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PAXPRESS

The Newspaper for Exchange Students, Host Families, and Schools

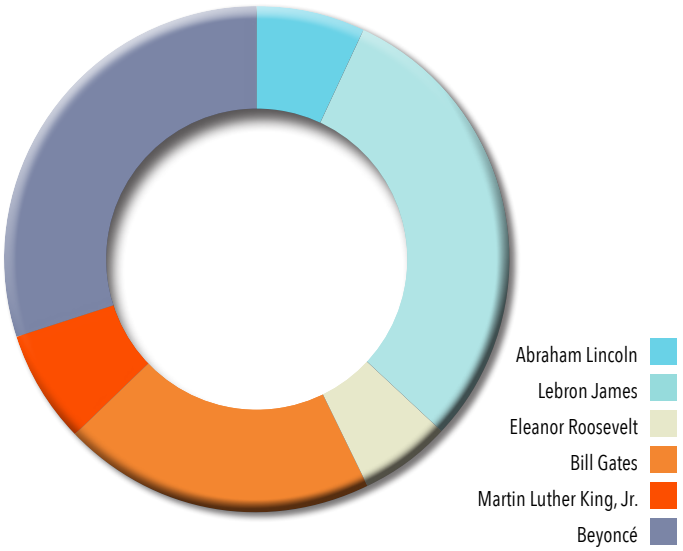
Introducing Our First Arrivals–Great Host Families Still Sought!

Germans, Mexicans, and Thai…oh my! A third of last week's orientation group poses in Central Park.

They're here!…at least 135 of the 1,100 are. Last week, we had the pleasure of welcoming our "Orientation 1" students to Adelphi University on Long Island and are very excited to present them to you—both quantitatively and qualitatively. Throughout this issue, you'll find poll results ranging from the silly to the serious, candid personal interviews about the experience ahead, and even a little fun with difficult to pronounce words—both in English and our students' native languages.

While the students in this issue represent part of our cohorts from China, Germany, Mexico, Spain, South Korea, and Thailand, equally precocious and excited PAXers from these and more than 65 other countries are still on their way—many still excited to hear whether they'll be headed to Alaska, Alabama, or Albuquerque. So, 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 us a call at 800.555.6211 or learn more at www.pax.org/families.

With which famous American would you most like to have dinner?



"What do you know about your future host state?" Julio Cesar (Mexico) and his peers are put on the spot.

Utterly Enchanting

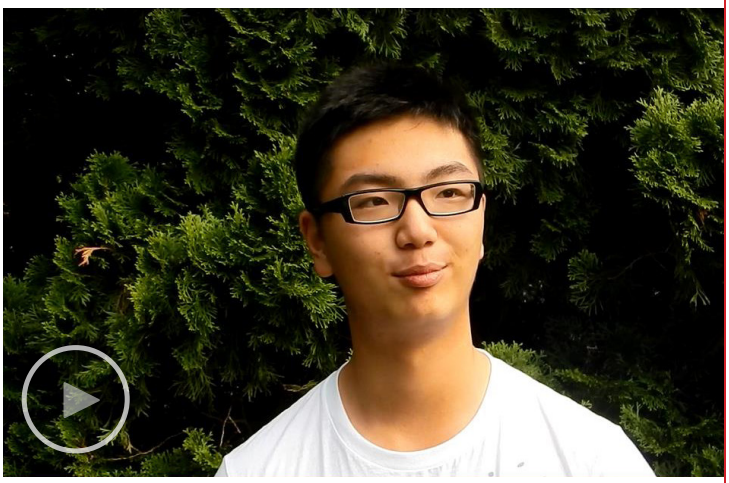
From naive questions, such as "What are those stairs on the buildings?" (fire escapes) to gasps and sheer wonder at the seemingly mundane (Canadian geese in the park), the students were freshly-arrived to the U.S. during our tour of New York. In fact, they nearly all zonked out following long flights the night before only to be awoken and shuttled into the city the next morning—dozing off again until a Korean student spotted the Manhattan skyline from the Queensboro Bridge. While perhaps a bit tired, it was determined long ago that holding students in a classroom-like setting for serious orientation material before they'd had a chance to explore the "cultural capital of the world" just beyond the campus gates would be cruel. So, day #1 is always The Big Apple!

While the geese and fire escapes were entirely new, the sites featured in *Spiderman* movies and *Gossip Girl* episodes were all too familiar. In fact, nearly everything could be put into pop culture terms. Our tour guide Rob quickly picked up on this—to the students' excitement. "Amar'e Stoudemire *really* lives there?" a basketball-crazy young man from China demanded.

For lunch, we grabbed a slice in Harlem with a view of St. John the Divine. "Anyone want another?" "*Yo!*" ("me") a growing Spanish youth exclaimed—not yet used to quick responses in his new language. On our way back downtown, a brimming German girl called, "There's the Chrysler Building!"—obviously having researched in advance. The pack of PAXers raised their smartphones in unison, instantly beaming the image back to whence they came. A harbor boat tour, Rockefeller Center, Museum Mile…all but those who've worked as hard as these students and dreamt about it for so long would have yielded to exhaustion.

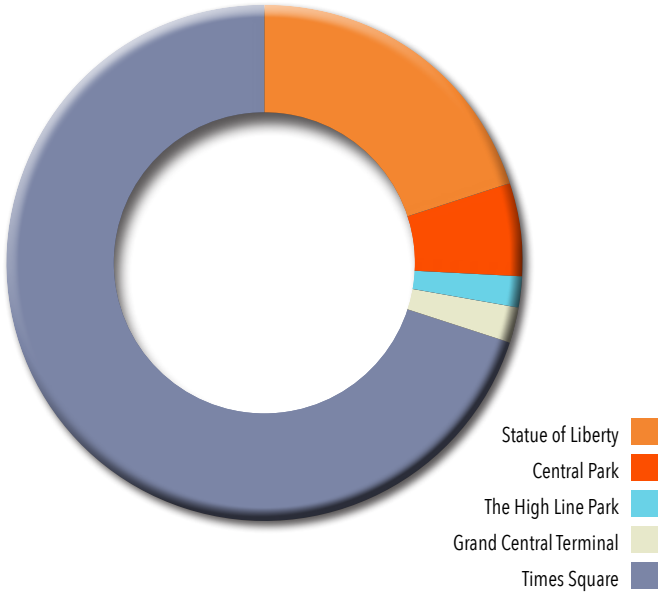
As night descened upon the otherwise indifferent metropolis, a Thai teen stood arms outstretched, twirling in the artificial luminescence of Times Square. A collective contentment washed over the cohort—they'd made it.

Ines and Zurine (Spain) pose in front of their tour boat and a certain, celebrated bridge to Brooklyn.



NYC tour behind them, Harris (China) and the gang tell us what extracurriculars they're most looking forward to at their American high schools.

Which part of New York City was your favorite to visit?



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Orientation Workshops

From Fairytale to Fable

After a magical day in Manhattan, it was time for the teens to hunker down for the experience ahead. With friends and family hundreds or thousands of miles away and armed only with "big dreams, big hopes, a little English, and big suitcases"—as PAX's *The Ostrich & The Giraffe* exchange student fable goes—things were starting to sink in for the teens.

Sensing this, PAX staff sought the right balance between boosting their confidence and challenging them to get as much out of the day as possible. The students were asked to consider possible conflict scenarios in their host families and schools, imagine what culture shock may feel like, reexamine expectations, and explore hopes and fears. At day's end, one Mexican participant confessed this last exercise was what she found to be most useful, especially sharing the hopes and fears with her two neighbors. "Seeing that others are worried about the same things was reassuring," she explained.

Aimmy from Thailand (striped shirt) takes the lead in designing a flag that represents her team.

Extremely excited upon arrival, one German student left feeling more confident and clearheaded. "I still see that this will be a great experience," he said, "but I now understand better that it will not be easy. Luckily, I feel like I have the necessary tools." Perhaps more important than the tools or information is the *mindset* taught during arrival orientations—summed up best in *The Ostrich & The Giraffe*: "Ask questions. Keep an open mind. Think about other people. Say 'thank you.' Stick your neck out—be a PAX giraffe."

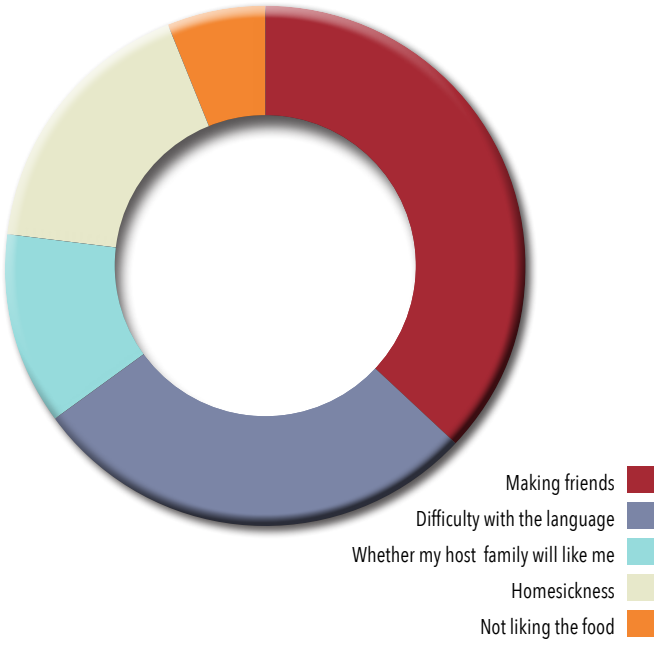
Best of luck, PAXers. We know you'll do great!

Nervous is Normal

The first day of school, finding people to sit with at lunch, meeting your host family, being able to express yourself adequately… all exchange students have been worried about these things, and it's entirely normal. On the evening before flying out to their host communities, "Orientation 1" students opened up about that one thing they've been worrying about most.

Germans Tammy, Tabea, and Katalin share what makes them most nervous about the experience ahead.

What is your biggest fear about the experience ahead in America?



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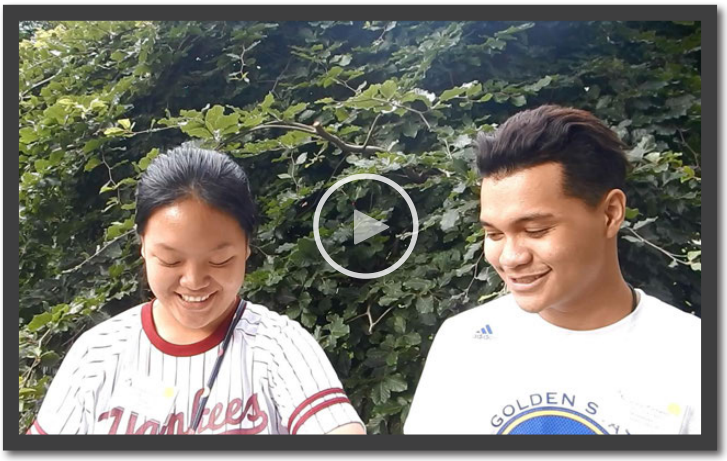
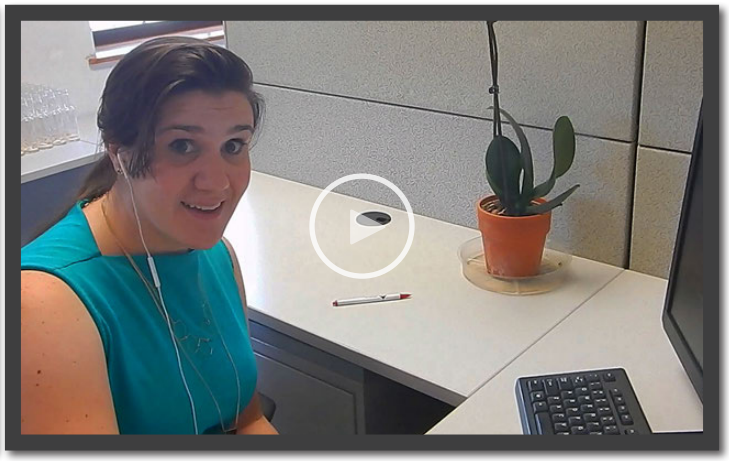
As Seen in Social Media



Fun With Tough English Words



PAX Staff Tries Students' Languages

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