



## Connecting Cultures Program

### Chat Pal Italian Family Club Community Outreach

This activity is designed to both enhance cultural awareness and to guide students through the study abroad experience, in order to maximize their educational outcome and personal growth during their time in Florence. Through Connecting Cultures, students have the opportunity to interact with the Florentine community through the Community Outreach, Italian Family Club and Chat Pal programs.



#### Community Outreach

Students have the unique opportunity to go beyond everyday interactions with Florentine residents by participating in our Community Outreach program. This experience allows students to give something back to their host city by offering their time and services to local social and cultural organizations, such as museums, canteens, houses of worship, and cultural associations, such as La Tinaia Center for Expressive Arts, or even teaching English in local schools. Community Outreach is an exceptional opportunity for students who want to be actively involved in the everyday life of the city during their time in Florence. It is also an enriching experience that will contribute to personal and emotional growth, and

the development of a sound cultural consciousness that will serve students throughout their lives. Most of FUA-AUF's partner organizations do not require particular professional or language skills, but all of them require a weekly commitment from students; one shift, typically 2-4 hours per week, depending on the association's needs. Space is limited, so students must be seriously motivated in order to be considered for the program.



#### Italian Family Club

The Italian Family Club gives students an in-depth opportunity to get directly involved with the Italian community through an "adoptive" Florentine family. By joining the Family Club, students get an intimate view of a typical Italian family by discovering and observing habits and customs that may not be familiar to them. Students with Italian origins will have the chance to experience first-hand what they may have only heard through stories passed down to them by family members, while non-Italian students will also have an opportunity to evaluate the Italian family lifestyle beyond the stereotypes. Students and families will be matched according to the characteristics and

requirements of both parties, with the intent to build a relationship that will develop over the semester through regular meetings. The goal is for the students to become members of the family and to partake in everyday functions such as family meals, conversations, cultural exchanges or even assist with errands, baby-sit, or care for pets. The affection, empathy and emotions shared by the students and families will become a special treasure that all will cherish in their hearts for time to come. The families will have a reference point abroad, and the "adopted" kids will leave Florence knowing that someone will always be here to welcome them back!



#### Chat Pal

What better way to learn a language than to use it in a practical manner? Chat Pal is a noncredit conversation exchange designed to connect FUA-AUF students with Italians with the intent to improve Italian language skills and to create connections with members of the Italian community. Each student is paired with a language partner; partners are expected to meet for at least one hour, a week, and to divide the practice time equally between Italian and the student's mother tongue. Conversation Exchange partners can meet at a time and place of their own convenience.

Interested in participating in the above Connecting Cultures activities? For further information and the application process, please contact the SLD staff at: [sld-studentservices@fua.it](mailto:sld-studentservices@fua.it). We will be glad to schedule a meeting to discuss available opportunities!

