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I joined ISP welcome team last summer quarter. This decision might seem a little bit unusual to me when I was in my home country, Japan. I was a really shy girl. I felt uncomfortable talking in front of strangers. I wasn't willing to talk to others, to make friends or to spend time for school activities. Thus, why did I sign up for it?

Last summer quarter was my first semester. There were only few people on campus except international students, and almost no activity. I was really bored and looked for opportunity to make friends and something fun. I heard about this team in college survival class, which all the international students must take in the first semester and I decided to participate in it without irresolution. I went directly to ISP office and sign up for it. I thought it would help me get rid of my boredom.

**Welcome To Highline!**

By Maiko Murakami  
From Japan



Moreover, I needed to make more friends since I was really worried about living here alone. I came here a week before school began so I had no idea how I could make friends and I felt discontent. I wanted to talk about whatever I want with my friends but there was no one.

After attending the first meeting, I found a tremendous change because I could make many friends there! Everything here made me confused and scared. The worst of all, it always twisted me around its little finger. Now, my English was better than before, and I got to know more about HCC and Seattle. I really wanted to help new students who may have same problems as I did. Also, I wanted to spend time with them. In welcome team, airport greeting was

the funniest work for me. We welcomed new students in the airport and gave them small survival kits. We did a great job despite it was our first time. I enjoyed being in this team because I could make friends more easily and had some discussions about our work with my teammates. Now, I am more comfortable living here than before because I find a sense of belonging at ISP and HCC. It keeps my life busy and fun. This team changes my way of living and I really appreciate it. The more friends I have, the more excited I am. There are lots of international students and most of them are facing difficulties as I was. I encourage people to join us and give those students a hand. ISP welcome team welcomes you!

**Bian Bian Restaurant**

By Christine Lee  
From HongKong



“Wow...what kind of smell is in the restroom? It is looks good and tasty. What am I eating?”

During the summer vacation, I went back to my home country--Hong Kong. I ate a lot and had a lot of fun with my friends, but the most unforgettable thing was the Bian Bian restaurant.

I was told that every-

thing in that restaurant was related to restroom. Out of curiosity, we decided to visit this so called “Bian Bian Restaurant“

My friends and I were really excited about what we were going to see when we arrived in the restaurant. Outside of the Bian Bian restaurant were the female and male signs of restroom. After we went in, we saw many beautiful toilets on the wall, and every toilet had their own design. For instance, some of the designs were the national ensigns and some of the designs looked very modern. My friends and I took a lot of pictures with the toilets. Another funny things in this restaurant were the chairs and the tables. The chairs were shaped like a toilet; in my daily life I only

sat on the stool for pee or poo. I couldn't believe that I was sitting on the stool whlie having lunch with my friends. The table was made with glass, and under the table there was a sink and it seemed like you were eating on the sink.

After people ordered food, the first thing they would do was taking photos with the food, and of course we did the same thing. We ordered curry and some beef. The “things” they used to hold the food were really cute. The food was held by a mini bathtub and a mini toilet and the drinks were held by glasses that shaped like men's urinals. Can you imagine your curry and lemonade were held by toilet and urinal shaped dishes? Luckily, We didn't sit at the other side of the restaurant

because there were some boards on the wall showing different kind of problems you might have depend- ing on the shape and color of your feces. When I was eating I did not look at the board at all, since it was quite disgusting.

Even though the decorations at the restaurant were “unusal“, people were still attracted by it and decided to give it a try. The Bian Bian restaurant did surprise me, but I had a fantastic time with my friends and definitely enjoyed the food.

**The Ghost Month**

By Austing Yang  
From Taiwan



Do you believe in ghosts? Have you ever had any haunted experiences? Whether you do or don't believe in ghosts, you cannot deny that the concept of afterlife exists in every culture around the world. There is the popular “Halloween” celebration in the Western culture, as everyone knows. In Hindu culture, there is Ngaben ceremony for the dead, and there is also the

Day of the Dead in Mexico. These are all festivals that are relevant to the deceased. In Chinese tradition, there's even a whole month for ghosts and spirits every year during the seventh month of Lunisolar calendar. So right now, let me take you on an exploration about this fascinating culture of “Ghost Month”.

According to Chinese folklore, people believe the gates of hell open every year at the beginning of the seventh Lunisolar month, and closes at the end of the month. During that period, ghosts whom we called the “Good Brothers,” will be back and roaming around our world seeking food and entertainment. While those “good brothers” are hanging out, it is important for people to treat them well

and be careful for themselves. Thus, many taboos were formed based on this reason. For instance, you can't hold a wedding in this month, otherwise ghosts would be jealous of you. You can't move to another home, because they would follow you. Chinese people are extremely respectful to those spirits even in daily life no matter what religion they are. I still remember when a few of my American friends and I went to a hotel for an overnight basketball tournament, they almost freaked out since I did a “full-check” for the room. I knocked on the door before we entered the room, flushed the toilet a few times, and checked the hydrants and shelves. My friends were all looking at me and said, “Come on, it's just a room!” Those actions

might seem weird to them, but to most of Chinese people, these are necessary steps that can't be ignored.

However, as Chinese society progressed, some people start arguing that those mores are just symbols of barbarism. Reason why people are more likely to have accidents during the Ghost Month is because that's the time when young students have their summer vacation. The more they go out to have fun, the higher the accident rate. Besides that, some people even studied about the Ghost Month and found out it is just a rumour spread by the Hongwu Emperor during the Ming Dynasty.

We should all be respectful and careful (to ghosts and people) then everything will be fine!

**With The Internationals**

By Alex Birch  
From USA



Many people claim that events or people have changed their lives in some way or another. Some of these stories can be weak, or cliché, or others can be groundbreaking, sometimes affecting the listener or reader's life. I can say that I am one of these people, but my story is definitely a one of a kind. I have been born and raised in Federal Way, Washington, and have lived here since I was born. As time progressed, the thought of living in one place my whole life discouraged me. Ever since I was young, I have always had a bad habit of exploring and getting lost, preferably without my parents. I once got lost at Pikes Place Market when I was three years old. Luckily, a policeman found me and returned me to my hysterical parents. I have seen pictures of places of where my father has traveled for business, and have been in awe ever since. During my school years, I have made many great friends along the way. But deep down, I always wanted to befriend an International person instead of a local. I sometimes thought

they were incredibly boring and dull at times. When high school graduation was on everyone's mind, it was time for me to make a big decision in one's life, where to go for college. It was surprisingly easy to choose. For some reason that I still don't know today, I wanted to attend a community college over a large 4-year institution. Even though I was qualified for most universities, I decided to work on the application to Highline Community College. One year ago, I could not fathom the situation or life I am currently living as of right now.

On my first day of college, I came across an alarming amount of diversity in my classes. Talk about Culture Shock! For the first time, I seemed to be the minority in the classroom. At first, it felt strange, but not uncomfortable or bad. As the day went on, I met some of my best friends that I still see every day. The first "international" student I met was Anja, in Math 111. She informed me that she is a student from Germany and she is continuing her studies at Highline. At that moment, I was truly shocked that Highline had something like this to offer to the world. A small community college in a suburb area has students from all over the world! As the quarter progressed, I started to learn more about the different clubs, programs, and people that existed at Highline. I then received a notification that the International Student Program was

planning a trip to Leavenworth. I am still unaware what possessed me to sign up for that trip, considering I did not know one person that was going with me. The day came to head towards the German town. I sat on a bus with about 80 other people speaking every other language besides English, none of them white, with only one being an Asian-American, and all of them looking at me as if I were on the wrong bus. I will be honest, I was scared, embarrassed, and seriously mad at myself for going on this trip. Those were the loneliest 3 hours of my life. However, when we arrived at the hotel, I started to talk to a rather out-going Korean named Hwi. I was absolutely elated that somebody talked to me! As it turned out, from that moment on, my life was changed forever. The trip introduced me to the majority of the international student body, where I learned an incredible amount of culture, people, and essentially the life of an international student. I heard of many stories of international students being too afraid to converse with Americans, defeating the purpose of studying in the States. After this ordeal, I believe both sides are at fault. I was too shy to open my mouth to an international stranger, and they likewise, were also. Many international students think that their English is quite poor, but I disagree. I believe that they speak very well, considering it's their second language. I enjoy

helping them with their questions about America or the English language, and they in turn love to answer my endless questions about the "outside" world. As my time at Highline moved on, my native friends saw this pattern and thought I was strange for being with "those" kids. They started to avoid me more and more, but I knew that they were the ignorant ones not going beyond the socially accepted boundary. During my high school years, many people have jokingly said that I was weird and don't belong in the American culture. Maybe they are right, I was meant to see the world and meet different people.

After the Leavenworth trip, I started to stay at school longer than at home. I have been involved non-stop with Highline's activities and programs. I would never have thought I would be at school for 9 hours a day always helping with something or somebody. I have gone to every event the ISP has made, and participated and volunteered at many others. I have learned an enormous amount along the way, and have made connections with others that can, and will, never be broken. I have made more friends here than I ever have in my school years before this. It's as if I have been accepted into a small society. I have never enjoyed school before this experience, but since now I have a family to see every day at school, I can't wait to get there when every new day arrives.

## Dream until you Dreams Come True

By Amanda Gloria  
From Indonesia



I never imagined that I would be here in the US. This is like a dream to me, being in the United States, especially by a scholarship. I didn't attend college in my country because I couldn't afford it. Last year my friend

also came here through the same program. That was how I knew about the scholarship program and why I applied. I didn't imagine that I would be accepted. I just wanted to give it a try. I kept praying that I could get the chance to go to the USA. Finally I was accepted! I was so happy and excited for the great educational opportunities.

As the day got closer, I started worrying about leaving my home country. Some part of me wanted to stay in my comfort zone and give up the big opportunity. But, I stood up and faced my fear, and I'm glad I did. Otherwise I would have been missing out on my greatest experiences.

Before I came here, I was just another girl with an or-

dinary life. I felt bored with my life because it was almost the same routine everyday. So I needed to do something exciting with my life. There were many pros and cons between my choices. But I decided to take it and I was sure that it would bring me a bigger opportunity in the future. Even though my decision meant that I had to leave my comfort zone in my home country, I had to leave my friends, my family and everyone around me at home. I needed to take that risk for a better future.

I knew this experience would be very helpful in the future. I would learn so many lessons while staying in the US. Based on the my major and the culture diversity, Highline Community College seemed to fit me

the best. I felt so happy to be here and felt comfortable being myself because I was accepted.

I never thought a dream as small as dust would come true. I did not dare to dream big because I didn't like to fail. After I came here, I knew that we may dream as big as we allow ourselves because we could achieve it if we worked hard enough and willing to try. Who knows, in the future someone may offer you an opportunity that you never imagined before; lots of things can happen in this world. Keep dreaming, so that you can find and achieve your goals in life. Only you can make your dream come true. Just try your best in every way.

## My First McDonald

By Nitsuh Eshetuh  
From Ethiopia



When I first came to the U.S, I first stayed in Maryland and my cousin told me that I should taste the McDonalds but I wasn't that interested in it. However, we still went there and after the first time I tried it, I fell in love with McDonald! My

cousin didn't eat much on that day so I had the chance to eat twice. McDonalds was new for me, I heard of it from friends but we didn't have McDonald in my country, not yet! I liked it...NO...I meant I LOVED it! I just kept on eating and eating, for the whole week I had only McDonald. I loved their cheeseburgers. Who doesn't like it? I thought except people who are afraid of it being harmful for their health, it would crash their diet and so on so many reasons. Nevertheless, it's okay to eat it once in a while Don't try my way! You will eventually get addicted. I was addicted to McDonald and my cousin who first brought me into this started telling me that it should stop, it wasn't not good for my health, but it was not easy to give up. Step

by step I was used to not eating it and now McDonald doesn't even come to my mind.

If you are an international student like me, you will find one or more funny things happening to you. One thing that happens to everyone is that everyone suffers from the time difference between their country and the U.S. Feeling sleepy when it's not the time to sleep, that's sleeping disorder. Luckily, I didn't suffer from that, instead; my biggest problem was that I couldn't have dinner when it was not dark outside. This was one thing that my friends made fun of. I lived in Ethiopia, the equator crosses Ethiopia, which meant in Ethiopia the day time was 12 hours and the night time was 12

hours sharp. Except when seasons change there was a very little difference, but it wasn't even noticeable. In the US it didn't get dark even when it was 8:00 pm. I had never seen that. Maryland was even worse it didn't get dark until 9:00pm. I was surprised, but the point was I couldn't eat dinner if it was not dark. One night my friend asked me, "Aren't you going to eat dinner?" and I replied "It is not dark yet!" I just didn't have appetite if it was not dark because in Ethiopia every night was dark and I was connected to the environment it became a nurture effect on me. Now I am getting in tune and preparing for a brand new life.

**Unforgettable steps of coming to the USA**

By Robin Choa  
From Indonesia



Everything started when I read an article in one of national newspaper about the scholarship opportunity given by United States. I submitted my application at the last day of the registration day. I was not sure if I would be selected for the program. Three weeks

later, I got a phone call from American-Indonesian Exchange Foundation (AMINEF) and she asked me to go to Jakarta for an interview and TOEFL test. I could not believe that they actually called me and told me that I had to go for the next step of the selection process. At that time, I still had no idea about going to USA although studying abroad had been my dream since I was a kid.

Dec.13, I went to Jakarta for the interview and TOEFL test and had my very first interview and yet, I had to do all this by myself. The interview went pretty well although I made a fatal mistake by miss pronouncing “anti-drugs organization” as “drugs organization” After two weeks of waiting, I got an e-mail said that I was

selected in CCI program, Fall 2010 and the best of all, I was accepted by Highline Community College.

The next step was going to Bali for a three days Pre-Departure Orientation (PDO). At the PDO, people from Fulbright and U.S. Embassy explained to us about different issues, started from living in the U.S. to the process we of applying visa. For the first time, I met people who were also selected by CCI program. Not all of them were going to the US but they all became my great partners.

During the process of issuing visa, I received a yellow card, which means my visa had not yet been issued and they needed more time to process it. No one knew what happened with my application, but I assumed it

was because I had only one name, Robin on my application. However, after another long period of waiting, my visa was issued, and yet, I am here.

It was a long journey until I arrived in United State. Started from applying for the scholarship, TOEFL test, Interview, several selection processes, Pre-Departure Orientation, Visa application, departure from Soekarno-Hatta International Airport, transit process in Beijing Capital Airport, arrival at SeaTac International airport. All of them became an unforgettable experience in my life. Every step had its own story, which made all the steps became impossible to forget.

**Q&A**

Send your answer in one sentence to this e-mail before **Nov.12** [phsieh@highline.edu](mailto:phsieh@highline.edu)

We'll choose the top 5~10 best answers of the week and publish it in the next issue!

**YOU WILL BE THE LUCKY ONE!**

If I have a chance to change one thing in the history I would .....?

# PAST EVENTS HIGHLIGHT



Students waiting for bus to go on Federal Walking Tour



Up in Space Needle!



Group picture outside of Space Needle



ISP Welcome Team!



Students at Rotating Restaurant Event



2010-2011 ILSC love you!