

Ever since I joined the Taiwanese American Community, I have learned so much about myself, Taiwanese culture, and other important ideas. I have developed important skills that will aid me as I approach adulthood. By interacting with the people within this community, I have found a sense of belonging. It is how I learn that Taiwan is not just a place I visit once in a while, but how its culture is a part of who I am; Taiwan is my second home.

I would like to start by describing my participation and experiences in the Memorial Day Ceremony and Parade in Rockville. FASCA-DC (Formosa Association of Student Cultural Ambassadors) holds an event for participating in the day of the parade. During the first year of knowing about this event, I wanted to sign up as just a committee member. Helping out by walking beside other FASCA committee members holding banners to display to the audience of the parade, but that day never came because it rained, so the event was cancelled. When next year came around, the leader of the parade was no longer eligible to lead our group in the parade, leaving a spot for someone to take over their spot. I was given the special opportunity to become the new leader for the parade, taking care of finding people and organizing everything for the event. In the beginning, I was nervous and lost as I had no prior experience of what the event was like. I also had very little experience in leadership; it is a very weak skill of mine. Although the whole situation seemed very stressful to me, it was the members and leaders of the Taiwanese American Community who helped me make everything possible on parade day. They helped me gather information, gain confidence, and reassure me that I was capable of taking this position. In the end, I successfully found committee members to display our FASCA-DC banner, boosting our community for the public to see. I felt very satisfied with my key service to the Taiwanese American Community on that day, and this event is one reason why I look forward to devoting more time and participation in future events.

As it was about time for me to find an extracurricular activity to participate in, I stumbled upon Dragon Boating offered at WDCTS (Washington D.C. Taiwanese School). Not only was this a great extracurricular activity that stood out, but more importantly, it displayed the beautiful Taiwanese culture of Dragon Boat on the day of the race at the Washington DC Dragon Boat festival, in front of thousands. Through this annual activity, the Taiwanese American Community and I can introduce the sport's history and joy to a large American audience.

Though on top of spreading Taiwanese culture by Dragon Boating, it has also influenced me with a personal experience that I am very thankful for today. At first, it was not easy. I admit that I was extremely reluctant to dedicate so much time and effort to practicing this activity. I struggled to find confidence in whether my ability towards this new skill will be significant. Through the difficult months of training, thoughts of whether the time being given up is worth it, I pushed myself onward until the day of the race, where my team and I won the race. It was the first race I won ever, and it was only my first year on the team. I felt so proud of myself, but most importantly, after that day, my thoughts on taking part in the activity changed completely. I now gladly wish to participate in Dragon Boat training until I graduate, making this a big step towards improving myself and my attitude towards new things, as I surprised myself with my hidden potential. And of course, to continue to spread Taiwan culture every year during the race.

Without the Taiwanese American Community offering me opportunities and adversity to overcome and benefit from, I would never have known the things I can do if I hadn't been a part of this community. They, as well, would lack a member who aspires to spread Taiwanese Culture for all to see and experience.