

Valley students 'immersed' in foreign culture

By MEGHAN HALL
JVHS Reporter

Under the supervision of first-year teacher, Heather Thompson, the Juniata Valley Spanish students traveled to Juniata College Oct. 25 to participate in Spanish Immersion Day, an annual event held at Juniata College. It is a day when the college students teach the high school students about different aspects of the Spanish culture. Each year, the area high schools are invited to participate. This year, Juniata Valley was represented by its third-year Spanish students.

Spanish Immersion began with morning presentations by Juniata College students. The first presentation was about the Sevillana dance. The Sevillana is a specific type of Flamenco dance. It is performed many times during festivals and parties. The Sevillana is danced by couples of all ages and is a very easy dance to learn. Many learn the Sevillana as a beginning step in learning the Flamenco.

The Day of the Dead was the topic of the second presentation. The Day of the Dead is a Spanish tradition much like Halloween celebrations in America. People dress up in costumes and parade around. Families go into the cemeteries and decorate the tombstones of their loved ones. They also make food and prepare offerings for the spirits. It is a holiday that is celebrated in many Spanish-speaking countries.

At the conclusion of the presentations, the students adjourned to make lunch. This

lunch did not consist of the average cafeteria food. Students actually made their own meals. Students were divided into groups, and each group was responsible for making one course of the meal. Caribbean salad, guacamole, omelets, taquitos and empanadas were just a few of the items making up the Spanish menu. Taquitos are tortillas stuffed with cheese, onions, garlic and chicken or beef. They are fired in a skillet and then topped with lettuce, radishes, jalapenos and avocado slices. Empanadas are dough balls stuffed with beef, onion, green peppers and garlic. The empanadas are baked to make them crispy.

After lunch, students were given a tour of Juniata College. They were shown where the majority of language courses are taken. Students were also shown the extensive library that Juniata offers its students. Of course, the intent was also to lure prospective students to attend the local college.

Carrie Lawler, a third year Spanish student, attended Immersion Day with enthusiasm. "The entire day was a blast. It was interesting to see other cultural dances. It looked hard to do. If I had the chance, I would participate in another Spanish Immersion Day."

JVHS students felt attending Spanish Immersion Day provided them with the opportunity to truly experience Spanish culture. They enjoyed learning about the Sevillana dance and understanding the celebration of the Day of the Dead.

The Daily News [Huntingdon, PA] 2 Nov. 2007. p. 11