

Meet our new MHS Bulldogs – by Tess Pifer

This year we have 4 foreign exchange student attending Madison High School. I interviewed two of these 4 students. Elena is from Dijon, France and is staying with the Knuths. The Knuths have a son, Elliot, who is staying with Elena's family; Elliot would have been a junior this year at MHS. Ella is from Berlin, Germany and is staying with Tom and Kim Jones. These are two wonderful girls who have the opportunity to live in the United States for the year.

I asked these ladies if this was the first time they had ever been to the United States. Ella has an aunt that lives in Minnesota and she has taken trips to see her before and Elena has been to New York City. I wondered if they planned on taking any trips while here. Ella told me that she will be going to the Mall of America. Elena traveled to the Black Hills not too long ago.

Life back at home, Ella has one brother. Elena has three siblings, two older sisters and a twin. Both of these girls agreed on how hard it is to be away from the family, but are enjoying their stay here. Next I asked about what they do in their spare time. To my surprise, their schools do not offer an athletic program, but they learn about and play sports in gym class. Elena participates in our cross country team and she is a great runner.

I asked these girls about the differences between the schools they attended back at home compared to Madison High School. For Elena, there isn't much of a difference in how our schedule works except for her classes are the same all year. She is used to the every other day schedule. Ella had many differences; one being her school schedule is similar to the college schedule set-up here. Ella says "The schedule at the high school was very confusing at first". At their schools at home they get a longer lunch than at MHS. At home, Ella tells me, they aren't supposed to leave for lunch, but she would run to the store and get something little most the time. Her lunch times would change depending on the schedule for that day. Elena said back home she gets about a two hour lunch and usually would go home.

I enjoyed talking to these two ladies because I got to look into their lives back home and see some differences. Ella and Elena are very lucky girls to have such an opportunity to participate in the exchange program. Next time you see them in the hall way, say "hey" and take some time to talk a bit.