

Exchange students share plans for their education after Okemos

Allison Murray
Staff Reporter

As the end of the year approaches, a majority of the senior class has narrowed down what they will do after high school. However, for departing foreign exchange students, their plans are a little different.

Jimena Linares-Cabrera (11) plans on returning to Spain to finish her final year of high school as well as attending college.

According to Linares-Cabrera, attending University is always recommended to help prepare you for a higher paying, more stimulating career.

"[For a career path I am interested in] something related to languages because I also speak German. Or maybe something that has to do with teaching," Linares-Cabrera said.

While there are many things to enjoy about American schooling,

Linares-Cabrera has noticed some important differences between the education she receives here and the education she would receive in Spain.

"I feel like in Spain they prepare you much more for college in the last two years of high school than they do in America," Linares-Cabrera said.

Linares-Cabrera's school day in Spain is a little lengthier than what it is here, starting at 9 a.m. and ending at 5 p.m.

Unlike Linares-Cabrera, Yelyzaveta Barkova (12) from Ukraine, plans on staying in America to attend college. Similar to America, a college degree is important in her country in order to obtain a higher paying job.

What Barkova intends on studying while at college remains undecided, but there are a few ideas that have piqued her interest.

"I'm really interested in international relations; that's probably why I'm here. I'm also interested in hotel

management and everything that is connected with finance," Barkova said.

Tim Mushke (11) still has two years left of high school back home in Germany. Afterwards he plans on attending college in Germany.

"American colleges are very expensive. For German colleges we have to spend almost no money because it is all government funded," Mushke said.

Similar to Linares-Cabrera and Barkova, in Germany a college degree is imperative if one wishes to obtain a higher paying job.

Those without college degrees are more likely to have more labor intensive jobs such as carpentry and construction work.

Mushke intends on becoming a computer programmer. Spending a year in an American high school has helped him speak better English, which will eventually help him while working for an international company.

Exchange students provide their perspective on a year spent abroad at Okemos High School

Lexie Yates
Staff Reporter



Yelyzaveta Barkova (Lisa) (12)

1. Where are you from?
"Ukraine."
2. How has your United States experience changed from the beginning of when you first arrived to now?

"I enjoy studying here more than in the Ukraine because I have a choice of what I want to study and the school here is not that hard for me. I don't know how to come back and finish my studying there [in the Ukraine]. School here is much more fun, like fun classes and I like the interaction between the teachers and the students, they are more like friends so it has changed my perspective."

3. How do you expect to use the experiences you have had here when you go back to the Ukraine?

"I definitely need to finish my school back in the Ukraine. I will have some really hard exams and that is why I need to come back to the rhythm of life and study hard. I think I care less about my grades now, because I used to have what we call an "A grade student," and I kind of got rid of that perspective so I hope it will help me relax."

4. Do you plan on coming back to Okemos or the United States after visiting here?

"I plan to come back to the United States, but I do not know where I should go. I am looking for a college."

5. Is there anything you want to say about Okemos?

"I am pretty likely to stay here because I keep in touch with a lot of other exchange students. I think that Okemos is a nice school."



Tim Muschke (11)

1. Where are you from?
"Germany."
2. How has your experience in the United States changed from the beginning of when you first arrived to now?

"I do not think it actually changes a lot from when I first went to school here until now because it has always been fun for me to go here and the semesters are different because of different classes, but other than that, it has stayed the same."

3. Did you meet any new people that you enjoy to be around and that you think you might keep in touch with when you go back to Germany?

"Oh yeah, I met a lot of really nice friends here and I hope we will stay in contact even when I go back to Germany."

4. How do you expect to use the experiences you have had here when you go back to Germany?

"One of the experiences I have made is you have to be outgoing here, because when I came here, I had no friends here before I came so I had to be somewhat outgoing at least and I have never really been outgoing before so I hope when I go back to Germany I will be more outgoing and be more open."

5. Do you plan on coming back to Okemos or the United States after visiting here?

"I really want to come back here and meet my friends again. For example, I'd love to meet my host family again that I stay with."

6. Is there anything you

want to say about Okemos?

"I like Okemos a lot. It is fun and while the football team way not really playing well, it was fun being on the football team and there way a lot of nice people on the team too. There are a lot of very friendly people."



Jimena Linares-Cabrera (11)

1. Where are you from?
"Spain."
2. How has your experience in the United States changed from the beginning of when you first arrived to now?

"I feel like my English has improved a lot, I also met new friends and my friend group has increased a lot. Also my relationship with my host family has improved as well."

3. How do you expect to use the experiences you have had here when you go back to Spain?

"Now it is more clear that I want a career that has something to do with studying different languages and I also think I will get better grades in my English class back home."

4. Is the school system harder here than where you are from?

"No."

5. Do you plan on coming back to Okemos or the United States after visiting here?

"I would definitely like to come back to the United States after my experience here."

Ukrainian OHS Press Staff reporter shares experience as foreign exchange student

Lisa Shcherbakova
Staff Reporter

I arrived in Okemos, Michigan in August, 2015. Although, the story of one of the best experiences had started much earlier.

"Hello, I am Lisa"
"Hey, You have an interesting accent. Where are you from, Lisa?"

"I am an exchange student for a year here, in the U.S. I am from Ukraine."

"Wow! That is a long way you have come."

"Yeah...It is."
I had some serious thoughts about doing an exchange year.

In October 2014 this idea came across my mind for the second time in my life and I decided to go for it. I applied for the U.S. Department of State scholarship, called the FLEX program, which allowed high schoolers from Ukraine and many other countries in Central Asia and Eastern Europe to spend a year in America. Soon after the first test my name appeared on the list of those who got to continue the competition.

And then there were a lot of other interviews and essays waiting to be completed in the next seven months, but they were a significant part of what happened later. In May 2015, I got a phone call that eventually determined my future coming to Okemos. Since then, I was officially

an exchange student.

So what's now...Get my international passport ready, pack my luggage, fill out tons of medical documents, take some stress relief pills in between those above... That summer passed by incredibly fast. It was nothing to compare to the journey that awaited me.



Photo by Erin Wakeland

Last goodbyes and hugs... and my plane is taking off. I arrived in Lansing in the middle of August leaving my entire life back home for the next ten months.

There they were, the people I was about to get to know as my second family, and we are on our way to their house... and now my house too.

Okemos seemed like a lovely little town. At least from the side window of the car. Yet there was so much to get used to. I loved all the space around, small one-two-story buildings and secluded trails hidden right behind most of the neighborhoods. However, it took me pretty long time to get used to not having multiple buses nearby taking me to any part of the city.

I arrived in Lansing in the middle of August, leaving my entire life back home for the next ten months.
-Lisa Shcherbakova

I had some fear about starting conversations, because of English still being hard to operate with. It was something my introverted temper was not ready for; even hugs were terrifying.

Starting a new story on a blank page with no experience of "writing" was thrilling, at least because it was the first story I had to write all by myself.

My time spent in the states was truly an adventure that I would never forget.



Thank You!
2015-2016 Partners in Education
(major donors as of 3/1/2016)

A gift to the OEF funds educational programs and services for all Okemos students. Learn about the impact you can make at www.oefsite.org

Diamond Donor (\$10,000 +)

Rod Ellis, Okemos Class of 1965

Emerald Donor (\$5,000 - \$9,999)

Joel C. Peterson

Platinum Donors (\$2,500 - \$4,999)

Courtesy Ford
Forsberg Real Estate
Horizon Bank
OHS Class of 1965

Gold Donors (\$1,000 - \$2,499)

Catherine J. Ash
Chris Buck & Martha Hentz
Chuck & Karen Canestraight
Lisa Crites
Nancy Herta
Tracey & Bryan Holland
Dr.s Laurie & Tomas Hult
Scott & Toni Klus
The Matusz Family
Mid-Michigan Oral Surgery,
Drs. Mark Beckman & Vince Benivegna
Mary Rhodes
Dr. Hina Shah
JoAnne Sorlie & Subhash Gupta
Jane & Gordon Spink
Patricia Trelstad
Mark Voit & Megan Donahue

Gold Donors (continued)

Howard J. Weyers

Silver Donors (\$500 - \$999)

Asian Buffet
Jim & Kathy Ault
Deb & Mick Baughman
Dean Bolton & Helen Taylor
Chris Hogan Brynn
Mark & Kim Burzych
Cedar River Insurance
Chivukula/Simmons Family
Josh Coty & Laura Holden
Steve & Gina Delp
Doctor's Approach Dermatology
Jim & Tina Grant
Sue Hallman
Heat 'n Sweep
Barbara Hoevel
John & Kristen Hood
Susan Patricia Hopper
Tom & Sue Hopper
Mark & Gwynne Kadrofske
Dr. Cuneyt Kalfa
Irem & Tunga Kiyak
Pamela Kliever
Lansing Community College
Dr. John S. & Kathryn H. Lanzetta
Carol & Rick Laub
Hui Li & Yitian Zhuang
Paul F. Mantica
Mark & Debbie Mashburn
Punya Mishra & Smita Sawai
MSU Federal Credit Union
Physicians Health Plan

Silver Donors (continued)

Therese & Rod Poland
Mark & Erisa Renfer
Kris & Steve Schoen
Christine & Dan Sermak
Thrun Law Firm, P.C.
Tomie Raines, Inc.
Peter & Sherry Trezise
Asja & Bill Wilcox

Bronze Donors (\$250 - \$499)

Ann Austin-Beck & John Beck
Sabine Blaxton
Julie Brixie & Randy Schaeztl
Kris & Noelle Burak
CASE Credit Union
Peter Cooke & Barbara Fretwell
Mary Davidson / Jazzercise
Wanda Derochowski
Dr. Ellen Dohr, Optometrist
Dana & Pam Duren
Careena Eggleston
Jerome & Jill Fine
Floer-Martinez Family
Fluid Salon
Tara Fry
Lee & Linda Gerard
Suzanne & Jerry Gieszer
Gupta Allergy & Asthma/
Dr. Dave Gupta
Andrea & Chris Hallead
David Hallman, DDS
Laurie & Jack Harkema
Health Care Legal Group P.C.
Independent Bank

Bronze Donors (continued)

Martha & Lee Kliebert
Jeffrey & Michelle Korb
Jessica & Jeff Kovan
David & Sally Langley
Susan & Peter Long
Chris & Krista Loose
Maner Costerisan
Plummer & Jeri Mifflin
John & Michelle Mitchell
Aanand Mody
Minesh & Hina Mody
Okemos Auto Collection
Okemos Music Academy
Okemos Optometry, PC
Noelle Palasty
Drs. Samir & Smruti Parikh
Bridget & Joe Potchen
Bidhan & Prasanna Redey
Jerry Sambaer
Richard Schwendeman
Sulabh & Deepika Srivastava
Amy & Michael Stephenson
Jeffrey V. Stuckey & Mary Pat Jaracz
Georgia & Ron Styka
Jeff & Kathy Tavormina
Antoinette & Stuart Tessmer
Tri-Tec
D. Wieber, J. Mahoney
Matthew S.M. Yun, DDS

View the complete donor list at oefsite.org.

Thank you!