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A Teen's Independence

By Youngjoo Ahn



A 2014 Miramonte graduate, Youngjoo Ahn is the host of Express Yourself!(tm) Teen Radio, and an officer in Club Be the Star You Are!(r). She traveled to Korea independently this summer.

adulthood, independence is also about the little things. "I'm excited to hang out with friends whenever I want," graduated senior Roland Zhu said. "The possibilities to snack at night are also exciting." Senior Julia Meckes commented, "Receiving my driver's license has given me a great sense of freedom because now my activities are on my own terms. It is so much easier to do things by myself." Graduated senior Michelle Wu discovered her independence in "braving an East Coast winter and being able to freely explore the city on my own terms."

Senior Sarah Rockwood has a different perspective about independence. "You reach a point where no one views you as a child anymore, but rather a young adult, mature enough to make your own decisions. Freedom comes at the price of more responsibility." Rockwood elaborated. "By having a job, I'm financially independent and am able to go out more than my younger sister because my parents trust me more. However, I have to make more sacrifices to maintain this liberty and I have to be accountable for everything I do."

When we are young, all we want to be is "older" so we can be on our own and make our own decisions. Now that I have arrived, independence is both scary and exhilarating.

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Turning 18 is a monumental landmark in the life of a teen. Adulthood marks the ability to vote as well as a newfound independence outside of school and a parent's supervision. This independence comes in many forms, whether it is the joy of ordering anything from the Internet without parental consent, the annoyance of having to do your own laundry, or the challenges of traveling alone.

I recently visited Boston for a college trip and realized the true weight of independence. It was liberating to travel alone for the first time, however, I soon was overwhelmed with the difficulties. On my outbound leg, my connecting flight was significantly delayed and I had to completely alter my trip plans, taking a train from Newark, N.J., to Springfield, Mass. My first night in Boston was spent without any of my luggage. My return flight left at 4 a.m. and without my parent's guidance, I had to finagle the flight delays and the unscheduled stops in Texas on my own. Although I used my problem solving skills to stay as calm as possible, to say that I was a bit stressed is an understatement. While independence looks glamorous and adventurous in teen movies, in real life, it presents unexpected and frightening responsibilities for the uninitiated.

While traveling alone marks a step towards

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