



1. **Coming Home** German teacher **Guenter Kierblewski** spends some quality time with family in a local restaurant in Germany, his home country. While living in America, he often found himself missing Germany and everything about it that made it home. "I miss my family, but I miss the culture the most. That includes the food, speaking my language, the architecture and landscape. They're all different," he said. (Contributed)

2. **Traditional Tunisian** Wearing her traditional Tunisian clothing, **Rahma Kahri** (21) stops by the World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C. as she prepares for the upcoming school year. Along with other exchange students, Kahri spent her first day in America exploring the nation's capital. "I was wearing a Jebba, which is a traditional Tunisian dress that people wear on happy occasions as a sign of joy and cherishing life. I wore it because I wanted my first day to be about both my roots and my present, which is the U.S," said Kahri. (Contributed)

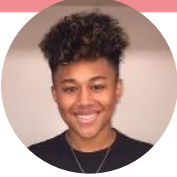
3. **Great Wall, Great Views** When traveling to China and Taiwan, **Laura Sitz** (20) pays a visit to the Great Wall of China. Being over 2,000 years old, visiting the Great Wall gave Sitz a chance to learn more about the history of China, which is part of her own cultural background. "We hiked up for a couple of hours, and it was hard because the stairs were all cracked and uneven, but once we got to the top of one hill, it was really rewarding and cool to look out at the mountains. The whole trip was a great experience for me. I learned about how my family lives when they're all the way around the globe," said Sitz. (Contributed)

4. **Chasing Waterfalls** Posing in front of a waterfall in Durango, Mexico, **Angela Torres** (21) takes a break from admiring the view to take a picture with her aunt. Despite having visited Mexico several times, the rich culture kept her coming back. "I've been visiting Mexico since I was three years old. I love to go back because of the strong sense of pride it gives me to be a part of their culture," Torres said. (Contributed)

Alexis  
Stovall

# Hype Up YOUR **Heritage**

## Students reflect on cultural backgrounds

Lamont  
Harris

Knowing your race and ethnicity is one thing, but having a close relationship to your heritage is another story. A person's heritage can have a huge influence on their identity and can bring people a sense of pride and belonging. In fact, many students found themselves eager to learn more about their ethnic backgrounds.

Despite being born and raised in America and not knowing much about her Vietnamese culture, **Alexis Stovall ('21)** still felt determined to learn. "I don't know much about my mom's racial background. The only time I feel like I connect to my culture is when I eat Vietnamese food. I would like to learn more about my heritage in the future, though," Stovall said.

Being able to share his unique background with others felt important to **Lamont Harris ('20)**. "My heritage makes me different from everyone else, and I think explaining to people where I come from and where my parents came from is really cool. I connect to my culture through food, going to Filipino parties and talking to other 'Blasian' kids," Harris said.

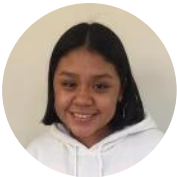
For **Yuliana Marceleno ('21)**, being able to speak her native language helped the most when it came to relating to her Mexican heritage. "I speak Spanish with my family at home, and I also like to cook Mexican food. It makes me feel like I'm in Mexico despite living here in

Davenport," Marceleno said.

Sometimes students found that the best way to connect with their culture was through just spending more time with people from the same background as them. "My family and I usually go to Powwows. It's basically this big Native American get together where people bring food and dance," said **Emilia Rosas ('20)**.

It takes more than just learning about the food or language of a country or culture to be able to gain a full understanding of a person's heritage. Sometimes actually traveling to a student's native country ended up being the best way for them to connect to the culture. "My family makes Yorkshire pudding, which is my favorite, but other than that, I'm not as familiar with my British background. One day I would like to visit England to learn more about my heritage," **Gabby Baldry ('21)** said.

In high school, students often felt pressured to start thinking about their futures. Whether that meant applying to colleges, looking into careers or thinking about their goals for after high school, the focus was always on what was next, but learning about their past could be just as important. Students could use their backgrounds, cultures and heritages as an opportunity to express or share their own unique story. (G. Paran)

Yuliana  
MarcelenoEmilia  
Rosas

Gabby Baldry

## Comparing Cultures



"The biggest difference is the food. I like it way better in China. I also noticed that classes and school in general are easier here."  
-Xi Wu ('21)

"Personally, I think America does not really have a culture of its own. It's made up of different cultures combined together that they call their own. Tanzania has such a big and rich culture. There's a variety of food, dance, music and languages."  
-Riziki Furaha ('21)



"I lived in France for about eight years. I feel like everything is stricter when it comes to school in France compared to the U.S. The food is different between the two countries, too. I like French food better."  
-Charles Chenus ('22)

