



Reflections from a Student

Meet-A-Family has been such a great and learned experience for me and I just want to take a moment to say a quick thanks to all of the brave hosts and coordinators that seem to find enjoyment as they take on this wild bunch of Americans time and time again.

You can imagine what runs through our minds when we first catch word of the opportunity to know and become a part of a truly authentic British Family. It was as if we had gained access to an overseas community with whom we knew little about other than that they produced The Beatles and J.K. Rowling.

I know, and most of my classmates will agree, that at some point we even imagined this picturesque scene where we would drink tea with our pinkies pointing as high as humanly possible. Fortunately, we know more now!

In the beginning, it was the opportunity to explore these intercontinental differences that intrigued us. We HAD to apply. For me however, what made the experience worthwhile, and unexpected, was the way that an entire ocean between our distinct identities disappears when you sit down for supper. I never once thought it would be so easy to engage in such lively talks with someone whom I had met in a 3-month span. Conversation flourished, and with it... so did cultural exchange.

It is for this reason, why Meet-A-Family is so beneficial to the students who participate. They become immersed in a culture without limitations. Students begin looking forward to that weekly or monthly escape from Hogwarts... I mean Harlaxton. At your host family's house or flat, there aren't 170 other American students, doing American things... like belting the Star Spangled Banner or saying Aluminum instead of Al-you-mini-um (British accent).

It would be falling short, however, to say that this is solely a one-way exchange, only from host to student. It works the other way around as well. Why do you think we have families like mine that have sworn by the program for nearly a decade? It is indisputable that both students and hosts alike benefit from being around one another. It is quite refreshing to obtain new knowledge about life across the pond.

I firmly believe in the idea that to truly understand your own culture, you must find a way to be involved or immersed in another. And that is exactly why I can say on behalf of all the students: Thank you Harlaxton and Hosts... for being that outlet. We hope you have learned as much as we did and continue to host for the students who come after us.

Cheers,

Domenic DeSoto
Spring 2014