

By James J. Gorecki
For The Dunn County News

The Foreign Student Exchange Program is nothing “foreign” to Menomonie High School. For the 2009-2010 school year, there are 19 exchange students attending MHS. From various countries and backgrounds, these students are encouraged to become involved as possible in their educational experience while they are here. This year, two girls’ and four boys’ are participating on their respective Menomonie High School hockey teams.

On the girls’ team are Andrea Dzurikova and Marta Acon Raspall. Andrea hails from Slovakia, and is hosted by Maryn Fanetti. Marta comes to Menomonie from Spain, and has host parents of Richard and Holly Dardine.

On the boys’ team, are: Philipp Brosius (Germany), with host parents of Ray and June Witke, Daniel Gonzales (Columbia), host parents of Vern and Theresa Caturia, Alfonso Salesa (Spain), who was hosted parents Peter and Robyn Morin first semester and Dr. Bruce and Carmen Trimble second semester, and Antoine Soetewey (Belgium), hosted by Ryan and Lori Olsen. Gonzales, Salesa and Soetewey also played on the varsity soccer team.

According to MHS student activities administrative assistant, Sheila Stori, each student is responsible for the cost of opportunity to become an exchange student. Stori, herself a former host parent, commented, “basically, the host family provides a bed, a roof over their head and meals. Of course, you want them to become a part of your family. Some kids come here and feel homesick, so if they can get involved, meet new friends, their time here becomes more valuable. Athletics is often a great outlet for them and, over the years, we have had quite a few participate in sports.”

The foreign students don’t have free ride when it comes to grades, however. They need to attend classes, and maintain their grades the same as all the Menomonie athletes. The WIAA has an advisory list of approved programs by the Council on Standards for International Educational Travel (CSIET) of which the WIAA is a member. If a foreign student would come to a school through other means that are not approved by the WIAA, the participating school would run the risk of being declared ineligible, and could possibly forfeit any games in which that student participated. MHS girls’ hockey assistant coach, Dave Halama commented, “Both Marta and Andrea bring a lot of positive attributes to the team. They cheer on their teammates, they ask good questions when they don’t understand something, and they have really bonded well with the other girls’.” “The kids are having a blast,” said MHS boys’ head coach Graham Lomen. “They bring a lightened sense of humor; they are all outgoing young men, and the Menomonie kids feed off of their good attitudes. Overall, it has been a great experience to have the foreign kids on the hockey team, for everyone, including the coaching staff.”

Note: Sports submissions for Wednesday papers are due by **10 a.m. on Monday**. Submissions for Sunday papers are due by **11 a.m. on Friday**. Thanks for your help.

Brett Hart

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