

2019 TYAF Outstanding Taiwanese American Youth Award Essay

My name is Jason Liao and I am a junior at Wootton High School in Rockville. I was born in Rockville, Maryland. My Taiwanese root stems from my parents. My mother was born in Taiwan and my father is an ABT (American born Taiwanese). I visit Taiwan almost every summer to visit my relatives, to experience Taiwanese culture and to eat lots of good food .

I have been going to Washington DC Taiwanese School (WDCTS) since I was 2 years old, where I have learned a lot about Taiwanese culture in addition to learning Taiwanese and Mandarin.

I help promote Taiwanese culture with WDCTS at events such as Taiwan Fun and Potomac Day. I ran activities such as shuttlecock juggling and Taiwan trivia at these events and provided prizes to the participants. I also helped serve food during the Winter Solstice and Mother's Day events and had performed Mandarin songs and dances. Last year, I also joined the Taiwanese school dragon boat youth team and helped the team win Gold!

For the past 5 years, I served as a counselor at Dr. Liang's Taiwanese Summer Camp. I enjoyed working with the camp participants on various activities ranging from painting umbrellas, coloring cotton bags, tie dying shirts, to constructing kaleidoscopes. We also made a lot of food and drinks that originated from Taiwan such as tinn kue (甜粿), luo bo gao (蘿蔔糕), mantou (饅頭), dou jiang (豆漿), dou hua (豆花).

Last summer when I went to Taiwan, families from Washington DC Taiwanese school and my family got together and went to visit the Presidential Office Building. There was a tour guide there that showed us the history of the building. Afterwards, we met the President of Taiwan, Tsai Ing-Wen! We took a picture together and I shook her hand after the picture. It was a very memorable experience.

Last wrestling season, I won 1st place in the Montgomery County High School Varsity Wrestling Tournament. There aren't many Asian wrestlers, let alone Taiwanese ones. When I was interviewed by The Sentinel newspaper, I proudly stated that I was a Taiwanese.

I love visiting Taiwan every year and eating delicious Taiwanese food such as rice ball (飯糰), xiao long bao (小籠包), braised pork rice (滷肉飯) and mango shaved ice (芒果冰). My favorite restaurant is Din Tai Fung (鼎泰豐). I wish I can eat there everyday. I am proud to have Taiwanese heritage.