Foreign exchange program and new students

By Mara LeFevre

This year is not only a new year for returning JHS students, but it is a new year for our schools' foreign exchange students. Our schools' exchange program gives students the opportunity to experience a diverse culture society. All three students not only knew that they wanted to come to America, but that they wanted to experience our school system and way of life. I have interviewed all three exchange students to receive their opinions and take on there new life, here in the United States of America.

The first student I interviewed is named Annie. Annie is currently a Junior here at Jamestown High School. She is originally from the world's most populated country; China. "I wanted to broaden my horizon and learn more things about other countries," she said. Annie expressed interest in learning about new cultures, specifically America. She explained how big of an adjustment it was. "America has a lot of new customs, especially with the food and eating habits." She goes on to explaining how much larger our school was. Annie also talks about the difference in learning hours per day. She explains, "In China, we have only three classes and lots more homework. We go to school a lot earlier." Her school day starts with waking up at 6:40 p.m. Her school hours last until 5:30 p.m. From there she eats dinner and does more homework until 9:30 p.m. When her school day ends, Annie returns to her school dormitory, where she lives during the week. During my interview with Annie, I learned about her interest and passion with not only the U.S., but other countries as well.

The second student I had the pleasure to interview was Paul. Paul is also a Junior here at JHS. Paul expressed his interest in the foreign exchange program because of the abundance of opportunity and growth. Paul lives in Frankfurt, Germany. He loves his host family because they are a big family and have a lot of animals, but definitely misses his family back in Germany. Originally, Paul wanted to go to a big city such as New York City or Los Angeles. However, after experiencing Jamestown, Paul thinks that it is bigger than he expected. "At first I thought there was only a supermarket and a few people," he said, but that is obviously not the case. Paul also mentioned the bigger population comparison between Frankfurt and Jamestown. Frankfurt consists of around 100,000 people and Jamestown consists of about 15,000 people. Paul says, "I feel like I am (Continued to page 8)
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(continued from Page 7) in a new world, because no one knows me and I don't know any of them, but everyone is really nice." Ultimately, Paul wants to take a college entrance exam back in Germany. After that, he wants to travel the world for one year and hopefully come back to Jamestown. Then Paul wants to possibly go into law enforcement. During my interview with Paul, I learned so much about society in Germany and its comparison with the United States.

The last student I interviewed was named Linna. Linna is from Murs, Germany. The foreign exchange program gives Linna a lot to adjust to when going from Germany to the U.S. She says it is very different to stay with a totally new family and come to a different school. Linna also talks about the difference in school systems. In Germany she explains how every day, they have different classes; where in the U.S. we take the same classes every day. Like Annie and Paul, Linna also talks about the difference in population. Her home city of Murs has about 100,000 people. Linna emphasizes the big adjustment and differences in the U.S., but she really enjoys it. Linna had always had her sights set on coming to America and really loves the difference in cultures and society.

After interviewing all three students, I have learned about the diversity and cultures they bring to Jamestown High School. They all said it was a big adjustment, but that they all really loved it. In my opinion, our school's foreign exchange program is very valuable and a great opportunity for students wanting to experience a different culture and country. A lot can be learned from these three students. Each of them bring a different set of qualities to our school. Get the opportunity to get to know them and see how much you can learn from them, as well as them learn from you.

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This past July, students from Jamestown High School’s Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) group, along with FCA advisor Mr. Smith, traveled to Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. The trip was part of the AIM Athletes International Missions company.

While the students were there, they put on sports camps for the kids in the communities. They reached over 6,000 kids. During camp they provided lunch, sports coaching and a bible lesson.

The students from JHS who attended the mission trip were Rachel Morin, Maggie Ridley Seth Kenna, Maddy Mandan, Josh Schulz, Ben Hanson, Carter Weiser, Adam Reiten, Beau Waldoch, Ethan Haut, Jacob Ament, and Erin Hillerud.

FCA meets Sundays in the Commons during the school year at 8:00 pm.
Jamestown High School scored big last spring when they hired new principal Adam Gehlhar to its staff and welcomed him back to the Jamestown community.

Gehlhar isn’t a new face for many here in Jamestown. He grew up in a farm near Ypsilanti, ND, and attended school in Jamestown. In fact, many of the teachers still here at JHS had Gehlhar as a student! Gehlhar and his wife Ashley, who owns a graphic design and handmade art business, have two daughters: Brynn (age 5) and Elise (age 2). Both daughters keep Gehlhar entertained and motivate him to ensure our schools are preparing students for their future, not their past.

After spending twelve years in the National Guard and enduring two deployments, Gehlhar says it was there where he learned a lot about leadership and how people learn. “The world isn’t as linear as it used to be, and I learned that effective leaders empower people around them to work as a team to meet complex challenges. That’s why I like to be a collaborative leader, and when possible to make decisions by consensus. I try to remain open-minded to get as close to the full picture as possible keeping in mind our vision for our students,” he said.

A graduate of NDSU in Social Science Education, Gehlhar first taught at Cheney Middle School where he was also a founding member of the West Fargo STEM Center. It was there that he taught as part of an interdisciplinary team. From there, Gehlhar spent a year as an interim Assistant Principal at West Fargo High School and also spent three years as an Assistant Principal and Activities Director for Cheney Middle School.

Professionally, Gehlhar loved his time spent in West Fargo and had a difficult time leaving a well-established network of friends, colleagues, and students. But, he was looking for a change, which led him back “home”. “My professional reasons for coming here [Jamestown] were because of the caliber of the staff and the size of the school,” said Gehlhar. “We have a lot more green space than most communities, beautiful parks and recreation sites, golf courses, lots of outdoor hunting, hiking, rodeos, fishing, local art, and music opportunities…I like the medium-sized town feeling and know there is an engaged community here.”

Gehlhar’s move to JHS has been welcomed. “It has been a great move, and in my first few months, I have found so much support and so many people willing to help me get settled. This, of course, makes me work even harder to serve this community,” said Gehlhar.

Gehlhar feels that Jamestown High School is of a size where both cultural and instructional shifts can be understood, supported, and innovation can flourish. He stated his opinion that JHS has always been a great school, but now it’s time to “add some new layers to a solid foundation.”

Transitioning from West Fargo where he was privileged to teach at a school that was developed from scratch and a place where the staff was able to establish a culture where kids loved coming to school and participating in authentic, purposeful, and deeper learning, he’s hoping to help the JHS staff develop a shared vision of education to make learning not only enjoyable but purposeful. To do this, Gehlhar has the staff actively involved in PLCs (Professional Learning Communities) and has started to engage the community in these same conversations as well. “This is a vital aspect of creating...Continued to Page 11
opportunities for real world integration with our learning outcomes,” he stated. So far, he has two committees meeting; one to look at submitting a STEM Innovation Grant, and one to develop a capstone project/internship program for seniors to explore their passions.

Outside of school, Gehlhar loves to spend time learning with his two children. “I don’t know much about pop culture or professional sports but have lots of friends that keep me in the know. I would rather read a book or learn something online than turn on a TV,” he said. He actually finds it relaxing working at his parents’ farm and when he finds extra time, he enjoys hunting, camping, and working on house projects.

However, he spends the majority of his time focused on learning about national trends and ideas for innovating education. He follows a lot of education and business thought leaders on Twitter. His involvement in supporting education is evident. “I have been fortunate to be a presenter at TEDx Fargo, SxSW Education in Houston, twice at the Association for Middle Level Education National Conference, the 21st Century Conference, ND STEM Summit, and was published in the Middle School Journal with an article called “Deconstruction Geography”. I participated in a nanoscience internship at NDSU, teachers in industry improve in their field. Because our world changes so quickly I believe we need to prepare students to be creators, critical thinkers, communicators, and collaborators. Those are enduring skills, we need everyone to learn how to learn, how to stay healthy and happy and to find something they are passionate about that contributes to our society. I look forward to serving our students towards those goals.”

Gehlhar finished with his belief that students are the most important stake-holders in the learning process. Much of what he is leading this year through the school’s site based leadership team is understanding how students experience school through focus groups, looking at achievement data, and student shadowing.

“I try to remain open-minded to get as close to the full picture as possible keeping in mind our vision for our students.”— Mr. Gehlhar
STUDENTS’ ART WORK

Comic #1

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Time for you to get a watch

For time

Not funny

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This program was brought in by Nancy R. Wolf. Joe Wescom, why played Reginal in the play, was her great-uncle. She is married to Ronald R. Wolf, who graduated from JHS in 1962. She has three children who also graduated from JHS: Anthony Wolf in 1992; Tara (Wolf) Kapp in 1996; and Cameron Wolf in 1998. Her grandson is Cole Kapp, who currently attends JHS!