



ePals SCHOOL SWAP EXPERIENCE

ARTICLE SET

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Growing Up

in Africa

Meet two African kids — one from Tunisia and one from Egypt. Although they don't live in the same country, they share a religion — Islam. As you will discover, their religion is just one aspect of their lives. Like kids the world over, school, friends, and family take center stage in their lives.

Life in Tunisia

by Abby Christine Hackl

Ghassen Chakroun is a 11-year-old boy growing up in Kherreddine, a city outside of La Goulette, in the northern suburb of Tunis. Tunis is the capital of Tunisia, which lies on the northern tip of Africa. It is an exciting time to live in Tunisia. Tunisia has been an independent country only since 1956, and the country has undergone many changes. Tunisia has a population of over 10 million people, in an area slightly smaller than Wisconsin. A majority of the country's population is Muslim, but the constitution of the country promotes religious freedom and forbids wearing clothes that show your religion. Tunisia is the only Arab country to clearly outlaw polygamy, which means having more than one wife. The constitution also provides equal rights for

Growing Up... Growing Up... Growing Up... Growing Up... Growing Up... Growing Up... Growing Up...

Life in Egypt

by Angela Murock Hussein

Twelve year-old Nurhan Asam is a typical Egyptian girl from the capital city of Cairo. She lives in the neighborhood of Shoubra al Kheima, where she shares a two-bedroom apartment with her parents, older brother Meedu, and little sister Sara.

For Nura, as she is called for short, the days begin early. Most mornings, her mother wakes the children up at 6:00 A.M. to go to school. She attends sixth grade at the local public school, which is located around the corner from her home. In her grade and in the lower

Nura Asam is a 12-year-old Egyptian girl.



Abby with her new friend, Ghassen.

tion, which assists elderly people who were born before the new government. In Tunisia, white is used in houses as a symbol of the sky. Some other houses are painted a brilliant blue as a symbol of the Mediterranean Sea, with accents of yellow as a symbol of the sun. Many doors are decorated with nails heads in the shape of peacock tails. Peacocks were used in the past as guards, because they make a loud noise if disturbed. It is a colorful community.

Ghassen attends the local public school, one block away from his house. He goes to school from 8:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M. then goes home for lunch. He studies geography, history, civil

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women, which means that both boys and girls can go to school. Ghassen and his family are enthusiastic about the future of their country.

Ghassen lives with his mother and father and 6-year-old sister in a comfortable white house near the Mediterranean Sea. His house has a courtyard with a flower garden. He has a dog. Both his parents work for the Ministry of Social Affairs Department of Elderly Educa-



Nura is a typical Egyptian girl — she loves spending time with her family and friends.

grades at public school, the girls and boys go to the same school. But in later grades, she will go to school with only girls and the boys will go to a different school.

Classes begin at 7:00 A.M. and Nura takes a breakfast to school with her to be eaten late in the morning. Her favorite breakfast is milk and a large bag of chips. However, she also likes bread and cheese, bean paste, or falafel sandwiches, which are very typical Egyptian breakfast foods.

Nura finishes school at noon, but after school she goes to her lessons with her private tutor for about an hour. Many Egyptian children have tutors to help them with their schoolwork.

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Ghassen (continued)

education, math, French, writing and grammar, biology, geometry, and physical education. His favorite subjects are history, geography, biology, and writing. Next year, he will be in sixth grade. He began studying English in fifth grade. During the afternoon, Ghassen enjoys reading, watching television, playing his video games, and preparing for school. His favorite television shows are American cartoons. He does not go to the movies but watches movies at home on a DVD player. He likes karate movies best. When he grows up, Ghassen would like to be an engineer or a doctor.

Ghassen is a Muslim and attends a nearby mosque. He prays at least five times each day. Prayer times are announced from the mosque. Each prayer involves counted verses. The thing that Ghassen would most like for Americans to know about Islam is that it prohibits doing bad things, harming or insulting others. Ghassen's favorite holidays are the end of Ramadan, a month of prayer, fasting, and charity,

The blue on this shop door represents the Mediterranean Sea and the color is commonly seen in Tunisia. The design is made using nails.

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Nurhan (continued)

After studying, Nura likes to take a nap since she had to get up so early in the morning. Lunch comes in the early afternoon and usually includes French fries, bread, chicken, and soup. After lunch, Nura has homework and more time with the tutor.

In the evenings, Nura has time to herself around the neighborhood before she goes to bed around 10:00 P.M. She spends time with her uncles and parents, visits her grandmother, and plays with her cousins and friends. They like to play hide-and-seek or rent bikes to ride. She also likes to watch television, especially WWE wrestling, soccer, cartoons such as *Tom and Jerry*, and *Alam Simsim* (the Egyptian version of *Sesame Street*).

The weekends in Egypt are on Fridays and Saturdays. On these days, Nura gets up late.

Nura prepares to leave for a mosque, which she usually attends on Friday afternoon with her friends.

Tunis is famous for the historic city of Carthage, which was destroyed by the Romans in the Punic War. If Ghassen could show an American child his country, he would also like to show them the beautiful city of Aindrahem and share tasty Tunisian food with them. Native dishes include couscous, saffron potatoes, *coucha* (a slow-baked lamb dish flavored with olive oil, mint, cayenne pepper and tumeric), and tuna with cucumbers. Ghassen loves his country and is proud of its traditions and culture.

The Hackl's went some place a little less traveled: Tunis. Here, Abby poses with her family.

Up . . . Growing Up . . . Growing Up . . . Growing Up . . . Growing Up . . . Growing Up

to make rice, but it didn't turn out so well. One of Nura's favorite hobbies is dancing. Egyptians love music, and it is a part of any birthday, wedding or other type of party. Nura even likes to practice her dancing when she plays with her cousins and friends.

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UP

Growing

in Brazil

by Eduardo Monte Jorge Hey Martins

The Iguazu Falls divides Brazil,
Paraguay, and Argentina.

My name is Eduardo Monte Jorge Hey Martins and I am 15 years old. I am an only child. My father is an engineer and my mother is an English teacher at a university. I have a lot of friends.

I live in Curitiba. It is a big city here in my country. It has about 1.8 million inhabitants. Curitiba is the capital of the state of Paraná. It is known as the ecological capital of Brazil because it has so many trees and parks. Paraná is one of the three states in the south of Brazil. Brazil is a very big country and there are a lot of differences between north and south. The south of Brazil is much colder than the north and it is also more developed. The weather in my city is crazy. Sometimes in the morning it is warm and sunny and then in the evening, cold and rainy. But it is a really good city to live in, especially my neighborhood, because there are schools, malls, a club, supermarkets, and squares — everything that I need.

I live in a building, on the fourth floor. My apartment is very comfortable. It has three bedrooms, two living rooms, and a TV room. My bedroom has everything that a normal bedroom has: a bed, a television, a computer, my video games, CDs, books, and clothes. My building has a good area for kids to play. There is a court, where we can play soccer, basketball, and other sports, and a playground. It also has a place where we can

Ah . . . a day at the beach —
one of Eduardo's favorite places to visit.



Eduardo has many “best” friends, but only one dad!



have barbecue, with tables and chairs, and on the first floor there is a hall for parties and another area where we can play Ping-Pong or pool, watch DVDs, or just sit and talk.

I study at Expoente, a private school near my house and one block away from the stadium of my soccer team, Atlético Paranaense. I have studied at this school since I was 4. It's not a very big school, and everybody knows everybody. My classes are from 7:20 A.M. to 12:50 P.M. At Expoente we have 14 subjects: Portuguese, English, Spanish, math, physics, chemistry, biology, philosophy, sociology, history, geography, art, text production, and physical education. My favorite subject is history because the teacher is nice and I like learning the history of the world. I don't need to do physical education because I am an athlete on the school handball team. I am in the 11th grade. Next year is my last year at school, and I'll have to study a lot because at the end of the year I'll take an exam, called Vestibular, to get into university.

I don't have only one best friend, but rather all my close friends from my school and from my building can be considered my best friends.

We hang out especially at malls, because there we can see our friends from other schools and have a snack. But we also go to the stadium

to see our soccer team play, to parties, to a friend's house to play some sport, to squares to go skateboarding, and because our city doesn't have any beaches, we go to the pool. I go to the pool in the club near my house in the summer. We also go to the movies, and my favorite type of movie is horror.

When my family and I go on vacation, we usually go to the beach. We like the beaches in Santa Catarina, another state in the south. We also visit other places like São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Porto Seguro, Gramado, and sometimes we travel abroad.

I don't watch television or play computer games much. I play some sports. I play handball three times a week, tae-kwon-do three times a week too, and tennis twice a week. I know how to play the piano, but I haven't practiced it since I was 10 years old. I also study English and French twice a week. I started studying English when I was 10 and French I started this year. I have a busy schedule but I have time to do what I like.

If someone from the United States came to visit me here, I would take him to some tourist attractions, such as Iguazu Falls, in the city of Foz do Iguaçu, and to Cristo Redentor [Christ the Redeemer], in Rio de Janeiro, and to some beaches, too. I would like to take him to a soccer game in the stadium here in my city or, if possible, to a game in Maracanã, the biggest stadium in Brazil, which is located in Rio de Janeiro.

When I am an adult I want to be a diplomat, to promote peace around the world, and to help people who need it. But I want to major in law; so, if I can't be a diplomat, I will be a judge.

The best thing about being a Brazilian is to live in this beautiful country, which has amazing things to see and to do.

Growing in China

Meet Shaomin Yang and Wei Xin,
two kids growing up in China.
Shaomin lives in rural China, while
Wei lives in the busy city of Beijing.

The Beauty Within Life

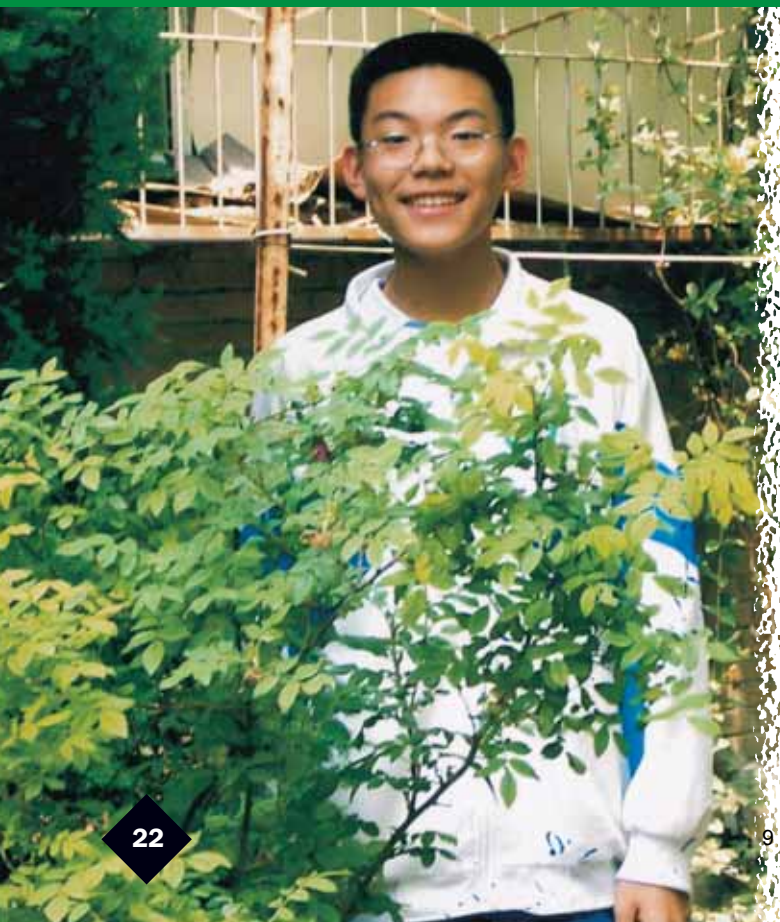
by Shaomin Yang

Note: The writing style of this story is poetic. It is one style of writing that is typically taught in Chinese schools.

It was dawn. The small garden awoke from its sweet dream. Little pigs laid on the edge of their tiny door, heads half protruding and “oinking” loudly. With their starving eyes wide open, the ducks also rushed out of the fence, as if they were asking their owner for food. The cats, who had already worked for a whole night, danced around the owner in a circle, as if they were begging for something. The Sun rose slowly from the east

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A City Boy

by 魏新 Wei Xin

I am Ethan, which is my English name. My Chinese name is Wei Xin. I am 15 and I live in Beijing.

My home isn't very big, but it's very comfortable, and we are very happy. Dad and Mom are always very busy in their work. My father works in a factory. My mother works for a computer company. I am an only child.

I study in Zhi Chun Li Middle School. There are 40 students in our class. We have many classes — such as mathematics,



He who knows others is wise;

as smoke floated across the sky like a piece of silk under the radiance of the Sun. The new day had begun.

My classmates and I were riding our beloved bicycles and breathing in the fresh air that nature had bestowed on us. Facing the brilliant Sun, we rode into the entrance of the school, which, covered by the silky fog, was so beautiful and graceful. We learned very efficiently in this exquisite environment.

Listen! Students were reciting the text loudly, and teachers with their books under their arms were walking toward the classrooms. We studied many subjects: history lessons, full of mystery and wonder, that at the same time allowed us to understand the past; language lessons that taught us how to be good people; mathematics, biology,

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tionally; life is a kind of beauty.

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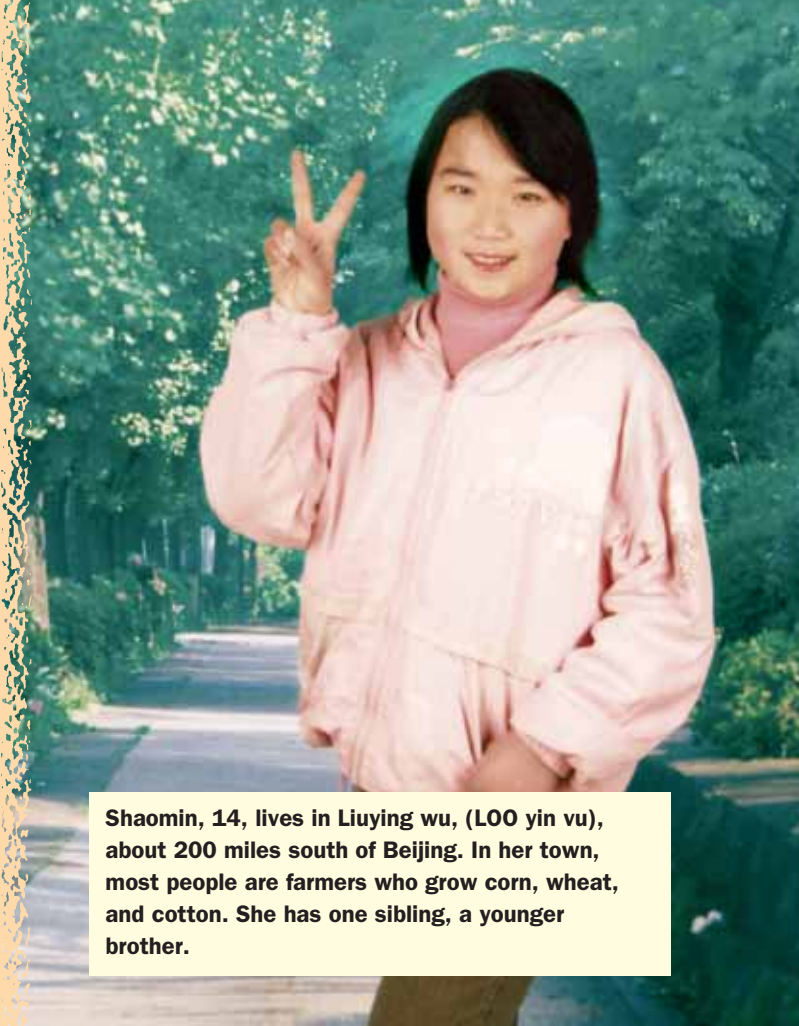


Wei kids around with a friend at Zhi Chun Li (gzu twin lee) Middle School.

chemistry, physics, English, physical education, and so on. We have four classes in the morning and three classes in the afternoon. Our classes begin at 7:00 A.M. and end at 5:00 P.M. Our teachers are very friendly, and they are very skilled. I am a hardworking student. After my high school graduation, I want to go to a university.

I am good at math and Chinese. My English is so-so. I'm good at computers. I am especially interested in Web design. I hope to become a computer expert when I grow up. I will study hard to make my dream come true.

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Shaomin, 14, lives in Liuying wu, (LOO yin vu), about 200 miles south of Beijing. In her town, most people are farmers who grow corn, wheat, and cotton. She has one sibling, a younger brother.

he who knows himself is enlightened.

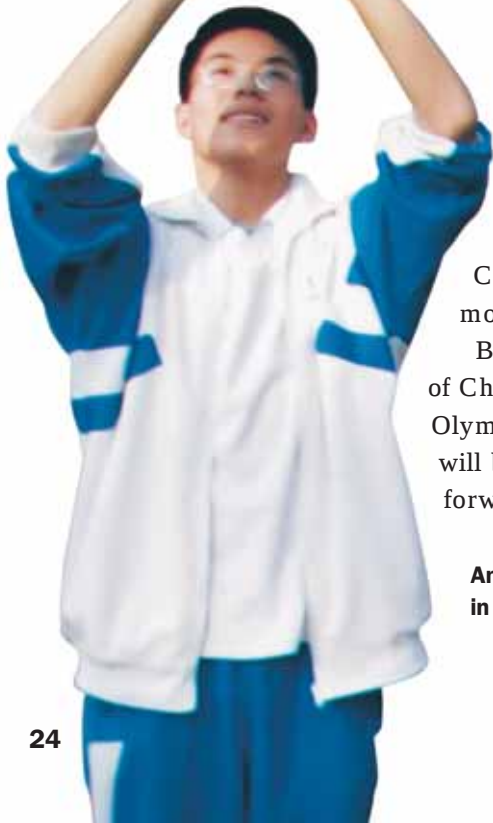
and geography lessons. We also learned English. In the afternoon, we learned computer skills. Today, technology improves so quickly “that one cannot survive without computer skills.” Students practiced how to type.



Shaomin (3rd from left) poses with friends in front of a peach tree at school.

“Ding, ding . . .” The bell had rung. Students exited the school one by one. The Sun was setting and the dimming rays hovered over the campus. As the Chinese proverb says, “Sunsets are amazingly beautiful, yet the dusk is coming fast.” The fruitful day had come to a close, and we confidently waited for the rising of the next day’s Sun.

Growing Up . . . Growing Up . . . Growing Up . . . Growing Up . . . Growing



In my spare time, I have a lot of fun. I like playing basketball, tennis, and chess. Sometimes I watch television, use the Internet, and listen to music. I really like watching American movies. My favorite is *The Da Vinci Code*. Of course, I also like Chinese films very much. My favorite celebrity is the Chinese movie star Jackie Chan.

Beijing is a very beautiful and ancient city and is the capital of China. There are many strong and stately towers in Beijing. The Olympic Games will be held in Beijing in August 2008. Then China will become the spotlight of the whole world. Everybody is looking forward to this great event.

Another champion in the making? Wei says no — he wants a career in computers.

IP Growing in Russia

Russia is home to almost 142 million people. We can't meet all of them, but here are four Russian kids who would love to share their country with you.

Beautiful St. Petersburg

by Iliya Kolesnikov

My name is Iliya Kolesnikov. I am 13 years old. I live in St. Petersburg. This city is located on the northwest of Russia. St. Petersburg is a big and beautiful megalopolis.

I love my city. It is a museum under the sky. Old-style houses and parks, palaces and churches, beautiful embankments of the rivers and canals — this is what my great city is all about. Also, St. Petersburg is a city of the “white nights.” White nights is a period of time when the sun goes down only for a few hours. It lasts from the end of May until the end of June. This is the best time to visit my city.

From the historical center of the city you can take the subway to get to where I live. It is in the southern part of the city. This district consists of

mostly modern buildings. In my neighborhood there are a lot of apartment buildings, hypermarkets (supermarkets), movie theaters, and other attractions found in a modern city. My family lives on the fourth floor of a new 16-floor apartment building.

I have a great family. My mom's name is Julia. She helps cities develop their economies. My father's name is Aleksey. He is an engineer. I have a younger brother. His name is Nikita. He is eight years old. My brother and I attend school number 544. In school, I study Russian language and literature, English and German languages, math, Russian history, biology, geography, painting, and music. Next year I am going to study new subjects: physics and drawing. My favorite subject is math. In the future, I would like to learn to be an engineer.

I have three good friends. Their names are Vlad, Vladimir, and Andrey. They are all my classmates. We like to play soccer, computer games, ride bicycles, and go to the movies. In my free time, I like to watch the TV show *Top Gear* and the popular science show *Galileo*.

Usually I spend my vacation at a *dacha*, a country house. My grandmother owns a little house on a small piece of land not far from the city. She likes to grow vegetables such as potatoes, cucumbers, tomatoes, and sweet pepper, as well as berries: strawberries,



raspberries, and currants. We often go to the nearby forest to pick wild berries and mushrooms with our friends.

I like to travel very much. During the summer, we often go to the very north of Russia, the sea-shore of the White Sea. It takes us the whole day to get to Obozersky village, which is located in the Archangelsk region. My great-grandfather Alexey Vasilevich Krukov lived there. He died recently at the age of 86. He was a veteran of World War II. He served in the coast artillery of the Red Army on the sea-shore of Barents Sea. He defended American sea convoys from the Nazis' aviation. He told me a lot about the difficulties of wartime and the many feats of his comrades-in-arms. He received a lot of decorations for his deeds. I am proud of my great-grandfather.

In Obozersky we usually stay in my great-grandfather's old wooden house that he built by himself. His family has been living there for more than 50 years. This is a place where the whole family gathers together. When we stay there we have to live in an unusual way for us city dwellers. For example, in order to cook a meal, we need to bring water from the well and stoke the iron stove that uses firewood. It is different for us, but we like it.



Iliya visits Peterhof, one of the most magnificent estates in the world.



Iliya and his friends take a break from soccer to pose for the camera.

The Archangelsk region is a beautiful place. There is a pine forest, green meadows, and a lake with pure water near our village. We like hiking around the lake. During such trips we sleep in a tent, go fishing, and cook on an open fire.

I would be glad to make friends with Americans. I would invite them to my house and serve them tasty pancakes called blini that my mother cooks. We could go to the stadium and see soccer being played by my favorite team, Zenith. Also we could visit palaces and the fountains of the tsar's residence, Peterhof. People in Russia are friendly and hospitable. Please come to visit us. I am sure that you would like it here.

It takes a lot of chopping and carrying of wood to keep the stove going at Iliya's great-grandfather's home.



Life is Wonderful!

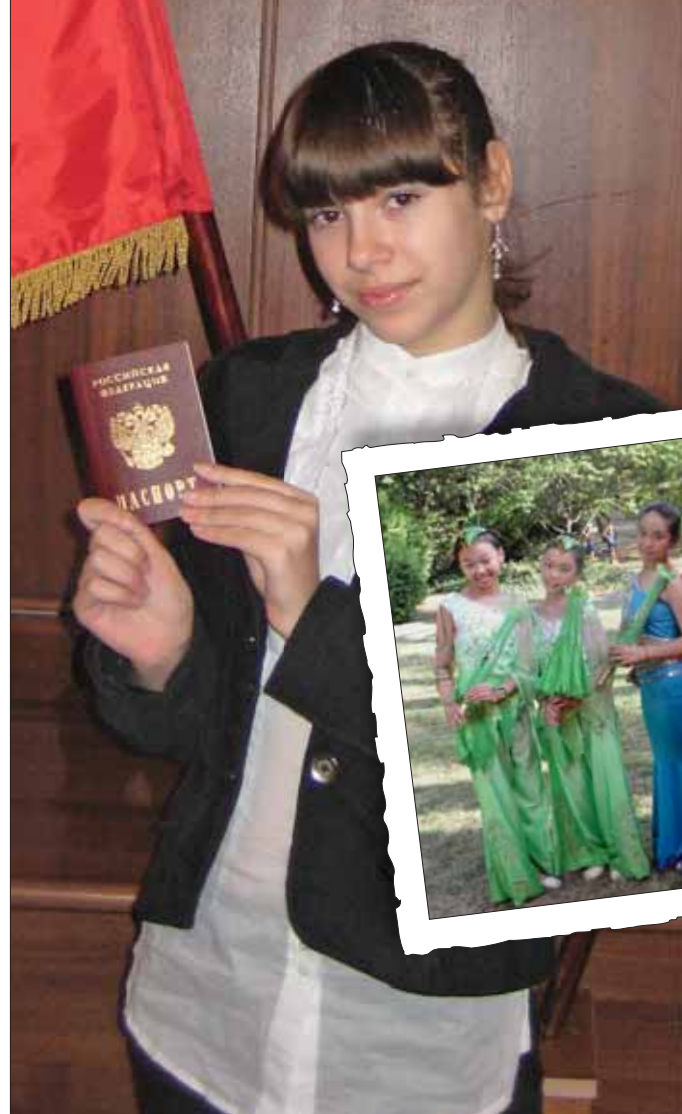
by **Polina Krasilnaya**

My name is Polina Krasilnaya. I am 14. I live in the city of Nizhny Novgorod, Russia. I am proud to be Russian because my country is amazing and full of miracles and adventures. The city of Nizhny Novgorod attracts people with its ancient buildings, monuments, and museums. One of the main attractions is our Nizhegorodsky Kremlin.

My life is great. I go to school #126, where I study English. I am in the eighth grade. I am an “A” student, love English, and plan to use it in the future.

I love my family. My mother, Inna, is a charming, kind, and beautiful woman. She is my friend. She understands and cares about me. She is a sports instructor. My father, Dmitry, is strong, brave, and fantastic. He is the best father in the world. He is a firefighter. I love my parents very much, and I am proud of them. So far, there are three of us, but soon we'll have another member of the family. I really want to have a little brother.

It's great to be 14! Polina proudly shows off her passport.



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Hello from Russia!

by **Pavel Belkov**

My name is Pavel. I am 12 years old. I live in a beautiful city called Mezhdurechensk. The city got its name from its location between two rivers. One river is called Usa and the other river is Tom. If you are ever out in the city early in the morning, you will see flashes of the orange jackets of workers who are taking out the trash, planting trees, and tending to gardens. About 100,000 people live in this city that is bordered by two lakes. Beyond the lakes are mountains with forests and impenetrable taiga.

Pavel has some backyard fun on a hammock.



Polina with her mom and dad.

As for my hobbies, my life is busy. I dance in a modern dance group called Rocket, which was nominated as the best children's group of Russia in 2010. I also play tennis. I love playing tennis, and I am thinking about professional training. I also attend swim classes.

I have a lot of friends. All of them are different, but each has their own personality, and I love it. I love children. This summer I worked as a counselor at a cool camp. Being a counselor is a rewarding yet hard job, at the same time. But it's worth it to see happy children's faces, laughing

and smiling. I enjoy working as a counselor.

Right now I am also at camp, Artek, but as a camper, not a counselor. Artek is a fun place. This is the Ninth Annual Children's Festival. The theme is "Let's Change the World for the Better." Artek children from 55 countries attend. Last year we created the Children's League of Nations, and I was a representative of Russia. Skin color, country, and language do not play any role here. What we want, what we think about, and what we can do to change the world for the better is more important. Young leaders of the delegations work on problems of ecology and children's rights. It is a great group.



Polina poses at Camp Artek with other campers, who represented China, Palestine, and Gabon.

Up ... Growing Up ... Growing Up

Pavel and his dad on vacation.

Elk, rabbits, and bears live in the taiga. On the edge of the city is a high mountain that people climb to admire the view of the city.

This year our city turned 55 years old, so we had a big celebration. To honor our coal miners, celebrities came visiting from Moscow. At the end of the celebration, there were beautiful fireworks that were visible from the whole city.

I live with my mom, Antonina Ivanovna, my dad, Yuriy Aleksandrovich, and my youngest sister Mariya Uurievna, whom we call Masha. We live near the river Tom, and our township is called Pritomeski. We have our own school and a preschool. Not long ago, a new store was built, like a supermarket, just smaller in size.



My sister Masha is one year younger than me. Our birthdays are both in April. Mine is on the second and Masha's is on the twenty-third. I love sports, so this year I plan on playing volleyball. Masha really likes music. She loves to sing and attends music school to learn how to play piano.

(Continued on page 28)

Pavel (continued)

We attend school together in the same grade. Our parents decided to send us to school at the same time, so that we can look after each other. Our school is small; our teachers are really good. In my grade there are 22 students — seven girls and 15 boys.

We really love our mom and dad. They are good and caring parents. Our mom is a nurse. She worked for 13 years at a children's hospital. Now she works around the house. She prepares delicious food at home, and she sends us off to school and our dad off to work. She greets us when we get home from school. When we arrive, our home smells of something appetizing for lunch.

Our dad works in the coal mine called Rapsadskaya 2. This is one of the biggest coalmines in the world. Our dad has been a sinker for 25 years. The work is very hard. It's dark there, hard to breath, and frightening. Not long ago, the whole world talked about our coal mine because a great tragedy occurred there. Many workers lost their lives. Our dad was saved by God, Himself, because we prayed with my mom for my dad's safety. For fun our dad likes to gather mushrooms. He knows and analyzes mushrooms well. We love to go with him into woods to gather them. It's pleasant to eat mushrooms in the winter that you picked yourself.

This past winter was very cold, -43°C . (-45°F). School was cancelled quite often due to very low temperatures.

There are lots of poems and songs about the city of Mezhdurechensk. Here is part of one:

*Among tall mountains, two rivers,
Where men catch fish,
Stands without sorrow a wall
My Mezhdurechensk — my city.*



Ilya loves his hometown of Moscow.

Russia is My Country

by Ilya Pastushkov

My name is Ilya Pastushkov. I am 13 years old. I live in Moscow with my mom. Moscow is a very beautiful city. Our house in Moscow is located near the metro station "Tsaritsino," closer to the edge of the city. Further, I must mention my room. It is not very big, but why would I need a huge one? Most importantly, it contains a couch, a computer, a desk and many other necessary things.

There are other very interesting places in Russia, too — for example, St. Petersburg. I was there myself a couple of times, and I must say the city is very beautiful, even better than Moscow. In the past, St. Petersburg was the capital of Russia, and that is why in the city itself and in the surrounding towns there



**From Moscow to Minneapolis —
it's the same all around the world.
Being with friends is always fun.**



**Ilya got to get up close
to a leopard after
a performance.**

are many palaces in which many Russian tsars lived. The most beautiful of the surrounding towns is Peterhof. Peter the Great built an enormous palace here and a park with fountains.

When my mom and I went there last year, we saw a historical reenactment of the battle of the Neva. Right in the middle of the city on the beach in front of the Peter and Paul Fortress, young people in historical clothing, with real ancient weapons, conducted a performance battle reenactment.

I go to school #870, which is not too far from my house. My school is remarkable. It is a physics and mathematics school with intensives in algebra, geometry, physics, and of course, computer programming. Mathematics is my favorite subject. Right now I am in seventh grade. There are 22 people in our class, more boys than girls. In total, we go to school for 11 years.

Also, something should be said about my family. My mom works as a journalist. She likes her job very much, and, after all, she is a great journalist. And my grandpa is a doctor. Being

is a movie theater, city hall and a decent park.

Going to school and working is very tiring (especially considering that students don't get paid). One must relax somehow. I spend my free time playing on the computer, playing outside (soccer and basketball), watching TV, and reading books.

I think that Russia has a bunch of positives (for Russians in any case), and one of them is this: here, people speak Russian. It is very convenient and allows Russians to understand each other easily. Another positive side is that all (or almost all) natives of my country are very industrious and smart people. And the third and most important positive is that in Russia they prepare the most amazing borscht.

In conclusion, I want to say to American kids, don't be afraid to fly to Russia; there is nothing scary here — bears don't wander around on the streets. One thing that might bother you is the long flight, change of time zones, and the need to study your Russian so that you are able to converse with matryoshka (nesting doll) salesmen. That's about it. On this joyful note I conclude my story; hope it was interesting.

UP Growing

in South Korea

Meet Chris Kim,
a busy teenager who lives
in Seoul, South Korea.

Piano was the first
instrument Chris
learned to play.

A Life with No Break

by Chris Kim

Seoul, South Korea, is always in motion. There are no breaks and it is hard to find extended periods of complete silence. Perhaps because I had grown up in the United States as a baby, I still find the incessant explosions of noise and activity unsettling.

My name is Chris Kim. Chris is not an uncommon name and neither is Kim — it is one of the three most common Korean surnames (the others are Lee and Park). I am 16 years old and live with my parents in the hectic capital of South Korea. After eight years, though, all the sounds blend together in a colorful, painless harmony. That said, this is not a beautiful sound — it is simply the noise — the soul — of Seoul.

What is this harmony? It is difficult to characterize, but its most striking aspect is that it truly is a 5.1 Surround Sound (did I mention South Korea is advanced in electronics?) system. Noise comes at you not only from all four directions, but also from below and above you.

The overall atmosphere of the city is not unlike metropolitan areas like New York City or Chicago. Tall buildings soar into the sky, leaving only occasional patches of blue visible up above. What this means is that there is always someone above; the majority of Seoulites live in apartment buildings which vary from five stories to 30 stories high or more.

There is always someone below, too. A constant rattle of activity can be heard beneath the streets and sidewalks. The metros of Seoul leave no corner of the city untouched. The metro tracks, which are like veins and arteries, are so expansive they even stretch to neighboring cities. Even without the horrific traffic,

cars are unnecessary because public transportation is very well organized.

Thus, I have no problems getting around the city and certainly none getting to school. I attend Seoul International School, one of several international schools in South Korea. Generally, international schools accommodate students from kindergarten to 12th grade. Since we follow an American curriculum, I don't imagine that studies here and in the United States are much different, aside from the fact that Korean parents are very focused on their children's educations.

I'm sure infamous tales of the incessant after-school tutoring sessions Korean students go through have reached ears in many parts of the world. In truth, though, it is not as horrible as



Yin and Yang, Korean Style

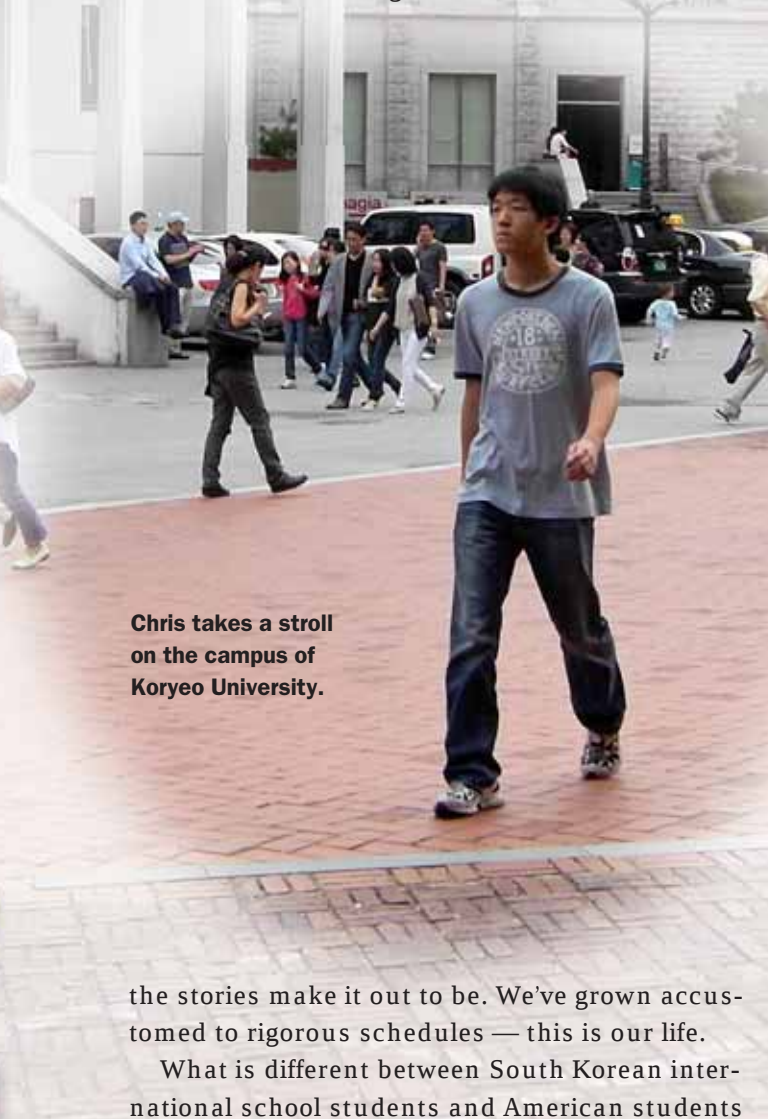
Chris works hard at his homework in his school's lounge area.

is how we spend our relaxation time. Here, we call it "playing" as opposed to "chilling" or "hanging out." This is a reflection of our mentality when it comes to having fun. Perhaps because of our oppressive studies, we pounce on every opportunity to enjoy ourselves. We don't simply relax and chill. We play. We spend our every effort to be wild and have a good time.

We go to gaming rooms and grind away in front of computer screens for hours. We karaoke our lungs out. We traverse the hustling streets, chatting, eating, and shopping. We sit down at our favorite cafes for a taste of our favorite beverages. We enter a trance in front of the titanic screens of the cinemas. We run out on dirt fields and basketball courts. We jam away on our pianos and guitars until our fingers start crying out for mercy.

This is the life, a yin-and-yang of studying and playing. The transitions are seamless; there are no breaks and it is hard to find extended periods of complete silence. Rest assured, no matter what we do, we do so with cyclical vigor.

The noises just keep coming.



Chris takes a stroll on the campus of Koryeo University.

the stories make it out to be. We've grown accustomed to rigorous schedules — this is our life.

What is different between South Korean international school students and American students

UP Growing

in Turkey

Meet two Turkish girls — Zeynep and Sena.

Zeynep lives in Istanbul, Turkey's largest city and Sena lives in a smaller city where her family runs a candy store.

Istanbul Girl

by Zeynep Yilmaztürk

Hi, my name is Zeynep Yilmaztürk and I'm 13. I live in Istanbul. My home is in Cekmeköy, a suburb on the Asian side of the city. My school is there too. I live with my mother, father, and eight-year-old brother. Istanbul is a very beautiful and historic city, but there is a lot of pollution.

My mother is an architect and my father is a businessman. The school that I go to is the Sezin School. We learn math, science, social studies, Turkish, English, and for two years I have been learning German. My favorite lessons are math, Turkish, English, and German. Actually I like all of the lessons. When I'm an adult, I would like to be an astronaut or a designer. My school is up to

(Continued on page 26)

wing Up . . . Growing Up . . . Growing Up . . . Growing Up . . . Growing



My Life in Turkey

by Sena Öztosun

Hello! My name is Sena Öztosun. I am 14 years old and a high school student in the city of Adana, the fifth largest city in Turkey. Adana is located in the region of Akdeniz, a southern region of my country. Adana has the most valuable fields named Çukurova for growing cotton and oranges. Adana's population is more than 1.6 million.

If you come to visit Adana, first, I would have you taste a *kebab* (a Turkish meal of lamb meat and bread). The "Adana kebab" is famous in Turkey, although you might think it is too spicy! Every visitor should also see the Seyhan River and the Çatalan Dam, which provides all the

Sena thinks a stop at her dad's candy shop is a must for anyone visiting Adana.



Snacking, being with friends, playing basketball
— not a bad life for this Turkish girl!



Up . . . Growing Up . . . Growing Up . . .

Up . . .



LEFT: At her dad's shop. Sena displays the Turkish flag.
BOTTOM: Sena's family is very close and supportive
of one another.

electricity for the city. The sight is amazing. You will feel like you are in paradise. Our final stop would be my father's chocolate and candy store. In our store, you can try the famous candy: Turkish Delight. Our shop has many flavors, and I think it would be a perfect souvenir.

I live on an avenue in Adana called Ziyapaa, which is very calm and peaceful. Everyone says "good morning" to each other. It is a happy place. Nearby, there is Atatürk Park, which is a green and beautiful area. People walk in the park and walk their dogs.

My family lives in an eighth-floor apartment with a perfect side view of Atatürk Park. My sister and I share our room. Our neighbors

(Continued on page 26)





Zeynep's family gathers 'round for photo time.

Zeynep (continued)

eighth grade, now I'm in seventh grade. I love my friends too, but mostly Efe, Nagehan, Bilal, Ege, and Naz.

For fun, I hang out and go to movies with my friends, or sometimes I invite my friends to my house or they invite me to their houses. I go places with my family. On vacation, I go to my grandmother's summerhouse in Güzelce and Fethiye, which is in the south of Turkey.

I like watching movies at home, too. I prefer watching comedies and action films. My favorite is *Dejavu*. I also watch TV. I watch cartoons, television series, and films. My favorite

growing Up . . . Growing Up . . . Growing Up . . . Growing Up . . . Growing

Sena (continued)

are friendly people, especially the ones who come to Turkey from Germany in summers.

I have three family members (my mother, father, and sister). We all live together and love each other very much. My mother, Hayriye, is the leader of our home. My father, Mehmet, earns money for our family. He has a huge candy shop with seven floors. My sister, Gülén, is 13 years old and she is my best friend. My family is everything to me.

I am a ninth grade student at Tarsus American College (TAC). I love my school, because it has many activities and high-quality education. It is a historic school, founded in 1888. Stickler, the oldest building, is the symbol of Tarsus American College.

TOP RIGHT: Sena goes glam for the camera. **BOTTOM LEFT:** Sena loves her school, especially as she has many dedicated teachers, such as Carole, to her right.



series are *Arka Sokaklar* (Backstreets) and *Akasya Duragi* (Taxi Rank). In my free time I play computer games, too. I play basketball, tennis, and piano.

I admire Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. We call him the “Father” of our people. He died in 1938, but we still remember him. He did good things for our country. He cared about other people and helped them.

If an American came to visit Turkey, they would visit some museums to learn our history, they would see the beautiful view from the Bosphorus, the strait that divides the city, and he or she would eat delicious Turkish food.

The best thing about living in Turkey is that there are a lot of historic places to visit, we help each other, and also we like to have a lot fun.

Zeynep relaxes with a book in her room.



Up . . . Growing Up . . . Growing Up . . . Growing Up . . . Growing Up . . .

At TAC, all lessons are in English except history, geography, and Turkish, so students have a brilliant opportunity to learn English.

TAC teaches students not only about academics, but also about real life. There are many activities and clubs such as theater, debate, basketball, tennis, fitness, traditional Turkish dance, journalism, arts and crafts,

community service, and more. The motto of our school is “Leaders for Turkey, Leadership for the World.”

I am also involved in many artistic activities outside of school. I have played piano for eight years and I love writing songs. I have composed musicals and compositions, as well as written plays for the stage. In my city, there is a government chorus for young people, in which I sing as a soprano.

In the future, I really want to be an ambassador, a writer, an explorer, or a genetics researcher. I want to be an ambassador because I believe I could represent my country very well. I want to be a writer because I feel I can express myself perfectly while I am writing. I want to be a scientist because I enjoy exploring things in biology. I’m only 14, so I have a few more years to decide!

Yum!

**Can you imagine a seven-floor candy shop?
That’s a whole lotta sweets.**





Salon Care for Suzie

Suzie gets her hair done.

Amilcar (continued)

If a foreigner came to visit me, I would take him to visit many cities and tourist places, such as the museum Mudanah, Labadi Beach, and Jacmel, one of the most beautiful cities you can imagine. Because of the earthquake, Port-au-Prince is still very dirty, but they are trying to clean it up. There is a hotel nearby called the Flamboyant Hotel, which is trying to attract tourists.

American children should know that Haiti is a very good country. We have many good things in Haiti, such as LCS and our museums. I'm happy to write this story about my life, my country, and my family, and I hope that you appreciate my story.

My Dreams for Haiti

by **Camelo Jean**

translated by **Raymond Chicoye**

I live in Matènwa on La Gonave Island, but it is not my place of birth. I was born in a community called Lasous; I moved with my sister to Matenwa. There are nine people in my family, which is made up of my mother, my six sisters, my brother, and myself. I am the baby of the family. My father passed away when I was 12. At the age of one, my mother left to go to the United States to work and support the entire family. I first met her when I was 10.

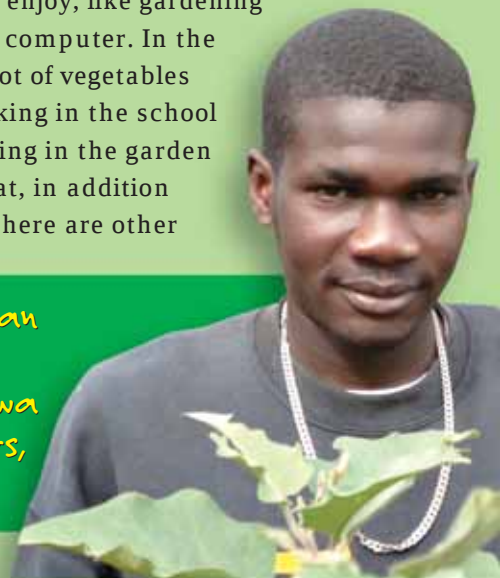
I attend school in my community. I like the school because it gives me the chance to do a lot of things that I enjoy, like gardening and working on the computer. In the garden, we grow a lot of vegetables that we use for cooking in the school kitchen. Also, working in the garden helps me realize that, in addition to going to school, there are other

Name: **Camelo Jean**

Age: **18**

Hometown: **Matenwa**

Siblings: **Six sisters,
one brother**



KIDS SPEAK

compiled by **Christine Low**

We asked these students
what they loved most about
their country or their school.



"I love my school
because it gives me
great opportunities
to help my family
and myself."

—Wilna Blanc, 11

The children who contributed to our *Kids Speak* all attend Matenwa Community Learning Center, a school for 240 students on La Gonave, a 37-mile-long island west of Haiti's capital. Learn more at www.matenwalc.org.



What's new in the world today?

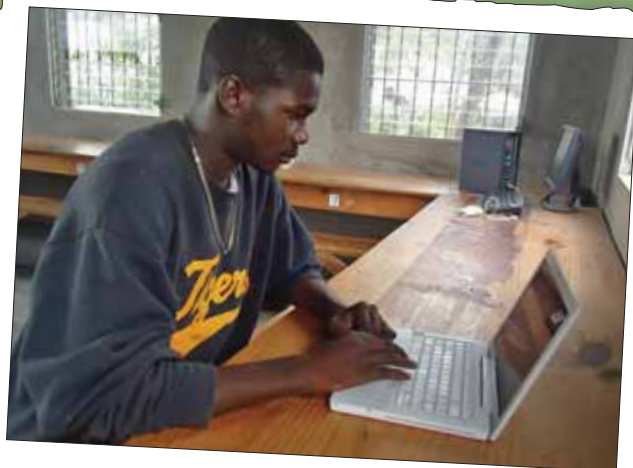
Camelo uses computers to learn about agronomy and to stay in touch with world events.

things to do that can help me find jobs and keep me busy. I love using a computer because it is something important in everyone's life. When you really know how to use it, you can communicate with the rest of the world in the convenience of your home. My favorite subject is French because I think it is a beautiful language. I would love to master the French language, and that is the reason why I keep on practicing.

I love my country very much for its culture, traditions, and nice weather. In February it is Carnival time. People come from different parts of the world to enjoy the bands performing and people dancing on beautiful floats — the ambience lasts three days. Around Easter, the streets are animated by live bands called *rara*. People dance in the streets.

My favorite music is Haitian *kompas*, a kind of music that everybody can enjoy listening and dancing to. But sometimes, I also enjoy listening to some rap music.

I look at the future with a lot of dreams. I dream of becoming a great singer. I hope my music will bring happiness to people. Isn't that our expectation from music? I also dream of becoming an agronomist, so I will be able to help



the people with their farm work by encouraging them to use fertilizer to make their land more productive. I have learned all of this in school, and I expect to increase my knowledge in this field in order to become an expert.

My dream for Haiti is to see it more beautiful than the way it is now, where economic development and good health care, justice, and education system will prevail. I dream of a Haiti where each person will have the possibility to work and enjoy a peaceful life. I dream of a Haiti where people will come from different parts of the world to visit and want to stay.

I would like to see all these become reality, because where there is a will, there is a way. I hope through this story I have convinced you to come and visit my country and discover our culture. You will not regret it.

"I like my school because it gives me an education in my mother tongue, Creole, and teaches farming and crafts — it's an education for life."

—Emerson Florvilus, 11



"I love my country because it has a beautiful language that all nations would like to know how to speak. We have a culture that is unique and people who love to have visitors come here."

—Chamy Jean, 12

(Continued on page 16)

KIDS SPEAK

"I love my country because it has a beautiful language and beautiful culture."

—Shoodlie Cajuste, 9



"I love my country very much because of the way people talk to each other without the need to know each other. I think our language, Creole, is the most beautiful of all languages."

—Dieuricame Riviere, 9

"I love my country very much because it is a beautiful country that has a lot of fresh air, beautiful sun, and nice temperatures. We also have a beautiful culture that has a time for everything and a language that many other nations enjoy."

—Chrisla Fleurant, 9

"I love my school because it gives me the opportunity to make beautiful things in our crafts center."

—Donalidson Mamoune, 10



"I love my country for its beautiful weather, sun, and culture. I love to sing our national anthem because the five verses have such beautiful words."

—Louvens Simeus, 10



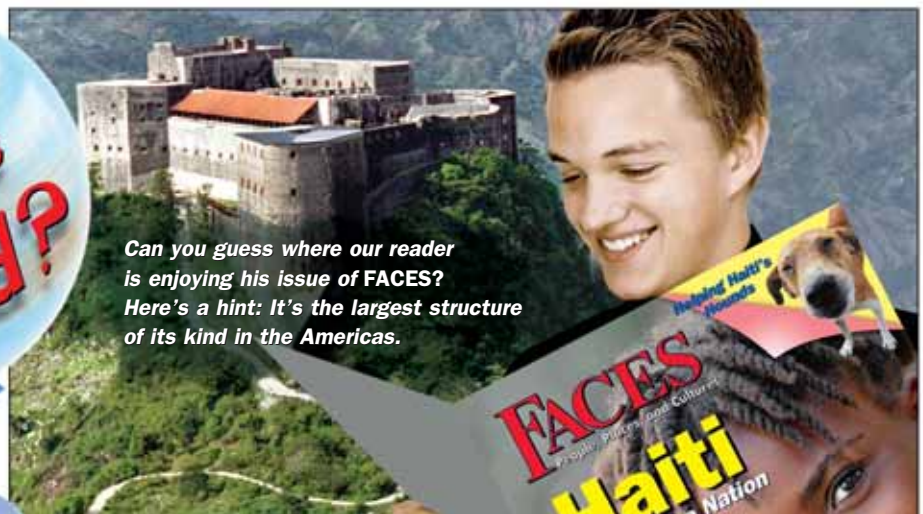
"I love my country because it has a beautiful blue and red flag. It has a beautiful language that many other nations want to learn to speak and a culture that is not similar to other nations."

—Fabiola Petit-Frere, 15



"I love my country very much for its good weather."

—Djonnika Jean, 9



Can you guess where our reader is enjoying his issue of **FACES**? Here's a hint: It's the largest structure of its kind in the Americas.

Send us a photo of you with your copy of **FACES** to facesmag@yahoo.com.

The answer is on page 47.

Family Time:

Norawish enjoys an outing with his brother and parents.



This piece is hard!

Norawish learns something new on the piano.

A Boy Called Banana Leaf

by **Norawish Lohitnavy**

Hello, my name is Norawish Lohitnavy. You can call me Bai-Tong. It means “banana leaf.” My parents named me that because the banana leaf is very versatile and useful in Thai culture, not to mention environmentally friendly. The name Norawish means scholar. My last name, Lohitnavy, means navy blood. My last name is Lohitnavy because my ancestors used to serve in the royal Thai navy. The word “lohit” means blood or bloodline, whereas “navy” is navy in English (In this case, Thai language is “borrowing” the word “navy” from English.)

In my town, my school is pretty far away. It’s about 12 miles from my home. As my school starts at 7:30 in the morning, I have to wake up at about 5:45 a.m. every morning. Before I go to school, I have to feed my yellow Labrador retrievers, Buddy and Jill.

In Thailand, the kids are competitive about their education, especially with math, science, robotics, and a few other subjects. My favorite subject in school is math. I like it because there’s always an interesting way to solve problems. In school, we learn the basic languages, such as Thai, English, and Chinese. My school has

Banana Leaf continued on page 18

MY TOWN: ONE BIG FAMILY

by **Nathakan Kantip**

Hello, I am Nathakan Kantip. My friends call me Nuk. I am 17 years old. I live in a small sub-district town called Ban Den, not very far from Chiang Rai. Chiang Rai is in the northernmost part of Thailand bordering Laos, China, and Myanmar. My neighbors are mostly farmers. We know almost every one, which makes us feel like a big family.

My father died when I was 14. His name was Anucha Kantip, and he worked for the Telephone Authority of Thailand. My mother's name is Pornthana Kantip. She works as a salesperson for a silk fabric shop in the Chiang Rai International Airport. I also have an older brother, Nattawoot Kantip. He is 20 years old and is in his second year in Chiang Mai University. Chiang Mai is a city about 184 kilometers (115 miles) from Chiang Rai.

The name of the school where I study is Meing Rai Maha Raj Vi Tha Ya Kom High School. I am now in MS 5, which is equivalent to eleventh grade. The school is about 500 meters (about .3 of a mile) from my home. I walk back and forth to school every day. This school has given me a good education. I like all the teachers. They have been kind and patient. I enjoy studying mathematics. Above all, computer class is my favorite. I would

ONE BIG FAMILY continued on page 19



Hold on!
Nathakan gets a ride.

GROWING UP:

classes from preschool to ninth grade. There's soon going to be a new part to my school. The teachers call it Cambridge College. It's for kids who are going to finish eighth and ninth grade. Right now I'm in seventh grade.

My best friend is Daranpope (Boss) Charmpoonod. He moved to Hong Kong, so I don't see him that often.

During summer, I usually go to Rayong for vacation. It's about 330 miles south of Phitsanulok. My grandmother and grandfather live there. When I go there, I like to go to the beach. I like to play in the water, make sand castles with my brother, and lay down in the nice cool weather.

When I have nothing to do, I usually go out to play tennis. I practice tennis almost everyday, if I don't have too much homework. I go to tournaments about one or two times a month. When I go to tennis tournaments I have to travel around the country. I've been to Phichit, Bangkok, Nakhon Sawan, Chainat, Ayutthaya, Petchaboon, Lampang, Chiang Mai, and about 10 more provinces. You can say that's quite a lot. If I really have nothing to do, I play with my Rubik's Cube. My best record is 11.52 seconds!!! I practice quite often — about 100 rounds a day.

When I grow up, I want to be a professional athlete. I want to be good at tennis like Roger Federer or good at basketball. I play basketball with my neighbor almost every weekend. I sometimes play the piano. My mom teaches me during weekends if I don't have to go to a tournament or any academic competitions.

I think the best part about being a Thai is eating Thai food. In my opinion, Thai food probably has the most variety. Spicy food is Thailand's specialty, so I like to eat spicy food a lot. My favorite is fried rice with basil. My favorite dessert is Thai custard with sticky rice wrapped in banana leaf. That's appropriate, don't you think?!?



Camping out, Thai-style.

AT A GLANCE:

Bai-Tong

Age: 13

Hometown: Phitsanulok (about 220 miles from Bangkok)

Family: Mom, Dad, and 7-year-old brother, Jack

Grade: seventh

Favorite subject: math

When I grow up, I want to be...a professional athlete.



like to be a teacher when I graduate.

I have many friends, but my best friend is Wannika. During my spare time, I like watching TV. I enjoy watching documentaries on wildlife. I like movies too, especially historical Thai movies. I like to play Ping-Pong and volleyball. On weekends, I stay home to clean the house and wash clothes or help my mother at the silk shop.

If a friend from abroad came to visit me, I wouldn't know where to start when showing them my country. There are so many things to see and do and so many different cultures to study here. It's a great country. We have the sea in the south with beautiful beaches, and one can go fishing, diving, or snorkeling to see the most beautiful and colorful fish and marine life. If we were in the north, I would take my friend to see the palace of the king's mother, then go on to the Golden Triangle, a place where three countries meet. Then we would see the great Mae Khong (Mekong) river and the opium museum in Chiang Saen.

I consider myself lucky to be born as a Thai, and I am proud of my country and the royal family. I love and admire my king, His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej, Rama IX. To me he is a great king because he rules the country with justice. He has so many projects going on aimed to help his subjects, who are mainly farmers. Some of these projects are to make artificial rain for agriculture during the dry seasons. He makes the hill tribes grow cash crops to stop them from producing opium. He introduced sustainable economic theory as the most suitable economic theory for Thailand. Any one who follows this theory finds a better life. Above all, he works so hard. He sacrifices himself for the well being of Thai people.



AT A GLANCE:

Nathakan Kantip

Age: 17

Hometown: Ban Den

School: Meing Rai Maha Raj Vi
Tha Ya Kom High School

Grade: MS 5 (equivalent to
eleventh grade)

Favorite subjects: mathematics and
computer science.

Family: father, Anucha Kantip
(deceased); mother, Pornthana
Kantip; older brother, Nattawoot
Kantip

Pets: cats

Favorite book subjects: science and
Thai history

Favorite actor or singer: Thai
singer Jennifer Kim

Favorite food: northern Thai
cuisine

When I grow up, I want to be...a
scientist.



"I love my mom," says Nathakan.

OUR SCHOOL

UP:
GROWING

by **Alix Kalaher and
Tatiana Faris**



Tatiana and Alix at Angkor Wat,
which was once the center of the Khmer Empire.

Our names are Alix Kalaher and Tatiana Faris, and in February 2010 we went to Cambodia. It was for a charity called the Cambridge School in Cambodia (CambCamb for short), which raised money to build a school there, and now raises money to help it. We first got involved with this program when we were in the fifth grade at the Haggerty School in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Our mothers, Erika Wentworth and Heather Faris, cofounded the organization. Our whole grade got involved, spending snack time and afterschool hours raising money. We raised \$24,000 in Cambridge the first year.

The news of the project spread really fast, and eventually public schools, private schools, and some universities helped out. We held bake sales, charity dinners, auctions, and penny collections. We sold various merchandise, and even asked for donations. (We don't want to brag, but everyone involved works really, really hard.)

CambCamb is a part of the American Assistance for Cambodia. We sent the money across the world to Cambodia,

and they built a school. We still have events all the time to keep sending supplies and funds to the school.

*"Everyone
is different,
and everyone
belongs."*

Now a little more about us. We are both 13 years old and in eighth grade. We are grateful that we get to go to wonderful schools.

Alix goes to the Baldwin School and Tatiana goes to Shady Hill School. Our teachers are all great, and we learn a lot. Cambridge is, in our opinion, a really great place to grow up, not only because we get all four seasons and the historical significance in our area, but also because everyone is very open-minded. The population is really diverse here and acceptance is encouraged; the motto of our old school

I N C A M B O D I A

is "Everyone is different, and everyone belongs."

Our experience in Cambodia could fill an entire book, but to sum it up, it was great. We met with several important people, including Arn Chorn-Pond, who survived the Khmer Rouge (brutal ruling party of Cambodia from 1975 to 1979). He started an organization to preserve Cambodian traditional music and dance. We also were lucky to meet Somaly Mam, a woman who had been sold into slavery when she was very young and is now leading efforts to stop human trafficking. We visited an orphanage and also donated medical supplies from Mass General Hospital to free-care hospitals in Cambodia.

Why did we build a school in Cambodia? Because of many years of war in Cambodia, there is a big shortage of schools and teachers, books and teaching materials. The Cambodian genocide from 1975 to 1979 killed many of the teachers and educated people. We especially want the school to help girls who might not otherwise have a chance to get an education.

The Cambridge School was amazing to see in real life. We had thought about it for so long, it was like a dream to visit the school. We couldn't help think, "This is something we helped to do." The school has several classrooms all lined up in a one-story building. We went into the classrooms

Alix enjoys some time with a Cambodian middle school student.



A great way to learn English — play Bananagrams!

and handed out the supplies we brought. We made peace doves and cards with the children and played games like Bananagrams and Set. We had fun hanging out with them.

The kids were all really nice and a lot of fun to spend time with. We had a great outdoor dance party and sang some songs together. In the schoolyard, we played Frisbee, soccer, and Wiffle ball, and jumped rope. Most of the children spoke a little English, and we picked up a little Khmer. We also communicated using hand gestures and facial expressions. Altogether, we understood each other pretty well.

The most memorable moment of the trip was on our last day at the school when we took a huge group photo. We all had a great feeling of connection and accomplishment. Years and years of work to help combat poverty and economic disparity had finally paid off.

Tatiana shares some books with Cambodian students.



We think economic disparity is awful, and as the United Nations says, literacy is a basic human right that everyone should be given. We're very glad that we're trying to make change by building a school and helping children. We wish that everyone could get awesome schooling, but that's the same as wishing for world peace — a nice idea but difficult to accomplish.

Yes, the project changed us, as anything that important can. It puts our own experiences into perspective. We are definitely more grateful for our schooling privileges. Complaining about homework seems pretty selfish when there are many kids who have no school at all, right?

We hope we can stay involved with this project for a long time, and we will continue to participate in fund-raisers and charity events. Maybe we will even return to Cambodia someday.

American children should know that they are lucky to have such a good school system and such great opportunities to help others. It may sound cheesy, but we can make a difference.

In Alix's free time, she likes to read, write, sing, dance, walk, watch movies and television, eat, sleep, answer questions, and make videos. She wants to work on a TV show when she grows up, either as a producer, writer, or director. Her dream job is to be the executive producer of a successful TV show.

In Tatiana's free time, she likes to read, listen to music, sing, take photos, play tennis, watch movies, and hang out with friends. She doesn't really have a dream job yet, but she hopes it will involve travel.

If you want to learn more about the CambCamb project, visit www.cambcamb.org.



We did it! *The Cambridge delegation and Cambodian middle school students celebrate their new school.*



Kindness of Cambodia

by Tatiana Faris

The musty road on Silk Island lasts longer than expected,
continuing on as if it never ends.

My legs grow tired, wishing to stop, wanting a place to sit down.
Dust travels through the air,
heat waves move with rare gusts of wind.
A small house, with a child sitting there, by the road,
waiting, but waiting for who?

The schoolgirl hooks arms with me.
Her name is That.

We played a game of Bananagrams in the classroom,
but that is all we could say,
she speaks Khmer and I speak English.

I still remember how the cool Bananagram tiles felt
against my fingers

as I tried to think of a word she would know during the game.

She spelled out words: book, and desk.

I wrote out an adjective:

K I N D

To read Tatiana's
complete poem, visit:
www.cobblestonepub.com



*Meeting new friends in Cambodia was
the highlight of the trip.*

Log on to Learn

by Carol Everman

Most kids in the United States use computers in school. But if you lived in the Australian Outback you would use a computer to go to school! Listen in as we hear about what might be a typical school day in this remote location.

"Good morning, Sam. I'm Mrs. Keller, your new teacher. Welcome to the School of the Air. Even though you are 1,000 kilometers [about 600 miles] away, I can introduce myself and your classmates via this two-way satellite system. All of you can see me, I can hear all of you, and you can all hear each other. Let's begin this morning with a geography lesson. What is the capital of the Northern Territory? David, I saw your light on my console first."

"Darwin," replies David.

"Now, does anyone know the capital of Australia? Sam?"

"Canberra, located in the Australian Capital Territory," chimes in Sam, losing some of her first-day jitters.

Having just moved to an Outback station, Sam has been learning a lot about her new school. The 140 students, including 50 Aborigines, are spread over 1.3 million square kilometers (about 1/2 million square miles — twice the size of Texas). The 15 teachers are located in Alice Springs, Northern Territory, the first of 16 schools of the air throughout Australia.

The school began as a correspondence school in 1920. On June 8, 1951, that all changed. The students began to communicate with their teachers and other classmates using

two-way, high-frequency radios. This added an all important social aspect to the lives of all these children.

The use of the current two-way satellite system began in 2003. This technology has broadened the curriculum in many areas. In addition to written lessons, students receive a satellite dish, computer, web camera, scanner, printer, and digital camera. The IDL (Interactive Distance Learning) allows lessons in which the teacher can demonstrate skills visually, bringing more of the world of cooking, science, drama, and other subjects into Sam's home.

"Sam, do you have any other questions today? This school is new to you, but you will feel more comfortable with it very soon," Mrs. Keller says.



Diminishing the Digital Divide

by Marcia Amidon Lusted

Can you imagine your classroom without computers and the Internet? If you're growing up in Africa, it's likely that until a few years ago, your chances of using a computer and accessing all the information available on the World Wide Web in school were pretty slim. But that's changing, thanks to something called the *e-School* Initiative.

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is rolling out this *e-School* project with the goal of bringing technology such as computers and Internet access to every school in Africa, no matter how small. They want to close the gap, known as the "digital divide," between kids in some African countries and kids in more developed parts of the

world, who are able to easily access and learn to use the newest technology. The e-Schools Initiative will give kids in Africa the computer and technology skills they need to get jobs and to help their countries' economy grow in the 21st century. In order to help African kids catch up to their peers in other parts of the world and successfully compete in a communications-based world, NEPAD's e-School goal is to equip 600,000 secondary schools all across Africa with at least 20 computers each and Internet access. Computer and software companies such as HP and Intel, are donating equipment and expertise to help them achieve this goal.

Of course, setting up computers in Africa is not usually as simple as buying a computer and plugging it in. Some schools in Africa do not have reliable electricity, and they will have



"When I am working on all the lessons that were mailed to me and I have a question, how can I get some help?"

"Besides our three 45-minute class lessons, you and I will have one personal lesson each week, and you can e-mail or phone me anytime. During the year, you will come to Alice Springs four times for classes and social events with other students. The most exciting event is held for several days during the last week of school. Students swim, attend a school concert, receive awards, and participate in extracurricular activities. A farewell Christmas party culminates your visit on the last day of school." (As Australia is in the Southern Hemisphere, Christmas falls during the summer.)

"Thanks, Mrs. Keller. I know that if I need more books or other materials, even items like musical instruments, I just contact the librarian and have them sent to me. My family and I are



Listen up, kids!

A teacher in the main studio gives a live lesson.

also looking forward to your 'home visit.' It's hard for me to imagine my teacher coming to see us and maybe even spending the night. 'Bye.'

Sam logs off and prepares to study for five or more hours on her lessons for the day. She receives help from her tutor — in this case, her mother.

Carol Everman is a retired educator. She lives in Cincinnati, Ohio.

If you would like to read more about the School of the Air, log on to www.assoa.nt.edu.au.



Computers can bring the world to children everywhere.

to buy generators and solar panels to power their computers. Teachers will need special training on the best

ways to teach kids about computers, as well as how to use them in the subjects they already teach.

Teachers will also be taught to download current educational materials from the Internet. The plan includes setting up an Africa-wide satellite network to connect all the schools.

The first e-School in Africa was launched in 2005, at the Bugulumbya Secondary School in Busobya, Uganda, which has about 270 students. The school, which was once very rural, is now connected to the world with

electricity, computers and servers, Internet, and mobile phone access. Kids who might never have traveled

more than a few miles from their own village can now explore the entire world. Dr. Henry Chasia of NEPAD said, "This technology will enable the young people of this village to tap into the global mainstream of information and knowledge, where they will learn and play, expand their imagination and their creativity, and collaborate with their peers across the African continent and across the world."

The e-School project has now been successfully launched in 16 African countries, and NEPAD is working to expand it to all of Africa. So don't be surprised if your next e-pal or friend request comes from Africa! With all those e-Schools, there will be a lot of students eager to reach out, explore, and make friends around the world.

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