



We Are All One

Student reflects on the impact of growing up with two varying cultures

By Bri Weirick

Alyssa Scarborough, a Richmond Northeast High School student, walked into a Sunday church service the same way anyone, but unexpected. The sound of Korean hymns fills the pews and ears of those who have drifted into the culture outside of its native country Scarborough sits with her grandmother and they listen to the service in a language she does not understand however, one she appreciates greatly. Her home and social life has been filled with different cultural experiences, with the help of her family's unique upbringing.

"My grandfather is from South Carolina and my grandmother is from Seoul, Korea... They lived in Beaufortville, South Carolina and [then my grandfather] got stationed in Germany. My dad was born in Korea, [and] my uncle was born in Germany," Scarborough said.

Scarborough's father was born in South Korea, but raised in Germany; he continued to travel after partially settling down in both Columbia and Charleston. He and his mom carried their Korean roots to America, where their traditions and lifestyle fused with Scarborough's childhood.

"[His childhood] was very different... because when he came back, all of the kids around him had never been out of the country, or out of South Carolina. He's very open minded when it comes to people who aren't from here, he wants me and my brother to be the same way," Scarborough said.

Scarborough has been exposed to amazing experiences and cultures, not only in her home but outside of it. Last

April, her father showed the siblings what the world holds for them, by taking them on a trip through Europe.

"We went to Milan Italy, then we drove to southern France, we saw Monte Carlo, we drove to Barcelona then drove to Paris, then we went to Geneva in Switzerland, we went back to Milan, flew to New York, stayed in New York for a few days and [then] flew home," Scarborough said.

"I FEEL LIKE IF I DIDN'T HAVE THE BACKGROUND THAT I HAVE I WOULDN'T COMPLETELY BE ABLE TO UNDERSTAND OTHER PEOPLE."

Scarborough never lost her Korean roots through all of this traveling. Her grandmother and father led her to attend church but with a bit of a twist.

"I go to Korean church every Sunday, I've been going since I was two or three. I like it because even though I don't speak Korean it reminds me that this is my culture... Going to American church, it was very different from what I'm used to. My church is very small and there's only 50 people who go," Scarborough said.

Her mother's side of the family offers a different type of experience at home, as well as how and where they

worship for their religion.

"My mom is a Jehovah's Witness... It's very diverse in my house, in all kinds of aspects," Scarborough said.

Her parents separate households and lifestyles helped Scarborough realize that she has not only a duty, but a passion to make others feel just as welcome and part of the community. A place where she put this talent to use is the diverse student body at Richmond Northeast High School.

"I feel like if I didn't have the background that I have I wouldn't completely be able to understand other people. Having people who are not from this country influence the school that you go to makes it better, because you are able to integrate... different cultures from all over the world into one school," Scarborough said.

Acceptance could be a hard thing to learn during adolescence, but when it was encouraged from both and exemplified by those around her, it became a large part of who Scarborough flourished into. She is now that despite everyone's differences the world consists of one authentic whole.

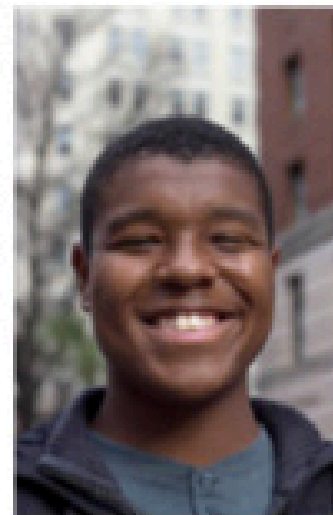
"I think it's really cool that I go to a school where I can meet other people and I'm the type of person where I love to learn new stuff. Even if our opinions are completely different I want to know why you believe what you believe, and who around you have those same thoughts. Our generation is changing how others think," Scarborough said.



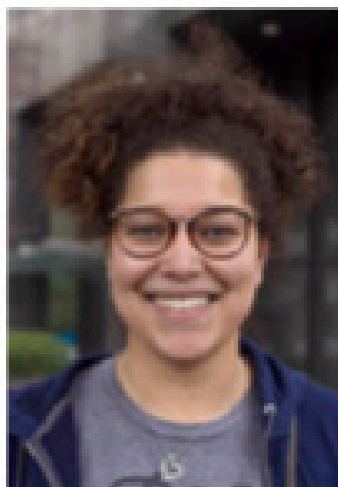
"I am from Livingston, West Columbia. We are all here, as my family goes back to the early 1800s. Our roots are here and we've never felt the need to move anywhere else," Wayne Loren, said.



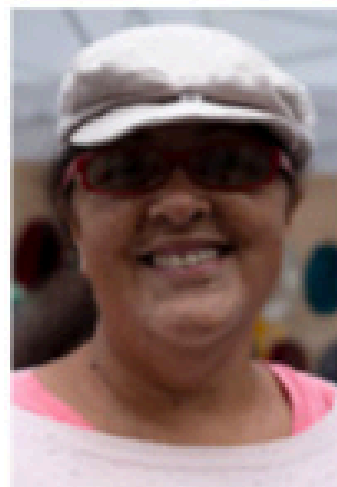
"I am from Bolivia, I came to the states in 2008 to work. My background is that I'm from India. I learned to speak Spanish when I was in middle school and when I came to the states I had to learn the language. Back home I only speak Spanish, no English," Eufren Niancuru-Rama, said.



"I'm from Columbia South Carolina. My background was affected by my high school. A lot of different cultures are on our soccer team, guys from South America and Central America. It has really helped me become more well rounded as a person and be able to communicate with people of other cultures," Caleb [preferred not to say last name], said.



"I am half Mexican half black. My mom is Mexican and she's light skinned like me and my dad is black and he's more of a carnal Puerto Rican sort of thing I have the mixed hair... I'm used to Spanish food, soul food and a blend of the two. Coming here we moved from Miami, coming here we been different. I've not had a lot of interracial couples, which is a beautiful thing. You don't see a lot of that Miami, so it was really shocking for the first time," Sayra Sifre, said.



"I am from Jamaica I actually was born in England and moved to Jamaica. I grew up as an adult here. [Moving around] has made me more open minded. I am from a family that is very diverse, looking in my family you see people that are fair skinned with blond hair and people that are dark like Indian and Chinese," Prudencia Plator Miller, said.