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## Spanish students living in Somersworth, Rochester enjoying U.S. stay

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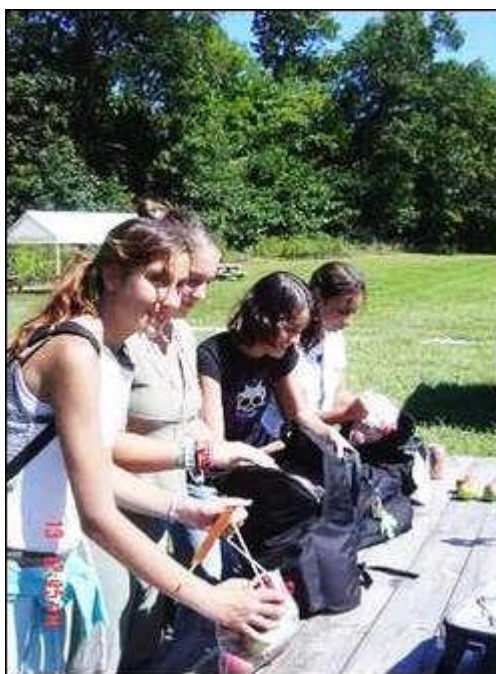
LEE — For the high school students visiting from Cadiz, Andalucia, Spain, via a foreign exchange program, the frequency of weather changes, and amount of trees in New Hampshire are something of an anomaly.

The students got a taste of Americana while visiting DeMeritt Hill Orchards on Thursday afternoon where they picked apples, tasted cider and ate freshly made doughnuts in the sunshine.

As part of the American home-stay program, Global Friendships, and the Spanish exchange program SHE Herencia, the 18 students are living with host families in Somersworth and Rochester for three weeks. They have been attending classes, three days a week and have a packed schedule of field trips to Boston, New York City, Kittery, and Squam Lake.

"The program is part of a scholarship, and they have to have good marks to go," said Lola Ruedas, the group's chaperone. She said the students also have to raise the other part of the tuition for the trip.

The students, ages 14 to 17, are entering the final week of their visit and have already seen Boston



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"This is our tenth year of doing this type of exchange," said Global Friendships field trip coordinator, Dennis Cower of Somersworth.

While the pastoral beauty of the orchards, located on Route 155, impressed the students, they had many observations about American life. As they were eating their bagged lunches, the teens spoke freely about American life.

The time schedule was strange for Aurora Valenzuela, who wondered why Americans went to bed at 10 p.m. but had stores open for 24 hours.

"I feel like it should be later," said 15-year-old Aurora Valenzuela. "We eat like this at 3 o'clock," she said.

At home, the students said they eat their biggest meal in the mid-afternoon and have a small dinner around 10 p.m. The American schedule of getting up at 6 a.m. for school, eating lunch at noon and going to bed at 10 p.m. has been a challenge.

"To see trees is very nice. It is very quiet. And you can see both the rain and the sun," said 13-year-old Nieves Carrellan, who was excited by the climate.

"The weather is good," agreed 15-year-old Barbara Arana. "Everything is different, the food, the music. And the high school is very big. Everything is big," she said.



**Aurora Valenzuela of Andulucia, Spain checks out a pumpkin at DeMeritt Hill**



**Students from Andulucia, Spain check out the pumpkins at DeMeritt Hill Farm in Lee recently. The students are part of an exchange program with Global Friendships and are staying with local families in Somersworth and Rochester. Pictured, from left, are Aurora Valenzuela, Irene Moreno, and Isabel Trujills.**

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Where the students come from, a busy city in Southern Spain, the weather is arid and they live about 30 meters from the ocean.

"Here, computers are in every classroom. In Spain, there is just one computer in every school," said Valenzuela.

"You have a lot of cemeteries here," observed 14-year-old, Gloria Conde. "In Spain we only have one or two in a city. Here they are everywhere," she said.

The girls said the American host families have been very nice and they are looking forward to their trip to New York City.

Meg Wilson, owner of DeMeritt Orchard, said they see about 4,000 students in one season, but this is the first time she's had exchange students. "I think it's kinda neat that they're here," she said.

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Farm in Lee recently.  
Valenzuela is part of an  
exchange program with Global  
Friendships and is staying with  
a local family in Somersworth.  
She attends Somersworth High  
School three days a week and  
takes educational field trips  
the off days.

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