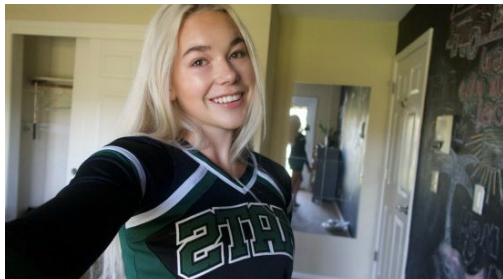


Published September 28th, 2022

Czech teen gymnast loving time in Orinda

By Sora O'Doherty



Sofie Flaskova, a 16-year-old visiting student from the Czech Republic, is thoroughly enjoying her time in California. "I'm not homesick," she proclaimed in an interview with the Lamorinda Weekly, saying that she got used to her new situation within a few days. She communicates with her family at home in Tabor via Facetime.

Flaskova is attending classes at Miramonte High School, under the sponsorship of the Orinda-Tabor Sister City Foundation. Unusually, the son of her host family is attending Campolindo High School, which leads to some good-natured competition. Her host mom is an attorney and her host dad, retired from banking, plays golf almost every day.

Sofie Flaskova Photo provided

Czech and excellent English skills, applied to be the 21st student to come to Miramonte High School from Orinda's sister city, Tabor. She has been surprised and delighted by what she has experienced. Flaskova loves the lunchtime activities offered to the students, such as flower arranging, or listening to a piano concert. "The teachers are very nice to you," she proclaimed, "very friendly." She said that, despite her extremely busy schedule, she isn't feeling stressed.

Curious about American culture, Flaskova, who is studying German and Italian in addition to her native

At home, Flaskova lives about 5 miles outside of Tabor with her mother, who sells home water filters. Her dad lives about 4 miles away and he has a 3-year-old son. He is the manager of a solar panel company. Flaskova alternates between her mom and dad's home every fortnight. She loves Christmas, when the whole family comes together on Christmas day for presents and Christmas dinner.

Flaskova clearly enjoys cooking and baking, and has made some traditional dishes for her host family, including koprova omacka, which is a dill sauce served with dumplings and hard-boiled eggs. She is looking forward to cooking with some of the tomatoes growing in her host-family's garden. And she is very excited about pumpkin spice everything this fall. At home, she says, Czech people plant a lot of vegetables. She loves kale and eats a lot of cabbage, for example in the Czech national dish of pork, dumplings, and cabbage. She enjoys baking with her grandmother.

Back in the Czech Republic Flaskova plays tennis, but has been unable to fit it into her schedule here. Instead, she joined the cheerleading squad at Miramonte, performing at all of the games. She described how she realized how much she enjoys working with younger students while explaining that the Miramonte cheerleaders undertook training of a group of elementary school girls who performed with them at a Friday-night game. Flaskova doesn't date, but is enjoying her friendships in Orinda. She is very fond of the friends she has made on the cheer team. In addition to cheerleading, Flaskova enjoys horseback riding and yoga, which she didn't expect to like but found that she does.

"When I found out that they chose me," she says, she bought a camera, and she is documenting her journey on her own YouTube channel.

Flaskova will be here until January 2023. She had to decide where she wanted to spend Christmas. She is extremely fond of Christmas at home, with all of her family getting together and enjoying traditional dishes, but in the end she opted for a California Christmas.

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