

Taiwan: A Country As My Family

One of the most undervalued yet greatest privileges an individual can have is the ability to have the sense of belonging within a group. A mutual sense of familiarity with members in a community is a desire ingrained in human nature. And my Taiwanese background has provided just that. Washington DC Taiwanese School (WDCTS) has been this community for my entire childhood. Having attended for over fourteen years and accumulated over 75 hours of volunteer work, WDCTS has created countless lifelong memories and taught me who I truly am as an Asian American.

Throughout these fourteen years, some of my favorite memories came from the Mother's Day and New Year parties where many people, Taiwanese or not, would gather together enjoying various Taiwan-related performances and eating authentic Taiwanese food. And the annual ski trips and field days we would go to, which although were unrelated to Taiwan, still brought us even closer together as a community. These unforgettable experiences define the spirit of Taiwanese people; to be welcoming and charismatic, and with compassion unmatched by nearly any other country. These are the values I hold dear, and intend to spread everywhere I go.

Athletics have always played a significant role in my life. Specifically swimming; which I have been doing for about seven years. And this past summer, I had the opportunity to be an assistant coach for the Willows of Potomac swim team, which was the team that I first joined and am still a part of today. By using the values and virtues I've learned from my Taiwanese childhood, I was able to unify the team after the previous year's season was cancelled because of the pandemic. This Taiwanese spirit allowed me to pass on my passion for swimming to the younger kids, as well as the warm-hearted attitude I've acquired from my Taiwanese background.

Being Taiwanese is not just a title, it is a representation of my background and history, it is a representation of my personality and the values I hold true. And I aim to make sure that these values are reflected upon the country itself. Whenever Taiwan is mentioned to someone, I want the first thing that comes to mind to be the remarkable kindness of its people and the incredible food and culture of the country. I want Taiwan to be viewed as a "dream" country, not just an island next to China, but a place where all of its descendants are just as lively as its community. As I finish my second half of high school I want to leave a mark on my community, a mark of Taiwanese essence, so that everyone can experience the same "Taiwanese love" as I did. Although my experiences differ from many others', there is still one thing similar between us Taiwanese people, it is the extraordinary sense of comradery within our community, which is what makes us Taiwanese people stand out in front of the rest of the world.