International Voices
2007-2008

Visiting International Students experiences at K
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Introduction

2008 marks the 50th anniversary since the beginning of Study Abroad at K College. One of the main goals of the study abroad is cultural exchange. As the world is changing much faster than we can understand, there is a great need to work together, understand each other and promote peace. Thus, study abroad is an ideal way to enhance the survival of future generations, as today's undergraduates are the future leaders of the world. As K celebrates its golden jubilee of the study abroad program, students from many different countries came together as usual to study at K for the 07-08 academic year from Mexico, Japan, Ecuador, China, France, Kenya, Germany, Botswana, Spain, and I am proud to be one of them representing Zimbabwe.

We arrived in September 2007, two weeks before the beginning of classes. We were welcomed at our various arrival stations by K College students. It was during those two weeks when we had orientation that we managed to form a cohesive bond as we settled in. Some were nervous, some regretted coming here, some cried not because there was something wrong or bad at K, but simply because it was the first time being this far away from home. The cafeteria became the meeting place where events or stories of the day were exchanged, again, strengthening the family bond. When all the students returned, the family was already intact; in the cafeteria you would see one big group eating together, walking together and just having fun together.

Occasions and trips for VIs were in place to maintain our bond despite the challenges of keeping together through classes and our different activities. Once in a while the whole group would come together and share experiences, challenges, difficulties or any happy moments-celebrated birthdays together. During the break, some had the opportunity to travel, some returned to their home countries and some decided to stay on campus. We kept the international student advisor, Angela Gross, on her toes, as she was the first port of call whenever there was a problem; and sometimes we called her for happy moments as well!

The host family program ensured that each of the VIs had a family. Maybe they knew that sometimes one needs a break from the cafeteria food. Naturally one needs to be in a family with people who can understand what s/he needs, to simply hang out, or to have a resource if there are any problems.

It has been a really wonderful experience being with all the VIs 07-08; exactly what I expected - diversity which is the "spice of life." We had a great time as a family, but there will always come a time when we have to say goodbye and leave. Our main concern is the thought of never seeing each other again. Of all our good and bad experiences at K, the thought of leaving always draws some tears.

There are a lot of people who helped us enjoy our stay here and it is unfair not to mention them. Again, before we came, we got advice from the previous group of VIs and we decided to do likewise to our incoming brothers and sisters. In this book, we put together our experiences, some of our pictures, some of the work from our classes or presentations, our utmost appreciation for the people who helped us, advice to VIs who will come after us as well as a note about the activities we enjoyed taking part in and the places we visited the most. Have fun!

Darlington Sabasi
Editor-in-chief.
Welcome to K!

This may seem to be a strange way to greet a group of international students at Kalamazoo College who have been here for two and a half quarters already.

Kalamazoo College is not new to you, but instead has become your home. Your life is here; you study, eat, play, worry, laugh, dance and live here. And even though many of you will be leaving us in a few short weeks, I would like to tell you all that you will always be welcome here at Kalamazoo College.

The mark you leave on this campus is indelible; it will not vanish when you leave. You are a beloved group that has brought us so many riches in so many different ways, and it is my distinct pleasure and honor to work with you during your time here.

Just as you leave a legacy at K, trust me when I say that K will remain with you as well.

You have been a joy to have on our campus, and although you will soon leave us, you will not be forgotten.

Think of this not as an ending, but as a continuance of the lasting friendships you have built this year; for those, too, will remain with you.

Thank you for everything you’ve brought us this year. You will be missed.

Angela Gross
International Student Advisor
A year to remember.

There are quite a number of reasons why I decided to apply for this program including but not limited to meeting people from different parts of the world. Not just meeting them but interacting with them and learning different cultures, as well as sharing my culture with them. Making this decision was not an easy task as this was going to be my first time being far away from home for such a long time without family, friends and loved ones. Now that the year is coming to an end, that long period has just elapsed like a month and I am starting to feel the depression I am going to experience as I say goodbye to my friends its time to reflect on my experiences at K.

07-08 is a year to remember for the rest of my life for sure. Kalamazoo College exposed me to the “real world” and there are quite a number of things that I learnt, liked and enjoyed taking part in. Though life at K is so busy with tons and tons of homework from each class on a daily basis, there is still time to relax, have fun, mix and mingle with other students as well as explore. I got my first paycheck at K, I got my first poem published at K, I took part in a number of activities at K some of which I never knew about Badminton for example, I traveled to different places (schools rather) representing K due to the equal opportunities given at K-went to Toronto Canada for the MUN conference for instance. In a nutshell I had so much fun. From the day I arrived, the last day of orientation when I felt really proud of being at K College when I carried the Zimbabwean National Flag in front of all the freshmen and professors as a representative of Zimbabwe until today when I am getting ready to pack my bags, I have never regretted making the decision to come here.

I reiterate; my year at K was the best ever in my academic life and of major interest to note was my relationship with my professors with some even inviting me to their houses for dinner, my friends either American or from all over at K who introduced me to different lifestyles; my employers who made me feel at home far away from home and my classmates who enjoyed listening to me speaking and every time after a presentation they would come and say, “good job”. My confidence has quadrupled. The biggest culture shock was my experience in my room whereby I only had to say greetings to my roommate without which a week without a word became very common. Another shock was that I said my name during this year more times than I have in the past 10 years if not my whole life. Not only saying my name, but also learning how to pronounce it, hahahahaha, yes its mine but I don’t use it-I don’t say it that often at home.

Seeing snow for the first time got me really excited the first days little did I know that it was transient pleasure as with time I started realizing that it “sucks”. Thanks be to my host family for enabling me to see and enjoy some of the limited benefits of snow as I hemmed 07year tobogganing and tubing at Echo Valley. I had so much fun in class, in the cafeteria, in the library, at dinnos, at the quad stop, at beaners, in the chapel, shopping at the nearby Walgreens, Target, Wal-Mart, Meijer or the Mall, everywhere. Only snow gave me a hard time but I survived.

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Darlington Sabasi aka Darsaba
Living in a zoo, Kzoo.

It is hard to summarize my experience in one page, but I will try. I did not expect to come here, but I happened to be in the right place at the right moment and so my adventure began at K.

Once here, I had to learn very fast “how to” and “when to.” Meeting new people and trying to learn their names was not easy, but it was fun. Half of the campus girls were named “Sara” or “Kate”, so it was kind of simple. However, people living here are really different from each other, and I discovered new worlds, new valuable perspectives and ideologies. This is definitely a Zoo because you may find any “species” in this campus.

The first 4 weeks were the adjustment period; after that I had to worry more about my courses, but it was already midterm by that time! Yes, 10 weeks is a short and intense period, so one has to be prepared. I still think this system does not work for me.

I was not alone in this period, in this crazy adventure. My outrageous group of friends became a special floatation vest for stormy times. In November I lost my father and they helped me to overcome it, and go on with life. That was how I knew I could find real friends here, and that is the most valuable possession I gained at K: FRIENDS. We are different from each other, but still get along well; and I am sure this is not going to be the last time we meet. There are plans, there are dreams running thorough our heads and hearts.

The main drawback at K is white. Winter can be long, very long here. Snow falls and it can be enchanting at the beginning, but after months it becomes annoying. There is little to do because it is very cold outside. I wish winter could long 10 weeks, as “winter quarter”, and then keep going to spring. The curious thing was finding how natives complain about the weather as well. Anyway, there had to be a drawback after all. It could be worse, like Cafeteria food, say.

Eating was free for me this year. Nothing is free in America. I had to pay a price in the taste. Sometimes I missed my own country’s food, or just a little bit of taste in the food. Cafeteria times, though, were a special moment of the day because we met and talked about our journeys, plans, jokes, frustrations, etc. That place held our loud conversations until the old woman came and said: “they need your trashes” which meant “we are closing now, what are you doing here?” Normally, there is no “sobremesa” for K students, you eat and that’s all you are supposed to do, there are too many things to do after dinner! We broke that rule.

My host family saved me from “CAF-food.” The Garcias are a lovely family which hosted me, and gained a piece of my heart (and this text). They were totally kind to me, and helped me to understand a little more what “American culture” is like, or why this, or how that. I learned even more than in my courses at their house. Good wine, and/or beer, and/or whisky; wonderful food from different backgrounds; and the exceptional company of them and some friends were an oasis in the middle of my deserts.

Yes, I could be the luckiest in the herd: a marvellous host family, a single room in DeWaters with two windows, an amazingly relaxed schedule in spring, a willing partner to play my guitar, and brothers and sisters form all over the world. K was hectic, but it was an inspiring experience.

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“Mum, Dad, I think this is a bad idea...I am not ready to survive by myself in a far and strange place!” I said. “But don’t you see this is a good chance for you to test the American waters?” one of them replied. Yes, I packed my little stuff and here I was, at a small Zoo, but yet to discover the wonderful people who live in it, this awesomely designed Zoo...

But you are totally right! I am as blank as a slate, my feelings to the zoo are getting more and more stronger, I see the people at Zoo and my heart goes “Oh! My God!” and at the same time my spirits are high and I don’t feel like leaving this place I have come to call HOME. But what do I do? I am left in a huge dilemma, a state full of melancholic feelings...Somebody tell me something...I guess I should answer my thoughts, East West home is best, here I go.

Oh, my experience. I am going to tell you this in black and white; first of all tell me what type of a person you are? Do you like reading a lot? Can you survive in a -1 degrees climatic condition? Do you like a postponed but-yet-to come spring? Is white your favorite color [lots of snow here]? Do you enjoy typing lots of papers [maybe 15 page- paper * 3 per week]? And of course, will you still have time for parties? Then, I guess, Kalamazoo College is a perfect place for you. But in case you are falling short of the above clues, then I suggest you should sharpen your arrows, fill in your gun and be ready for war! But there is still room for improvement. And in that case, I still have a secret for you [especially you, visiting international student] after all that, you will never wish to go back home. You will fall in love with K College and you will be amazed by how it changed your life; to a wonderful person who will always walk with his/her head held high. I feel like what I got from K, is worth my life and if there is anything I can beg to do, is to say a BIG THANK YOU.

I like the people, I enjoyed working with them, and although I had tough classes I enjoyed all of them. I used to talk too much about the amount of class work I had to do, but when I looked back at the end of the quarter, I felt so great and surprised by the amount ‘capital’ I achieved; overflowing capital. If it was meant to be, then it will be; Kalamazoo College changed my life, it shaped it so well and so smoothly. It’s just one academic year but still I feel I am ready to go out there and start my career, I must say, Kalamazoo College students have the best opportunity ever; being at K College is the most expensive miracle you got, and I guess, I envy you!

UoN, (University of Nairobi) Kenya, Undergrad’ Social Work.
The reason I decided to study abroad was really simple; two years ago, I went to New Zealand. It was my first time abroad and I spent two weeks there attending English conversation school. Until then I had not been interested in English at all therefore my English was poor even though I was an English major at my university. That experience in New Zealand inspired me and got me interested in English as a tool to communicate with people who have different culture, backgrounds and thoughts. Right after I went back to Japan, I decided to apply for a study abroad program.

Why did I choose the States for studying abroad, even though I specialize in British literature? The reason is so simple as well. First, I needed to take other tests such as TOEFL to study abroad in UK. Second, I love American music, especially rock n’ roll. English major in the first friend had not given me Aerosmith on that day would have never become thought about studying. Anyway, I managed to get accepted to the study abroad program.

There I was on the first day in Kalamazoo, standing at Kalamazoo airport, so nervous and insecure. It is so hard to believe seven months have passed since then. Time flies when you are having a good time. My stay at K has been a great experience. All the memories in K are so wonderful that I will cherish them for the rest of my life even though I have quite a few things to say about the food in the cafeteria and the snow. Every day there was new and exciting to me. I studied a lot (These past seven months, I have studied the harder than I have ever in my life), I became very excited to see so much snow for the first time in my life and then later got sick of it, I met new people, I leaned new things, I laughed, I cried….I have enjoyed a life at K very much. I have learned so many things. There were a couple of nights, however, I cried in my bed feeling homesick, being frustrated with my English skills or sometimes for reasons I don’t even know. But there was always someone or something at K that cheered me up and made me feel motivated again.

When I look back at the last seven months I have had, every moment even when I was having a hard time, every experience and every encounter with each person that I have met seems so meaningful and important. Now here I am enjoying the rest of the stay here, feeling much more comfortable speaking English. It is really sad to think about saying good-bye to all the people here in two months time but I believe that meeting with those people, the things I have learned, and all the experiences at K will remain in my heart and become a part of me.

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“The experiences are so multifaceted”

Miriam Becker

Empty, without life, and exhausted, the girl opened the door, which lead her into an absolutely foreign terrain. The walls were white, the room was empty and the faces were unfamiliar, yet friendly. On the first morning a sunray fell through the cracks and tickled her nose. There was light. After a while massive loads of snow covered her eyes, but the sunlight leaked through relentlessly and made her wrinkle her nose and set a smile on her face. Feeling alive but different, still exhausted but different. The unknown and empty room built character, her character. The nameless, but smiling faces of Spanish, French, Ecuadorian, African, Mexican, International, and later American, grew with personality. She enjoyed seeing the different shades of colors everyday. The sunlight and rain accentuated her face, but also theirs as well.

Everything was different: faces she had never seen before, languages she had never heard, an empty room, loads of work, and snow she had never seen. Feelings she had not experienced in a long time came back to her. Nobody said that it would always be easy, but it was worth taking it. The struggle, economically and socially, was harsh and exposing, but it was worth it. She met people that were random and puzzling, but now she knows and appreciates them. Still, life is not easier for her and new faces and emotional ties do not make it easy, however it is an enrichment, which colors her life. People who were unknown in the beginning are now friends for life. She can “bailar”, “pleurer”, “hablar”, “parler”, “fumar”, “manger”, “lachen” and “share emotions” with them.

In the end, still exhausted but more complete, she is vibrant and colored.
She came there without any expectations. She will try to remember everything, of course she will forget some things, but the most important things will stay as a never erasing part. She does not need pictures or words. Everything important will remain in bright colors.

This is my presentation of my experiences at Kalamazoo College. I know, it is an uncommon way to explain one’s experiences, but the experiences are so multifaceted that it is hard to condense them on one single space. This little story of “her” reflects my account of being here.

It was not always easy, but I enjoyed it. I have no regrets and I am so happy about it.

GERMANY
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**Life at K**

There are countless precious things I have obtained through the life at K, which I would never be able to experience in Japan. Not only learning in the classes I took, but communicating with the other students including VIs from all over the world as well as American students also gave me a lot of cultural exchanges, which helped me broaden my point of view. Also, I really enjoyed teaching my native tongue in the Japanese labs and talking about cultural differences with Japanese-learning students.

It is now also a good memory that I have always confined myself to the library until 2 am to get all the assignment done and sometimes even stayed in OU, where there is a 24-hour available computer lab, until it dawns. K College with tons of homework always kept me busy, but it also made the everyday life satisfying and gave me a sense of fulfillment at the same time.

Traveling around the states in the winter break, in which I visited to Los Angeles, San Francisco, Las Vegas, New York City and many other places with Akie, Sin Man and Akiko (also Dora and Qi Qi in San Francisco) is one of the greatest memories of mine. Of course there were also some hard time to weather through, but especially the existence of the other VIs, who are in the same situation as I am, helped me a lot to get over it.

The everyday conversations in the caf, in the library, in the dorms, and on the road always gave me cheers and smiles. I am overwhelmed with happiness that I could have this year in the states and a lot of such precious experiences, and I am really grateful for all the people who helped me in some way or another. All the memories which I shared with my friends at K are everywhere not only at K, but also all around the States, and I am sure it will remain printed deeply in my heart for life.

Nationality: Japan  
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DUMELANG (HELLO).

When I arrived it was a beautiful fall day and it just made me feel calm and at ease with the environment. Everyone was excited so I felt pretty content that I was going to be well cared for. Yeah, my presumptions were right, I felt everyone at K really appreciated us, we were never left out, always included on this and that and it made my stay here really beautiful. I loved the teaching system, its pretty fast and too much to do but the challenge is the exciting part, and eventually you get used to it and become the master of your game. The other thing that I like about K is the relationship between professors and students, it is beautiful and it made me feel so at ease. I was able to ask questions in and out of class and through that I managed to cope well with the fast pace at K.

Well... outside of class, I don’t know really, it was just ok. I mean, it is a small school with individualistic people. For me, being from a big school where people are highly interactive and genuinely social, it was hard at first. So I figured out the only way to deal with this overwhelming environment was to do what I enjoyed, whether it meant spending time in my room alone or not. My life at K mostly consisted of studying, shopping, hanging out with some people, partying (didn’t really like them) & exercising. Food was also another factor. There can really be nice food but for me it eventually became monotonous and I found a lot of unhealthy stuff to eat, so I really had a hard time. My diet was mostly granola cereal, peanut butter sandwiches and raw greens. But if one does not really care that much there is a lot to eat, pizza, burgers, fries and a lot of other junk food. All in all I had fun, I traveled, I got things that I wanted.

By the way it is me and my nephew on the picture…my lil’ angel, enjoy us!!!!

University of Botswana, Botswana
3rd year
Major: Social Work
The year at Kalamazoo College is probably the most enriching one in my studies. Besides the academic opportunities K offers, I experienced countless cultural and social events and meetings that made my stay in the U.S. unforgettable.

At the beginning of the academic year, we, the group of international students and I, were offered three orientation weeks that resembled a professional entertainment program and went far beyond a mere tour of campus. On the various field trips we were taken to many beautiful places like Lake Michigan, the Kalamazoo Local Farmers Market, and many more. The remarkable organization of the orientation program made it possible for the group grow together thereby providing the basis for lifelong friendships and harmony within the group at all times.

When classes started, I experienced a new approach to academic learning. Relatively small classes allowed very close contact between professors and students. It created a very special dynamic and fostered interaction and motivation. The liberal arts principle provides the chance of taking classes outside of one’s major and helps broaden the students’ horizon by giving them insights into many different areas of research.

One of my main reasons to apply for the year at K was the opportunity of being part of the German department and help transmit my language and culture. The positive relationships between professors, students and teaching assistants made it a pleasure at all times and helped me develop as a teacher and person at the same time. I was proud to represent my country and university and appreciated the students’ interest and motivation.

The accommodation in a suite with 5 American students gave me the chance to form profound friendships, gain insights into American culture and improve my English language skills. Our life together was positive and respectful most of the time. I had a very good relationship with my roommate. His family invited me to their house over Thanksgiving and allowed me to get an unique experience of American culture.

I am grateful to have been part of the international group at Kalamazoo College in 2007-2008 and will certainly never forget the amazing experiences, insights, and friends I made.

Friedrich-Alexander University Erlangen-Nuremberg
Majors: English/Spanish/Education
“MY TREASURE FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE”

The decision to come to Kalamazoo College was an abrupt one, to say the least. I made up my mind to leave Japan and study in an English speaking country literally three days before the application deadline and applied to this college at the last minute. At that time, there were still eleven months until the day I was going to be leaving for Kalamazoo College. I spent those months regretting my decision, trying to forget the reality of leaving, and thinking of an excuse to cancel studying abroad. In September 2007, I came here because I had no choice. During my first months at K, I counted daily how many days I still had left; that number made me more depressed everyday. Now, April 2008, I am counting the days for the opposite reason. It is really hard to accept that no more than two months are left.

My experience at K will surely be my treasure for the rest of my life. Leaving my country where I was born and raised and living in a different country helped me understand myself as a Japanese person. During my time in the U.S., I realized that I could broaden my horizons and change certain aspects of my life, while other aspects would always stay the same. Beautiful snow in winter, being buried in homework everyday, not being able to go almost anywhere without a car, unable to help being surprised by the noise of vending machines, and being frustrated with my English skills especially when having a fight with my American boyfriend are all things I could not have experienced without coming to K. The time I spent at K is more precious than anything and I will never forget this experience.

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From left to right Akie, Zack, Yuki, Akiko, Sin Man
Time flies. I can’t believe I will be going back to my home country in less than 2 months. I can still clearly remember the moment when I filled in the application form of Kalamazoo College study abroad program. I was so excited when I received the acceptance letter from K.

Going on study abroad has been very important to me while attending college. I have enjoyed going to another country to experience a new culture and enhance my language proficiency. K really brought me a fruitful experience.

During my time here, I met a lot of new people with different backgrounds and personalities. They helped to me know more about the world. The atmosphere in class was very different from what I was used to. There is a strong interaction between professors and students. I experienced extreme weather but I survived. The workload is heavy here but I still had many great times with my friends. Hanging out with my friends was one of my favorite activities at K. We watched movies, talked and had fun.

I saw a lot of things here, which I couldn’t see in Hong Kong. My vision has been widened. The time staying at K will pass, but those sweet memories will stay forever.

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Well, K is different than any other College, it is a small campus, quiet but at the same time nice and quite exciting every once in a while. There are a lot of cultural activities, like speeches, lectures, movies and theater during winter.

Usually during the week there is not that much to do, just hang around with your friends and this year I was so happy that all the internationals or most of them spent time in my room Harmon 353.

For parties we usually go to either the soccer house (every weekend they have goes there: athletes, artists, basically athletes), and there are Frisbee house, and basketball house. next year the names will be really useful.

Lat year there was “Tortilla flats”, now we go to “Blue Dolphin” on Thursdays, those are places where you can go to dance salsa, have a beer, your Spanish teachers and the Rave is always nice, to go to Meijer or the experience! We got lost and to figure around K. The hot helpful also.

Walking to Wallgreens when there was 0F or -14C was quite cold and hard, but we had fun. Sledding down the hill at the middle of the night and falling down the sled, a supposedly broken finger, hitting our buts and almost hitting a tree are memories of the winter that I won’t forget.

Being part of the host family’s program has been an awesome experience for me, my host mom and I have a strong relation as friends; she has helped me a lot not to feel lonely and listening to me when I need to talk. The ISO, it has been really fun not so much for the activities but because of the American people who were involved on it. Jama every Friday is a enriching moment I’ve got to learn a lot.

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This is not the first time being away from my country. This is not the first time living in a heavy snow place. I was so optimistic about studying abroad in the U.S that I had to face many internal and external conflicts after I had arrived here—Kalamazoo College. This is the first time that I have ever faced my real identity crisis. At first, I really wanted to adjust in this environment as quickly as possible, but it was way too hard. I felt like I was losing some parts of myself by assimilating myself to this American college life. Some say, “When you are in Rome, do as the Romans do.” But in my case, I just could not help acting like a typical Japanese somehow. In a sense, I was very resistant to American college culture. I was always under the pressure of “how to protect myself.” I consumed all of my energy to live every single day bearing the pressure. This nervousness, however, has gradually run out by sharing feelings with other international students and some American friends.

“Yuka, keep your options open. You won’t lose anything but gain something by this adjustment.”

Finally, I was able to breathe the same air with others, and it has been so tasty.

My college life has just started, and yet it’s not even half way through. I have still three more years to go at this college. To be very honest, I have still been struggling with this college life. However, this first year experience at K has provided me a strong foundation for living in the future. All of you are the ones who gave me the strength. How can I thank you enough?
Kalamazoo College is more than study abroad, it is not just a college, it is a home. K College gave me a beautiful family, a family that I will never forget. International students, classmates, my roommate, and friends were like brothers and sisters. My professors and people around K College were like aunts and uncles to me. If I tried to describe K College, I would say “Being at K College was an intensive, exciting, challenging, and unforgettable experience.” I found motivation to wake up every day and go to classes with energy and willingness to learn, and share experiences starting from the first day at K. K College has a beautiful campus to meet interesting and motivated people, from around the world, with initiative and dynamism. It was amazing to share greetings, have interesting conversations and see smiling faces in the different corridors of K College.

Right now, many memories are coming to my mind and tears are caressing my face. It is because K College has a special sound, smell, and image of peace, persistence, love, spirit of life and success that I will miss. But there is also a smile on my face for the pleasant memories of being here enjoying K College.

I recognize that all experiences made me change; now the world looks different from before and every country in the world seems to be very close from here. I love Kalamazoo College for the opportunity, for the beautiful campus in its three colors: orange in the fall, white in winter and green in spring and summer; for the experiences, exemplary teachers, and activities going on every day in different parts of K. “K College never sleeps!”

I remember when I said to my family and friends at the Oaxaca’s bus station “I will be back.” I was taking the trip to Kalamazoo without an idea of how wonderful it would be. I just had the dream from my childhood of coming here. I also remember arriving at the Kalamazoo airport, September 12th 2007, and coming to K College for the first time, I was very excited; K College looked beautiful with its green tall trees and many squirrels running on the ground. I came into my room in DeWaters, I breathed deeply and turned my head towards the desk. I saw some papers on it, one of them said: “WELCOME TO KALAMAZOO COLLEGE” and that was the moment when I realized that I was here and not dreaming.

Another unforgettable experience was the Commencement Ceremony when I carried my Mexican Flag. I felt so proud of being Mexican and for wearing traditional Mexican Clothing. That day, I heard the Kalamazoo College hymn for the first time and I felt moved. I felt like a part of Kalamazoo College, and my voice joined to the K College community voices while singing the Kalamazoo College “Alma Mater”.

Painting in the Cavern was also an exciting activity. I painted “Mexico te ama”; in my native language that means “Mexico loves you.” I also painted a Mexican flag, and my hands on the wall. The Cavern is one of the places that I love most at K, every time that I go there I see my painting and others too, they bring to my mind beautiful memories of colors and international students in one group.

Being a Spanish TA made me identify with the role of a Spanish Professor; I have found my passion and my job.

After taking wonderful classes, working in the library until 2:00 am, teaching Spanish in my labs, getting to know people, travelling around the United States, celebrating American holidays, and having a life like an American student, I could say “I really enjoyed it, those were the most exciting months of my life, and I would love to repeat this dream many times.”
“Different cultures combined”

Mengyang Chen

I’m not a VI but I consider myself as international student too. I hang out a lot with international students group and took part in a lot of activities, so I hope I could be counted in with them!

Being at Kalamazoo College is amazing and it is even more awesome that I could be an international student. I think Kalamazoo College is every liberal and a lot of times I feel myself studying in the world, not only in the U.S. It is great that K could combine all different cultures together, and people could always share their thoughts and ideas freely. Even though K is comparably small, there are tons of things you can explore!!! I enjoyed hanging out with all international students and other American students too. I can say that I learned more than I did in the whole high school here in the first year both academically and socially. There are always great opportunities to do whatever you interested in and I've never been bored.

For us, the special experience would be seeing how passionate people are about their own culture and language and I believe most of the Vis enjoying teaching their labs!

I want to say that when you come to K, you will explore a brand new you that could handle things you never thought you could do, so what are you waiting for?

Chengdu, Sichuan, China
Kalamazoo College, USA
Graduating: 2011
Email: k07mc02@kzoo.edu
“A TINY NEST FILLED WITH WARM AND FRIENDLY PEOPLE”

Aline Kleiber

Where should I start? I don’t know, this year has been so full of emotion, changes in my mind, experiences, and discoveries.

I applied to come to the United States, my dreamed country, and my university chose Kalamazoo. I have to say that I found there what I needed: a tiny nest full of warm and friendly people. I needed fresh air and a new world to discover.

However I didn’t realised how hard it would be to go so far loved ones. My fiancé was staying in France and after 2 months being here my grandmother passed away. It’s really hard to imagine you’re so far away and all funerals, birthdays, in this tiny room, alone, so

I couldn’t imagine what it was to have to speak another language for a whole day, a whole week, and whole month. It turned out to be OK and sometimes fun and I think I’m going to miss it. It’s fun to learn new words every day and new ways of saying things. But you cannot always express the way you feel and people just don’t understand you sometimes.

I discovered what it is to live in a campus 7 days a week and barely go out of it. I discovered what it is to eat everyday the same kind of food.

I have to admit that the first weeks I wasn’t sure of staying here. However, these first weeks were so full of experiences. I was meeting new people every day. Every day I was experiencing something new, learning a lot about foreign cultures. That opened my mind in such a magnificent way.

After the first weeks, I began to travel a lot.

I was in a special situation since I didn’t have to take any classes. I had time to travel with especially my family when they came over. I think I’m very lucky to have had the opportunity to travel so much. I’ve been to New York, to the Niagara Falls. I drove through Pennsylvania, New York State, Ontario, Ohio, Virginia, West Virginia, Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky. And thanks to my Host mum I had the opportunity to go to Florida and to travel inside Michigan for Thanksgiving.

That was what I always dreamt of and I did it.

This year might have been hard but I stayed, and now June is coming very fast, the hardest part is behind me. This experience made me stronger, more self confident, more proud of myself. I think now I know better who I am, what I really want. But also I learned so much about people all around the world and from people in general. It is such a great experience and it is worth of how bad you can feel sometimes.

And I know I will remember this year my entire life, and I am truly going to miss it. It was the fullest of experiences, of learning.

France

Graduated in English Studies in 2007
E-mail: aline.kleiber@yahoo.fr
When Maricarmen, from the Office for International Programs back in Ecuador told me that I
was chosen to come to Kalamazoo College, I couldn’t believe it!! Finally, my
study abroad time had come! The best visit my friends that were in Ecuador
what no one told me is that Kalamazoo College was called “The Zoo.”

In fact, now that I look back to the beginning of this amazing
scared cub, looking for a cave to
environment, the new smells, the
at the same time, it showed me a
different perspective of the world, a
new horizon beyond my
comfortable cave back home.

Looking at the faces of the
that I wasn’t the only scared, the only
cubs. And at the airport, not only the
faces of the other cubs made me feel
welcome, but also the face of our peer leaders, those who had been living in the
Zoo before us, those that were helping the new acquisitions of the Zoo get used to it.

And that was it. That was the starting point at the Zoo.

When remembering the first moment at the campus of the College, I can’t help not to smile.
It was the beginning of a new life, of a new experience, the beginning of our future academic,
professional and daily lives.

The cages that we were allocated in were pretty nice, but they were still cages, and it was
our task to give them that taste from home, so the walls of the cage would look like our caves back
home. We all did a great job with this. We all felt welcome, hugged for the walls of our dorm rooms.
We felt at home.

Immediately after we were settled in the Zoo, and we started to become familiar with the
place, something curious happened: we all became caterpillars.
Caterpillars? The cubs became caterpillars? Yes. We did. And the wrap that protected us was
ourselves. The internationals came to the cafeteria at the same time to eat together, to smile to
each other, because we all had the foreignness in common. And that was our wrap, the rest of us.

The time to become pretty butterflies is coming. Butterflies? Maybe. Maybe not.
Maybe we are now just grown cubs of what we were before coming: astute and smooth lions, agile
gazelles, fierce hyenas, lovable bunnies, naughty eagles, fast snakes, wise owls, crazy monkeys,
slow elephants, scary vultures, loyal dogs and the likes.

Maybe it’s just the time to come back, and we realize that we never stopped being who we
were but at the same we realize that we are not the same.

The cubs have grown up. Sadly, not for all of them the growth is both intellectual and
physical. Some of the members grew only physically. Probably they never even got out of the wrap
of the caterpillar. But for all of us that went to the necessary stages to become butterflies or young
animals, coming to the Zoo brought us together.

The Zoo brought us together. The Zoo brought us together. The Zoo made of the
international students a herd. A singular and unique herd. A herd that hasn’t ever been seen. A
herd even more peculiar than the one formed by Manny, Sid, Diego, Eli, and her brothers in Ice
Age2; more singular that the group of animals in Madagascar. The Zoo is the place that helped the
herd to mature, to grow, to love the difference.

The herd, our herd, is singular because we made home of this place. The Zoo is
our always welcoming home.

USFQ, Ecuador
Graduating 2009
As CHARLIE strolled along through campus, he could feel like he was plowing the ground under his heavy boots, dragging them around like a scarecrow whose motion was driven by a bizarre sort of careless impulse, of burned out will, of exhausting struggle.

He suddenly halted to look at a chipmunk standing upright on a little wall mostly covered with snow that attracted his eyes like a magnet. The chipmunk fixed her gaze on him in a mesmerizing mixture of naive curiosity and indecipherable scrutiny. Click! And Charlie couldn’t help falling apart; something broke inside of him, shattered into a billion tiny fragments. The snow glistening slightly under the pale wintry sky.

The sight of this pretty and for some reason unique creature had the power of ripping his soul open and turn his heart upside down. The strenuous and continuous torture of Charlie’s self-destructive clockwork mind machinery started to slow down to a point where nothing really mattered to him any more. Charlie FELT that this striped rodent had the unexplainable and uncanny ability of making him, almost unconsciously, sift through the happenings and experiences of a disturbing lifetime that couldn’t bother him now, that couldn’t hurt him NOW.

The snow seemed to be closing in on the static scene of these beings, as though shrouding them in a pure and frigid embrace, in an isolated sphere, where the only witnesses where the two characters that were held together on a deep visual and spiritual encounter.

Somebody was carefully holding Charlie’s head, as his cold and dead body laid on the soft snow, by the little wall where the chipmunk had stood. His boots were gone, too.

This chipmunk had made Charlie HAPPY.
“What am I?”

Have you ever seen the movie Madagascar? It’s about a group of animals in Central Park in New York. Marty is a zebra that turns 10 and wants to discover “the wild.” Before discovering it, he must face the most complicated question ever: What am I? His dilemma waves between being black with white stripes or white with black stripes. Isn’t it funny?

No. It isn’t. And it is not funny because this situation happens daily and in ways that would surprise most of us. Coming to America for my study abroad has been, if not the major, at least one of the most powerful experiences in my life. It has meant, first of all, “el destete” or wean; leaving family and friends at home to face this new life. Second of all, it has meant to get used to the culture in this country. Third of all, it included the challenge of meeting new people, accepting their differences, and going beyond the language barrier to discover the good and the bad of the people around me.

And it is precisely here, where my story matches with the story of Marty, the zebra from Madagascar. I’m not 10, but I find myself asking the same question “what am I?” Leaving the comfort zone of my country has shown me that everything you believe can be called into question. That happened to me. After being asked several times “are you black?” and after the people that asked the question self replied “No, you are not. Look at your hair. You are mixed” Now you can understand why Marty’s problem doesn’t seem funny for me. It has been really hard to question myself. “You are mixed,” they said. And you know what? Yes, I am a mix; a really special mix. There is black, indigenous, and Hispanic blood going through my veins.

I’m mixed. I’m a mix with a toasty wrapper: my skin. I’m a mix. A mix that comes from the first woman in Africa, whose descendants decided to leave their comfort zone and travel up north becoming Caucasian due to the lack of sun (what a known story!!), and whose descendants decided to travel even further, to what we know nowadays as America (America the continent, not North America, not Central America, not South America, but America as a whole), and became the “Corn men”- our native indigenous. I’m a mix, yes. And so are some of the people I see here today. Anyways, do you know what the best thing about being mixed is? That you are just like your cell phone, or your ipod, or your camera, or even this microphone: “Made in China” but with parts coming form Thailand, Russia, USA, etc, etc. And that mix makes you a really nice thing to look at, and to discover, and who knows, even get one. I’m a “Made in Ecuador” girl, una morena Latina, (a dark-skinned latin girl) that recognizes all the micro components of herself.

I’m a girl that recognizes herself, yes, but not only that; I’m a girl that also accepts the beautiful differences of the different racial groups and embraces “being a mix.” Embrace is the key word here. Embrace is to accept who you are and to feel good about it. I’m happy being “the mix” that I am. But I’m even happier because after these words you’ll think, at least a lil’ bit, about the same statement: we all are different because, ultimately, we all are the same.

Maria Lidia Gruezo Baldeón
The Idea “home”

Ninth week, Kalamazoo College – The only thing a student really wants to do right now, is either stop studying or take a nap. So, after the first half of my 10 o’clock class I told my neighbour: “The only thing, I would like to do right now, is going home…”. Before I could finish the sentence, she interrupted me and said: “Oh yeah, I can really understand that you want to go home. After almost seven months being in a foreign country, I would be homesick as well.” But hell no. I did not even think about Germany. I just wanted to get back to my dorm room to take a nap.

Then, some days ago, my emotional mom, who has become even more emotional since I am thousand of miles away, asked me on the phone if I was not missing home. In order not to increase her emotionality, I confirmed how much I missed home.

After these events, the question of where and what my home was, was spinning around in my head. Of course, I have a least one home in Germany. But wait. I would say that I have actually at least have two homes. On one hand, there is my village where my mom and my brother live, and where I went to school. On the other hand, there is Bonn the city where I have been living the past three years to do my studies. Both places are very different and very different people surround me every day. Of course, I spent more time in my village, but for me that does not mean that the feeling of being home in Bonn is less strong than in my village. As a first explanation I could say that the term “home” does not refer to the period of time you have spent at one place.

However, this summer I had to leave my homes to fulfil my dream of studying abroad. More than tired after having been travelling for more than 24 hours, a cancelled flight, one suitcase lost somewhere in the underground of Chicago airport, I arrived at the metropolitan airport at Kalamazoo and two smiling faces, my host family, was picking me up. After a 20 minute ride- by the way it was around midnight and I did not have the slightest idea where I was-we reached the holy gates of K-College. I opened the door of my suite and five very friendly faces smiled, but still I felt really weird and then I open the door to my little room and my only thought was: “This is the place I am supposed to stay and feel home for the next year – impossible.” The room was small, white and empty. I forgot to mention that it had one window.

However, after some weeks this little and ugly space felt a little bit like home. But it was not the space itself that supported the feeling. It was the people living in my apartment, who welcomed me very nicely and helped me integrating. Without those girls it would have been impossible to establish that little feeling of home.

Well, however I moved out because the noise level of 100 decibel day and night decreased the feeling of being home very quickly. But now, my new space and my new housemates feel like a home, too. A second realization about defining “home”: Home is where people make you feeling home.

After my first hours in a state sleepless trance at K-College, I got to know the other international people. Since our roots are from all over the world, we are very different. But we have something in common: We are far away from home and everything around us is new and different. This international group is another important factor in establishing the feeling of being home. Of course, it is impossible to have a close relationship with all the over 20 people, but the dynamic within the group was and is very important to me. However, besides having found the feeling of home in my room, on campus and partly within this country, I found another home; I would call it the MESF: my mexican-ecuadorian-spanish-french home. Although I am obviously not physically present in any of these countries right now or even have never been to any of them, my friends from them offered me the feeling of having an international home. They supported me in establishing the feeling of home here at K, but besides offer me so much more. Thank you guys, you are awesome.

I still do not have a final answer of how I would define home, but I can say that it does not only depend on the physical surrounding. It is more what you and other people make of it.

Before I end my little speech, in behalf of all the international students, I would like to thank one person because without her our international feeling of being home would not have worked out. Angela, you are awesome!

Miriam Becker
IT’S NOT CLEAR

I’m from the land between and, at the same time, so different worlds.
I’m from the land between Europe and Africa.
I’m from the “siesta” in the afternoon
and the “fiesta” at night.
I’m from Spain.

I’m from its north of craggy horizons.
I’m from its center of plains and fields of sunbathed wheat.
I’m from the endless plateau.
I’m from mountains and trees,
I’m from beaches and seas.

I’m from the cider splashing in my glass,
I’m from the wine flowing in the cellars.

I’m from the tranquillity and calm of the countryside and the whirlwind of the city.
I’m from long nights under the stars,
I’m from fresh air filling my lungs, surrounding me with the smell of liberty.
I’m from summers underneath the suffocating sun
and from the bitter cold of long winters.

I’m from the dream of a tree house;
a dream broken by the same kids who now I call my beloved friends.
I’m from trips by bike, baths in rough rivers, camps in the wood.

I’m from the breakfast made by my dad,
I’m from my mom’s advices,
I’m from the endless conversations with my brother.

I’m from music at the subway, the rock of night festivals
and clapping and harsh and strum sounds of the flamenco.

I’m from my people, from my land, from my past and from me.
But where I’m going is not clear.
Sad shoes
black sad shoes in the corner street
piano solo in my lips, blink.
memories in the skin, blue timeless sound

that night waiting for a kiss, muah!
empty hall witnessing tears, oh man
black sad shoes in the corner street

restless fingers crossing my thoughts, no sleep
I wish I could just stop, not to think
memories in the skin, blue timeless sound

feelings in a cocktail, sex on the beach
set of drugs, not much to see, Friends.
black sad shoes in the corner street.

silence full of faces, dizzy cartoon
trips, letters, words, dates and patience
memories in the skin, blue timeless sound

witnessing tears, waiting for a kiss,
fingers crossing my thoughts, I need to stop –not to think
black sad shoes in the corner street
memories in the skin, blue timeless sounds

Pablo Andrés Bayas Mora

“Conversation of Love”

“Hi K College!”
I say everyday while opening my eyes after waking up
and looking outside through the window.

“Hi Dora!”
K College says and smiles to me,
its beauty caresses my eyes, my soul and my dreams
with its vivid colors of every season: green, orange and white!

I think I have fallen in love with K College since the first time.
I love Kalamazoo College, its people and its life!

Dora Cristian Garcia Cornejo

(Guayaquil, Ecuador)
Universidad San Francisco de Quito;
Major: Liberal Arts,
Minor: Education
Email: phayas@gmail.com
Hang out with VIs
and you will hear:

I am tired,
I didn't sleep well,
Ya ya ya ya ya ya,
I have a lot of work.
This life is horrible.
Yep!!!

Oh my God,
My life.
I mean, its like,
The thing is,
What do you mean?
For example

In my country,
Dude,
This is awesome,
So what are you guys doing tonight?

One Day

One day I am going to carry the mountain.
All the way to the sea
and split the water into rubble.
The sun will smile at my vastness,
all the trees will salute me,
while the birds will sing for me.

I know the day,
when the stars are going to come down,
when the sun is going to melt,
when the wind is going to be blowing upwards only,
when the earth is going to be stationary,
the day is coming.

I’ve learned about myself

Once I got here, a couple days before fall quarter began, I just numbed up, my initial excitement was gone. There were no people around, and no parties, just a handful of international students that I didn’t know with names impossible to pronounce names

I thought it was going to be college wildness like in the movies, but instead I found calmness, responsibility, and control (words I would never have expected to use to describe parties.) I found calmness because not everyday is a party like I was hoping, and partying happens at the same place with the same people, same soccer house, same football house. I found responsibility and control because I needed to be responsible and control my actions, knowing that on such a small campus people recognize me by what I do and nobody can take care of me.

I learned how to have a nice time with friends, simply eating Chinese and joking around.

I’ve learned, as Oti says, friends are the family that you choose. I didn’t get to choose my roommates, but I chose to be their friend and to bond with them. I didn’t choose for a friendship to go bad in New York on vacation, but I chose to get away from the people that hurt me. I didn’t choose to miss my friends back home so much, but I chose to make my new friends make me feel that I’m home.

As a TA I’ve learned that it’s about being passionate and enjoying your students. I now feel tenderness towards them, like a proud Mama. I enjoy hearing the cute errors when they speak but love even more when they get one word right or do well on an exam. Any little victory for them is a victory for me.

Now, I cannot say I’ve just learned about things, I’ve learned about myself. I cannot control things, but I can learn from them and become stronger. No matter where you are, if you are true to your inner values you will always find the good that you deserve.

Maria Belen Merchán Urquiza
Caged together in the zoo.

We have had the pleasure of getting to know many of you and have been there with you through the struggles of a year at K, the struggles we all somehow overcame. Thus, we feel that we have been witnesses to some major growth this year, observing that everyone is in some way stronger: a stronger tolerance for sleep deprivation, a stronger stomach to survive a year of cafeteria food, and a stronger ability to be away from family for a year.

What we love about our group of friends, the little international bubble we somehow got into, is that we all have formed mini-families so that we have a support system for the moments when we feel we might not be strong enough. Our mini-families to fill in for the family we are away from. However, just as we all had to leave our families to get to K, we now have to leave our new kind of family, a family bond that has strengthened in all the ups and downs of being caged together in the zoo. Now we need the strength to say goodbye.

Saying goodbye to this kind of family was one of the hardest things for us last year, as we learned with many of our international friends. However the experience has taught us how to deal with the problem of the world getting smaller but distance and airfare prices remaining the same. At the end of our freshman year when we said goodbye to many of our international friends we thought our friendships were over, that we wouldn’t keep in contact. However, family doesn’t give up so easily. We’ve learned that the friendships made at K will maintain abroad because they have grown so strong here. Even though it sucks to say goodbye, it can be done, and it has to be done because we needed each other to strengthen together and we will need each other to strengthen apart. (We know this sounds really cheesy.)

Maybe you all already know this, but just remind yourself: You are capable of living with pieces of your heart scattered all around the world.

Sincerely,
Lauren McCoy (the gringa loca) – 4 year and American
Anum Fatima (num-num) Anum – four year international.

International Students Blurb

My experience with the International Students of 07-08 was definitely a positive one. I won’t waste any time in building up suspense, because my experience with this year’s VIP’s was undoubtedly a good one, right from the start. I felt included in the VIP scene ever since the first week of school when they decided to go salsa dancing and invited me to go with them. Since then, I’ve been able to eat with internationals, fundraise with them, study with them, and grow with them. Spending time with them has reinforced for me that everyone has something to bring to the table in life. Experiencing the wide variety of personalities among the VIP’s has taught me more about getting along with people and how to relate to different kinds. My life has been richer with them being here, and for that I say thanks. I hope they have enjoyed being in Kalamazoo as much as I have enjoyed hosting them.

Jamie Sturm
THANK YOU...

Words alone cannot express the amount of gratitude I have to quite a number of people who enhanced my life at K. The following should not go unmentioned and not in order of the most important: Angela Gross, Eric Staab and family, the Gross family, soccer guys, and Coach Mary Ellen Ashcroft, all my professors, CIP Staff, Peggy Rice, Linda Schubel, Pat Ponto, Judy Clark, Marsha Dorgan, ISO leaders, MUN members, study partners, Health Center, Facilities Management, Visiting Health Center, Facilities Management, International Students, Friends and finally all those who helped me one way or the other. I thank you.

I don’t know how to do it, but I will try and if I don’t mention your name, then it’s most definitely engraved in my heart.

Angela Gross- Thanks for being a wonderful mother to all of us.

Pat Ponto- Thanks for being a very supportive and a most treasured host mum.

Dr. Grossman- Thanks for making me realize who I am and that I always have the opportunity to become a fully functioning person.

Dr. Baptiste-Thank you for your support and understanding.

Garcias, Heidi, Joe, Narda, Sandra and all of CIP.

I enjoyed every second we spend with you, thank you all for your warm heartedness.

-My heartfelt thanks also go to; my professor’s, my roommates [Theresa and Tracy], and all the friends I met at Kalamazoo College.

Darlington

First of all, I would like to thank my parents for giving me the chance to come here and for always supporting me. Also my friends, both those who are in Japan and those who are at K for helping me and making my life a happy one. Other YJs, it was such a great experience talking to you and sharing our cultures. My students in Japanese class for putting up with me. You guys are wonderful! My boyfriend for teaching me many things and always making me smile, my roommate Emily for being such a nice and patient roommate, my suitemates, the people in the CIP, my professors, my host family, my classmates, all the people who helped me and inspired me. Thank you.

Akiko

I would like to thank my wonderful mom who is 10,000 miles away from here, but always there for me and supports me in any decision. She is wonderful and she made me the person I am today.

I would like to thank all the nice people I met here, talked to, danced and laughed with. I will keep you in my memory because you basically made my year. Inez, Pablo, Cam, Otti, Carlos, Mali, Belen, Clara, Sarah, Kassie, Megan, Terrence, Travis, Drew, Anthony, Orel, Becca, Steph, Josh, Blessing and whoever I forgot, you made my year. I love you, I will miss you and always keep you in my mind.

I would like to thank Angela Gross. She has done so much for the international group, but also for me. Without her, things would not have worked out as great as they did.

Miriam

I would like to thank the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg and Kalamazoo College for the opportunity of making a life-changing experience, the CIP staff, and Jane for being my best friend, Professor Boyer-Lewis for being a role-model and motivation as a teacher, the German department for excellent collaboration, my suitemates for great companionship, the group of international students for being my friends and helping me gain insights into their and my own culture, Brian for being a considerate roommate, the Barkleys for their invitation, Professor Potts for being my host-dad, and Kelly for being an outstanding barista.

Alex

People who enabled me to come here, people who supported my life here, precious friends I made here, people who gave me a warm smile, professors, friends in Japan, and most of all, THANK YOU!! I want to thank everything and everybody from the bottom of my heart for helping me to grow and change so much while enjoying my life here.

Akie

I have to thank especially my Host mum, Linda Schubel, who welcomed me in her house, in her family, who made me discover so many things, who helped me in any case, who was there for me anytime.... She was just a real mum to me. Thank you also to Angela who was there to help and to listen to us.

Aline
I would like to say thank you to each and everyone who helped me to accomplish all I accomplished this year at K. Angela and all the CIP staff, my host family, Professor Warren and all the other professors who taught me, Henry, my all friends at K including; my roommates, RAs, Japanese-taking students, CGC members, VI’s, the library staff, Beamer’s staff, Health Center staff, cafeteria staff, CCD staff, my parents and friends in Japan, who always supported me to take such a great opportunity, all the others who have been related to me; thank you very much.

Yuki

I will love to thank my host mom, Terry Miller, she has been a good friend, company, support and an excellent host mom. We have shared so many things, and having someone who cares about you is really helpful and nice. My roommates, I love you girls, you have been the best company ever! We have learned so much this year together and yet we still have fun with little things and simple moments. Thanks for choosing me as your roomie and thanks for not quitting on me the first couple of days, also for opening your lives to me and being my girlfriends, roomies and siss.

My girls… Clara, Ines, Mali and Miriam! I am so happy that we met each other and most important that we all got someone who cares about you is really helpful and nice. It is necessary to recognize that we wouldn’t have made our living in the Zoo without all the staff of the same. Angela, Heather, Linda, Judy, and everyone else that has helped and protected us are fundamental part of THE HERD.

Belén

Sin Man

I just wanted to say thank you to all those amazing people who have done this year one of the best experiences of my life. First of all, I would like to say thanks to Angela Gross who was always there for us.

Secondly, to all the American peers who welcomed us since the very first day.

And finally, to all the internationals who became not only my friends but also my family during all these months. I will never forget you guys!

Inés

MY LIFE

Read a book.

Me la trae flója todo: solo se salvan Inés Y.P., from Spain, Pablo B.M., el niño de la selva; y Otilio R.H.R., el DaVinci mexicano.

I am very grateful to all Kalamazoo College for everything. The list is long and my words are not enough to express how thankful I am. I would like to say THANK YOU to people who I shared more time:

Angela: you were an angel for all internationals. CIP: you did a wonderful job! John and Ann Fraser: you were wonderful parents. Linda: the moments shared with you were very special. Your smiles made my days.

Judy: I enjoyed visiting you sometimes. All members of Garcia’s family: your support and love were always very wonderful and special to me. All members of the Spanish Department: This is the best ever. Professor Maria Romero and Cynthia Carosella: who worked with me: thank you for the confidence, and support. I learned from you valuable aspects of profession and life. Dr. Tan, Dr. Andy Mozina, Dr. Larissa Dugas, Dr. Olga Bonfiglio, Dr. Jane Warren, Dr. Evans, and Dr. Solberg: of all you were the best professors I have had in life. Sr. Melvin: you were always there for us. Dr. Jane Warren, Dr. Evans, and Dr. Solberg: you were the best professors I have had in life. Sr. Melvin: you were always there for us.

People in the cafeteria, thanks for the food.

People in the library: I will miss “your attention please, the library will be close in 15 minutes.” "My students: for participating enthusiastically and being my friends too.

ISO: Great team! International Students: we will be internationals forever, I love you guys. Peer Leaders: Our lives at K College would not be the same without you. And all of you that I didn’t mention, thanks for your help, support, friendship, encouragement, and lessons of life.

Thanks for being with me in the most enjoyable and difficult times. Thanks all of you who spent some minutes of your time with me. I won’t forget you; I will keep valuable memories and learning, every time I see pictures or close my eyes you will be there, until the last day of my life.

“Everyone has a special place in my heart”

Dora
★ You will be nervous the first few days but that will disappear, you will complain about the amount of work because you will not have enough time to party, but slowly, step by step, you will fall in love with K and you’re gonna love it even more.
★ Cultural shock might be a challenging and painful process, but the experience is the essence of being an exchange student. It will enable you to explore and have a deeper understanding about the world.
★ Do not be afraid of exploring and finding your new self.
★ Bring your international driver’s license.
★ Bring some bigger pants, because after about 5 months of American nutrition, you will need them.
★ Laugh and Enjoy!!!
★ Learn more than academic content. Experience your own culture from a different perspective and also other cultures.
★ Engage in extra-curricular activities.
★ Experience life outside the "K-bubble".
★ Think about purchasing a car.
★ Be true to yourself, your morals, principles and beliefs.
★ Have an open mind, learn, see and listen.
★ Challenge anything you find interesting without being afraid.
★ Take some time to go out and make a lot of friends!
★ You can do it!!!
★ Visit all the places you can, go to all events, performances and participate too.
★ Do not settle, do not stop moving. In Buddhism, stagnation is death. Get involved in other activities, reach different people. K is a mysterious place.
★ Look around. Experience, engage, create.
★ Take a corner somewhere on campus and make it yours.
★ Make friends and no enemies, and just be yourself.
★ Chose classes you would never have a chance of taking if you were at your school and believe me you will have fun.
★ The rest comes along with it.
★ Never let the time manage you, organize your time instead.
★ Sleep well, eat healthy, drink responsibly.
★ Trust your VI fellows, that builds community.

**ADVICE FOR THE NEW EYES**

**PLACES**
- Crossroads Mall
- Rave movie theater
- The gym
- Walgreens
- Meijer
- Lake Michigan
- Biggby Coffee
- Wal-Mart
- Spice and Rice
- Fandango
- North Eleven
- Martell’s
- Great Wall of China
- La Mexicana Market
- Arie’s London Grill Singapore

**ACTIVITIES**
- Badminton
- Zombie tag at midnight in the FAB
- Laser tag
- Soccer
- Friday movies
- Working out
- Playing guitar
- Long conversations at night
- Service-learning: at the Juvenile Detention Center at Lincoln School
Acknowledgements

I would like to express appreciation to Visiting International Students who heard my call, got interested in the idea and took it as theirs. Without their cooperation, translating this dream into reality would have been impossible. The fulfillment of the original intent I established as the initiator as well as spearheaded incorporated many hands. There are quite a lot who played a pivotal role in this project whose birth came from the motivation by the love for VIs 07-08.

Special thanks are due to the following for their tireless efforts and unselfish assistance in the creation of this product, without whom this project could have been fruitless: Otilio Herrera, Sakhi Vyas, Angela Gross, Sarah Nicholus, Kathryn Lightcap, the CIP, and The Office of Admissions. Others helped one way or the other, for instance, by positive and encouraging compliments: thank you.

Finally, special thank you to my school, all VIs’ schools, and K College for this opportunity to be here. We hope that you will like this gift that we leave with you as we say goodbye and hopefully we will see you again sometime but then not at K College.

Darlington Sabasi

International Voices Editors

You are holding a dream in your hands. Inventiveness, imagination, and love are its basis. Working in this project has been exciting and tiring. After long nights, emails going back and forward, and discussions to polish our little diamond as much as we could; I am proud of what we have achieved. This process helped me to know a little more about these people I walked part of my road with. May this be the first of many because we, the Visiting International Students, need our voices to be heard.

Otilio Ramón Herrera Ruiz; VI, Photo, Layout, and cover designer

It is my pleasure and honor to be part of this first publication of International Voices. This is an especially meaningful group of international students who truly understand the meaning of exploration and discovery. After all the late nights in the library, adjusting to K’s hectic schedules, hanging out on the quad, speaking at the chapel Jama, and coming together to form this book, I can see the lifelong bonds of friendship within this group. It has been said that, “friends are the family that you choose.” This international family has brought together voices from all over to reflect on their experiences at Kalamazoo College, to express appreciation for mentors, and to offer their insights for future international students. I wish all of the students my very best in their forthcoming endeavors.

Sakhi Vyas; K’08, Experiences Editor

Nothing is impossible. It is my hope that you liked it and any commends are most welcome. Reach me on mwdarsaba@yahoo.com/k07ds01@kzoo.edu

Darlington Sabasi; VI, Editor-in-chief,
"our song"

All we came to Kalamazoo maybe because we wanted to or it was written somewhere else.

We didn't know each other, but now I call you friend, and I see my home in your eyes.

Papers, quizzes, readings to do, working at the library at two... and tonight I won't sleep again.

Pizza, burgers, some apple juice, random food that I never knew, but the "caf" was good because of you.

We didn't...

Hanging out with friends in their room, or going out if they're in the mood created bonds stronger than our pain.

Missing home and feeling depressed, wishing we could be at our place... You were there to listen to my grief.

We didn't...

You're my friend, and that'll always be true!

This is for you to fill. Who was who within the herd?

The Bookworm (Always at the library) ______________________________________
The Schwarzenegger (Alway at the gym) ___________________________________
Dr. Freud (Always listening) ______________________________________________
Joshi (Always eating) __________________________________________________
Night owl (Always up 'till dawn) ___________________________________________
The MSN notifier (always up to date in gossips) ______________________________
The invisible (Always nowhere to be seen) __________________________________
Love Machine (Breaking hook up records) _________________________________
The Wo-hoo (Always looking for parties) ____________________________________
The Frikie (do you need an explanation?) ___________________________________
“This is the tale of our lives running parallel for a while with common aspirations and dreams.” Ché