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Hannah Terrell

Aix-en-Provence, France

November 13, 2018

A Family Like My Own

For three months I have been living with a phenomenal French family in Aix-en-Provence. This family is quite similar to my own. Elisabeth is my host mother; she has three children: Clara (23), Simon (21), and Caroline (19). I interviewed my 19-year-old host sister, Caroline. Life in France isn't too much different from life in America, except for a few specific things. One main difference is that people walk everywhere and take the bus more often than in America. Because of how much walking they do and how active they are, they are much more fit and healthy. Caroline lives a similar lifestyle that I live. She enjoys sleeping in when she can, she wakes up and eats a breakfast consisting of croissants and fruit and heads to class or work, depending on the day. She walks to the market to get ingredients for lunch with her friends after class, and later in the day returns home, relaxes by watching tv or playing Call of Duty, then has dinner with the family. The only thing that is different about our lifestyles is that she smokes cigarettes, as do most French people. That is probably the thing that surprised me most about life in Aix- the majority of people smoke cigarettes starting from a very young age.

Caroline is very family oriented, much like myself. She is always helping her mom with chores and helping to clean up after dinner. Her parents are divorced like my own, but they still have a good relationship and her father comes to dinner quite often, which surprised me. My own parents have refused to talk with each other unless completely necessary since they divorced. I was surprised that Caroline listens to mostly American music, but not the same music that I listen to. Many of the youth here are involved with American pop culture and music. They watch American films, listen to American artists, play American video games, etc. Caroline is quite a picky eater, even though her mother Elisabeth loves to

cook all sorts of food. I am about the least picky eater you can find- I will eat most anything. Caroline *hates* fish and doesn't like very many vegetables. She loves baguettes and cheese though, and thankfully eats the same amount that I do at dinner.

What I have learned most from Caroline is that the French are much more world-oriented than America. She has been studying English since she was very little, it being a requirement in school to learn another language. Many of her friends speak three or four languages, which is quite typical in Europe. It made me realize how isolated America is. Here they listen to American music and read American news, but in America we rarely consume anything other than American culture.