



Renascentia Hall International

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Exploring Virginia

Renascentia Hall students were offered the opportunity to take a road trip over the Thanksgiving break. The destination was Virginia to visit the famous Caverns and enjoy the natural beauty of the Shenandoah Valley. Twenty-four students and several chaperones traveled by coach bus the morning after the holiday, stopping at Arundel Mills Mall in Maryland to allow the group to take advantage of Black Friday shopping bargains. Following dinner, the students enjoyed socializing in the hotel lobby.



Saturday morning the group headed to Luray, Virginia for horseback riding through the mountains. In spite of the chilly weather and sometimes uncooperative steeds, everyone had a great time. For many, it was their first time on a horse. While one group of students rode the trail, the others took part in a scavenger hunt at nearby River's Bend Guest Ranch. The fastest group to complete the challenge of finding the list of items included team members Ruilin Yang, Aimee Shao, Aiko Zhao and Cassie Wang. Each winner received a t-shirt from the manager of the ranch.



Before heading home on Sunday, the group explored Luray Caverns, trekking sixteen stories below ground level to view the amazing stalagmites and stalactites and underground lake. After the tour, the students raced through a labyrinth maze. Aiko Zhao and Ruilin Yang were the first to complete the course, followed closely by Kevin Zhang and Li Yifei. A dinner stop in Rockville, Maryland at a Chinese buffet completed the road trip.

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Planning For Life After High School



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On Monday, November 4, a group of mostly 11th grade Renascentia Hall students began preparations for life after high school by visiting two universities in the city of Philadelphia. The purpose of the trip was to encourage students to start thinking about options for college and fields of study. The first stop was Temple University where students toured the campus while learning about the history of the school. Following the visit, the group traveled to Chinatown for a dim sum lunch at the popular restaurant, Joy Tsin Lau. Dim sum is a style of food that is served in small portions, traditionally in steamer baskets or on small plates. Waiters push carts laden with a variety of dim sum to each individual table and patrons make their choices while seated. The next stop was the University of Pennsylvania where the group received a personal campus tour. Afterwards, students and host parent chaperones attended information sessions about the school's programs in the Arts & Sciences, Engineering and the Wharton School of Business, according to their interests.



Upcoming Events

December 14

- ◆ Habitat for Humanity Volunteer Build

December 26 - January 1

- ◆ Christmas Break Activities

January 11

- ◆ Youth Leadership Conference

January 24

- ◆ Host Family Appreciation Dinner

January 24 - February 10

- ◆ Winter Exchange Program

More Virginia Fun



Winter Exchange Program

Renascentia Hall is excited to announce a Winter Exchange Program for international students. This two-week program will allow select 9th and 10th grade students to audit classes at one of our partner high schools. For the inaugural exchange, guests will arrive on January 24 and will return home on February 10. In addition to attending classes, the visitors will enjoy day trips to nearby metropolitan areas, adjacent universities, and local attractions. The program will help students decide if attending high school in the U.S. would be a good fit for them. It is expected that the students will attend our partner schools for the following school year.

We are currently seeking host families for these visiting students. Host families will be compensated for lodging and food. Contact Eva McChesney at 302.273.2009 or emcchesney@renashall.com if you are interested in assisting with short-term housing. Please tell your friends about this chance to open their heart and home to a young person from another nation. It is an excellent opportunity to learn about the culture, lifestyle, and customs of a different country. You will have an opportunity to teach your guest about American traditions without having the time commitment that a full-time student would require.

Youth Leadership Conference

One of the goals of Renascentia Hall is to enable students to develop skills that will allow them to become successful managers and leaders. In keeping with this goal, students will be offered the opportunity to attend workshops that teach success principles not typically taught in secondary schools. Topics covered include self-management, communication, goal setting, planning, working in small groups, dealing with personal feelings, and leadership strategies. Fun interactive activities will complement the presentations. Four workshops will be held throughout the academic year with the first scheduled for January 11 at the Newark Senior Center from 9a.m. to 3p.m. A light breakfast and lunch will be served. Parents and siblings are welcome to join this interesting and informative learning experience.

Student Spotlight

Shiyao “Jason” Ju joined the Renascentia Hall program in August after starting his education in the U.S. at a boarding school in Virginia last year. In the spring, he made the decision to try out for the football team and started a regime to prepare himself mentally and physically for the sport. He provided the following account of his experience.



“Football is a rough sport that requires hardship and mental toughness. It was a brand new sport for me since I had never seen a full length football game before and somehow confused football with soccer. My first day of practice, I was called into the coaches’ office and I was afraid that I would be dismissed due to my zero football experience. However, I walked out of the office with a jersey that had the number 57 on it. Since that day, I have become a part of the team and I am determined that no matter how exhausting my life will be in the future, I WILL NEVER QUIT! I appreciate my fans’ support throughout the season. As long as you are persistent and willing to dedicate yourself you will come out fine. GO SPARTANS!”

“Happy Birthday To You!!”



Yungi (Aiko) Zhao
December 3



Yilun (Michael) Zhao
December 28

Important School Dates

December 6 - 12

- ◆ Honors Art Show - Sanford

December 7

- ◆ SAT's - Various Locations
- ◆ Model UN - Salesianum

December 10

- ◆ All Catholic Christmas Concert - Salesianum

December 12

- ◆ Christmas Concert - Salesianum

December 13

- ◆ Caroling in the Quad - Sanford

December 14

- ◆ "Silent Night" Basketball Game - Salesianum
- ◆ Senior Ball and Banquet - Saint Mark's

December 15

- ◆ Christmas Concert - Saint Mark's

December 23 - January 2

- ◆ Christmas Break Activities (TBD)

Host Family Corner



"Hosting an international student is a first for the Arscott family. We were truly delighted to discover that Cassie is a mature, respectful, and bright young lady inside and out. An excellent student, Cassie has a very positive outlook and is everybody's friend. We admire how brave and adventurous she is as she tries new activities outside of her academic responsibilities as a sophomore at St. Mark's High School. One particularly challenging activity is overcoming her fear of water by taking swim lessons at the local YMCA. She also took on piano lessons and is a quick learner! She has quickly become a valued member of our family, often hanging out with Lewis and Alyssa, learning to cook with me, going on family hiking adventures, and even warming up to our zealous border collie Hannah."

Yeda & David Arscott

Visiting Our Host Families

Over the past month, Host Family Coordinator, Eva McChesney, and Student Coordinator, Sherry Chen, have been making home



visits to host families and students. These meetings offer an opportunity to build strong personal bonds between staff, host families, students and natural parents.

Renascentia Hall appreciates the willingness of host families

to share their successes and to understand the cultural differences that may lead to misunderstandings. Host family meetings are instrumental in supporting our continued efforts to optimize the home stay experience for students and families. Home visits will continue periodically throughout the school year. However, families with immediate concerns should contact Eva to address any situation.

College Applications

The months of December and January are critical times for our senior class students as they decide where to apply to college. Many students are retaking the SAT to maximize their score. International students are required to take the TOEFL test as part of their college application to prove their English proficiency.

Requests to faculty to provide a letter of recommendation should be made immediately. Teachers need several weeks to submit a thoughtful and accurate assessment of a student. Lastly, we advise students to ask a favorite English teacher to review their 'college essay' for suggestions.

In the midst of all this activity, seniors are reminded to be aware of all deadlines for applying to their college choices. Many applications are due by January 15 and some schools have even earlier deadlines. All questions should be directed to the student's college placement counselor or Renascentia Hall staff member Yan "Wenny" Wen at ywen@renashall.com.