

Niagara families host Spanish exchange students

Bobbie Samme'

Through two separate programs, one being International Experience and the other International Cultural Exchange Services, there are now two exchange students from Spain attending Niagara High School.

For the 2019-2020 school year, Jamie and Kerri Oratch are hosting Ana Salazar, 14, from Madrid, and Todd and Becky Bischoff are hosting Dayanna Izquierdo Rodriguez, 15, from Navarra, Spain.

Having been in the United States for just a few short months, Ana, a sophomore at Niagara, is adapting well to her new environment.

"Everything is different here, this is smaller than my school back home," said Ana. "I am settling in and making new friends and living with the Oratch family is fun."

Ana previously participated in the exchange student program, having visited Ireland when she was 12 years old through a program at her school in Madrid.

"School and sports are different here," she shared. "I play volleyball at home and here too now, and for fun, I like to go out with my friends."

Kerri Oratch and her family are enjoying Ana's visit, and look forward to many new adventures to come.

"Having three girls in the house, including my two daughters, is a bit in-

teresting sometimes, particularly in the morning getting ready for school, but overall they are getting along very well," said Oratch. "They are very busy, and Ana is not used to this craziness."

According to Oratch, her daughters had been asking for years to host an exchange student, and this year they just didn't have a reason to say no.

Oratch explained the many factors to consider when deciding on an exchange student.

"We have to take many things into consideration, including religion, dietary preferences, pets and cultural differences," said Oratch. "In her video about her interest in the program, Ana said she wanted a sister her age, and my daughter is a month and a half younger than Ana, so that was a good fit."

Ana explained the differences between the Spanish and American school system.

"We have 12 years of schooling, and then we go on to college," said Ana. "I want to go to college, and my favorite subjects back home are physics and chemistry, and here my favorite class is gym."

"In Spain we start school at 9:30 in the morning and we are finished at 5 p.m.," she explained. "Then we have sports from 6 to 7 p.m. and when I have tennis, I play from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m."



Kerri Oratch, right, with Ana Salazar, an exchange student from Madrid, Spain who is staying with the Oratch family and attending Niagara High School this year.

It has been quite a challenge for Ana to reset her body clock to the American school schedule.

"Here I get up at 5:45 a.m. because school starts at 7:55 and goes through 3:15," she said. "Then I go straight to volleyball until 6 p.m. unless we have a game."

Ana explained how much she loves American food.

"I like everything except vegetables, and I usually like meat and steak because Kerri is a very good cook."

After this school year, Ana, whose father is a pilot, plans to travel the

east coast with her friends before returning to Spain.

Dayanna, now living with Todd and Becky Bischoff in Niagara, is from Navarra, Spain, near Madrid, and is enjoying her visit to the United States.

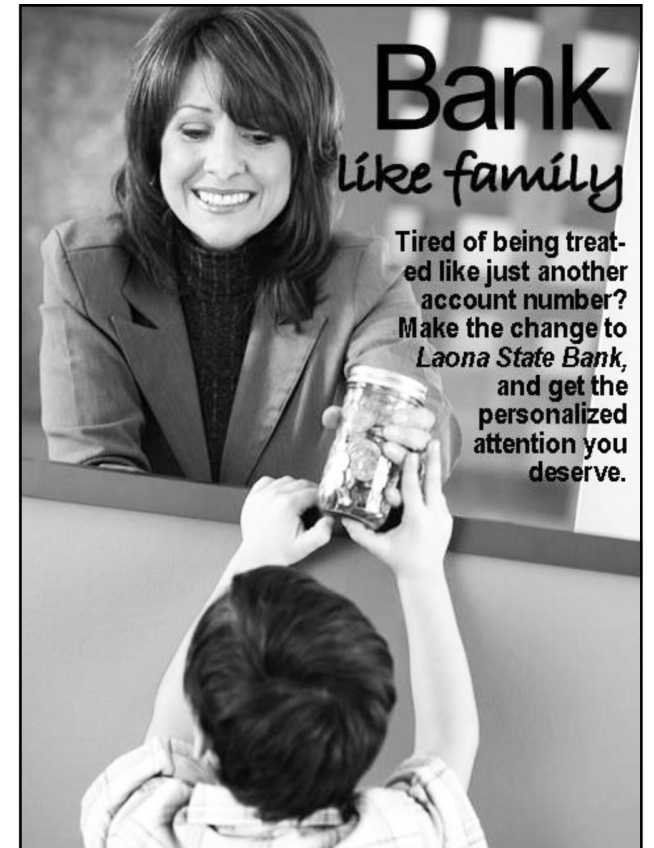
"I am here for the whole school year," she

said. "This is my first time as an exchange student, and I like it."

Adapting to a new curriculum has been a challenge for Dayanna, and she is giving it her best.

"The subjects here are so different from

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