

Family warmth transcends distance

AMANDA NAVA
Staff Reporter

When the holiday break rolls around, whether the trip takes 10 minutes or five hours, people pack their bags to visit grandparents, aunts and uncles, parents or siblings. It doesn't matter what holiday is celebrated because families usually take the two week break as a chance to visit faraway family members.

Seeing family is a weekly tradition for some. During the holidays there is not much difference in the schedule, besides presents being brought along and unwrapped.

This is the case for sophomore Vivian Pham. It has been a tradition for her family to meet in San Jose in one of her aunts' houses on the weekend. There, her family gathers around to talk, eat and grow closer, creating memories that Pham will look back on later in life.

When Christmas comes around the corner, their family tradition doesn't change. She sees her aunts, great aunts, grandmother and cousins, as usual. The only thing that differs that weekend for the tightly knit family is that the family plays a round of white elephant, a present exchanging game.

Unlike Pham, not all people have family members who live close by. For sophomore Freshta Pirzada,

visiting family in Modesto, it takes a little more time than it does for Pham. It takes one hour and 20 minutes more for Pirzada to visit her two aunts and two cousins. They usually meet up around Christmas to exchange presents.

"The time I spend with family brings me a natural warmth to my heart," Pirzada said.

After exchanging gifts, Pirzada and her family watch horror movies. Just because it's the holidays doesn't mean they have to watch the classic Christmas movies on television.

Other students visit family spread across the nation. For junior Ashley Colbaugh, this means traveling from Fremont to Englewood, Tennessee. She commutes by plane for seven to eight hours on breaks and during summer vacations to visit her dad or her mom, depending on which parent she is living with that year. This year, Colbaugh is visiting her father whenever she can, which is usually during extraneous breaks from school.

"Actually, I'm really excited to go to my dad's this year. I'm looking forward to seeing him, all of my grandparents and my friends from school!" Colbaugh said.

With Black Friday and now Black Saturday sales, people forget that holidays aren't about the material things. It's about spending time with family and creating memories that people will appreciate long after the holiday season is over.



Illustration by
Brian Jeon

Cultural celebrations diversify holidays

KEERTHIKA RAMAKRISHNAN
Staff Reporter

The waning fall and rising winter mark the beginning of holidays all around the world. Christmas, Kwanzaa, Eid, Hanukkah and other holidays are celebrated at this time of the year.

People celebrate Christmas differently in other parts of the world. In India, citizens celebrate by lighting oil lamps. Since pine trees are difficult to find, mango or banana trees take the place of the traditional Christmas tree.

"Every morning we had assemblies at school in India. Once December started, everyone would learn new carols and sing them every day until we perform the songs to parents on our Christmas recital," senior Bhargavi Pawar said.

In the Philippines, people generally sing karaoke, give dinner to strangers and make star lanterns. Most people don't sleep on Christmas Eve.

"I miss the hospitality during the holidays. Homes were open for everyone and we would feed everyone that came over," senior Jelyn Pascual said.

In addition to Christmas, Indians celebrate Diwali, the festival of light. "We lit the lamps all around the house and everyone who celebrated Diwali would make delicious pastries and sweets," Pawar said.

In India, the kids take trays of sweets from their houses and walk to nearby houses to pass out the sweets. Pawar misses being able to trade sweets with her neighbors.

"I also hate not being able to see my relatives who are living in India," Pawar said.

Muslims celebrate Eid to mark the end of Ramadan. Food, money and new clothing fill this ethnic holiday with smiles. Muslims wake up in the morning, go through their respects to their god and start the holiday feast.

"Back in Pakistan, my dad gave my sister and me each \$100 worth of money in rupees. I went out and got a bunch of clothes," sophomore Rochelle Czar said.

African Americans and Jews celebrate Kwanzaa and Hanukkah, respectively. While Kwanzaa celebrates the harvest season, Hanukkah celebrates the miracle of Maccabees. Both holidays are celebrated by lighting candles. Kwanza lasts for seven days, while Hanukkah lasts for eight.

The many seasonal holidays and accompanying traditions are about filling the world up with happiness.

Give more, receive more

JUDY WU
Staff Reporter

During the season of giving, families, friends and even strangers come together to help the less fortunate. People remember to appreciate the things they have that others don't. The holidays are a time for celebration and high spirits.

"When people are celebrating, there is less work being done, and people are going on vacation," senior Alex Gilham, public relations officer of Interact Club, said. "Therefore they have fewer things to worry about and can focus less on themselves and focus more on others."

There are a lot of other reasons why people help out more during the holidays.

"Helping others during the holidays becomes a tradition for many families, and they just continue this tradition every year," senior Hnin Oookhin, vice president of Key Club, said.

Every December, members of Interact Club participate in an event called "Caroling for Clothes." Interact club gathers together with the Interact Clubs of other local schools to sing Christmas carols around a neighborhood while asking for clothing donations. This year this event was held Dec. 11 in the Irvington District.

Key Club is also caroling. They are caroling to raise money for the Children's Hospital and Research Center of Oakland. This event is going to be held on Dec. 18 in the Niles District.

This month, Corpus Christi Church, in Niles, is working along with Abode Services (formerly Tri-City Homeless Coalition) to provide shelter for homeless families with children. They are housing the families inside the church classrooms. About 100 volunteers are working to help provide meals and transportation for these families. Many of these families are overflowing from a main homeless shelter in southern Fremont.

"If we don't help these families, who will? What comes around goes back around, so it's the least that I can do for them," religious education director Lucy Soltau said.

Helping others tends to give people a sense of accomplishment and gratification.

"I love to see the smiles of the people I help because they make me happy," Oookhin said.

Helping out the community is something that everyone should do.

"I don't wish to just take but also to give. I think it should always be the season of giving because I believe many people will be more appreciative and thankful for what they have. I think that many people take the things they have in life for granted," Gilham said.

Put thought into holiday gifts

SIMONEEL CZAR
Staff Reporter

Are you confused about what to give your family and friends for the holidays? No worries, we have ideas on how to find great presents for less.

If you want to find a present that your best girl friend or sister will like, search for things that can be used in everyday life. Items such as scarves, perfume, jewelry or even a cute jewelry box come in many styles, so chances are you can find one your friend

will like. For your brother or best guy friend, look for a wallet, watch or make him homemade food like cookies or brownies.

For your parents, go the extra mile and make something yourself. You can make a personalized calendar by using your favorite family pictures. Making your parents a card is another sweet way to show your appreciation for them.

Your mom may also like a candle scented with her favorite perfume. A lot of big retail stores sell them. On the other hand, your dad may appreciate a personalized mug or a

collection of his favorite movies.

If you're shopping for your boyfriend or girlfriend, make their gift extra special. You could try to make it homemade. You can give them a mixed CD with a collection of their favorite songs, a framed photo of you two or even a picture that you painted. Traditional gifts such as stuffed animals, flowers or chocolates are always good too.

Gift cards are another option, but keep those as a backup plan. Make the presents you give to your friends and family as special and meaningful as possible.

Holiday cheer rises above bad economy

CHASE GLENISTER
Staff Reporter

Christmas has always been known as the season of cheer, peace and giving. However, due to the current economic situation, the giving part of the season is severely cramped.

Senior Eric Olsen disagrees. "People give much more because they realize how close they are to being in the same position," Olsen said.

Last year the WHS Toy Drive, expecting 150 gifts for families down on their luck, actually collected 336 presents.

"In the past, we've received everything from action figures and dolls to games such as Trivial Pursuit," Olsen said.

There are many people who have clever ideas for gifts.

Sophomore Jill Huynh has several ideas for presents that are cost-effective and can be purchased almost anywhere.

"Candy's always good. As long as they don't know where it came from, it's good and goes cheap!" Huynh said. If you don't know what your friend wants, then choose something anyone would want.

"I think money is a fantastic gift because of its versatility. Practical things might make a good gift in this economy," senior John Rasure said.

Giving gifts to friends may be difficult due to the economic situation. Sometimes, though, the best gifts are the small things.

"Homemade is the way to go," senior Emily Khuc said.

Don't forget, Christmas is not only about presents. The main purpose of the winter season of love

and cheer is family. "I'm going to New Jersey to spend time with family. I don't get to see them in New Jersey very much, and we usually have a lot of fun," Rasure said.

Whatever you may go through, your family will be right there with you. That's what Christmas is about.

"Materialistically, my Christmas hasn't really changed," Khuc said. "However, it's more about the closeness of my family. We always get together with family."

Times are hard for a number of people. Despite this, Christmas is still the season of peace and joy. So instead of worrying about material presents, give emotional ones. Give hugs, high-fives and sing songs. The inside jokes and shared memories will be treasured more than the expensive gifts. Enjoy your break, and happy holidays!

How to make a pop-up holiday card
By Michaela Go

Materials: Colored paper, white paper, scissors, ruler, glue

Cut 2 cm off of two sides of the white paper.

When placed on top of the colored paper, there should be a 1 cm colored border.

make sure you cut on the side that is folded

fold inward

fold outward

fold inward

Open the paper so that it forms a right angle. Pop out and fold the flaps you just cut into box shapes.

You should end up with this.

Cut out three holiday symbols and glue them to the boxes. Glue the paper with the pop-ups onto the colored paper.

Lastly, use any extra scraps of paper you have to make a label for the front of the card.

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