

Foreign students find similarities in family life

By Amy Rauch
staff writer

It's not that much different from being at home.

That's what Farmington Hills foreign exchange students are saying. And their host families agree.

"Kids have an opportunity to see that kids are the same," said Farmington Hills resident David Haron, who with his wife, Pam, are hosting Olivier Amiot, 16, an exchange student from France.

They have the absolute same interests — baseball and computers. Thousands of miles away, they develop the same, wear the same clothes.

Families through Farmington and Farmington Hills are playing host to 15 of the 381 foreign exchange students in Michigan July 24 to Aug. 20.

The Harons learned about the program through a June article in the Observer. Their son, Eric, will be a junior at North Farmington High and studies French. They also thought an exchange student would be a good experience for their daughter, Andrea, 12.

Everything Amiot wears has words in English written across it, Haron said.

"There is not a world of difference," said Amiot, in the United States for the first time. "I like America. It's exactly like I thought it would be."

"FAMILY LIFE is the same. Families are about the same every-

where," said Laura Porto Sanchez, 16, of Spain, staying with the Bob and Betty Jacobs family of Farmington Hills.

Yet there are differences. "Everything is very, very big. You have to drive your car for everything," Sanchez said. "In Spain, you can go on foot everywhere you want to go."

"Spain is very, very old. There's a lot of old buildings. And we don't have another religion. You are Catholic or you are nothing."

Amiot has noticed differences as well. "His major comment when we drove into the subdivision was that every house had a basketball net," Haron said.

Sanchez will be going to Franken-

mouth as well as Bob-Lo Island and Mackinac Island during her stay.

Since arriving, she has roller-skated, swam and just enjoyed the family.

The Jacobs family often sits around the dinner table, talking and sharing stories with Sanchez.

The family first heard about the program through their daughter, Chrissy, 14, who learned about the exchange program through her Spanish teacher. Though she has only studied Spanish for a year, Chrissy is able to understand Sanchez and occasionally speak Spanish to her.

"She (Laura) fits in really nice," Bob Jacobs said. "They've (the kids) learned a lot more about things that they had no knowledge of. It's been really rewarding for all of us."

AMIOU IS spending this week in northern Michigan with his host fam-

'There is not a world of difference. I like America. It's exactly like I thought it would be.'

— Olivier Amiot
French exchange student

ily. He will also visit Mackinac Island and go to see the Tigers and the Lions play before he leaves.

Since he arrived two weeks ago, Amiot has been to Greenfield Village and Greentown, where he tried a flaming cheese dish and Ethiopian food. He's also been swimming and playing tennis.

But though he's been out and about quite a bit, Amiot has also spent a lot of time at home. "We felt the important thing was to be here at home," Haron said. "The idea is to be part of the family."

The foreign exchange students around the area do get to see a little of each other or talk on the phone, but spend most of their time with their host families. Last Friday, they met at a home in Huntington Woods along with members of their host families. Next Monday, Aug. 14, Farmington-area students will meet with the city council and will each receive a welcome letter from Mayor Terry Sever.

THE STUDENTS are part of a program called NACEL, a French word that means "balloon basket." The program symbolizes people will-

ing to explore new lands and cultures. Locally, the program is run by Julian and Evelyn Prince of West Bloomfield. The couple has coordinated it for 10 years in Michigan.

"It's becoming more common to deal with people from other countries," Evelyn said. "It's a smaller world."

"As organizers, it makes us feel marvelous to see kids and parents learning so much while they're having fun. We love the day-to-day experiences with the students."

Along with locally organizing the program, the Princes host at least one student a year for the four-week session. Statewide, more students are involved in the program than ever before. Nationally, 7,000 students participated in the program.

"I can't imagine a family not wanting to do this," Haron said. "It's just a fascinating experience for the whole family."

Bob Jacobs agrees. "We didn't know what it would be like, but we'd certainly do it again."

For more information about NACEL, call the Princes: 626-6641.



RAYMOND BOHNET/staff photographer

NACEL exchange student Laura Porto Sanchez (left), 16, of Spain, is a guest of Chrissy Jacobs, 14, and her parents, Betty and Bob, of Farmington Hills.

Community groups seek money for anti-drug battle

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officers — want all segments of the community to join in the crackdown on drugs.

CONTRIBUTIONS WILL go toward the T-shirts needed for school employees and students, but businesses may buy T-shirts separately for company employees to wear for the day, Nicolay said.

Businesses may choose to "adopt-a-school" and earmark donations for T-shirts for a particular school.

FFIA encourages local businesses

to give discounts to students and faculty who wear the T-shirts on Oct. 6.

"Businesses lose time and money on substance abuse problems they deal with," Nicolay said. "This is an easy way for them to be involved with the solution."

FFIA is preparing a four-week series called "Are You Concerned?" for Substance Abuse Awareness Month in October. The series is recognized nationally to promote drug education and awareness.

The series will begin with a breakfast at 7:30 a.m. Wednesday, Oct. 4, at Mercy Center, Farmington Hills.

Guest speaker will be Donald Reisig, Michigan's drug czar.

Other activities planned for October include having local professional athletes speak to students and families on three separate evenings about being drug-free.

THE MONTHLONG observance is an extension of a 19-point action plan drafted in April 1988 by the crime prevention advisory committee. The plan includes developing drug educational programs, coordinating a yearlong series of public

service announcements on substance abuse, and enforcement programs targeted at narcotics dealers and distributors at all levels.

"Addiction is running rampant, not only in the inner cities, but in smaller communities as well," said Chief William Dwyer of the Farm-

ington Hills police. "The key to prevention is in education and programs like this."

The T-shirt plan developed after local police and public service employees sported red bands during last year's drug awareness campaign.

T-shirt fund contributions are tax deductible. Write: Farmington Families in Action, P.O. Box 3273, Farmington Hills, MI 48333.

FFIA will print in the Farmington Observer the name of each group and the number of T-shirts bought, Nicolay said.

Area residents graduate from MSU

Lola C. Armstrong, John House, William Phillips, Timothy Roms, Steven Samet and Chris Theodore of Farmington Hills, and Carolyn Tupper of Farmington, graduated from Michigan State University's

Advanced Management program.

Each was recently awarded a master of business administration degree from MSU's Graduate School of Business Administration.

The spring 1989 graduates join 1,300 professional men and women

who have completed the program and hold key positions in major corporations around the country.

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