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跨文化的圣诞  
18 December 2007  
纪韶融

跨文化的圣诞 - 回收期到了。

"Glo-ooo-ooo-ria, in excelsis deo", 20 岁的林之琦和她的四个同胞们用很认真的表情唱经典圣诞歌。不过地点不在教堂, 而这位来自广东的一年级的学生也不信基督教。这样的歌唱方式也是他的第一次。

地点是武吉巴督的私人房子。主办方是新加坡管理大学。他们的"殷勤好客家庭计划"让来自中国、越南、缅甸、寮国等的一年级学生了解新加坡生活的方式, 在本地家庭的领导下, 让他们更容易融入狮城。

参加圣诞活动的张耀林博士和两个基督教长老会两年前进行一个叫做 CampusHub 的交流计划。这位很活泼的高级经理过去的留学经验, 让他有了在本地进行类似计划的念头。"我在美国留学的时候, 我那边的美国家庭对我很好。我想给来新加坡的外国学生同样的、在国外的家的感觉。"

正巧, 两年前新加坡管理大学也开始他们的"殷勤好客家庭计划", 从此, 两个计划的合作很成功。至今已经有 40 个不同民族的新加坡家庭给 40 个学生享受到家的温暖。

张耀林说, 参加计划的新加坡家庭, 家长一般都是律师、医生或教授等等。"我们要家长能帮忙学生, 学生也应该通过他们新加坡家庭的介绍, 在短时间内认识本地社会各式各样的人物。"

在张耀林眼中, 这样的交流计划对好客家庭也有好处。"新加坡人的华语不是最好的, 这是常识", 张耀林笑着说。

"来自中国的学生也可以帮助我们, 甚至我们自己的孩子, 提高我们的华语水平。对孩子来说, 向来自不同国家的年轻人来学他们的文化, 他们的生活风俗, 也算一个很好的很珍贵的机会。"

来自中国的林芝琦十分同意这一点。她来到新加坡不到一年。不过, "殷勤好客家庭计划"让她很快融入狮城。"跟中国对比最大的区别可能是这里的多元文化。加上, 我可以帮我的好客家庭多学华语, 多学中国各地的特点。"

她对新加坡人的生活方式很好奇, 很乐意地参加这次圣诞活动。宗教对她来说不是重点。张耀林补充说, "我们没有传播宗教的动机, 我们计划中也有佛教和回教的, 重点是跨文化交流。"

看样子, 这次通过唱歌, 玩游戏, 吃晚餐, 聊天, 外国学生真实有国外的家的感觉。张耀林透露, 将来打算举行更多活动, 包括跑步, 爬山, 旅游。

想参加"殷勤好客家庭计划"的家庭, 请跟新加坡管理大学联络:

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**Headline: A cross-cultural Christmas**

20-year old Lin Zhiqi and her 4 friends sang traditional Christmas carols intently. The location was not in a church and Lin, a first year student from Guangdong, is not Christian. This is the first time she is singing Christmas carols.

The location is a private home in Bukit Batok. The organiser is SMU. Its Host Family Programme give first year undergraduates from China, Vietnam, Myanmar and Thailand a taste of Singaporean life through the hospitality of local families and enable them to better adapt to life in the lion city.

Joining the Christmas celebration is Dr Alex Teo and two elders from his church, who set up a CampusHub exchange programme two years ago. The lively senior manager, who studied overseas and enjoyed his exchange with an American family then, wanted to introduce the concept of providing foreign students a home away from home in Singapore.

At the same time, SMU also started its Host Family Programme and so both programmes entered into a successful collaboration. Today, there are 40 Singapore families of different races offering hospitality to 40 SMU students.

Teo says that families under the programme are typically professionals such as lawyers, doctors or academics, so they can also provide guidance to the students in other ways. At the same time students also get to meet people from all walks of Singapore society.

Teo and the host families have also learnt a lot from this programme. "It is a known fact that Singaporean's Mandarin is not the best," he says with a smile. "The students from China can help us and even our children in their Chinese language skills. And our children also get the rare opportunity to learn about the cultures and practices of these young people."

Lin Zhiqi from China fully agrees on this point. She has been in Singapore for less than a year. However the Host Family Programme has helped her adapt to life in Singapore. "A great difference from China is the multi-racial culture here. I am also able to share with my host family the finer points of the Chinese language and the unique culture in different parts of China."

She is curious about Singaporean's lifestyle and is happy to have been part of this Christmas celebration so religion is not a key factor for her. Teo says, "The aim of the programme is not to do so much about Christianity but more of a cultural exchange, so we have Buddhists and Muslim host families as well."

It looks like from the singing, games, dinner and conversations, these foreign students have gained a 'home away from home'. Teo revealed that there are plans to organise more activities, including jogging sessions, trekking and even travel activities.

Families who wish to be part of the SMU Host Family Programme can contact the university.