

## **Community Comment**

**5-1-2012**

**Brian Papstein**

THIS IS ONE OF THOSE RARE TIMES THAT I'M STEPPING UP TO DO A COMMUNITY COMMENT. .... GOOD DAY, I'M BRIAN PAPSTEIN. .... AT HOME, WE HAVE THE RARE TREAT AND OPPORTUNITY TO BE A HOST FAMILY FOR AN EXCHANGE STUDENT. ... EMERECK IS OUR 3<sup>RD</sup> EXCHANGE STUDENT WE'VE HOSTED AT OUR HOUSE. HE ARRIVED THIS PAST WEEKEND UNDER "UNIQUE" CONDITIONS. HE'S FROM FRANCE AND SPEAKS FAR BETTER ENGLISH THAN I THINK I WILL EVER BE ABLE TO SPEAK ANY FOREIGN COUNTRY'S LANGUAGE – OTHER THAN (MAYBE) CANADA, AUSTRALIA AND ENGLAND!. ... YOU'VE HEARD SAM PENNISI EXTOLL THE VIRTUE OF THE ROTARY INTERNATIONAL APPROACH FOR EXCHANGE STUDENTS AS A CULTURAL EXCHANGE. AT ST. BERNARD'S HIGH SCHOOL, THERE'S BEEN AN INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM FOR YEARS AND IF THE STUDENT EARNS THE RIGHT, THEY CAN "HOME STAY" WITH A LOCAL FAMILY. ... WE'VE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE A HOST FAMILY FOR EACH PROGRAM. ... AND WHILE THERE ARE DIFFERENCES IN THE PROGRAMS, THE PURPOSE OF THIS COMMENTARY IS NOT TO DEAL WITH THAT FOCUS. RATHER, I'D LIKE YOU TO PLAY A LITTLE GAME OF "WHAT IF?" ....

WHAT IF YOUR FAMILY WERE THE HOST TO A VISITOR FROM A FOREIGN COUNTRY? HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR HOMETOWN? WHAT WOULD YOU BE SURE YOUR FAMILY DID TO HELP THEM UNDERSTAND NOT ONLY OUR AREA, BUT AMERICA? WHAT TRIPS WOULD YOU DO OR WHAT CUSTOMS WOULD YOU EXPLAIN? ... HOW ABOUT RELIGION? ... HOW WOULD YOUR KIDS INTERACT – AND WHAT WOULD THEY WANT TO DO WITH YOUR VISITOR? .... SOMETIMES, IT'S ALMOST HUMOROUS SOME OF THE MORE ROUTINE ACTIVITIES THAT ARE MEMORABLE. .... MARTIN IS FROM CHINA. BAKING AND COOKING WAS SOMETHING THAT DIDN'T OCCUR IN HIS HOME. COOKEES, CHOCOLATE, BAKING, MAKING MEALS. ... HOW ABOUT SEEING SNOW? THOSE ARE SOME OF THE MANY MEMORIES WE HAVE

OF MARTIN AND HIS "DISCOVERIES" .... EMERICK HAD PANCAKES SUNDAY FOR THE SECOND TIME IN HIS LIFE. .... I TOOK HIM OUT FOR FISH TACOS (ANOTHER NEW EXPERIENCE) .... BROCCOLI? FIRST TIME. ... AND WHEN STEPHEN (OUR YOUNGEST) RETURNS FROM COLLEGE IN NEBRASKA IN A FEW WEEKS, WE'LL DRIVE TO OAKLAND TO MEET HIM. ... EMERICK WILL BE ALONG FOR THE RIDE – AND HOW DO WE SQUEEZE THE BAY AREA INTO TWO DAYS?

CONSIDER HOW YOU WOULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE OPPORTUNITY TO SHOW OUR AREA AND CUSTOMS TO A VISITOR. ... AND THEN, IF YOU DO HAVE THE ABILITY AND INTEREST, CONSIDER THE EXPERIENCE OF HOSTING AN EXCHANGE STUDENT. .... IT REALLY IS AMAZING WHAT YOU WILL BE ABLE TO LEARN ABOUT THEM, THEIR COUNTRY ... AND YOURSELF, TOO.