

## Seven foreign exchange students new to Holyoke High

Written by Jes-c Brandt

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After a drop in the hosting of foreign exchange students last year, Holyoke High School's number of visiting students is up again this year to seven.

Students from four different European countries have moved in with Holyoke host families and have been busy starting school and a whole slew of American activities. Here they share a little about themselves and their first impressions of life as an exchange student.



**Philip Buck**

Enrolled as a junior at HHS, Philip Buck will be spending the next year away from his home in Hamburg, Germany to be an exchange student.

Buck is staying with host family Jeff and Laura Roll and their children Alyssa, Zach and Emma. At home he has one brother, and Buck said it has been fun staying with the Rolls.

While this is not Buck's first time in the United States, it's certain to be a different experience than before. Previous visits have included New York and Florida for vacation.

In his short time as an exchange student, Buck has already noticed a number of differences from life in Germany. Holyoke's much smaller than he is used to, but he said it's been nice so

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far. The school also offers many new experiences. Where his home classes would include world and German history, at HHS he is taking a course in American history.

Noting other differences between the school systems, Buck said at home, students stay in one classroom, while teachers move. He's been getting used to changing rooms for each class. He also said in Germany there are just general mathematics classes, so it's been interesting to see how math classes here are divided into more specific areas. Other classes specific to his year abroad are weights and carpentry and mechanics.

After completing the school day, Buck has been spending his afternoons playing football, a change from his usual sport of choice, soccer.

Buck looks forward to a good year in Holyoke, learning about a new culture. He hopes to spend some time seeing Colorado and would like to ski in the Rocky Mountains.



**Ilse Kamstra**

Ilse Kamstra will be spending one semester at Holyoke High School as a senior. Originally from Sleenwijk, a small village in the Netherlands, she says that Holyoke is even smaller than her home town.

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One of the most striking differences Kamstra has noticed since moving to Holyoke is that everything is very far away. Even though she lives in a small town in Holland, big cities are not far away.

While in Holyoke, Kamstra is living with Phil and Susie Vasa and their children Marci, Jacob and Jesse.

Already Kamstra has been immersing herself in the local culture. Although she has never played before, she joined the HHS softball team. It's been very hard, she said, practicing every day and learning all the rules, but it's been fun.

At home, she noted, there is a different mindset about sports. They aren't school sponsored, and practices would often be held only once a week.

Within the school as well, Kamstra commented, there are many differences she has noticed. While HHS seems to be more lax about having food and drinks in class, the policies for being late are much more strict than what she's used to.

Kamstra is excited for the time she gets to spend in the United States. She's interested in the whole country, she said, and looks forward to spending time in Colorado, an area she has never been to before. Kamstra has previously been to California and Nevada on vacation, and before coming to Holyoke, she was in New York for STS prep.

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