Muhammad Baig, Pakistan
Alexis Barnes, Reporter

Muhammad Baig who goes by Talha is a junior foreign exchange student from Peshawar, Pakistan. He is in Des Moines because he wants to learn the American culture and ways of life.

“I came to America for the culture experience, not to study,” Talha said.

Talha was born and raised in Peshawar, therefore this is his first time in America. Talha has two older brothers and one younger brother who he sometimes misses, along with his parents. He copes by watching funny videos.

He said relationships differ in the US than in his home country.

“The concept of boyfriend and girlfriend is very new and different from Pakistan. In Pakistan you have to hide your boyfriend or girlfriend because it is against culture. If you are caught you will get beat. Also, women can drive and ride bicycles in America. They cannot do that in Pakistan,” he said.

Talha hopes to accomplish better confidence, leadership skills, communication skills, at speaking English and public speaking. “I hope to return to Pakistan as a leader,” Talha said.

Talha has a thirst for knowledge for American culture. What Americans call pajamas, it is regular attire in Pakistan. His favorite food is tater tot casserole. He mentioned our eating timeframes are different from Pakistan.

Talha explained classes are very different from Pakistan as well. In Pakistan they only have core classes like science and math, and they only have electives in Pakistan like art and wood-shop. Talha explained how teachers are friendly in America, however in Pakistan they are not friendly.

Chiara Cavallaro, Italy
Madison Houska, Reporter

Germany born, and Italy raised, Chiara Cavallaro is a foreign exchange student from a small town in Sicily, Italy, called Taormina. She will be attending our very own North High School for five months before she heads home to her mother, older brother Julian, and dog Pepe.

Chiara is currently fluent in Italian and Spanish but decided to visit the U.S. in order to become more fluent in English.

This being said, in order to have a conversation with her, we had to communicate mainly through Google Translate.

She is very inquisitive and she shared that for college she plans on going to The University of Economics in Italy, there she will study to become a bank manager.

She explained her reasoning for choosing to be a bank manager as he said, “In Italy, you have to respect your life when you are in the eighth grade. From there, you will have to respect yours. Since I plan on becoming a Neurologist after completing high school, I miss my family, and I am afraid of being made fun of,” Talha said.

Talha has a thirst for knowledge for American culture. What Americans call pajamas, it is regular attire in Pakistan, he said. “I am afraid to wear clothes from my culture against culture. He mentioned our eating timeframes are different from Pakistan.

Talha explained classes are very different from Pakistan as well. In Pakistan they only have core classes like science and math, and they only have electives in Pakistan like art and wood-shop. Talha explained how teachers are friendly in America, however in Pakistan they are not friendly.

Lutor Abwa, Nigeria
Madison Houska, Reporter

Lutor Abwa, is a science student from West Africa. He is joining us for 10 months as he gets a better introduction to help him become a Neurologist after completing high school.

At North, Lutor takes 3 different science classes aside from a few other main classes including Algebra 2, US History, English 4 and gym. Two of them are AP science classes. When asked what his favorite class was, he said “AP Biology for sure, since I plan on becoming a Neurologist, this class gives me the setup that I will need later in life.”

He came here about a month ago to begin his junior year. When he returns to his home in June, he will complete his senior year, “After graduating I plan on going to college, I might attend college in the US or possibly in Europe” he said.

In order to get involved with the study abroad program, his school has an exam where the students that wish to go, write an essay and they are chosen.

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Fatima Nazar poses in front of North building. Photo by Tanna Jones.

Fatima Nazar is currently 4,669 miles away from her home, Morocco. She lives with her host family here on the north east side of Des Moines, Iowa.

With the panic of deadlines, Fatima was unsure if she really wanted to study abroad but decided to fill out the application the day it was due. She will be spending the year at North high advancing her studies in English, Spanish, U.S history and psychology.

“It gets really cold here, and in my hometown it never snows so it’s very different,” says Nazar.

Being a very realistic person she came into all of this with no expectations on how it would be so she wouldn’t be disappointed if she didn’t like it. When she goes back to Morocco she will take her final test in order to graduate high school while taking everything she’s learned back home.

Even though the future is unknown, Nazar could see herself adventuring further into the states and possibly going to college here and becoming an engineer.