall High School in Falls Church, VA took time out from their spring vacation to participate in a photo shoot for the **Discover Languages...Discover the World!** public awareness campaign. Several of them are planning to concentrate on their language study in college and all were enthusiastic about their role in promoting languages nationwide!*

Note:

A sustained public awareness campaign needs to have consistent messages and logos throughout the long-term effort. For this reason, ACTFL has trademarked the logo and has developed guidelines for its use. Please visit www.DiscoverLanguages.org for information regarding the use of the logo or the theme.

Discover Languages is the national campaign for languages that builds on the momentum begun during **2005: The Year of Languages**. This is a long-term effort to raise public awareness about the importance of learning languages and understanding cultures in the lives of all Americans.

Even though **Discover Languages** events can be planned for any time during the year, **February** has been designated as **Discover Languages Month** by the ACTFL Board of Directors and also acknowledged by the White House and Congress. This will be a time annually when ACTFL will sponsor national events to highlight language education in the media. ACTFL members are encouraged to organize events and activities around this theme during the month of February.

There have been many exciting and creative ideas supporting and promoting the **Discover Languages** campaign over the past year—from contests where students create calendars, puzzles, artwork, essays, songs, posters, speeches, and more, to “language ambushes” in cities and towns across the United States where teachers and students hit the streets to measure the language knowledge of random passers-by in a quick pop quiz. The possibilities for events and contests are unlimited and we urge you to make a personal commitment now to advocate for language learning in February. For more ideas, visit www.DiscoverLanguages.org. Check in regularly on the website to see the latest ideas and be sure to post yours on the bulletin board.

Campaign Cornerstones

The key cornerstones of this sustained public awareness campaign include:

Public Awareness, Advocacy, and Policy

Throughout the campaign, there will be a focus on advocating for language education with a strong public awareness component at all levels of instruction, pre-K through adulthood, and at all levels of influence from the local community to the national level. As part of this advocacy campaign, there is a strategic plan to shape policy in a variety of arenas.

**Discover
Languages**[®]

Discover the World!

www.discoverlanguages.org

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages



Above: ACTFL President Paul Sandrock poses with the “Discover Languages Chair”—a creation of student Jaquila Toliver, Memphis, TN, as part of the Truth in Echos summer program that trains artists, actors, and musicians. The chair is now in the ACTFL headquarters in Alexandria, VA.



Left: A student in Atlanta stops a stranger for a quick pop quiz during a “language ambush.”

Discover Languages Month

How Can You Get Involved?

At your school or university:

- Order *Discover Languages* promotional items to distribute on parent nights and at program recruitment activities.
- Plan schoolwide events that focus on students' use and performance of the target language; publicize these events as part of *Discover Languages Month*. Invite school administrators and local legislators to the event.
- Sponsor student contests that highlight your students' knowledge of languages and cultures that will also bring attention from parents and the media to your language program.
- Organize student activities and fundraisers that can be featured on the ACTFL *Discover Languages* website. The fundraiser can result in a donation to the *Discover Languages* effort or be used to purchase *Discover Languages* logo products for your students.
- Request that your administration declare a "*Discover Languages Day*" during February at your school in which the various languages are featured during the day and older students teach language lessons to younger students or perform for them.
- Download the official *Discover Languages* logo and use it on your school handouts and information that is shared with parents. Visit www.DiscoverLanguages.org to download the logo and guidelines for its use.
- Sponsor a "Visit to a Language Class" day and use it as an opportunity to show school staff, including guidance counselors as well as community representatives, how languages are taught in our schools and universities.
- (For universities) Use this month for outreach and invite local high school students to visit the campus to learn about language and study abroad programs.
- Play segments of the *Talkin' About Talk* radio series on languages for your classes or over the public address system. These segments can be downloaded from the *Discover Languages* website at www.DiscoverLanguages.org.
- Sponsor a quilt project in which students fashion squares with various languages or cultural aspects featured which are then sewn together for the final language quilt.
- Organize a contest in which students design a commercial spot that promotes language learning. The video should relate to foreign language advocacy or the *Discover Languages* theme "*Discover Languages . . . Discover the World.*"
- Get involved with your local museums by having students serve as docents and conduct gallery tours of pieces in the museum's collection in the target language. Language students can explain the work and discuss the historical timeframe in which it was created.
- Organize an interactive panel discussion around the topic "What I did with my language after high school." Invite alumni back to share their testimonials as a means of advocacy for long-term

study of languages. Former students who are in law, medicine, divinity school, business, law enforcement, social work, etc. can provide an effective advocacy effort to encourage students to continue their language study.

In your community:

- Request that your mayor, town council and/or Board of Education issue a proclamation designating February as *Discover Languages Month* in your community. See www.DiscoverLanguages.org for sample proclamations.
- Sponsor a "language ambush" in which your city or community is given a "grade" on how well languages are spoken. Use it as an opportunity to get media coverage for the *Discover Languages* national promotion. Step-by-step instructions are provided at www.DiscoverLanguages.org.
- Have language students post placards on their home mailboxes declaring "A Student of [language] Lives Here." They can also do this on their lockers at school.
- Sponsor communitywide activities in which your students' knowledge of language and culture is featured. These could include presentations at School Board meetings or for local community groups.
- Contact your local media and share the print ads, radio, and television public service announcements that have been made available on the *Discover Languages* website. Encourage them to run them in as many venues as possible!
- Involve your local libraries by asking them to post a *Discover Languages* poster or sponsor a language event such as older students reading in the target language to younger students or teaching a mini-lesson on a different language each week for the community.

Discover Languages Month will be as successful as you make it in your local community. Please submit ideas for activities to the Bulletin Board featured on the website at www.DiscoverLanguages.org and send in your photos so they can be featured on the website. Encourage your students and their parents to check out the website periodically for the latest information about the benefits of language learning for a lifetime!

Discover Languages . . . Discover the World!

Many thanks to those who posted notices on the Bulletin Board on the website. Many of the ideas listed above came from ACTFL members who posted their events online.

Research and Practice

The *Discover Languages* campaign includes a strategic plan for research to promote best practices to enhance the quality of language teaching and to identify both cognitive and social benefits of language learning.

Resources and Collaboration

The *Discover Languages* campaign seeks to provide a unifying effort among all language professionals by working collaboratively on projects to promote language education and to identify resources that meet the needs of the constituent groups of language professionals. In addition, there is a focus on the recruitment and retention of highly qualified language teachers.

What the Research Shows

Discover Languages Month can be a great time to let your administration, colleagues, parents, students, and communities know about the significant amount of scholarly research supporting language learning—and elementary school foreign language learning in particular. Detailed references can be found at www.DiscoverLanguages.org under “Information for Parents.” Click on “What the Research Shows” to get a list of current study citations.

On Halloween 2006, ACTFL Member Duarte Silva thought, “What better way to reach parents and students than to promote languages for the trick-or-treaters coming by?” Not only were the kids excited about receiving a Discover Languages button on their treat bags from Silva, but he also gave out brochures to enthusiastic parents who were waiting for the kids on the street.



Public Service Announcements

ACTFL has several public service announcements (PSAs) that are available for promoting the campaign. These can be printed in newsletters and other publications in your organization or community. Download them easily from the *Discover Languages* website.



Foreign language education spells success.

Improves academic performance. Raises SAT scores. Creates more opportunities for success in tomorrow's international economy. That's what learning another language can do for your child. So speak up for language education. Learn more at www.discoverlanguages.org.

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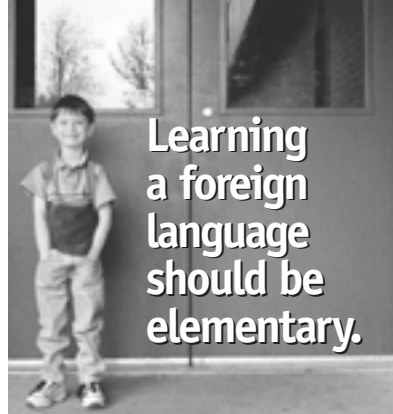
Give him the world.

Make sure foreign language remains part of your child's education.

To succeed in this shrinking world, our children will need to speak more than one language. So for the sake of our kids, speak up for language education. To get involved, visit www.discoverlanguages.org.

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Learning a foreign language should be elementary.

Now, more than ever, our children need to learn another language. So they can communicate, understand others and compete in a global environment. For the sake of our kids, it's time to speak up for language education. Visit our website at www.discoverlanguages.org and get involved.

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The Beauty of Discovery

In celebration of the *Discover Languages* initiative, the Florida Foreign Language Association (FFLA) held a song contest in 2006 where K–16 students from around the state were invited to write the lyrics to a song promoting language learning. Five finalists received trophies provided by the contest co-sponsor, Glencoe/McGraw-Hill. The winner of the contest was Courtney L. Chatman of Plant City High School, Plant City, Florida. Her winning lyrics were set to music and recorded by international singer Etienne. The song was featured at the general session of the October FFLA conference in Sarasota and the sponsoring teachers were recognized. The song was also presented by FFLA Past President Becky Youngman to the Assembly of Delegates at the 2006 ACTFL Annual Conference in Nashville.

The song, “The Beauty of Discovery,” can be downloaded at www.ffla.us.

Singing along to “The Beauty of Discovery” at the Assembly of Delegates in Nashville are (l-r) 2006 ACTFL National Language Teacher of the Year Ken Stewart, ACTFL Director of Education Marty Abbott, ACTFL President Paul Sandrock, and Florida Foreign Language Association Past President Becky Youngman.



The Beauty of Discovery

Lyrics: Courtney L. Chatman, Etienne

Music: Etienne

I could learn French, to visit the Eiffel Tower
Yo puedo aprender español y visitar México
‘Cause all around the world
So many places to go
Sights to see, things to learn
To broaden my horizons, oh!

Chorus:

Discover languages
Hello. Bonjour. Konichiwa.
To discover in this world
A place no matter where you are
Communication is the key
Experience the beauty
Of discovering new worlds!

I could go sail across the seas to Bora Bora
Travel to Japan and learn origami in Tokyo
I could visit Greece, to learn of Aphrodite
Or travel to Rome to see Cleopatra’s home
‘Cause all around the world
So many places to go
Sights to see, things to learn
To broaden my horizons, oh!

Chorus, solo, chorus

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