

## My Anomalous Life...

I moved to Hanover County, Virginia in October of 2007. It was the first semester of my sophomore year in High School. My father is an active duty Naval Officer and we were transitioning from a tour in Naples, Italy to a tour in Seattle, Washington. There was a six-month time period where we could not live with my father because of rules and regulations regarding Navy training schools. My mother had grown up in Hanover County and my grandmother still lived there. It was decided that my mother and I would live with my grandmother until we were allowed to join my father. After six months, my parents decided it was best to let me finish high school without changing schools. So my mother and I stayed in Hanover County.

My anomalous life has been full of many diverse opportunities and experiences in which I have relied upon my positive attitude and my aptitude to quickly acclimatize to overcome obstacles of language, culture, and variant. I have had the privileged opportunity to live in two foreign countries and four states, and to attend 11 different schools because my father is an active duty U.S. Naval Officer. I have learned through my experiences to be an ambassadress of my country and to serve as a representative of goodwill engaged in the many aspects of cultural exchange. The six years of my life I spent living overseas in Japan and Italy gave me a first hand awareness of the challenges faced by all immigrants and the benefits of the knowledge gained through active participation in other societies.

My great escapade abroad began at the age of five when my family moved to Sasebo, Japan and I attended Japanese primary school. It was a total immersion experience for me; I had to learn the language, customs, and norm of Japanese society. I made many lasting friendships and I learned how language is a significant part of understanding and integrating two very diverse cultures. Learning a new language further enhanced my experience attending a Japanese ballet school, and I learned how the arts are commonly shared between cultures. When I returned to Japan at age 11 after four years in the States, I attended a Department of Defense school and was able to continue my dance training at the same ballet school I had previously attended. I also began an 18-month intensive education in voice, art, and piano from an acclaimed Japanese instructor who I still maintain contact with today. Additionally, during my second two years in Japan, I volunteered to assist with teaching conversational English to soldiers of the Japanese Ground Self Defense Forces at Camp Ainoura. The friendship we shared was extremely rewarding and their gratitude was overwhelming.

My family moved from Japan to Italy when I was 13 years old and I began school at the Department of Defense School in Naples where I studied Italian. I also enrolled in an Italian dance school and was invited to take part in three community performances. While I was living in Italy, I became an active member of the American Base Naples Community Theatre (NCT) and received a principal role in one of their productions. I

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invited my Italian friends from the dance school to also audition and they began participating in shows with the American community in Naples. My leadership initiative established a continuing relationship between the Italian and American communities; the NCT now performs not only on the American Naval Base but also in the Italian community.

Also, while living in Italy, I was presented the opportunity to be a traveling companion and language translator for a Spanish Admiral's wife during an official NATO tour through Turkey and Greece. We used Italian as a median language to communicate between Spanish and English. This was a great experience of respect to my elders and to different cultures, especially in Turkey where the majority religion is Islam. During the summer of my stay in Italy, I volunteered for the Red Cross at the local military hospital pharmacy and learned basic medical skills.

Since returning to the States and attending Hanover High School, my focus to be a good citizen has not changed. I was well prepared to meet the challenges at hand to immerse myself in a high school culture where I knew no one. I am a member of the International Thespian Society and participate in the school theatre department. As a Varsity cheerleader I spread spirit and pride around my school. I received the Heart of the Hawk award for varsity cheering my junior year and the Spirit of the Hawk award my senior year. I am President of the National Honor Society and continue volunteering in the local community. I am the news editor for our school newspaper, *The Hawk Eye* and a member of the Quill and Scroll Honor Society. I am also a Hawk Ambassador and assist in easing the transition from new student to comfortable student. I have received numerous academic awards including the Hanover Scholar Award. I maintain a high academic level by keeping up with my workload of two AP classes and three IB classes. I also continue my ballet training at the School of the Richmond Ballet.

My experience at Hanover High School has been equally rewarding and has further enhanced my life experiences. I have found acceptance among my peers and feel very much a part of the 2010 graduating class. The faculty and administration at Hanover High School immediately embraced my differences and encouraged and guided me each step along the way. I must give credit and appreciation to the Hanover educators for my college preparation. I have been accepted to the University of Texas Architecture School. My educational goals include a Bachelor of Science in Architecture as well as a Master and Doctorate. I am a determined student. I know what I want and I have a plan to get there.

I have lived in and visited many places throughout the world and the United States. Each place has offered me new opportunities to grow and develop life long skills such as leadership, initiative, acclimatization, discipline, positive attitude, good moral character, respect for others, dependability, loyalty, responsibility, and the ability to interact positively and effectively with others from various cultures. I believe I am a deserving applicant of this award because I know what it's like to be foreign, not just in a technical, nationality way, but also in a personal, social way. My advice to another teenager preparing to relocate is the only way to overcome the challenges of moving is to learn

these skills, to be adaptable to new circumstances, and to make the best of what you have. Be an ambassador to whatever you take pride in representing, be it your family, your friends, your sports team, your school, your state, your country, your beliefs, your world. Be a good citizen.

Victoria Scott Carpenter  
March 7, 2010