First Wave of Students Arrives; Host Families Still Sought

The time has finally come. After a yearlong process of assembling applications, interviewing, taking English exams, and waiting to hear which generous American family would invite them into their home, 100 brave PAXers arrived on Long Island for orientation at Adelphi University last week. With the orientation divided between workshops which will prepare them for practical matters of the experience ahead and a tour of NYC, these impressive young people wasted no time.

While the students in this issue are well on their way to the most formative of experiences, equally deserving young people are still waiting to hear where in the US they will be headed.

If you or a great family you know is interested in sharing a slice of Americana with a courageous exchange student like those featured in this issue, give PAX a call at 800.555.6211 or fill out a brief inquiry. Brave students deserve heroic hosts!

Julian and Moritz (Germany): Freedom Tower at their backs; once-in-a-lifetime experience before them

Yifei from China discusses his goals for the year.

Elisabeth, Michelle, and Johanna reflect on what awaits them.

Students Open up About Experience Ahead

On the anticipation-filled evening before they headed off to Arizona, Indiana, Kansas, and the rest of the country, PAX Press caught up with 10 students from various homelands. Encouraged after having spent three days with exchange students in the same boat, they opened up about their hopes, fears, and ambitions. (Wherever you see a “play” symbol within this issue, click to hear their thoughts.)

You’ll notice that while they come from many different countries, they all share one thing: a sincere desire to experience and better understand America by sharing in real-life activities as a student and family member.
International Teens Exceed Expectations

“People in Indiana…do they know where is Spain?” a precocious student wondered aloud—already strategizing as to how best bridge the gap between his two homes from the charming confines of Adelphi University. Questions like this underline just how amazing exchange students really are—adventuring out into an entirely foreign society in an effort to satisfy their curiosity and share something of their native culture.

PAX Orientation ensures that students arrive in their host communities with the tools, information, and mindsets they need to be successful. As in past years, last week the PAX national office staff challenged students to explore their hopes and fears for the year ahead, consider possible conflict scenarios in their host families and schools, imagine what culture shock may feel like, and re-examine their expectations of the experience. (Yes, Manhattan, KS will differ from Manhattan, NY.)

Orientation leaders were inspired by the determination and maturity of the impressive participants. While acknowledging that it will be difficult to adjust into his new culture and make friends, Harry from China was unwavering in his desire to “savor American culture.” Meanwhile, Johanna from Germany posed a strikingly simple yet important question which too many of us forget: “How can you say you don’t like something if you haven’t tried it?”

Well said, Johanna. Go give it a try, PAXers! (And remember, you can’t say “please” and “thank you” enough.)
Students Explore NYC

One Magical Day in New York

It’s difficult to overstate how excited students were to explore “The City So Nice, They Named It Twice.” With the guidance of licensed NYC tour guides, students got an inside track on “The City” the way few do.

The exchange visitors meandered Southstreet Seaport, posed in front of the Brooklyn Bridge, relaxed on a harbor boat tour, struggled to stay with the group in China Town, snapped photos of Wall Street’s “Charging Bull,” and appreciated the significance of the Statue of Liberty as they begin their “new life.”

They paused for reflection at the 9/11 Memorial, explored the High Line, recharged in Central Park, and spun themselves dizzy in Times Square. With all of the detail, design, history, hysteria, consequence, and contradiction that is NYC, one might naturally imagine that it was hard for students to pin down their favorite part.

Upon the group’s return to Long Island, the question was posed, “Whose favorite part was Times Square?” All but a few hands shot into the air. Don’t worry. We’re sure they remembered a few dates and names as well.

Lara from Spain’s Times Square “groupie” is thwarted by team leader Matt’s “photobomb.”

Don’t worry. Albert (Spain) has seen people do this on television a thousand times.

Laura from Spain is interested in the blend of different cultures that makes the US so special.

Xiaoyu (China) can’t wait to cook with her Utah host family.
As Seen in Social Media

Click on any image to view full post or watch video

Get Involved in International Exchange!

Whether you have considered hosting a high school exchange student, sending your teen abroad, having an exchange student at your school, working locally to support an international student, or you simply want to learn more about what it is we do, feel free to give us a call at 800.555.6211. We’ll put you in touch with the regional director for your area and see if there isn’t a way to either begin or deepen your relationship with PAX and international, educational, and cultural exchange.

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14 Willett Avenue
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800.555.6211
www.pax.org

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