

Foreign students make their way in America

by Heleen Veenstra
Staff Writer

There are many foreign students in Clackamas Community College this year. They are all here for different reasons. Following are interviews with five of them.

Alan Liu is an immigrant from Taiwan. He had a good job as an auto mechanic there. "Some day I will go back to Taiwan," Liu said. He said that when he goes back, he'll have more experience and know more about a different culture than many other Taiwanese do.

Liu came here with his parents and his brother and sister eight months ago. His parents came here and then went back to pick the children up; he still has one sister in Taiwan.

Liu pointed out that he would like to go to Taiwan on vacation because, "I have friends over there." He added, "I really like it here," although he finds it hard to make friends.



Alan Liu

Thong Pham is a refugee from Vietnam. She came here 11 years ago. She said she plans to stay here because she's already a citizen and "I have my son here."

Pham said she has three brothers and four sisters who all still live in Vietnam. "I'm the oldest," she said; two children in her family died. "One died in the war. She died in my arms,"

Pham said. She expressed that she could not take her sister to a cemetery because of the war. "We stayed inside 24 hours a day," she said.

Pham concluded, "I want to go back, but I can't. I miss my country and my family a lot."



Thong Pham

Sylvia Grajeda is an exchange student from Mexico. She said she came to the United States "to study English," and now she needs to speak it well "because I am a psychologist." Grajeda said she wants to study psychology at the University of Mexico in Mexico City and English is a prerequisite there.

"I live with a very nice American family," Grajeda said. She pointed out her younger sister was an exchange student and lived with this American family in Klamath Falls. That family moved over here and they invited her. Grajeda said they are "friends with my family," and that they went to Mexico to spend time with her family.

Grajeda said she will go back

"I want to go back, but I can't. I miss my country and my family a lot."

to Mexico in July. She pointed out that Americans are "very nice people," and added, "Portland, I like it very much." But still she

said, she misses her family and her city.



Sylvia Grajeda

Lily Lim is from China. She came to America 12 years ago. Before that she lived in Canada for 19 years. She said she and

"I know how to go to the department store"

her husband own the New China restaurant on Molalla Avenue in Oregon City. She pointed out, "We are open every day except Monday."

She said she never really got the chance to study English. But



Lily Lim

after she saw a program about illiteracy on 20/20, she decided to take classes. She said she would like to write better English.

Lim said she doesn't need to take classes on daily life skills because "I know how to go to the department store."

Joanie Chan is also from China. She came here 2 1/2 years ago to help in their family restaurant, Mai Wah, on McLoughlin Blvd. She said she came here because a big part of her family was here already.

Chan said she doesn't miss China at all, because "my whole family is here." She said she doesn't want to go back to China to live there, but she

"we do it by the moon," and according to Lim, the date changes every year. Every three years the Chinese have an extra month and they call it the moon month. This thirteenth month in a year adds up because the Chinese months are not longer than 28 days. After three years there are enough days left to have a thirteenth month.

These are the responses of only five of the many foreign students here at Clackamas Community College. For them, college is not just hard work, it's a special challenge every day.

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