

From Finland to Holyoke: Elli Ahro experiences HHS life

Written by Darci Tomky



Braving the halls of Holyoke High School this year is Elli Ahro, Holyoke's only foreign exchange student for the 2012-2013 school year.

Ahro, a junior at HHS, is staying with host parents Mark and Mendi Lutze and host sisters Josilyn Lutze, a freshman, and Janessa Lutze, a fifth-grader.

Traveling all the way from her home in Hämeenkyrö, Finland, this is Ahro's first time in the United States, which is "the best country in the world!" She said the people are very nice here, and everything is so much bigger than in Finland, including all the pickup trucks.

She has been wanting to visit America for many years, and she's excited to be on her own, getting a little independence from her parents for the year.

Ahro said it's going to be really educational to be able to practice her English on a full-time basis, a language she began learning in school in the third grade.

She thinks the classes at HHS are a bit easier than they are in Finland, and in Holyoke the teachers are much more friendly and talkative with the students.

At HHS, she hopes to experience some American basketball, drama and maybe some clubs.

Back home in Finland, Ahro's dad works in the forest/lumber industry as well as some farming while her mom has an office job. She also has two younger brothers. Their city has around 10,000 people, and Ahro said it's a fairly flat landscape, although not quite as flat as Holyoke.

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They go skiing about once a year, and Ahro spends a lot of time playing ice hockey and serving as a summer camp leader.

Since arriving in Holyoke, Ahro and the Lutzes have traveled to Steamboat Springs, and they are really excited to vacation in Jamaica over Christmas break.

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