



For Immediate Release

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Survey: Burgers & Beyoncé Top High School Exchange Student Lists

PAX - Program of Academic Exchange Surveys Teens about Living in America for One Year

New York — PAX - Program of Academic Exchange reported this week that high school students arriving in the United States would most like to try an American hamburger when offered a menu of food choices. And they would invite Beyoncé or basketball star LeBron James to share that hamburger or another dinner if given the opportunity.

More than 1,100 teenagers from countries as diverse as China, Spain, Germany, and Thailand met with PAX team members and each other before traveling to their host families located in 30 different U.S. states. When asked about the American food they most looked forward to trying, 31% chose hamburgers. Bacon (21%) and chicken wings (20%) rounded out the top three. Only hot dogs failed to reach a 10% positive rate among the teens.

There was little doubt regarding which famous American the students would choose to share their meal with. LeBron James and singer Beyoncé each received 29% of votes with philanthropist and Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates receiving 20%. Among deceased Americans, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., President Abraham Lincoln, and Eleanor Roosevelt were the top choices.

While Harris from China was emphatic about “Kobe Bryant, Lakers!” LeBron James was the clear winner with one Mexican boy donning a different James jersey every day of the orientation. Overall, it was remarkable just how big of a draw the NBA in particular was for the young men while the allure of the overall pop culture scene (for the young men and women) that Beyoncé may represent was less surprising to PAX staff.

The students also expressed an overwhelming desire to become involved in their host communities. Nearly 80% said they hoped to participate in extracurricular activities at school and 15% said they planned to do volunteer work in their communities. “There is a very strong volunteer ethic among PAX exchange students,” said PAX Marketing and Communications Director Nicholas Burtscher. “We received dozens of essays and videos last year from students studying here who shared their stories about working in their communities. They fed hungry people, raised money for infant care, made blankets for children with cancer, and picked up trash on the roads. Many PAX students are remarkably generous and civic-minded.”

About PAX

Founded in 1990, PAX – Program of Academic Exchange is a not-for-profit educational organization and one of a select few U.S. Department of State-designated Exchange Visitor Programs chosen to participate in the prestigious U.S. government sponsored Future Leaders Exchange (FLEX) and Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study (YES) programs. Each year, more than 1,100 teenagers visit the U.S. as PAX exchange students. For information on how you can host an exchange student from another country, please visit www.pax.org/families or call 800.555.6211.