January 2017 Vol. XXI, No. 6

Pax academic exchange

PAXPRESS

The Newspaper for Exchange Students, Host Families, and Schools

Inside this Issue

Winter Wonderland 2
Get Involved! 3
PAX PLUS.....4
Exchange Living 5
Fashion 6
As Seen in Social Media 7
Special Message 8

Over the winter break, our Utah cluster hit the snow tubing slopes! We spent our "fun-in-the-snow" day at Brian Head Resort in the southwestern part of the state. After we couldn't take any more, we were able to enjoy the spa facilities—especially the hot tub—inside the resort facilities. The hot water never felt so good for these teens!

In our postcard-worthy pic are (from left to right): Tianran and Chuyan (China), Maryam (YES, Nigeria), Thachaporn (Thailand), Sanna (Germany), me, Korapat (Thailand), and our Polish students Aleksandra and Jakub.

—Laurel Paul, community coordinator (UT)

Winter Wonderland

Sittie is all smiles on the slopes!

Ester (bottom), her host sister Andriana (top), and friends Lizzie and Sheila after a fun sled ride.

Stay Calm and Ski On

Skiing is definitely for people that come from tropical countries! Going down the slopes is not the easiest thing, especially for a person who is experiencing her first winter. The Bridge Community Church youth group went on a skiing trip to Caberfae Peaks Ski Resort in Cadillac, MI. It was a fun experience. Not only being able to ski, but it also let me spend some time with my friends. Our youth leader, Eric Lehman, taught me how to ski. I learned and am sharing my breakthrough run in this video.

—Sittie (YES, Philippines), hosted by the Hunt family (IN)

A Birthday Surprise

On my 17th birthday, I got to see snow for the first time in my life! I was so happy to see snow that when I went outside, I forgot to check the door and got locked out for about 30 minutes until my host sister and my host dad came home from the store.

I went to the mountain with friends and played in the snow there too, on a sled. This experience was a mixture of things: learning, fun, and happiness. I added another golden page in the book of my exchange.

—Ester (YES, Indonesia), hosted by the Heike family (WA)

Rushana and host sisters Natalie and Masia enjoy a happy snow day.

A Season of Firsts

This winter has been a season of delightful firsts for Rushana. One of these was the concept of a snow day. While snow in her home country of Kyrgyzstan is common, weather-related school cancellations are highly unusual. We had our first snow day off from school in December. Upon hearing this news, Rushana first expressed shock, then disbelief, which soon dissolved into giddiness. She and her two equally giddy host siblings bolted outside and spent hours building snowmen together.

In December, Rushana also experienced her first Christmas and her first Hanukkah. She participated wholeheartedly in our family's holiday traditions and boldly tried new foods, learned some traditional (and not so traditional) holiday songs, and took part in holiday customs. An important tradition in our family is to take meaningful time to simply be together, and games spontaneously begin. For all of us, the highlight of our holiday festivities was several dozen intense rounds of the board game Life. As unforgettable as it was for Rushana, it was equally unforgettable for us as hosts.

—Sara Conklin (NH), host mom of Rushana (FLEX, Kyrgyzstan)

Back to Front Page

Get Involved!

My "Star Moment"

All my life, everybody has told me that I have to play basketball. When I came to America, people started telling me the same thing, especially in my community, where sports are a big deal. So I finally said yes and signed up for basketball.

I started with zero skills—I had never held a basketball before. My team and coaches were extremely friendly, supportive, and welcoming. I practiced every single day, including extra practices on Sundays. We played two games a week, and my family was always there cheering for me.

One day my star moment happened. In the third quarter of a game, I scored eight points! My hard work paid off, and the whole gym was cheering for me. It was amazing! And then, not long ago, my team won the county championship. I told my coach that playing basketball was one of the best decisions of my exchange year. I'm so grateful!

—Santa (FLEX, Lithuania), hosted by the Castleberry family (AL)

Santa drops in two of her eight during her "star moment."

Pursuing Nature

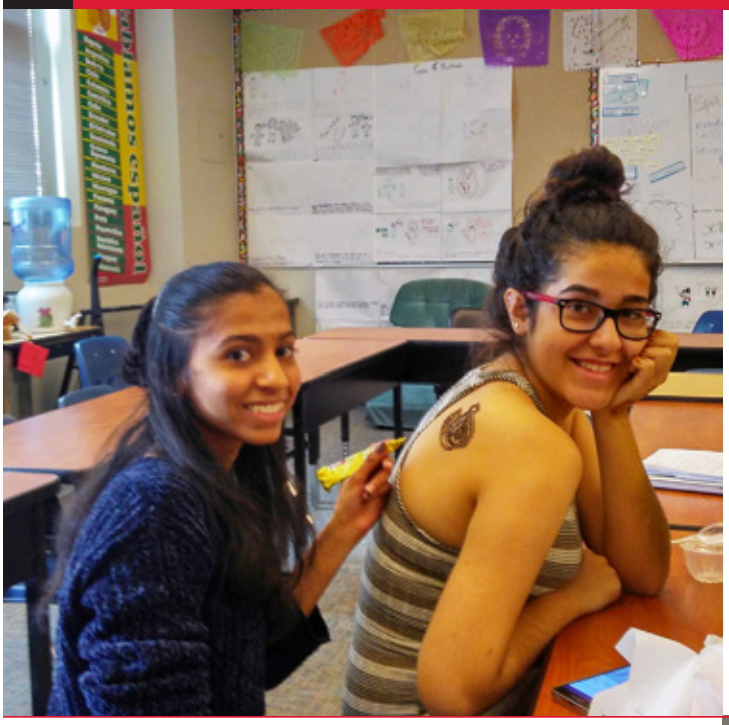
Oil paint is my favorite. I like the texture of the oil paint. The stiffness of the paint body allows a feeling of three dimensionality. My works focus on natural things, because I love the nature and the human body. I paint a natural view: flowers, trees, seas, and sun. I am trying to combine all of the natural stuff together in my series of paintings.

—Chuyan ("Anna") (China), hosted by the Aase family (UT)

Anna hard at work in her "studio"

A couple of select works

Back to Front Page



Starting New Traditions

One of my aims in coming here was to share my knowledge and skills, which might be totally new for others. Being in different clubs in school encouraged me to start my own, which was also the perfect opportunity to share about my country, India. Two months ago, I started Hindi Club.

We have been learning basic Hindi, how to introduce ourselves, and much more. I even taught club members the Indian national anthem, which wasn't easy! I am pretty good at henna designs, so I did some during a meeting. The girls were crazy about henna. They were so excited to get an Indian tattoo!

It makes me happy to see the increasing number of students in the club. I plan to do new and interesting things to keep the club running successfully.

—Ruksar (YES, India), hosted by the (Whitener) family (AZ)

Ruksar does a beautiful henna design on fellow exchange student Ayten (YES, Turkey).

Busy American Life

We all aspire to something in our lives. What I am most proud of is coming to the U.S. as an exchange student. When I came to America, my entire life changed, and my schedule became amazingly busy—school, volleyball, new friends and family. I was not use to this in Kyrgyzstan. Somehow, we have also found time for me to give many cultural presentations here.

While I represent my country each day, formally presenting Kyrgyzstan has been a great honor. No one knows about my country; I am proud that I could be an ambassador, showing my American community how beautiful it is. Likewise, I am so thankful for my host parents Terry and Karen Fawcett who have taught me so much about American culture.

—Saltanat (FLEX, Kyrgyzstan), hosted by the Fawcett family (IN)

Saltanat explains the significance of the various elements of the Kyrgyz flag.

Rizky shares his language with junior high students in Wisconsin.

IEW Is Still in My Memory

International Education Week is done, but the sweet experience I got is still on my mind. I did multiple presentations for sixth graders. We explored Indonesian culture through a lot of activities. We learned where Indonesia is located in addition to religions, food, and customs. In my presentations, we listened to Indonesian traditional music played on a sasando and saw Indonesian traditional clothes—especially the ones that I wore. The most exciting things we did were learning Bahasa Indonesia (Indonesian national language) and traditional dances like *poco-poco* and *saman*. We really had fun—they kept complaining "Rizky, the time goes so fast, we still want to learn about Indonesia and play with you."

—Rizky (YES, Indonesia), hosted by the Oestreich family (WI)

Back to Front Page

Amazing Ups and Downs

Wow! I can't believe it's already a new year, which means I'm halfway through my exchange year in the U.S. From New Year's Eve with Indian samosas made by my cool host mom to the insane snowstorms in Michigan and from learning I was a finalist to participate in the Civic Education Workshop to spending time with my fellow exchange students exploring our host city—every day is worth remembering.

These past months have been spent understanding myself with different kinds of people and in new situations. Overall, it has been a great ride with its ups and downs.

—Sushant (YES, India), hosted by the Ford family (MI)

Sushant pauses to reflect on his time as an exchange student during his exploration of his home away from home.

Living the Dream

I went to Orlando, FL, with my host family, or rather with my "family." I stopped calling them my "hosts" a long time ago, because I believe that the people who treat you no differently than their family, who love you, care for and look after you like their own and out of the warmth of their hearts, make you a part of their family.

I truly had the time of my life. We went to Florida on a week-long vacation to enjoy the sun and warmth. To my surprise, I got the chance to go to Universal Studios, which had always been my dream. Now, I realize that dreams do come true when you love, respect, understand, connect, and build bridges. Moments like these in my life teach me a lot and make me realize the purpose of being a cultural ambassador and how important it is to represent your country.

—Yousaf (YES, Pakistan), hosted by the Staff family (WI)

Yousaf and his family (sister Abbi, mom Sarah, and brother Cooper) had a blast at Universal Studios!

Back to Front Page

High Fashion in Utah!

Three PAX students attending Tuacahn High School for the Performing Arts in Ivins, UT, participated in a fashion show with designs created in their fashion class. Students spent an entire semester working on their fashion pieces and were thrilled when they got to show them off.

Two of the designers offered their thoughts. "I got inspiration for colors I used on the dress I made from beautiful orange rocks and hills that are very common in the area where I live," says Anamaria (YES, Bosnia and Herzegovina). "Being an exchange student doesn't only give you opportunity to meet and discover other people, but it also helps you discover parts of you that you never knew had existed." "My inspiration is colors and flowers," says Maryam (YES, Nigeria). "Creativity lies within everyone."

—Laurel Paul (UT), community coordinator

Anamaria and Maryam enjoy the show where their designs were modeled.

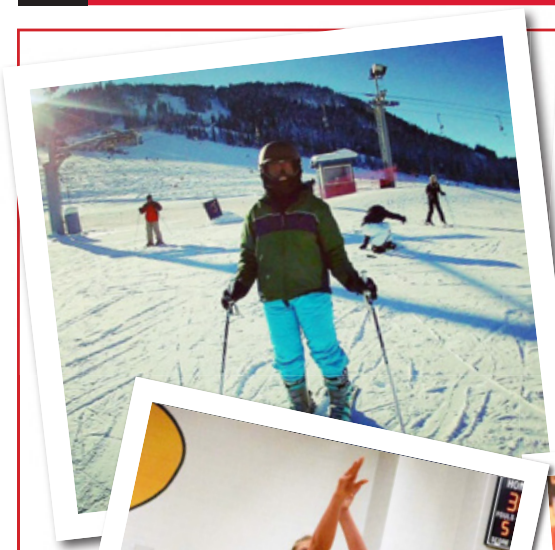
Chuyan ("Anna") (China) hosted by the Aase family models a dress of her own design.

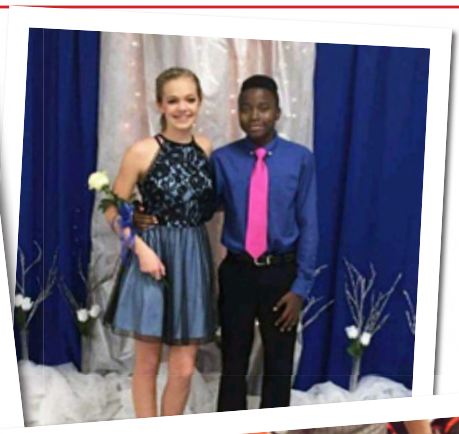
Sheena (2014/15 PAX alum, YES, Philippines) looks gorgeous in a dress designed by Anamaria.

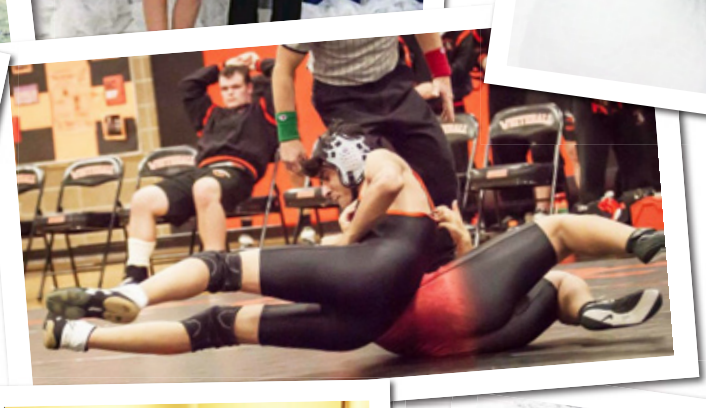
Modeled by American student Shilo, this dress was designed by Maryam.

Back to Front Page

As Seen in Social Media



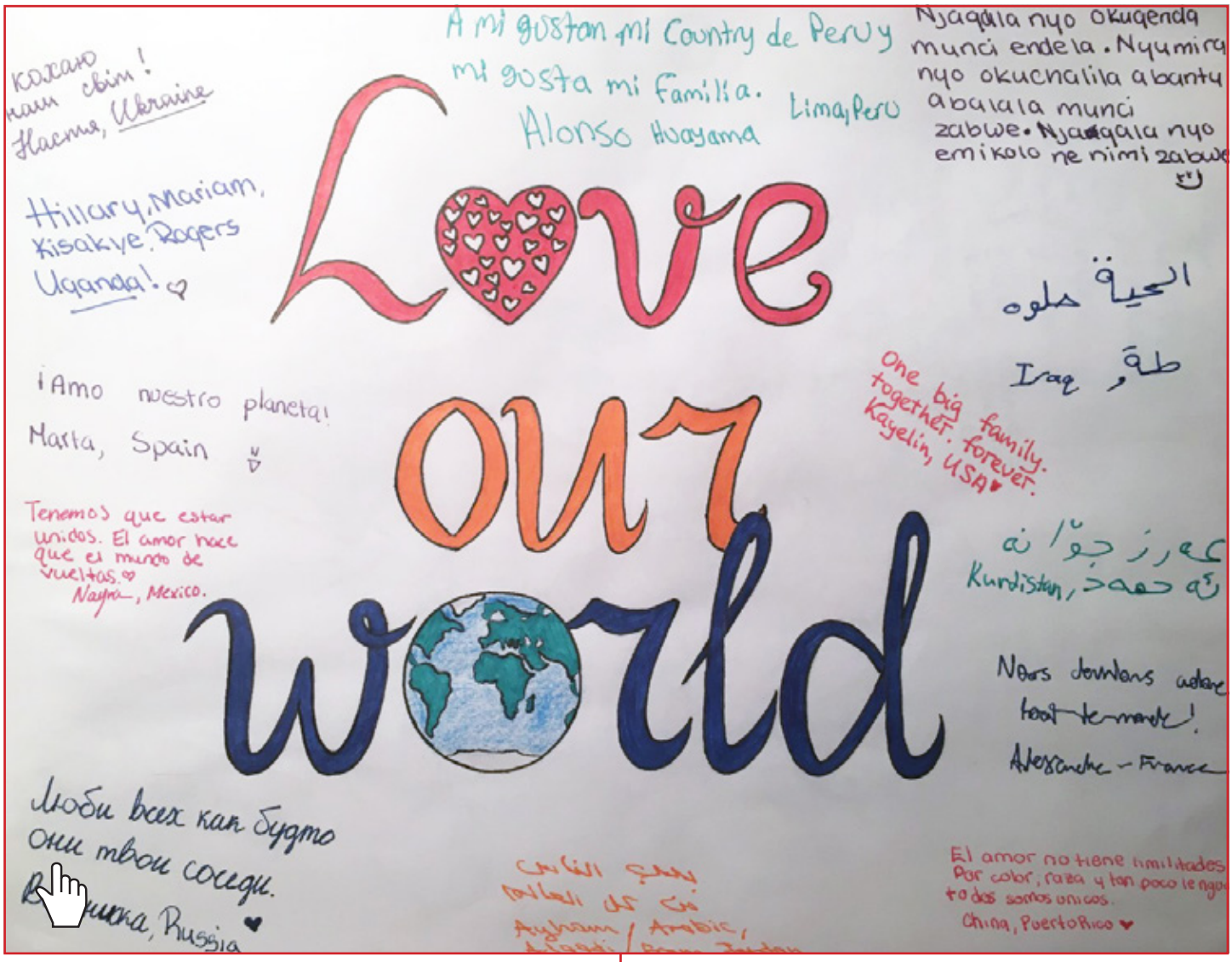




Click on any image to view full post or watch video

Back to Front Page

Special Message



Love our World

There's one special concept that I've realized as an exchange student, and I'd like to share it with you...

Life is not only about you, your town, or your country. It's about us—humans. It never matters where you're from, what color your skin is, or what physical or mental abilities you have. We all are one family, and we are only strong when we are together.

Thinking about this inspired me to create this project.

—Anastasiya (FLEX, Ukraine)
hosted by Shank family (VA)

PAX Press is published monthly by
PAX – Program of Academic Exchange.
14 Willett Avenue, Port Chester, NY 10573
800.555.6211
www.pax.org

President
Bradley Smith

Marketing & Communications Director
Nicholas Burtscher

Editor
Nancy Griffin-Bonnaire

Art Director
Pajes Sterman

Back to Front Page