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Matheus Paes, left, and Danilo Carneiro ham for the camera while listening to an iPod. Both are students from Brazil who are attending Whiteland Community High School. Paes has had his share of American junk food since arriving in Johnson County. "I've gained 50 pounds since I got here," Paes said.

Coming to America

High school students acclimate to new American habits, food

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Y'all speak French here? When Charlyne Tremblais of France applied to study in the United States, she spiced her application with expressions her father learned from his time spent as a foreign exchange student in Texas.

Tremblais' application had a Southern flavor, said Jayme Tunis, executive director of Foreign Links Around the Globe International and Beyond, a group that places exchange students.

It was peppered with "y'all" and other phrases she learned from her parents, Tunis said.

Tremblais is spending the year attending Franklin Community High School. She is one of 19 foreign students from around the globe spending time in Johnson County.

Other students hail from nations Brazil, the Czech Republic, Spain and South Korea.

This year, four public high schools in Johnson County are hosting exchange students. Franklin and Whiteland both have five, Center Grove has six, and Indian Creek has three.

Each student is placed with a host family. From their hosts, they learn about American culture in a way they can't learn from a textbook.

Some students spend the entire school year here, while others stay for just a semester. Most have studied English in their home schools.

They find many differences between life in their home countries and in the United States.

A Brazilian student observed that the price of cars is cheaper here and that American culture is more conservative.

"Here is more formal," said Matheus Paes, 17. "The way the students call teachers 'Mr.' and



Jan Vlasak of Czech Republic poses for a photograph shortly after arriving in the United States to attend Franklin Community High School. He likes the American TV show "24." The first season of the series played last year in Vlasak's country, but he learned "24" is in its sixth season here.

"Mrs.' In Brazil, we call them by their first names."

Paes, who attends Whiteland Community High School, said buying a car for less than \$20,000 is unheard of in Brazil, and that price would buy only a cheap model.

For Jan Vlasak, 17, from Czech Republic, the number of hugs he receives here is far from the norm at home.

"In my country, it's normal to shake a hand, and that's it," said Vlasak, who is spending the semester at Franklin Community High School.

Here, everyone hugs all the time, he said. For Paes, his home experience is full of video games. His host family has multiple game systems, including the new Nintendo Wii.

But American culture, with its penchant for fast food, comes with a price.

"I've gained 50 pounds since I got here," Paes said.

Americans have plenty of junk food, fast food and soda, says Danilo Carneiro, 17, of Brazil.

He's used to drinking soda only on the weekends, and meals normally are cooked from scratch at home, said Carneiro, who's attending Whiteland Community High school.

Vlasak thinks the many fast food choices are great. At home, McDonald's and KFC are the only options, he said.

He also was introduced to an American staple: peanut butter. He had never had the sticky food before coming to America, and he's not fond of it.

Tremblais recently had peanut butter for the first time as well and loves it. She does miss the food at home, though.

Time with host families requires adjustments for both the student and host parents.

Vicki Pope, art teacher at Whiteland Community High School and host mother to Carneiro, has hosted exchange students from various countries over the years.

"The daily things that you take for granted, like the chores that your other children do, or the things that you just know, you have to teach them to people," Pope said. "So, if you don't know what they are, you find those out as you go."

Pope stresses two things to the exchange students she hosts: She values her quiet time, and no one uses any water in the house while she is in the shower.

Being a host is a rewarding experience, Pope said. Her son is able to have a brother figure in the house and has someone to play video games with.

Exchange students shared Hoosiers' excitement over the Colts' Super Bowl win this year.

Tremblais attended a Colts game and compared the experience to what she calls football and what Americans call soccer.

She noticed some differences between the two sports. Professional sports teams in France don't have mascots or cheerleaders.

Sports differ at the high-school level.

Guillermo "Will" Puch, 15, from Spain, played soccer and basketball at Trinity Lutheran High School in Seymour during the fall semester before transferring to Whiteland for the rest of the school year.

In Spain, sports are played through expensive private clubs, not through the school, he said.

More school activities and events are a plus for many of the exchange students.

Tremblais attended Franklin's homecoming dance.

"It is exactly like American movies," she said, explaining the image of people dressed up and dancing in a gym, complete with a king and queen.

The exchange students said their view of American teen culture often is shaped by movies, television and music.

Vlasak experienced a kind of time warp when it came to popular TV programs.

In the Czech Republic last year, he saw the first season of the popular show "24." After coming to America, he discovered the show is already in its sixth season.

MinJung Choi, 16, of South Korea, said she has more time to watch television after classes at Whiteland high school end. In South Korea, she normally does schoolwork from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m.

"I feel like I'm getting lazy over here," she said.

TAKE NOTES

Students learn about state government as pages

The following students served as Indiana Senate pages, spending a day at the Statehouse assisting senators and staff members with a variety of legislative duties and learning about the structure of Indiana's government.

Home-schooled: Junior Emily Morgan and seventh-grader Riley Morgan, children of Randy and Joanie Morgan of Indianapolis

Donate prom dresses, accessories to other girls

Indian Creek High School is collecting prom dresses for a free dress giveaway in late March.

Prom accessories such as shoes or jewelry also can be donated.

To donate, contact Kendra Decker at kdecke@nhj.k12.in.us or 878-2142.



Students jump rope for heart association

Maple Grove Elementary School had 265 students participate in the Jump Rope for Heart fund-raiser.

The school raised \$11,566.91 for the American Heart Association.

The top fund-raiser was Vincent Elrod with \$325.

Center Grove show choirs earn accolades at contest

Center Grove High School show choirs competed against students from Alabama, Illinois, Indiana and Ohio in a recent contest in Danville, Ill.

CG Debtone's, the all-girls varsity choir, won grand champion in the unisex division, with special awards for costumes, visuals and vocals.

Junior Julie Nussbaum was named outstanding soloist.

Sophomore Chris Pearson won the outstanding performer award in the mixed choir division with the Surround Sound choir.

In the concert choir division, CG Singers won first runner-up. In the varsity mixed choir division, Center Grove Sound System won grand champion, with special awards for costumes, vocals and visuals.

Sophomore soloist Kyle Johnson was named an outstanding performer.

Indian Creek student honored for leadership

Indian Creek Middle School student Clinton Knapp is a finalist for the Indiana Middle Level Educators' Association Bright Star award.

Knapp was named a finalist based on positive leadership qualities, good citizenship, school and/or community service and academic excellence and/or exceptional work ethic.

He received a \$100 savings bond, a ticket to a Pacers' game and an engraved plaque.

Knapp will be honored during the opening session of the educators association's conference today, where the winner will be named.

Teen advances in business organization contest

Patricia Hollcraft, a Center Grove High School student who attends Central Nine Career Center, qualified for the state Business Professionals of America contest March 4 to 6 in Indianapolis.



"A cell phone to call if you need a rescue."

Kaley Heaberlin, 10, daughter of Rick and Ashley Heaberlin of Greenwood, fourth grade, Clark Elementary



"A healthy food product."

Kevin Stucker, 7, son of Kurt and Tammy Stucker of Franklin, first grade, Clark Elementary



Charlyne Tremblais, an exchange student from France, right, attended a Colts game with her host father, Mike Chitwood, and Chitwood's niece, Leah Fernsler. Tremblais is attending Franklin Community High School this year.

