

# TRAVEL PROGRAM OVERVIEW



MKA  
global  
experience





Global Experience at MKA  
empowers our students to think  
critically about and cultivate  
empathy for the classroom  
beyond our walls in order to gain  
the skills necessary to be more  
informed, ethical, and  
purposeful global citizens.

# THE ICELANDIC WAY:

## Climate Change and the Power of the Earth

**Trip Leader(s):** Varies Year to Year

**Trip Dates:** SPRING BREAK 2024 + 2026

Iceland's capital, Reykjavik, is one of the most sustainable cities in the world. Every building is fueled using clean, geothermal power. Iceland is lucky--most countries don't have an abundance of geothermal activity to turn into energy. On the other hand, because they are relatively isolated, Icelanders own more cars and fly more miles than their European counterparts. These seeming contradictions raise the question: Which parts of Iceland's clean energy economy could enhance sustainability efforts in our area and around the world? Iceland's unique geography, combined with its political will and technological focus, contribute to its national, renewable energy system. By exploring this system, we will work to understand how similar systems could be explored back home in the States or even on campus.

We will explore how different energy sources in Iceland and globally, from coal to geothermal, are creating environmental, economic, and political tensions. We will get a sense of Iceland's geology by visiting key, geothermal spots and Icelandic landmarks. In Reykjavik, we will meet with local experts on sustainability and clean energy -- to get an expert opinion on the engineering, technology, and political impact of creating a clean energy system. We will then conduct our own research on attitudes towards energy and local climate impacts. All the while pushing ourselves physically to explore Iceland's rugged geography and see firsthand the impacts of climate change and the power of the Earth.

\*Trip dates and final cost are subject to change and will be finalized in early November.



# Community Engagement: GUATEMALA

## *From Houses to Homes*

**Trip Leaders:** Rotating Teaches

**Trip Dates:** SPRING BREAK

**Trip Mission:** The purpose of this program connect with the community surrounding Antigua, Guatemala through work with the local NGO, Houses to Homes. Students ultimately help to build four houses for families with children in the outskirts of Antigua and explore the complex concerns of their community – access to education and health care, affordable housing, etc.

### **Trip Specifics and Highlights:**

- The trip will NOT interfere with spring sports travel.
- You do NOT need to be enrolled in Spanish at MKA, but should you wish to practice, there will be plenty of opportunities.
- We stay in Antigua, Guatemala, which is a beautiful colonial city in the highlands about 50 km outside of the Guatemala City. However, the worksites are on the outskirts of Antigua.
- We begin the trip with a personalized tour of the city to get a sense of its history.
- Day two sees us hike a volcano!
- Students will have the evenings to explore Antigua on their own (including meals), or join the chaperones for dinner.
- One day will be spent visiting the two other key aspects of Houses to Homes work in the region – the medical clinic and the primary school.
- The trip ends with a joint soccer match including all of the members of our team and community!





# Global Environmental Stewardship

## Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation in BELIZE

**Trip Leaders:** TBD

**Trip Dates:** SPRING BREAK 2025

Explore Belize's magical landscapes, colorful marine life, and local conservation efforts on this unique adventure. Upon arrival in Belize, we head to the quaint, beachside town of Placencia where we have a thorough program orientation, get our first taste of the local cuisine, and enjoy our first Caribbean sunset. Next up, we spend the day with passionate researchers from the Crocodile Research Coalition, removing debris threatening the habitats of endangered manatees and crocodiles while learning about the challenges facing these iconic creatures.

We then take a boat to our home for the next 4 days, a private island where we will delve deep into local conservation efforts with marine biologists from an NGO with a mission to protect our oceans. In addition to the main project of controlling invasive lionfish, we'll support other projects such as surveying the reef for coral bleaching and cleaning up pollution. We also earn our PADI diving certification, practicing SCUBA skills under the guidance of trained instructors. Already certified students can earn their PADI Advanced Open Water certification or jump directly into assisting biologists and enjoying world-class diving in some of the most beautiful and unique habitats in the world.

After an unforgettable 4 days, we return to Placencia to enjoy a celebratory "Final Feast" and meaningful closing ceremonies, reflecting on lessons learned and cherished memories from our epic adventure. Throughout the program, we also participate in experiential activities, developing our leadership skills and reflecting on best practices for service learning.



# Leadership + Indigenous Perspective

## New Zealand/Aotearoa – Whenua Iti

**Trip Leaders:** Cort Bosc

**Trip Dates:** SPRING BREAK 2025 + 2027

### Program Goals:

This program is designed to explore the environments of Te Taihū (the Top of the South Island, NZ) to broaden perspectives and understanding of approaches to te taiao (the environment) from both a Western and indigenous lens. The program will strengthen the connection between students and the environment, and with one another, through a series of shared outdoors and adventure experiences. Students will take part in authentic environmental and cultural immersion experiences that create a platform for transformational learning while exploring wilderness locations. The program will be scaffolded around gratitude for the environment, nature immersion and personal wellbeing, which are all interconnected from an indigenous Māori perspective. Experiences and learnings will be woven into set reflection times during and on completion of the program.

### Highlights:

- Formal cultural welcome and overnight experience at a local marae (Māori Cultural Center).
- Enjoy a paddle out on a waka -a traditional Māori canoe from Kaiteretera beach.
- A three day hike and kayak exploration of Abel Tasman national park.
- Explore stunning Golden Bay and Wharariki Beach and Ecosanctuary.
- Take part in a guided trip through one of the many underground cave systems through Takaka Hill.





# MAY TERM GLOBAL EXPERIENCE

## Rotating Project Based Senior Trips

**Trip Leaders:** TBD

**Trip Length:** AFTER AP Exams in May

**Approximate Trip Cost:** TBD

Every May seniors can choose from one to two Global Experience May Term travel options. These trips are all project based, focused on an issue important to seniors where they can learn more about the issue and bring back that knowledge to apply in their lives and communities. In order to build these experiences, we work closely with Atlas Workshops. We have been working closely with Atlas Workshops to build meaningful programs for students over the past 10 years. Atlas' goal is to build a global workshop: a community and a network of curious people, organizations, projects, educators, students, and travelers working together to imagine something new. They run local and international programs that explore with intention, seek insights in the ordinary, and nurture the curiosity within us all.

### Highlights of previous May Term Experiences:

- Clean Energy in Iceland – Now the basis for our Spring Break program available to every student.
- Innovation and Design in Scandinavia – Last run in 2023, this program looks at the lessons to be learned by city planning in Sweden and Denmark.
- Growing Up, Growing Old in Japan – Last designed in 2020, this program is the basis for our ongoing June trip available to all students.
- Community Building and Conservation in Massachusetts – Last run in 2021, this program focuses on the tourist industry and community development.
- Health and Wellness in Greece – Proposed for 2024, this program will help students unlock secrets to healthy living before they head off for college.



# Defining Wellness: GREECE

## MAY TERM PROJECT-BASED EXPERIENCE

**Trip Leaders:** Cort Bosc

**Trip Length:** MAY 2025 (for seniors only)

Greece is known around the world as a focal point for life and prosperity. Look even closer at the island of Ikaria, and you'll find a significantly large number of people living well into their 90's, effortlessly. On this program, we'll explore firsthand what it means to live well, and how societies have encouraged (or discouraged) wellness over time. We'll explore historic sites like Epidaurus and Nemea to get a sense for the values built into ancient lifestyles. We'll hear from locals about what day to day life looks like in the blue zone of Ikaria, and consider the relationship between wellness and culture as we work to uncover the real "secret" to a longer life - if there is one. From eco villages and coastal temples to the iconic sites and modern life of Athens, we'll work to determine, is there a "better" way to live? Does living longer mean living well. And are there lessons from Greece that we can apply in our lives and communities at home?

### Trip Highlights:

- Use our hands in a ceramics studio to see connections in craft to ancient and modern Greece.
- Spend the day at an eco-village to discover life on the farm.
- Learn how to cook famous Greek dishes with local produce and discuss the modern understanding of the Mediterranean diet.
- Learn how modern health and wellness movements have become a part of Greek life today.
- Climb to the top of the Acropolis for an overlook of the city.





# CHINA: Language and Culture

## Chinese Language Immersion Program

**Trip Leaders:** River He and David Hessler

**Trip Dates:** JUNE 2024 + 2026

**Trip Goals:** Practicing Chinese language efficiency in line with our curriculum is one of our main goals of this trip. However, this trip also seeks to expose students to the unique culture of China in both its ancient and modern forms and does not have a Chinese language requirement. This year we have combined the previous May Term Experience with that of a language experience.

### In Xi'an Students will...

- Visit Jinyuan International School and complete a two-day homestay.
- Work with primary school students at Jinfutu School.
- Visit and volunteer at the Terra-Cotta Warriors Museum.
- Visit and volunteer at the Nature Reserve and Animal Rescue and Research Center.
- Bicycle on the 3000-year City Wall.
- Visit the Muslim Square Street and Night Market.

### In Beijing Students will...

- Visit the Temple of Heaven, Tiananmen Square, and Forbidden City
- Practice meditation with Daoist Bai Yun Guan and visit the Buddhist Lama Temple
- Hike the secluded Jin Shan Ling Section of the Great Wall.
- Take a cooking class at Beijing International Vocational Education School

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# TANZANIA: Global Leadership

## Community Engagement – Tumaini School

**Trip Leader(s):** Sandrine Beddou and Liam Campbell

**Trip Dates:** JUNE 2024 + 2026

Upon arrival, we begin our orientation at the West Kili Lodge near the base of Mt. Kilimanjaro. We will explore our surroundings and go through orientation. The next two sections of this trip will include time in Karatu where students have a three-day homestay program. During the days, students will have time to pursue specific interests, such as cultural activities and playing sports, or to explore and deepen personal bonds with community members. On many evenings the group will reconvene for Learning Sessions designed to promote the understanding of global issues, leadership and local culture. Students will also spend time staying in the dorms of Tumaini Senior School. In the mornings of this section, we work on the primary Community Project, which will be designed in consultation with the needs and desires of the local community. The trip ends with a game drive to Ngorongoro Crater where we descend as a group into the crater in hopes of spotting lions, elephants, rhinos, wildebeest and more.

On this experience we partner with World Leadership School (WLS). The mission of World Leadership School is to partner with K-12 schools to reimagine learning and create next generation leaders. They do this by taking students out into the world and coaching teachers to bring purpose to learning. Students on their travel programs embark on two great journeys: an outer journey to explore the world and an inner journey to see oneself more clearly. In the process, students have a chance to explore, discover, and articulate their unique purpose.

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# WILDERNESS LEADERSHIP

## Yearly Backpacking Programs in the United States

**Trip Leaders:** Varies Year to Year

**Trip Dates:** JUNE 2026 + 2028 as well as other times

Each year we offer outdoor programs that help students to develop their wilderness and leadership skills on epic adventures to the most picturesque U.S. landscapes. On each trip students complete a two-day Wilderness First Aid course, learning about patient assessment and treatment in a backcountry setting. With no prerequisites, the WFA is perfect for outdoor enthusiasts and beginner backpackers. After wrapping the course, students pull out their maps and guide books and decide as a group what they want to explore, spending a couple days experiencing the highlights of the various regions we travel to. Then it's time to put their burgeoning wilderness skills to the test as they embark on a four-to-five-day backpack adventure where they learn backcountry travel skills, Leave No Trace camping ethics, wilderness cooking techniques, and map and compass navigation, all while hiking and camping in the ruggedly beautiful wilderness. All of these trips end (or begin in some cases) with adventure activities including white water rafting, glacier hikes, rock climbing, canyoneering, and more. Destinations have included Zion National Park in Utah, Pt. Reyes National Park and Big Sur in California, Denali in Alaska, and in 2024, Yosemite National Park.

On these experiences we partner with ARCC Programs, who we have worked with for the past decade on wilderness programs across the country. ARCC programs will supply our groups with Wilderness First Responders as our expert guides but they will also help our students develop their own leadership styles and abilities on this amazing outdoor adventure.



# ARGENTINA + URUGUAY

## Spanish Language and Cultural Immersion

**Trip Leaders:** Rotating Spanish Language Teachers

**Trip Dates:** JUNE 2026 + 2028

Develop your Spanish language skills and embrace the cultural spirit of both Argentina and Uruguay on this June program open to all students. During the trip's weekdays students will spend their mornings at VOS enjoying some fun Spanish language and Argentine culture classes depending on your level of familiarity with the language. In the afternoons you'll engage in cultural activities like learning to tango, cooking empanadas, visiting a local high school, and playing soccer. On the weekends we will engage in a day trip to an estancia in the countryside and learn about gaucho culture but also go see a professional Argentine soccer match and have an ending asado (grill) with all of our new friends. This trip also includes a two-day voyage to Colonia del Sacramento in neighboring Uruguay. Students will travel by ferry across the Rio de la Plata and tour the stunningly beautiful colonial town as well as visit with locals to learn about the distinctions between Argentine and Uruguayan culture.

While in Buenos Aires, the highlight of the experience will be a two or three night homestay with a family walking distance from VOS in the Recoleta neighborhood. Students will be in pairs or triplets during this homestay and paired with families based on the level of Spanish language comfort. VOS has been helping and guiding students in their journey with Spanish for over 15 years. They were founded under one goal, to show and teach what true Argentinian culture is. You DO NOT need to be currently enrolled in Spanish to apply for this program.

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# Spanish Language Immersion

## Chilean Exchange Program in San Felipe

**Trip Leaders:** Spanish Language Teachers

**Trip Dates to Chile:** JUNE/JULY 2025 + 2027

**Chilean Students @ MKA:** FEBRUARY EVERY YEAR!

### Speak, Learn, Explore:

Students studying in Spanish 3 Honors and above are eligible to participate in this immersion program. The 5 students selected for this program will travel to Santiago, Chile and then quickly onto San Felipe, Chile where they will meet their host families at our sister school, Instituto Abdón Cifuentes (IAC). They will attend classes, participate in extracurricular activities and do community service. Host families will also take each student on a few trips in the local area – Santiago, Valparaíso, Viña del Mar, etc. Each student will live in the home of a student at IAC and travel to and from school with this student. Students will practice their Spanish skills in a real life setting and be immersed in daily Chilean life.

### Build a Family Across Continents:

We also need hosts for this truly unique exchange. Five students from Instituto Abdón Cifuentes will join our community from **early February through the first weekend in March** and they will need families to stay with during that time. These students will go to classes, participate in community engagement opportunities and house competitions, attend sporting events, etc. It is a great opportunity to practice your Spanish skills and form lifelong bonds. So, if you're considering travelling to Chile in the summer or just want to gain a perspective of a different culture, please sign up to host!



# Growing Up + Growing Old: JAPAN

## Generational Culture, History, and Memory

**Trip Leader(s):** Alisha Glaser

**Trip Dates:** JUNE 2025 + 2027

Japan is a relatively small set of islands with nearly 130 million people. But unlike many nations, the country is shrinking. As the country ages, stories of growing up are compounding the stories of growing old. This reality is a product of Japanese history, culture, and values. On this program we will examine this reality in multiple locations. Led by Walk Japan, one of National Geographic's top adventure travel companies on Earth, we'll fly into Tokyo and travel through Kyoto to Hiroshima and onto Kyushu before flying out of Fukuoka.

We gain many insights and experiences into Japan's society, history and culture through activities that include helping with the work of a farming community; learning of events that surround the bombing of Hiroshima, delving into the intimate world of Japan's cultural capital, Kyoto, and learning how devastating natural disasters can be and how the Japanese character is shaped by them. The transport we use varies from the super-fast Shinkansen Bullet Train to local trains that wind their way gently, clattering street trams and rural buses. Occasionally, we also travel on foot!

Accommodation includes Japanese inns, where we experience the very different, traditional way of life. Japan is renowned for its cuisine, which provides us with a feast to delight both our eyes and appetites. Importantly, throughout our travels, the Walk Japan tour leader sets all we see and experience into an enjoyable and understandable context to be inspired and better informed about one of the world's more elusive countries and its delightful, welcoming people.





# Global Leadership: MOROCCO

## Social Entrepreneurship, Culture, and Language

**Trip Leader(s):** Sandrine Beddou

**Trip Dates:** JUNE 2025 + 2027

This trip is designed to provide an immersive cultural experience in the Moroccan context - to be exposed to a community and culture different from our own. This trip will also provide for our French language learners an opportunity to practice that skill in ways they cannot in the classroom. However, students do NOT have to be currently enrolled in French to go on this trip.

Students will fly into Rabat and will quickly be immersed in complex **Moroccan culture**. Students will make a quick transfer up the coast from Casablanca to Morocco's capital city of Rabat where they will settle into a family run riad, which is a **traditional Moroccan house** that features an interior garden or courtyard. The group will have a few days in the capital to visit local Mosques, museums, and explore the maze-like old city, otherwise known as the medina.

Students will then travel to their host community, a small city called Azrou nestled in the Middle Atlas Mountains. Students where they will immerse themselves in the local routine. Each day will be filled with different activities to help us **immerse ourselves in local culture, traditions, and current projects** and activities happening in the area. After lunch, we will have time to pursue specific interests, such as cooking and playing sports, or to explore and **deepen personal bonds with community members**. They will visit a local youth center, learn from leaders of a rug-making cooperative as well as an artisanal women's association, and experience the **indigenous Amazigh culture** through a traditional dance performance. On many



# Community Engagement: MONTANA

## Building Community with the Blackfeet

**Trip Leaders:** Thomas Jones

**Trip Length:** JUNE 2025

### Mission:

This trip allows students to engage personally with the Blackfeet community and to recognize complexity and value empathy. It also will provide them the chance to change to strengthen their intellect, character and confidence and promote their active citizenship and leadership integrity.

### Working with the Blackfeet:

In the high plains just east of Glacier National Park, live members of the Blackfeet Nation. The service program enables you to work alongside Native peoples and learn about their culture and day-to-day life. From cooking and serving meals at an assisted living center to reading aloud to children at the Boys and Girls Club or prepping the Sundance grounds for the summer celebrations, there are many ways to share your experiences and talents with the local community.

### Trip Highlights include:

- 6 hours of service everyday
- Participation in community cultural events
- Visit Glacier National Park
- Horseback riding
- Living and working on an operating ranch

