

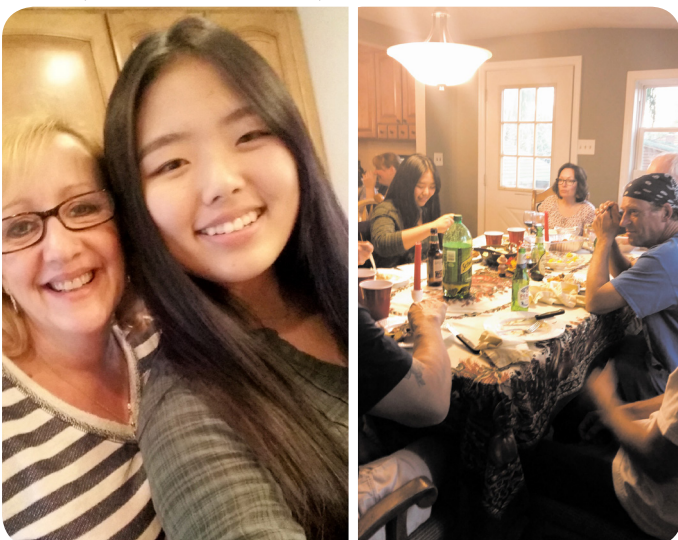
## Thanksgiving Dinner

Originated from the Pilgrims in the 1620s, Thanksgiving is the most celebrated holiday in the US. Although it wasn't my first Thanksgiving as a foreign exchange student, I never had an opportunity to have a legitimate Thanksgiving dinner. During the past few years, the family members would come over, but I just felt like there weren't any special vibes, or feelings of Thanksgiving. It rather felt like an ordinary dinner. So this year, I was very excited to celebrate Thanksgiving with my host family, because they are who I really love, and couldn't wait to meet the rest of the family members. Thursday morning, November 26th, my host mom and I went to aunt Maryann's house, where everyone is gathering this year. We were the first ones to arrive, so I got to help with preparing the meal. We spent some time together like playing games, talking about favorite music artists, and having some snacks while the meal was prepared. We also watched a football game, Philadelphia Eagles versus Detroit Lions. It is very typical to watch football on Thanksgiving. This tradition was started few years after President Lincoln declared Thanksgiving as an official holiday. Yale and Princeton were the first teams played on Thanksgiving in 1876. Since then, watching football games on Thanksgiving had become traditional and common. As the meal was ready, everyone sat down, said the blessing of the food. Few weeks ago, aunt Teresa and uncle Darryl went on a road trip to Texas to visit their relatives. So while we were having this delicious Italian traditional soup, they read their trip journal. The trip took about 2 weeks and their car broke down several times while they were traveling. It must have been a frustrating situation, but they rather found joy out of it, which was very inspiring. After the soup, we had the



traditional Thanksgiving dishes: turkey, mashed potatoes and gravy, stuffing, macaroni and cheese, potatoes and asparagus, bourbon yams, which are like sweet potatoes. I tried a little bit of everything because I didn't want to overeat myself, (I knew I'm going to have some pie for dessert too!) but I could barely finish what was on my plate. After dinner, we celebrated aunt Maryann's daughter Maddie's and uncle Ray's and Kaitlyn's birthday with pumpkin pie as birthday cake. Our host family has this unique tradition when they celebrate birthday, the birthday person has to wear a Mexican hat called sombrero. I've never heard any of this tradition until then, but I found it very interesting and fun. It might be a bit embarrassing for the birthday person, but I thought it really can be a great memory years later. This Thanksgiving was a big success and I could feel each one of the family members welcomed me to truly be a part of the family. I loved everyone and I could tell that everyone also loved me. From this year's Thanksgiving dinner, I learned that spending the holiday with people who I love is the best way to enjoy the holiday. I highly recommend other students in NACEL not to be afraid of being part of a new family, and really try to get involved, because it is really worth it.

-12기 이지원



## Homecoming

Definition of Homecoming in Northern American: a high school, college, or university game, dance, or other event to which alumni are invited.



Homecoming is one the most exciting event of the year in high school. Before the actual homecoming game, there is a thing called 'Spirit Week'. The school assigns different theme each day for the whole week, the spirit week. For St. Mary's Ryken High School, We were assigned Sports Jersey Day, Wacky Tacky Day, Character Day, Decade Day, and School

Color Day. Sport Jersey day we wore any kind of sports jersey whom you support. It could be football, Soccer, Ice-Hockey, or anything. Wacky Tacky Day is the weirdest. You wear any kind of cloth that doesn't match at all or anything you would never wear. Basically be crazy! Character days are the most fun. You can choose any kind of Disney character, animal, movie or show stars.

Maybe Ariel and Prince Eric like me and my friend might be a great idea for you next year.

Obviously decade day is wearing different decades. However, the only flaw is that you are assigned with different decades for each grade such as 50's for freshman, 60's for sophomores, 70's for juniors, and 80's for seniors. I can't wait to be senior. School color day de-

pends on you school color. If it's red, white and black, then those are the colors you would wear. People go especially crazy on this day. Tutus, neon colored tights, face paint, hair dye, big chained jewelries, etc. It kind of gets scary at first but you'll get used to it.

Most importantly, homecoming is all about the homecoming game and the dance. On the Game, we invite alumni who are the selected graduates and the homecoming court who are the elected princes and princesses for each grade. They'll be presented and announced in front of the whole student body and the guest. Most likely everyone will be attending the Game so if you don't go, you'll have no clue what's everyone talking about when you come back to school.

Usually the homecoming dances are held the night after the football game. Since I'm in the Student Activity Community(SAC), I was in charge of setting up the dance with my clubmates. The Whole gym is the stage and DJ sets, lights, balloons, confetti, drinks, etc. of course I had to rush back home and get ready for the night. Girls, don't forget, it's a big night that you can wear the prettiest dress you ever afford and amuse everyone. Guys, I would recommend a plain white shirt with black suit pants. At least try to match your tie with your date's dress color. And white corsage goes with everything just in case you are struggling with that. Oh, don't forget a jacket to warm up your lady from the cold!

For the last tip, this is very important. Have Fun! This experience is only available in High School. You go to high school once and you only have 4 years to experience everything. Take advantage the most out of it.

-12기 김지수



## Halloween decoration

Traditionally, during Halloween, most of Americans carve pumpkins and put them on outside for a part of Halloween decoration. Also usually they have get done carving pumpkins a week before Halloween because if you put them on earlier than that, those pumpkins are turning to nasty and going moldy. So, approximately a week before it, you may see other carved pumpkins from neighbors' houses. I and host mom went to Walmart to get three pumpkins like unusual because my host parents used to plant with their own pumpkins seeds on the backyard and used them for Thanksgiving decoration. Anyway we got the rounded and pretty pumpkins about two weeks before the actual Halloween day. While I was carving and designing my pumpkin, I

had so much fun. To make carving pumpkin, first we did cut the hole on the top of it, scoop out the flesh, pump, and seeds with a scraper or fleshing tool. When I scooped those everything inside of the pumpkin, it felt so gross but there was a fun because it was kind of my new experience to do. Then I picked up the image I wanted to do, sketched, and designed it on pumpkin and carved it followed the line that I drew with sharp knife or needle tool. Lately put the small lights(candles) inside of pumpkin at night. It looked so cool but I forgot to take those pictures so there is no picture of them to show you. My host dad put turn lights on outside of house to inform we are participating trick or treat; traditional event when kids are coming to home to get candies. In this year,



it lasted about 4 hours long from 4 pm to 8 pm. People started to come around 4:30 pm. They are knocked the door and say "trick or treat" when I open the door and handed out some candies to people who came for "trick or treat". Most of them are children from 2 years old babies to people who are at my age rarely. They got costumes like a batman, spider man, pumpkin, banana, hot dog, ghost, or spooky man.

-12기 오수경



## Black Friday

Shopaholics' favorite day is here! Black Friday is the day of shopping, discount and happiness. People spend this whole day purchasing and visiting their favorite shops. Since this sale usually continues till the week-ends, there are enough time to get awesome stuffs for satisfying price. For the black Friday shopping, people choose to either go to a mall or shop online. Last year, I went to King of Prussia, which is known as the second largest mall in the U.S. to shop. It was nice that I can actually touch and try things on, but I had to spend at least ten minutes waiting in a line. The mall was quite crowded and it seemed like I was wasting time on standing in endless lines. Therefore, I decided to do online shopping rather than going out this year. Since there were lots of online shops that have great deals, it was easy to pick and buy what I wanted. Although I was not certain whether my ordered product will satisfy me since I did not see them in my real eyes, I think they will be fine. However, I held on some stuffs for "Cyber Monday," which is the Monday following Thanksgiving, promoted by online retailers as a day for exceptional bargains. I surfed a few websites, I found some wonderful ones. I like to introduce them below:



- Otterbox: This is a privately owned consumer electronics accessory company that produces water resistant, shock resistant, and drop resistant cases for mobile devices. My friend introduced me this store.
- Hickies: This brand sells specialized shoelaces that let people slip their shoes on and off without ever having to tie the shoes. It has a variety of color and size.
- Foot Locker: It is a sportswear and footwear retailer. It has some really well-designed shoes and I was impressed by their discount for certain products.

-12기 정은교



## Boo! Halloween



Ugh, why does it feel so spooky today? Because today is Halloween! Every October 31st, which is end of the October, is Halloween. Halloween is one of the most important holidays to Americans and they celebrate it by going trick or treating, welcoming trick or treaters, carving pumpkins (making Jack O' Lanterns), and by decorating their house in the spirit of Halloween. We celebrate Halloween in Korea, but not as big as America.

So it was my first experience going through big American holiday, and it was really fun and awesome. After I came back to home, I wondered why did people started to celebrate Halloween. I looked up, and it told me that Halloween is a time of celebration and superstition. It is thought to have originated with the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain, when people would light bonfires and wear costumes to ward off roaming ghosts. It also said that it straddles the line between fall and winter, plenty and paucity, and life and death. Our school gave us permission to dress like anything we want to be, so everyone was excited to dress up. My friends and I couldn't decide what we should be and we ended up being cats. I went to CVS and bought lots of black makeups for it. I was excited to be a cat. Because we were in high school, we didn't do any activities or party during the day. But it was still fun to see everyone dressed up silly. After school, my friends and I decided to go trick or treating. Technically, all of us are above 13 and we can't go trick or treat. We were too old for it. However, who cares. We were just excited to

have sweets and gain weights ;). I wanted to be something else than cat for trick or treating because it was too simple. So, I dressed up and put make up like zombie. I actually enjoyed being zombie because

lots of little children that I met during trick or treating, ran away after they saw my face. It was fun to scare people. Trick or treating started at 6pm, and ended up at about 9pm.

Knocking on strangers' doors and saying trick or treat was very unique experiences. First of all, lots of Koreans lives in apartment as you know. However most of Americans live in house. It was unique to walk all the houses instead of apartments. Every neighbor that we walked felt like small city to me. After while my legs started to hurt, but I didn't want to stop. I was having a fun night. I love Halloween: ).

-12기 정지우



# Thanksgiving



In United States, people celebrate thanksgiving which is Choo- Seok in Korea. Thanksgiving started long time ago when the pilgrims, who were looking for a new world, came to America and met Native Americans. The pilgrims and Native Americans celebrated the day having a big meal and fiesta for the new start and being thankful each other. As the celebration passed through the generations, people still honor thanksgiving with the similar mind set as before, being thankful for

things and people that they have especially the friends and families. Also, just like Choo – Seok in Korea, people get a week – long of break from work and school. Thanksgiving date actually changes every year because thanksgiving does not have an exact date but instead, it is officially decided to be on the 4th Thursday of November.

This year, it was on November 26th. My host family always think the family as the first priority and the most important thing so we

had a big meal at my host family's house with grandparents and all the cousins. Unlike the other families, my host father cooks. Since he is the only one who actually knows how to cook and there are lots of food to be cooked, he started cooking 2 days earlier. He made onions with cream sauce, stuffing, turkey, pumpkin pie, sweet potato pie, mash potato and turnip greens etc.. There were A LOTTTT of food.

Addition to Thanksgiving, there are two different big things follow through. About 73 million people around the country watch this parade on the TV which is a giant parade mainly about Thanksgiving but also including the celebrities and Christmas things. Speaking of Christmas, another big thing is the ELF! Little kids in America believe in Elf and they believe that the ELF always come back on the thanksgiving night.

People also call Thanksgiving as the intro of all the holidays such as Christmas and New Year. My family went up to the farm on Friday after Thanksgiving to get a tree and decorated with the ornaments and lights. We all are so pumped up for winter holidays!

Yayyyyyy

-12기 김예나



## Christmas – Gingerbread House and Tree



Everything changes all the sudden after Thanksgiving to Christmas. My host family loves decorating the house so right after Thanksgiving, my host parents worked really hard on decorating stuff with Christmasy things. Even though I am not really good at decorating the house, I love putting ornaments on the tree and making gingerbread house with Christmas music on and that is what I did on the break!

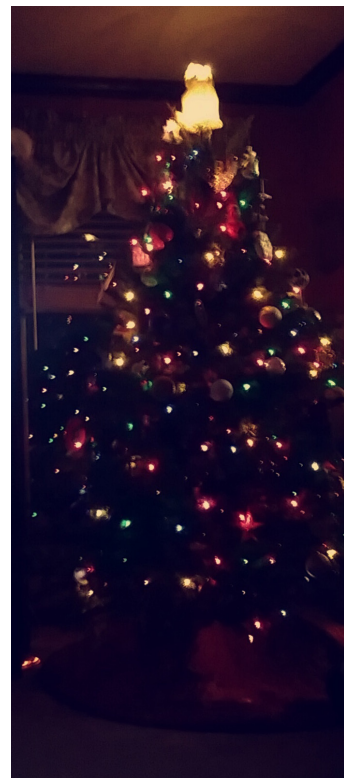
A friend of my host mother invited us to join the gingerbread house party. I was so excited because that is one of my favorite parts of Christmas since I get to make my own gingerbread village and get to each tons of candies. Before we went to the friend's house, we stopped at Wegmans to get the gingerbread house kit. My host sister really was willing to make a village with a train just like the movie "Polar Express". However, we realized it is too much work to make both a big village AND a train, so we decided to make a house and a train. My host father and sister worked on the house while my host mother and I worked on the train. The train was a bit harder to build since it was not stable enough to keep it stand. Through all the mess and hardness, by cooperating with my host mom, the train was successfully built! Still, it was another big homework to bring it with us but again we made it!

After the gingerbread house, we stopped at the farm and picked the best tree for Christmas. We could not decide what kind of tree we really want then we all agreed to get the fat three. When we got home with the tree, our family went crazy with decorating and putting or-

naments on the tree. Even the dog went crazy!

After all the Christmas tree and the gingerbread house, I truly could feel the Christmas spirit! I can't wait for the Christmas Eve and gifts.

-12기 김예나



## Holidays



There are a lot of holidays in America such as Thanksgiving and Christmas, most likely Christianity related. Those two are like the biggest holidays in United States. You are familiar with Christmas but might not be with Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving is the act of giving thanks; grateful acknowledgment of benefits or favors, especially to God. Thanksgiving with my host family was a blast. Cooking pies and making stuffing together. Also I had to drive 2 hours away to Virginia to their relatives' house. It might be longer for you depending on your host family or what your plans are.

Arriving to their house, I've noticed other families have driveways full of cars that they need to use the streets. I guess holidays really do bring families together. In the house, we had whole table full of pies and deserts and the other table filled with food such as turkey which is very important, stuffing, sweet potato with marshmallows, mashed potatoes, gravy, asparagus, green beans, and cranberry sauce. We gathered around, catch up and hung out. Before supper, we held hands and circled around the table with food. Each of us took turns and said something we are thankful for. It's a whole new experience than before. You usually can't find this kind of tradition in Korea.

After Thanksgiving, on the next Friday is called Black Friday. Most of you are not familiar with this concept, black Friday is a day when every store in the country has huge sale and a lot of people buy expensive items or do Christmas shopping. This year, my host sisters and I went a little excessive about shopping. After the thanksgiving dinner, we hit 2 different malls and an outlet. by that time, it was 3 in the morning. We took a quick 2 hour nap and went back shopping. I didn't get as many items as I wanted but I was amazing bonding with my host sisters and staying up all night driving around the state. By the time I got home, I've been up for 38 hours.

Christmas came upon us early this year. Decorations and songs, even though we won't get a white Christmas, everyone seem to get in there spirits.

At this time of the year, my school international program has somewhat a tradition. We pick a family to host our annual Christmas party

and this year it was me! Hosting a party might not seem that difficult, just buy food and put some music on but not. I had to tear down the whole house, clean inside out, finish all the decorations, plans in schedule so people won't get bored, chose the right kind of music, and on and on. I probably spent a whole week worrying about this party. As people arrived, I was relieved, the plans were on schedule people were enjoying. We did the traditional ritual, gift exchange as well. We each buy a gift anonymously and draw random gifts at the end. I can't wait for Christmas!

-12기 김지수





## Special day for the Americans



The 26th of November marked a really special day for the Americans; is called Thanksgiving. It is an event to celebrate in the fourth Thursday of November each year and means a lot to my host parents and of course to Americans.

My host dad, for example, emphasizes the fact that it is not only a time for the family to meet together again but also an opportunity to think about all the things we are grateful for. During Thanksgiving, the whole family (host mom's side) got together and we ate turkey which is the traditional meal with mashed potato with gravy, in a cheerful atmosphere.



The day after Thanksgiving is devoted to shopping and is called "Black Friday": the prices are really cheap; basically 50% off and plus more- if you want buy something cost a lot, you should wait for black Friday and some people wait the whole Thursday night to be first in line on the Friday. My host mother and I went to a few stores but not during the whole night! We should wait in the line for quarter minutes to get into the store

even it was crazy rainy and chilly weather. On the following Saturday, American families usually consider the end of the Thanksgiving period as the starting point of the Christmas one : they decorate the outside of their houses with lights, buy a Christmas tree and have a fun time setting up all their decorations. My host parents and I, thus, did the same and we can now proudly say that our home is beautifully decorated with all kinds of Santa Claus : one on the chimney, one on the Christmas tree, one on the piano ... Even if we are in December, the weather is more gentle than last year : there is no snow and the cold hasn't been too bad lately.

Another thing that happened in November is the arrival of Loena! In the early November, my host parents asked me "How do you think if we have another exchange student at home? She is going to leave after first semester, do you mind? I want to respect you because you came here first", so I said right away "Yes, absolutely!!!" because Loena has already changed host family twice since she came to America for two months and at this time if she cannot find anyone, she had to go back in home, France. Also I thought if I have someone who



is at my age at home, that will be much better than stay with only host parents. Then she came few days later. Now we tied as sisters. Do everything together, communicate, teach and learn each of us our language; I'm learning French and teach her Korea so that we just say basic things different language for example, I say "Merci and bonne nuit" which means thank you and good night. There is so much fun that I can have in that process we do each other.

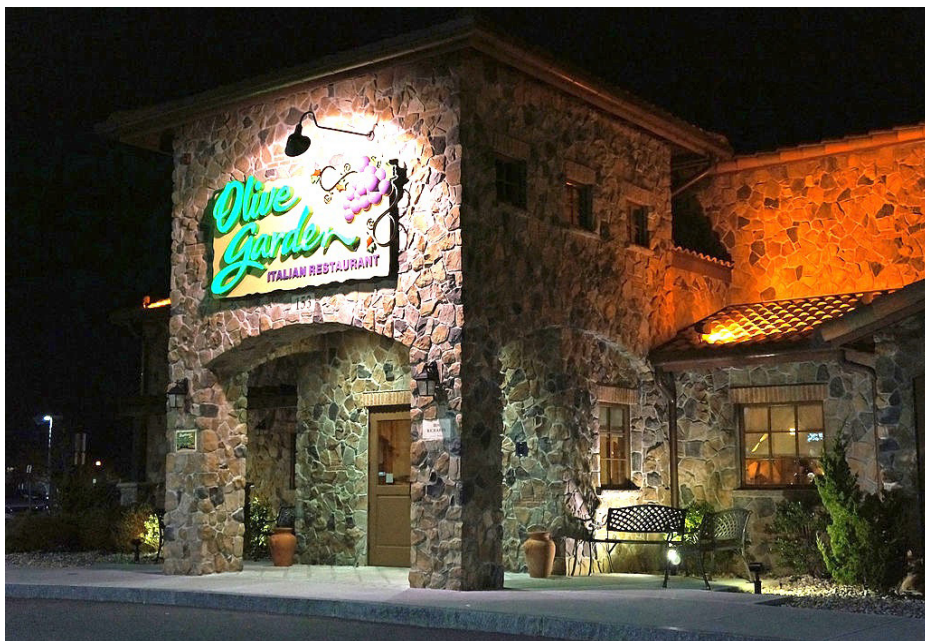
Lately I and Loena went ice skating together and even though some 8 year old kids were better than us, we had a great time. And for the record, neither of us fell! We are dreaming of going to New York together but it seems really unlikely to happen. But we never know, maybe Santa Claus will hear our prayers !

-12기 오수경

## My Birthday



November 24th was my birthday! I was so excited and blissful for the entire day just because it was the day I was born. Since this was my second year staying with my host family, my host mother and sister perfectly knew what I want for a birthday gift. They gave me a gift card for a movie theater, understanding how much I love to watch movies. Also, at my school, many teachers and students



recognized me and blessed me, which made me feel so flattered. My English teacher even gave me two lollipops!

The best part of the day was the dinner. My family and I went to Olive Garden, which is one of my favorite restaurant. My host mom even allowed me to have a quiet expensive dish named "Lobster Ravioli." It was really, truly savory After enjoying chatters and foods, we went to shopping, which is one of my favorite things to do. And then, we found this awesome store called "Mandee." It was like a clearance store full of cheap but gorgeous clothes and accessories. I purchased three comfortable and pretty pairs of pants! I was so satisfied that I found the store with a good deal. We went back to our sweet home, and has a glorious moment for my birthday cake!

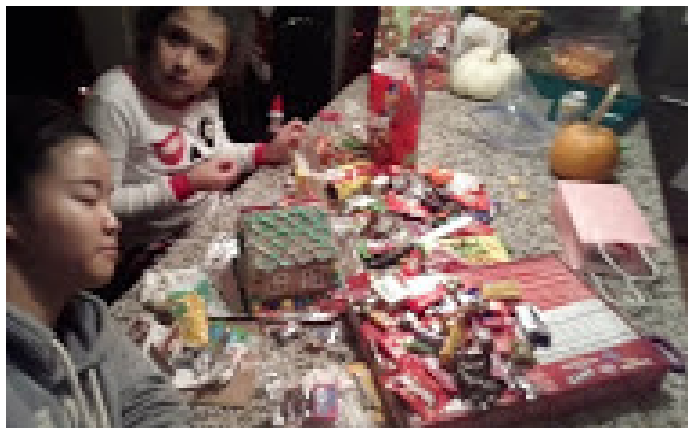
The cake was amazing. It was the largest cake that I have ever had in my entire life! It was a chocolate cake that weighs nine pounds and has nine layers. Also, the whole cake was covered with small chocolate chips. For a person who has a sweet tooth like me, the cake was definitely wonderful. My host sister and I took so many pictures of it and send them to everyone to brag. It was fun to receive my friends' jealous response.

Anyway, besides a nice dinner, pretty gifts and a humongous cake, it was so beautiful to have great time with my family.

Since all of us were busy with own works, having a fancy, lovely eating out did not happen for a long time. My birthday turned out to be a great chance for family-gathering. Although they are not my real family, they were always supportive and understanding to me, and I really appreciate it. Seeing them being happy for my birthday, I felt like I am such a blessed one.

-12기 정은교

## New start with Torres Family



Sometimes, things don't flow as we planned. Sometimes we start new relationships, and sometimes we say good bye. We grow up and learn with getting through all of those experiences. However, it's always hard to have a new start with someone and saying goodbye to others. I used to live with Demarias family before. Claire, Steve, Maddie and I were an amazing host family. Maddie and I went to same school. She was 7th grade middle schooler, and we were best friends. 6am, alarm clock rang and we both started our day. We took a bus to school. We lived about 10 minutes apart from school so we didn't have to be stuck in bus entire morning. I will say we started our morning pretty fresh. After school, when we finished our homework, we played games that we made. It was so fun to play with her. Of course we had tough times. We fought and didn't talk to each other too. However, that made us became closer. I really liked living with her. One morning, Claire, who used to be my host mom, told me a HORRIBLE story. It was shocking and I was sad. They said that they were moving to Arizona and I will be living with other host family. I first thought she was joking, but it was not. It was tough to accept the truth. I was worried. I didn't wanted to live with mean family and I thought everything was messed up. In process of finding new host family wasn't really easy. It was middle of the school year and everyone was busy take caring their own family. However, miracle happened. I really want to say



miracle because it was amazing. I started joining foreign language club at school. We went to a trip, and I had opportunity to talk to Ms. Torres, who is charge of a club. She was saying that she had an international student before and it really wasn't a good experience because of lots of things.

And Lyn Gordon, who is charge of international students, phone called her at summer if she wanted host other international student. And that student was me. She refused it because she already had bad experience with it. After her story ends, I told her that my host family is moving to Arizona and I am finding a new family to live with. She said she first need to talk with her daughter. Few days after, we got into process and decided to be a host family. It was really sad that I was leaving Demarias family. I was really



good friend with Maddie and leaving her wasn't easy. However I was excited in one side, because I am starting everything over and challenging myself. My host sister is in 4th grade and her name is Araceli. She is the one of nicest people I ever met. She gave me her room so I have a place to stay. I think it will be so hard to do that and I am very thankful of it. She likes to run and play. She plays trumpet and that's so awesome. We play piano together too. I am having lots of fun with her. My host mom is Jill Torres and she is a Spanish teacher in our school. She is awesome and super nice. She is really funny too. Oh, she is really good at baking. It has been about 1 month living with them and it is very nice. I want to be a great sister to Araceli. I love them.

-12기 정지우

## Halloween Party and Trick or Treating



When September changes to October, every kid, even adults, in the states look for one big event, Halloween. Little ones put on some unique and adorable costumes to go for a trick or treating. Big kids like me and my friends normally throw a Halloween party. So one of my friends, Kate, had a party at her house. We invited some Chinese



students who live in the dormitory right by the school so that they will at least try the American culture and have fun! (They were planning to stay at the dorm during Halloween.)

When I got to the house, where the party was, my friends were all there and . We compared our costumes. I was a witch with all black clothing, and my one friend was also a

witch, but she had all the makeup done with her super long and decorative fake eyelashes. The costumes were pretty diverse: scarecrow, vampire, zombie, half-skeleton, and Frida Kahlo. For those who don't know who Frida Kahlo is, she is a well-known artist, but even more famous for an easy Halloween costume model. Her signature unibrows and floral hair accessories are easy to do and unique. Anyway, we ordered pizza, and finished up all our makeup for the costume. When we were about to go outside, someone rang the doorbell. I opened the door, and there were two little girls with their mom. One of the girls said trick or treat, and I asked who they were. She said "Uhh... Melissa..?" I meant to ask what costume they were. But she apparently thought I was asking her name, so she told me her name. That was way too cute and my friends behind me were all cracking up and dying.

So all of my friends and I went from house to house and got so many candies, chocolates, and all kinds of goods. By the time we got back home, it wasn't really late, around 10, but we were totally exhausted. Because I was the only one who was sleeping over, the rest of my friends had to wait for their rides back home. While waiting, we took some selfies and group pictures to remember this Halloween. After everyone left, my friend and I were talking how much fun we had that night and went to bed.

Since Koreans don't really celebrate Halloween as much as here, it is one of the best times to hang out with friends and have fun. Halloween and trick or treating is one of the beloved holidays not only because of the candies and all sorts of goodies, but rather the process of choosing costumes, and the excitement of making precious memories with friends. If you miss the Halloween party, you are missing a lot.

-12기 이지원