

VOICES

Volunteer English Program Student Magazine

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Welcome to the latest issue of our student magazine!

Our students come from all over the world, and they have rich and varied stories to share.

This issue of *Voices once again* shows that rich diversity. The range of experience is, in one way, extraordinary, in another way quite common. It shows how our students are integrating their lives into American society, while at the same time keeping strong ties to their own cultures.

Through their writings, they express and share their experiences, and allow our readers a glimpse into their new lives.

--The Editors

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Lessons in Life

I moved to the U.S. from Japan one year ago. At that time I couldn't understand English well. It is still tough for me to hear English, and also speaking English is difficult. However, I feel my English is developing step by step.

Here is one example:

I had an opportunity to hear Steve Jobs' speech at Stanford University when I was in Japan. I couldn't understand it at all. I had an opportunity to hear the speech again recently. I'm glad to say that I could understand the speech a little bit better. The experience encouraged me greatly.

He talked about three stories in his life. He said "That's it. No big deal. Just three."

The first story is connecting the

dots. The second story is about love and loss. The third story is about death.

After he dropped out of the university, he stayed at the university and learned calligraphy. When he made his first computer, the calligraphy knowledge helped him. This is connecting the dots.

After that he married and had a wonderful family. But unfortunately, he was fired from the company that he started. This is a love and loss.

The last story is about death. He was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. This was the closest time to death. He said "Your time is limited. Don't waste your time."

Lastly, he quoted the words from his favorite book. "Stay hungry! Stay foolish!"

By Akemi

My Sister's Wedding in Rabat, Morocco

I went home for my sister, Donya's, wedding in June. My mother's relatives started coming one week before the wedding party. My father's family came 3-4 days before. There were 50 adults and children staying with us.

About a month before the party, my sister and her husband were married at government offices. Only parents, brothers, sisters came when they signed papers. Then

they can go out together to get rings, shop for their new home. My sister lived at home with her family until the wedding party.

About 500 people came to the wedding party held in a large hall. The day of the wedding party I was with my sister. We went to the salon at 3 pm. She had a manicure and henna designs put on her hands. At about 7:30 she got her make-up and a dresser arrived to put on her white

Kaftan. Then, her husband came in the car to take her to the party. They arrived about 10:30 pm. The guests had come at 8 pm.

There was a band, with a singer, playing wedding songs and also a DJ for breaks, dinner, and when she changed her dress. Every hour she put on a different dress and took pictures with the people there. She came in a white dress, the next dress was purple. For dinner time the dress was red. Next was blue, then yellow, and finally a white bridal dress. She had three more dresses but didn't have time to wear them all. Each dress was from a different city in Morocco. She was really a Moroccan woman for one special day in her life.

At the end, the bride and groom cut the big cake, and put on their wedding rings. Then they left for the hotel to celebrate their wedding night at 8:00 in the

morning. The guests went home. Many weddings go all night. A few are in the day. I had two hours of sleep before I got up to cook breakfast for our family.

The next day the bride's mother and family goes to the couple's home with almond cakes, sweets, other food and wedding presents with more musicians for another party from 5-10 pm. The couple comes from the hotel to this party at their house.

Then the family does not see them for 7-10 days. Some couples go away for this time, some do not. The bride can not go to her parent's house for this time. After this time is up, her parents and sisters bring her gifts of gold jewelry and diamonds. She then gets to wear her gold jewelry.

By Khadija

Videoconference

Every year the different connections such as mobile or Internet help us to be in touch the whole time. Twenty years ago it was very different, but now we have a lot of different video connections. Every large company develops videoconference programs. The first of them was Skype (now owned by Microsoft). Then Apple developed Facetime, and finally Google developed Hangouts. I think that videoconference is one of the best achievements of nowadays and I have a few reasons why.

First, videoconference helps us improve our business relationships. Through them, we can to be in touch everywhere and it is great! I have example from my life. I'm studying English with a tutor. We have English class every Tuesday morning and it is very help to me to become integrated into local life. Moreover, I learn a lot of native manners and habits. When my tutor Earl went out for the whole winter season to Miami in the state of Florida, we had to abort our education meetings, but we found

a solution to our problem. We connected through the Internet. The first time we tried to use Skype but there was something wrong with the connection and Earl didn't hear me. Then we decided to use Facetime because we have some gadgets from Apple. Our education continued. Every Tuesday morning we connected on Facetime and I told how my previous week passed, then I read a chapter of my study book and then we discussed it. I think it is great! Instead of stopping my education for two months, we just continued education through Internet. That is why I think videoconferences improve our life.

Second, videoconferences help us to be in touch with our relatives. Twenty years ago

if somebody left his native area, it was a big problem to be in touch with a spouse or parents. The man could use only phone. Furthermore, if he was traveling, he couldn't connect the whole time that he was on a trip. This is already in the past. I arrived to United States seven months ago and I missed my parents very much, but I call them by Skype almost every day. My mom and dad can see me. I can call them from car, sport gym, grocer store or some parks. I show them how this country is beautiful. They know that everything is all right with me and don't worry about it.

From these reasons, you can see how technology improves our life. It is integrated very strongly and has a huge positive impact on our life.

By Anton

My Choice Between Becoming a Working Woman or a House Wife

I had been educated by my parents that having a career and financial independence were importance of my life, and they were living as a role model at the same standard themselves.

I was struggling when my first child was born, while I was a student at the engineering graduate school. No money and time could be spent on my baby, I left my 8-month old daughter in my parents' hands as they offered their help. Within the nearly next four years, I obtained my MS degree,

found a job in IT field in a big company, built up my career path, and fulfilled our goal of ascending into the American middle class, meanwhile my parents were taking care of my daughter in Beijing, China. Sometimes, the missing of my motherhood made me feel guilty.

After a few years, I found out it was hard to ask my parents to return my girl to the USA because they enjoyed her company.

My daughter came back to us at her 4 years of age. Because of her shyness and she

wasn't close to us, we had worked hard to familiarize her to the new environment. My second child was born when my daughter was 8 years old. Because I and my husband were working parents, we faced difficulties in taking care of our two young kids. So my parents once again came to help us as I returned my office after maternity leave. I was working overtime constantly at that time. My parents realized the problem and brought my new-born son with them back to Beijing. They raised up my son the same way as they had done for my daughter 8 years ago. I have been blaming my selfishness for neglecting the responsibilities to my children and exploiting my parents with taking their retirement time.

When I was expecting my third child, I felt that it would be the moment to choose between family and my career. I consulted my friends and colleagues. It was a difficult decision for my family because of the financial reason. However, my 2 month-old's sickness triggered my resignation. I started to devote myself to my children.

For 7 years after my youngest was born, I have been putting family first and being a housewife, a chef, a cleaner, a mom, a home school teacher. I am loving every day I get to see my children because I wouldn't have that opportunity to watch my children grow up if I worked outside.

By Jingchun

A Visit to Korea

I'm going to visit Korea in the summer. I'll stay in Korea about two weeks. I'm going to leave America on June 13th and arrive on June 14th in Korea. I'll stay one day in Seoul to visit the American Embassy. We have to renew our visas.

I'll meet my brother-in-law's family in Seoul. We'll stay in a hotel. After visiting the Embassy, we are going to take a train to Changwon. That is my hometown.

My sister will pick us up at the station and drop us off at my mother-in-law's house. We'll stay there one week. At the second week, we'll go to my mother's

house and stay one week there.

About two weeks after, we'll return to the USA.

While staying in Korea, I'll meet a lot of people. First, I'll meet my relatives. My husband has four siblings in Korea, so he has many cousins, nephews, nieces, grandnephews and grandnieces. They'll come to my mother-in-law's house and we'll visit their house. I have a brother and a sister. We'll meet their families.

Second, I'll meet my friends and my husband's friends. I have two groups of my

friends and my husband has one group of friends.

I'll take a short trip with my mother and sister. My mother wants to go for a drive and eat fresh fish.

I'll go to Korean markets to buy things which I'll bring to America.

I have to check Korean bank balances and I need to meet with a real estate agent to manage my property.

I'll try to eat out at different types restaurants as much as possible because there are few kinds of Korean restaurants in the USA.

By Eunsung

Tomato ice cream

Have you ever heard about tomato ice cream? I bet never.

I can remember a taste of this type of ice cream from my childhood. I would like to tell you a bit about this ice cream. The ice cream taste is very simple by itself: sour and sweet at the same time. Even now whenever I think about such a simple thing as tomato ice cream I always see a hot summer day in my home city and little me enjoying a tomato ice cream. I can even feel how a frozen bite of the ice cream is melting in my mouth.

At moments like that, moments when any simple thing like the taste of something or the smell of cookies baked by

our grandmother brings us to our happiest time--our childhood. I think about my kids. At those moments I always wonder if they will have any favorite memories when they will grow up and if so what they will like the most.

Two years ago I shared my favorite memories with my daughter. She was very excited about trying tomato ice cream and it seems she liked it. So I hope when one day she will grow up she will remember the taste of the tomato ice cream.

By Natalia