



Lorenzo Masi, Carolina Cappelli, WHRHS student Giuliana De Freitas and Lorenzo Sabatini enjoying the summer 2013 in NJ

For years now the Watchung Hills foreign exchange programs have been creating lasting bonds between WHRHS students and the countries where the languages they study are spoken. This past school year was no exception and 14 lucky WHRHS students spent 11 days in Florence in March and then hosted their Italian counterparts here in April 2013. The Italian students were particularly enthusiastic about both their American stay and the Watchung Hills students with whom they shared the experience.

In fact, this summer 3 Italian students from Borgo San Lorenzo (Florence) who participated in past exchange initiatives decided they just couldn't stay away any longer and now they are here again, generously hosted by WHRHS families.

Carolina Cappelli, Lorenzo Masi and Leonardo Sabatini are here until July 22nd and have been variously staying with the families of WHRHS students Gabrielle Puleo, Mackenzie and Molly Wood, Courtney Daley, Giuliana De Freitas, Michael Ricciardi and Own Whitley. And what's not to like? Due to the generosity of the WHRHS student Sophia Percario's family they have been water tubing and jet skiing on Lake Hopatcong and they were also treated to a weekend in a downtown Manhattan hotel by the Whitley family.

The Italians can't stop marvelling at the wonderful hospitality they have found and how much they are enjoying their American summer. Whether they're playing laser tag or tasting Mexican food, their enthusiasm bubbles over and they say that their biggest desire now is to have their new American buddies visit Italy so they can return the hospitality.

Beyond the critical cultural experience for all the students involved, these students are also actively improving their language skills, not to mention forming important life-long ties of friendship. Let's hope we see more and more of this type of "study tourism" blossoming out of Watchung Hill's World Language programs.