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Friends break bread

Students gather around the table to share a meal before returning home

BY HÉLÈNE BIELAK
Staff Reporter

Carved turkey, sweet potatoes, green beans, potato bread and a pumpkin pie were some of the dishes patiently waiting to be eaten. Sophomores Sarah Naji, Nabila Wadud and Sarah Shroeder hosted a pre-celebratory Thanksgiving dinner with friends who they call their second family.

Last Saturday, the three roommates decided to celebrate Thanksgiving in advance at their off-campus apartment in an original way – a potluck dinner. They said each guest brought food to share.

"We couldn't afford to make a whole Thanksgiving dinner for 20 people," Naji said. "So we asked them to bring a traditional Thanksgiving dish. We just asked [people] what would they like to bring and [had them] bring it."

Despite the amount of traditional Thanksgiving food in the kitchen, the girls said they had a dish that would not normally grace the Thanksgiving table — brownies.

"We have brownies too," Naji said. "I think I just can't go without brownies."

Naji said she had this idea since last year when she did a potluck Thanksgiving dinner with her "Bigs" and her service fraternity. Because it was a success she said she decided to do it again, this time before returning home for Thanksgiving Break.

Naji and Wadud said they wanted to gather their second family together before going back to their place for Thanksgiving Break.

"When we say family, we mean the people we met last year," Wadud said. "We're just all getting along very well together. The main reason for this dinner was really to get everyone together and have a nice meal."

To keep track of their 2009 Thanksgiving dinner, the hosts made a guest book.

"I just wanted to bring everything the guests are thankful for, for this year," Wadud said. "Maybe we will look at it in our senior year and see what people wrote."

Although students, like Naji and Wadud will celebrate Thanksgiving twice this year, others will not have the chance to do so, such as the Truman international students who cannot go back home.

Senior Slavina Stoyanova will not be returning home because she does not want to fly across the Atlantic Ocean for just one week. Instead, she is planning to stay in Kirksville for her first Thanksgiving.

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Sophomores Beth Deeken and Bryce Osman dig in to the food friends brought to a pre-celebratory Thanksgiving dinner. The friends made many dishes to bring to dinner, including brownies. Blaise Hart-Schmidt/Index

Students share holiday stories

BY JENNIFER LEWIS
Staff Reporter

During Thanksgiving last year, senior Jack Chenault's girlfriend dropped by to share a Thanksgiving meal with Chenault and his family, bringing her skittish little dog with her. The food was excellent, the conversation was relaxed and friendly, and all was as it should have been until Chenault dropped a plate. The sudden noise terrified the already anxious dog and resulted in the dog going to the bathroom on Chenault's mother's new carpet.

This is only one example of how a pleasant Thanksgiving can go horribly wrong. Senior Megan Coburn has spent half a dozen Thanksgivings in countries that have never heard of Thanksgiving. When Coburn was 16 and living in Ecuador, she wanted nothing more than American food.

"I was really excited and I was going to hunt down at least some things to make, but in the

market it was really hard to find any of the ingredients I was used to," Coburn said. "Then, come Thanksgiving, I was totally and completely ill and couldn't eat anything all day."

Coburn said that by the afternoon, she decided she felt well enough to eat pancakes and made a double batch of plain, chocolate chip, blueberry, and banana pancakes. When her host mom found her eating them, however, she did not understand what they were.

"My host mom came in and asked, 'What are you eating?'" Coburn said. "I described them as tortillas, and my host mom said, 'That's not food! You can't eat that! You have to have something else!' And I was just like, 'It's Thanksgiving, and I want American food.'"

On another occasion, Coburn discovered that some traditional Thanksgiving foods are not easily accepted in other countries. Coburn spent one Thanksgiving in England and said her host mom wanted to make her feel at home by making Thanksgiving dinner for her.

"She spent like two days

researching the best way to cook a turkey," Coburn said. "She took care of that part and then I did everything else."

Coburn received a few cans of pumpkin from another American exchange student and decided to make a pumpkin pie for dessert.

"I brought it to the table and her husband and son and a friend of mine who was British had come over and they were just like, 'What is that?'" Coburn said. "I told them it was pumpkin pie and they were like, 'You can make a pie out of pumpkin?' And they wouldn't eat it. Finally my host mom got her husband to try this really thin slice and he was completely scared. He was this 65-year-old man and he was scared to eat a pumpkin pie."

Mark Campbell, an agriculture science professor, attempted to raise his own turkeys one year. Campbell said raising turkeys is hard and only one survived the season.

"I think we named him and he got really big and he used to hang out under the apple trees in our yard and eat apples," Campbell said. "He was kind of friendly. I mean, you couldn't pet him or anything, but he wouldn't run away."

As Thanksgiving approached and brought colder weather with it, Campbell and his wife decided to eat the turkey for Thanksgiving rather than worry about it surviving the winter.

"My wife is not a big meat eater, but she doesn't like keeping animals over the winter any more than she has to," Campbell said. "So she was like, 'OK, circle of life, this thing has had a nice life. Let's eat it for Thanksgiving so we don't have to worry about taking care of it during the wintertime.'"

Some friends of the Campbells invited them over for Thanksgiving dinner, and they arrived bearing the cooked turkey on a platter. Campbell said they had not anticipated the reaction this gift would cause.

"The woman, who is one of the kindest people you'll ever meet and we like her a lot, was very upset about the idea of taking an animal that was like a pet and eating it for Thanksgiving," Campbell said. "It was a bit of a sore point between us for a little while. We're still good friends with her, but it was an awkward moment."



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