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cultural immersion program within three hemispheres and 13 nations.

Take Stock In Children students from Key West, Marathon and Coral Shores high schools were notified this week that they have been awarded grants from Experiment in International Living (EIL) to pursue cross-cultural education in 13 countries. This unique opportunity for high school students in Monroe County is the result of EIL's local partnership with the Monroe County Education Foundation (MCEF), lead agency for TSIC in Monroe County.

All Monroe students will leave the U.S. in small groups at the end of June, joining approximately 1,000 other U.S. high school students in EIL's annual program of cultural orientation via local immersion. International

living experiences involve three to five weeks of language learning, individual home-stays and community involvement in 27 different countries.

Students are now beginning preparations to study abroad in their assigned country. Their individual destinations include: Argentina, Australia, Chile South, China, Costa Rica, France, Mongolia, Morocco, South Africa, Spain, Tanzania, Thailand and Turkey.

"Our students worked hard on their applications and are very excited about this chance to be citizens of the world," said Jim Hall, TSIC Program Coordinator for Monroe County. He noted that MCEF president John Padgett and other board members have provided pivotal support for what is

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## Empowered Forgiveness Apologies

If we can remember that our response to others is important, we can realize that trust and forgiveness go hand in hand.

In life there will always be times when we are affected by the actions of another person. When this happens, we often receive an apology. More often than not we say, "It's alright," or "It's okay," and by saying this we are allowing, accepting, and giving permission for the behavior to happen again. When we say "thank you," or "I accept your apology," we are forced to sit in our feelings rather than ignore them.

There are many of us who feel that it is easier to brush off how we really feel than to express our discomfort with something that has happened to us. While this may initially seem like the best thing to do, what it really does is put us into an unending pattern of behavior; since we are not honest with another person, we continue the cycle of letting them overstep our emotional limits time and time again. By doing this we place

ourselves in the position of victim. We can put an end to this karmic chain by first acknowledging to the other person that we accept their request for forgiveness; often a simple "thank you" is enough. To truly create a greater sense of harmony in our relationship, however, we need to gently, and with compassion, express our innermost concerns about what has transpired. By taking a deep breath and calling upon the deepest parts of our spirit, we can usually find the right words to say and verbalize them in a way that lets the other person recognize the consequences of what they have done. If we can remember that our response to others is important, we can begin to realize that trust and forgiveness go hand in hand. And when we react in a way that engenders a greater amount of honesty and candor, we will establish a more positive and empowering way of being and interacting others.



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