Dear Parents of 7th and 8th Grade Cubs,

I want to tell you about more an exciting opportunity for your child. The LSU Laboratory School is recruiting for its second exchange with our partner school in Transylvania, Romania. Your children may have met the exchange students last October, who came here when they were with the 8th grade. This year’s 7th and 8th graders will go on their exchange to Brasov School #6 for a 10 day period during Fall Break, Oct. 11 – 21, 2018. The Romanian students will come visit us in the spring of 2019.

Accommodations on both sides of the exchange will be with students’ families. Our hosts provided a great itinerary for us last trip, and I am looking forward to returning for my third time. The range of things we did was unbelievable, and virtually none of it was possible to do in Louisiana or even in Western Europe.

Romania is an idyllic area in Europe, which is not only naturally beautiful but also free of the strife currently found in much of Europe. Transylvania’s natural beauty is renowned throughout Europe and is a favorite vacation spot for HRH Prince Charles among others. In the US, we associate Transylvania with Count Dracula of vampire fame. The country has a great deal of tourism associated with that legend but also has great tourist destinations beyond those. There are several cities that still have their medieval architecture and art with modern conveniences as well. Some of the few areas of virgin forests left on the continent are in Transylvania, and it is defined by a mountain range, the Carpathians. In short, it will be a wonderful place to visit during fall (complete with fall colors), and we can learn much from their culture and educational system.

If you are interested in participating in the exchange, please email me (ccummi2@lsu.edu) with your student’s name, their school e-mail address, and your e-mail address of choice. If possible, please come to a meeting for interested families about the exchange on Thursday, Sept. 6th in my room (M248) at 6:30p.m. where we can further discuss details. The trip will also include pre-exchange, jet-lag “treatment” in Munich, Germany to compare Eastern and Western Europe. A deposit of $200.00 will secure a place in the exchange, which is limited by the type of transportation we have in Romania. We hope to have your child with us for this unique opportunity. The total inclusive price is $1964.81, which includes everything except spending money for snacks and souviners.

Best,

Catherine Cummins, Ph.D.
Elena and Albert Leblanc Endowed Professor
Science Instructor
7th Grade Team Leader
Louisiana State University Laboratory School
Europe is a Small Continent
Transylvania is an Entire World
Why Young People Should Travel

1. Traveling changes the way you relate to the world.
2. Traveling can give you lifelong friends.
3. Traveling humbles you enough to realize “it’s not all about you.”
4. Traveling empowers you to take on new challenges.
5. Traveling gives you empathy for global suffering.
6. Traveling pushes your educational horizons.

I love to travel with middle school students to foreign countries. This will be my fourth time internationally (plus two trips to Washington, DC).
Where is it? Part of Romania in EASTERN Europe.
Transylvania in Romania - Land Beyond the Forests. “Real Mountains”
Who am I and Why Do I Love to Go?

- Catherine Cummins, Ph.D. Teacher at ULS since 2002. I teach your children Science.

- I have been fascinated by Transylvania since I was a small child.

- I was your children’s age when Dark Shadows (now on Amazon Prime) was on TV, and my daughter and I were on Team Edward.

- I am a mountain person (hillbilly), born and raised.
Why Transylvania (other than my obsession)?

- We have built the connections. Several former and current ULS families are Romanian and helped set up the first exchange.

- It is SAFE. See US Department of State Website.

- Romania is a growing tourist destination. Romania was second on the list of European countries that have registered a growth in the number of incoming tourists. Medieval architecture with modern conveniences.

- Spectacular biodiversity. As a biologist, I found out what a great destination Transylvania is for biodiversity.
Why Transylvania?

- **Spectacular mountainous scenery.** It is surrounded by mountains and includes some of the most beautiful roads in the world.

- **Spectacular architecture.** It survived the wars with much intact, including Roman structures, Castles, and Medieval Period churches and villages.

- **Opportunity to interact directly with Romanians.** We will do this at our travel destinations, with our host families, and with the school. You will find them a welcoming and warm people.

- **Cultural differences.** Transylvania is a place where traditional ways of life are still preserved, which are very different from our life in Baton Rouge.
Travel Dates

- Dates: Leave on Oct. 11 from ULS
- Arrive on Oct. 12 into Munich, Germany. Stay in Munich the night of Oct. 12 and Oct. 13 to sightsee and to get over jet lag.

- Fly to Brasov on Oct. 13, mid-morning.

- Return to NOLA on Oct. 21.

All students would be escorted the entire trip by faculty.
Food and Hospitality

- Group Student Travel – No one goes off by themselves.
- All breakfasts and some dinners with host families.
- Lots of restaurant meals – great food in casual settings.
- All daily round trip transit by 15 Passenger Van.
Brasov School #6 Itinerary - Weather Dependent

**Day 1 -- Arrival in Romania - Bucharest**
Transfer to Brasov and meet the host families.
Visit Monastery
Brasov walking tour

**Day 2**
Visit of Castle Valley Cave Rasnov
Visit of Bran Castle and shop in the Bran Bazaar

**Day 3**
Rasnov and Brasov Roman / Dacian Fortresses
Prejmer Fortified Church UNESCO World Heritage Site

**Day 4**
Free day - Family choice

**Day 5**
Arrival to Sighisoara - Visit of the Citadel
Arrival to Praid - Visit of Praid Salt Mines

**Day 6**
Bus departure to Noua Adventure Park - zip-lining
Walk around the Noua Lake
Grill party

**Day 7**
Departure to Bucharest
Peles Castle
Bucharest city tour
Brasov - Our Home Base
Families
Castle Valley Cave - Rasnov
Prejmer Fortified Church - UNESCO Site
Castles
Farm Life
Money Maxed Out at Current Exchange Rate and with 30 Day Advanced Tickets

- Shuttle to NOLA from ULS
- LSU Travel Insurance
- Round Trip Flight with Munich Jet Lag Stopover 1654.81
- 2 Nights in Munich (shared rooms Hotel Cortiina*) 310.00
- Week in Transylvania (all inclusive except for snacks and spending money for souvenirs)
- 1 Night in Otopeni Airport (shared rooms Rin Hotel)
- Total 1964.81

*Cortiina Hotel- Can be LESS -based on hotel type and Exchange Rate. This is 3 stars with breakfast and no need of public transportation. In the “Old City.”
Next Steps

- Fill out the information sheet.
- Get a US Passport NOW - Expedited (check expiration date - six months validity after entry date) - never hurts.
- Pay the $200.00 Deposit by Sept. 10.
- Contact Dr. Cummins with any questions.
- Watch your email and ask your child for next planning meetings.