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AFS CELEBRATES INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION WEEK

New York, NY—AFS Intercultural Programs, a leader in international high school student exchange for 60 years, joins educational and cultural organizations across the country in celebrating International Education Week (IEW) from November 12 – 16, 2007. IEW is a joint initiative of the U.S. Department of State and U.S. Department of Education to promote programs that prepare Americans for a global environment and attract future leaders from abroad to study, learn, and exchange experiences in the U.S.

U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings said, "More than ever, being prepared to contribute to a better world is about what you know, not where you live." On the importance of expanding knowledge and education across cultural boundaries, she also added, "Teaching our students about international issues today will make us better equipped to tackle global challenges in the future, from poverty to environmental concerns, hunger, and disease."

During International Education Week, AFS participants will share their stories at school and community events throughout the U.S. to promote intercultural understanding and awareness. AFS Volunteers and Participants will also promote the Petition for Global Expansion of Educational Youth Exchange Programs, which aims to gather one million signatures in support of exchange programs to present to the U.N. Secretary General in honor of AFS' 60th Anniversary. All these activities highlight the stories of AFS Exchange Students and their families, as well as those of the educators, volunteers, and community members whose lives have been touched in sharing with students and teachers from other countries and cultures.

"Intercultural student exchange programs foster mutual understanding and acceptance among different cultures," said Francisco Cazal, president of AFS International who was also an AFS high school exchange student from Paraguay to Minnesota. "These exchanges help teach our youth to be citizens of the world and provide them with the tools to advance intercultural understanding in their communities, regions, countries or in the international arena."

For more information on International Education Week and activities planned in your area, please visit www.iew.state.gov. To learn more about how you can arrange for a presentation in your school or community, or for more information on study abroad programs, scholarship opportunities, hosting an outstanding student or teacher, or volunteering in your community with AFS, please call 1-800-AFS-INFO or visit www.afs.org/usa.

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For 60 years, AFS Intercultural Programs has been leading international high school student exchange. AFS was founded by volunteer American Field Service ambulance drivers from World Wars I and II who believed—as AFS believes today—that the way to build a more just and peaceful world begins when people from different countries meet, learn about each other, and begin to understand each other. AFS is a worldwide nonprofit and is largely a volunteer-driven organization, with 6,000 U.S. volunteers and 30,000 worldwide.