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## International families share culture, fashion

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The annual Parade of Nations highlights the styles and customs of international military students and their families. The Organization of International Spouses and Sponsors produced the event Oct. 3 at the Leavenworth High School Performing Arts Center.

Those in attendance witnessed a colorful display of native dress representing the participating students' respective countries. Countries represented included Moldova, Romania, Peru, Panama, Nepal, Lebanon, Bangladesh, Hungary and Colombia.

"The Organization of International Spouses and Sponsors has been hosting this event for over 10 years," said Marianne Tennant, OISS president. "The annual parade strives to promote awareness of the many cultures represented by the international students attending (the Command and General Staff College) and living in our community. This is a great opportunity for the public to see and meet people from around the world."

Two Leavenworth High School clubs now partner with OISS. The InterAct club, which is comprised of international students, and DECA, which is for high school students interested in marketing, entrepreneurship, finance, hospitality and management serve as event co-hosts.

"We also partner with our sponsor, the Rotary Club of Leavenworth. InterAct club participates in a lot of service projects for the community at large, as well as those for the international student community," said Jane Song, president of InterAct club. "Parade of Nations is one of those fun service projects. It is really interesting because everyone is dressed in the traditional clothing of his or her home countries. They come with their families and you can interact with them, talk with them and ask questions. It is cool to see how many different countries are represented right here in our community."

From Colombia, Maj. Juan Robayo Nieto and his family were dressed in the traditional dress of the northeast coast of Colombia. His wife, Paola Rincon, wore a colorful skirt decorated with ribbons. She is a cosmetologist and her interests include learning the English language, learning about the culture of the United States, as well as those of all the other current international student countries. Robayo Nieto and his son, Daniel, wore ponchos with red scarves and hats representative of national pride. The family has been at Fort Leavenworth for four months, but Robayo has attended military schools at various Army posts in the United States.

"This is our first time living at historic Fort Leavenworth, Kansas," he said. "We sincerely love the peaceful, friendly environment and the outlying rural surroundings."

Lt. Col. Luis Carpio Centelles, his wife, Ada, and their children, Luis, 17, and Maria, 13, represented their home country of Peru. Carpio Centelles described the traditional dress that each member of his family wore. In the Peruvian Andes, each village has a unique style of clothing. Indigenous women in the Andes dress in layers of bright, colorful traditional clothing, including capes, shawls, embroidered skirts and vibrantly colored hats.

Carpio Centelles said his family enjoys soccer, visiting various points of interest in the Kansas City area and meeting new friends.

"We are here until June of next year and are enjoying our being stationed here," Carpio Centelles said. "Participating in this event is exciting as well."

OISS is a private volunteer organization that provides opportunities for the spouses of international military students to meet in a social environment. In addition to the annual Parade of Nations, OISS sponsors monthly coffees, holiday parties and various other events throughout the academic year.



PHOTO/ PRUDENCE SIEBERT, FORT LEAVENWORTH LAMP

Lt. Col. Luis Ricardo Carpio Centellas of Peru holds his hat high as his family, 17-year-old Luis, 13-year-old Maria and wife Ada, assemble on stage for photographs after the Parade of Nations, a fashion show featuring international Command and General Staff College students and their families in native dress, Oct. 3 at the Leavenworth High School Performing Arts Center. Photo by Prudence Siebert/Fort Leavenworth Lamp