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International student from Hong Kong Gregory Leung and RN at Southwest Medical Center TakYee Leung, his sister, pose for a Christmas photo recently. From LA, to Vegas, Denver and Chicago, siblings Greg and TakYee have a passion for travelling.

By GISEELLE ARREDONDO

• Leader & Times

Gregory Leung, a 20 year-old international student from Hong Kong, came to America seeking something new. It also helped that his sister had established herself in Southwest Kansas.

When asked how he came to America, he was quick with a quip.

“I flew. Actually, I swam here,” Leung joked.

Leung started out as an exchange student during his senior year of high school in Chicago. He had posted his profile online and then one of the host families from the States picked him. Since they were from Chicago, Leung ended up in the Windy City.

And he had an idea of how to transition because his sister, Takyee Leung, did the same thing a number of years before him.

“She got picked at Cimarron, Kansas. Her host family is from there,” Leung said.



Leung said that after high school, he had to decide between going to college in Illinois or Kansas because his sister was there. TakYee first went to Dodge City Community College, and she then transferred to Seward County Community College because she was accepted for the nursing program there. Leung said his sister suggested he attend Seward.

“She asked me to come over, and I came over,” he said.

Greg also stated that studying at Seward was a lot cheaper in comparison to Illinois, and that he originally planned to attend UIC but that he thought it was kind of expensive.

“It’s maybe \$800 per credit per hour. Right here it’s like \$100, so it’s eight times more expensive there,” Greg said.

Greg decided on Kansas even though he had no idea what Kansas looked like.

He noted that when he got to Kansas, “I got scared,” Greg said and smiled. He added the experience was similar to his arrival in Amarillo. When his sister drove him into Liberal, she pointed to National Beef and told him it was the college.

“I said, ‘there’s a cow,’ and she told me the cow was the mascot. ‘Oh my gosh,’ I told her,” Greg explained.

Even though his sister managed to trick him, Greg added that he found Seward pretty nice. He has now moved on after graduating from Seward County to the University of Kansas to further his education, but he was back in Liberal over the holidays to visit family and friends. TakYee is now an RN at Southwest Medical Center.

Regarding his education, Greg was majoring in pre-pharmacy originally, but he then changed to chemical engineering, and presently, he is double majoring in chemistry and economics.

“So indecisive,” he said and laughed, “But I think now I know what to do. I think I want to be maybe a community college teacher.”

He added he likes both subjects of chemistry and economics and that he plans to master in economics later so that he can qualify to teach at the college level.

Greg agreed that there could be a chance that he ends up in Seward once more.

“Possibly, if they hire me,” he said and smiled.

“I like Seward. I really do for some reason. It’s weird because I hated it when I first came here, and now I like Kansas better than Chicago,” Greg said.

He continued by adding that it took him some time to adjust to KU. Going from 1,500 students to about 30,000, “I kind of got scared. The classes have hundreds of people, and the professors don’t care about you. You have to be self-motivated. If you get behind, you have to find your way to catch up... it’s kind of fun. I learned a lot,” he said.

He explained that school is stressful back at home.

“Only the best of the best can go to college. It’s not like here if you try, you can go to college here. But there, you have to try really hard and be the best to get to college. If you’re dumb, you have to work. I like it here,” Greg said.

Greg spent Thanksgiving with his sister and her host family in Cimarron and celebrated there. And even though Thanksgiving isn’t a holiday back at home, Greg said that he likes it and that it’s nice to appreciate and be thankful.

“There’s no way that it will become a national holiday in my country, but it could be like a family thing. Maybe like a Thanksgiving weekend with the family, and then go out and eat turkeys. It would be interesting. I like turkey, so maybe Thanksgiving every day,” Greg joked.

He spent Christmas in Liberal with his sister and will be here for New Year’s Eve. In Hong Kong, he said he goes downtown and counts down with hundreds, thousands of people to celebrate the New Year.

“All the buildings are decorated,” he said. “There are fireworks. January 1st. It’s fun.”

This year, Greg said, he will probably hang out with some friends and maybe watch a movie, or go to Dallas.

“I love travelling. I just came back from Denver. I’m going to Ohio for Spring Break. I went to Vegas and L.A. the past summer,” he said.

Besides travelling and being a good student, Greg is a talented pianist, loves noodles and sushi, and he volunteers. Greg will volunteer in Ohio through The Alternative Break, which offers different volunteering programs through Hays, K-State and KU, and it’ aims to help homeless people.

Greg said that classes will meet once a week and do research and he added volunteer work will be practiced during the break. Greg also spends time with Luis, his Little, through Big Brothers Big Sisters.

“We watch movies, just hang out a lot, go to Braums, Peachwave,” Greg said.

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