

CULTURE SWAP

Spanish, American exchange provides memorable experience



Live 'n Learn Spanish students from summer 2014 experiencing American lifestyle.

Photos contributed by Robin Hunsucker

Meghan Pottle | Staff Writer

This year, approximately 45 Mason High School families are letting strangers sleep in their homes, eat their food, and teach them about their culture.

Live 'n Learn is a program where Spanish students have the opportunity to get a taste of American culture by staying in the Cincinnati area with host families during the summer. Robin Hunsucker began preparing the company in the fall of 2012 and Spanish students first came to the United States in the summer of 2013.

"When the Spaniards come here, they come for one month and they live with host families who have students with the same age and gender as them, and they have similar personalities, interests, or hobbies," Hunsucker said. "During that month, they do classes three days a week and one day, the Americans come to class and the Americans practice Spanish, and the Spaniards practice English."

For the rest of the time, the Spaniards and host families participate in fun group activities, such as going to Kings Island, playing laser tag, and doing other typical things in the area.

Freshman Avery Brown hosted the same Spanish student for two consecutive years. Brown said they bonded over their shared interest in soccer and still keep in touch over the phone.

"We got along really well and he's like a Spanish brother to me," Brown said. "Our ages were a little off because he was 18 and I was 14, but I have a brother who was 17 at the time, so it was good. Even though there was a big age difference, he would hang out with me and my friends."

For the first time this year, 14 MHS students are traveling to Spain with chaperones, including Spanish teacher Debbie Perry. They will visit six cities in seven days and then the next week they will stay with host families, similar to the program in America.

Running of the Bulls, so I am going to be able to see that and that will be really fun."

This year, Live 'n Learn was launched as a 501c3 non-profit and even though it is a fun experience, students can get volunteer hours from hosting because they are volunteering their time to help Spaniards learn about our culture and improve their English.

According to Hunsucker, she decided she wanted to start Live 'n Learn after studying abroad and also teaching English in Spain for four years.

"I'm hoping to inspire students in the United States to continue studying Spanish and to see it as more than a subject."

— ROBIN HUNSUCKER
LIVE 'N LEARN CREATOR

Freshman Bailey Nix is traveling to Spain this summer to stay with the Spanish student she hosted the previous year.

"I've talked to the family and they said that there's a bunch of fun activities we're going to do, like we are going to go all over Spain to different tourist spots," Nix said. "I'm going to be there during the

"I started because I love Spanish and for me, it was really eye-opening to travel abroad," Hunsucker said. "I'm hoping to inspire students in the United States to continue studying Spanish and to see it as more than a subject. It's something that can be useful in their life, that can help them travel, to see the world and to meet people."

CYBER STALKING

Social media creeping has dangerous potential

Juliana Discher | Staff Writer

Stalking is all fun and games until you accidentally hit the 'like' button.

There is a new image being associated with the term 'stalker' now-a-days. No longer is it a person in a trench coat, clutching binoculars, peering into your window, but rather a person huddled behind a phone screen, scrolling through your daily life. Creeping or stalking online occurs when a person views someone else's social media page for an extended period of time. In a study conducted by the National Center for Cyberstalking Research, 70 percent of stalking victims know the person stalking them. While some may not admit to the act, junior Kim Lyon said she feels online creeping is a rampantly occurring event in the high school age range.

"It's so common," Lyon said. "The thing is that most people don't start out with the mission of stalking, but you click on someone's picture, and then you click on the likes, and then you click on a page, and then you click on someone tagged in a picture. Next thing you know, you're creeping on someone in Australia."

While stalking can be innocent and lighthearted, sometimes things can turn for the worse, according to Lyon.

"One of my friends was in an online chatroom and was talking to someone and became Internet friends with them," Lyon said. "She let them come into her social media, and eventually she started getting notes from this person outside her house. He would mail her gifts. She used to run in the park and she would see him standing by the playground sometimes."

At a certain point, Lyon said that there is a line to draw between casual creeping and harassment stalking.

"It's okay if you go onto social media with the intent of finding out more about someone, but when it turns into constantly watching a person through your computer screen, I think it's no different than watching someone through their window screen," Lyon said. "Just as if hiding behind trees and watching someone live their life is stalking, so is hiding behind a username and watching someone's social life. It's when this cycle repeats with a stranger that the line between casual stalking and Internet creeping becomes apparent."