

## 2019 TYAF Outstanding Taiwanese American Youth Award Essay

My name is Eric Liao. I am currently 16 and a junior at Wootton High School. I have been going to Washington DC Taiwanese school since I was 2 years old. My mom is from Taipei, Taiwan, while my dad is born in America to Taiwanese parents. I make annual trips to Taiwan during summer breaks to visit my relatives there, as well as trying out many Taiwanese foods. My favorite food is the xiao long bao (小籠包) and the zha jiang mian (炸醬麵) from Din Tai Fung (鼎泰豐).

I have done many things to contribute to the Taiwanese community. First, I have been a counselor at Dr. Liang's Summer Camp for 5 years. I helped clean up, wash dishes, and made sure the kids weren't breaking any rules. When kids play with beads, it gets really messy with all the perler beads falling on the floor. After the kids are done, I help them iron the perler beads and sweep up all the beads that fell on the ground. We also cooked Taiwanese foods there to teach the kids about Taiwanese culture. The kids were allowed to help cook all the dishes. That way, the kids will have first hand experience in cooking Taiwanese foods.

I always try my best to help out at other events like Taiwan Fun and Potomac Day. During Taiwan Fun, I helped by serving Taiwanese food and cleaning up afterwards. During Potomac Day, I promoted Taiwanese culture by helping at the Taiwanese booth where they give a quiz about Taiwan with prizes. The people spin a wheel, which selects a certain question. If they get the answer right, they get a prize. If they get it wrong, we tell them the answer and they get to spin the wheel again. This is a fun way to promote Taiwanese culture. During Mother's day, I performed popular Taiwanese songs to express Taiwanese pop culture.

I am also part of my Taiwanese school dragon boat team where we compete against other teams. Dragon boat is a race where 20 paddlers paddle as fast as they can in sync to cross the finish line. Our youth dragon boat team won gold, silver, and bronze medals!

I also participate in the sport of wrestling. Last season, I won the Maryland State Wrestling championship for Wootton High School. I am the only Taiwanese Maryland State wrestling champion. When I was interviewed by a reporter after the season, I proudly mentioned that I was a Taiwanese.

This summer, I visited the Presidential Office Building with Washington DC Taiwanese school and got to meet the president of Taiwan, Ing-Wen Tsai. When the president was walking in, we sang the Taiwanese song "伊是咱的寶貝" and happy birthday to the president. We took pictures and shook hands with the president. It was a most memorable experience.

Overall, I love visiting Taiwan every year and its delicious foods. I am proud to be Taiwanese and will continue to serve the Taiwanese community.