



# STAYING CONNECTED

Social media helps exchange students stay connected to home and at BHS

Four girls walked through the Buffalo High School doors on September 5. They came from different countries, but all shared the same anticipation as they wondered if this school would meet their expectations.

For **Vera Tiger '18**, from Sweden, the school met her expectations.

"It was exactly like the American movies I've been watching," Tiger said.

One thing that comforted their nerves as they started school was social media and the relationships it created.

"You sit next to somebody new one time in class and they're like 'do you have Snapchat?' So you connect with them too," **Anna Gustavsen '18** said. "Maybe that's the first and the last time you speak with them, but you've got them on Snapchat and you can connect with them if you need to."

Although Snapchat is a commonly used social media app for teens in the US, it was not the case in Europe, where WhatsApp, a free texting app, dominates messaging.

"Snapchat is a big thing here. People are constantly sending each other selfies. That's not the thing in the Netherlands," **Renske Schikhof '18** said. "We Snapchat, but we don't send each other selfies. We send streaks, something that you're doing, or something funny. Here people constantly snap and people get mad

when you box them."

The foreign exchange students weren't familiar with terms used frequently such as, 'Boxing', meaning to ignore someone on Snapchat.

"People here are like, 'Why are you boxing me?' and I'm like, 'What does that mean? What did I do wrong?'" Schikhof said.

They never used Snapchat as often back home, but they took advantage of Buffalo High School's Snapchat addiction.

"Social media is here to stay and we can't do anything about it, so let's just enjoy the good sides," Schikhof said.

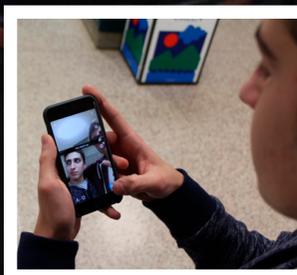
Their optimistic attitudes led them to meet many people.

"If I can't remember someone's name, then I'm always asking for their Snapchats," Tiger said. "Then I'll learn it because I see their face all the time and connect it to their name."

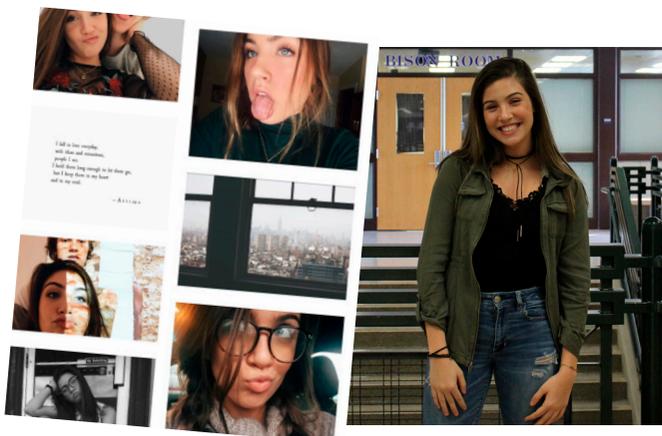
According to the exchange students, social media helped them in the US, but also made it difficult. Seeing everything their friends are doing on social media made them miss home. The students were aware that even though they were missing their friends in Europe now, they will soon be missing their friends they have made here.

"I think it's good that when we go back we'll be able to keep in touch with people here," **Silvia Gomez Pontes '18** said.

-Erica O'Borsky



**Contrasted Focus** Auria Speltz '19 started using the app to edit photos, but now she also shares her work with others. She got a VSCO when she was a freshman, before the app became more common. "I like that I can publish whatever I want and no one else will see how many republishes it got," Speltz said. "It puts more focus on the picture rather than the number of likes and I admire that." Photo by Erica O'Borsky and Photo courtesy of Auria Speltz

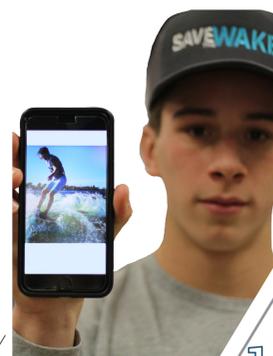


Does the amount of likes you receive impact if you keep a photo?

"No, I'm not worried about the amount of likes. If I don't get a lot on a photo I don't delete it because I don't care what people think. If it's a cool pic to me, then it's a cool pic. Simple as that."

**Nathan Tomann '19**  
Photo by Erica O'Borsky

## IMPACT



social media

149  
LIFE