

My Cultural Exchange Leadership Journey

By Ruth Sikaonga, Grade 12



Hathaway Brown Visits KF

I was honoured to play a leading role in the Eureka Camp cultural exchange that involved 21 high school students and teachers from Hathaway Brown School in Cleveland, Ohio, who came to visit us at KF. As one of the primary coordinators, I took on the responsibility of making sure our international guests experienced authentic Zambian culture, while also fostering meaningful connections between our local students and the visitors.

I taught Zambian cooking techniques, introducing our guests to traditional dishes and explaining the cultural significance behind different foods. I demonstrated how to prepare nshima, relish, and other local favorites, detailing the ingredients, cooking methods, and the communal spirit of Zambian meals.

My cooking sessions quickly became popular. Participants not only learned practical skills but also engaged in lively conversations about food security, agricultural practices, and the vital role of traditional cuisine in preserving our cultural identity.

I also helped guide team activities, organizing ice-breakers, collaborative projects, and cultural learning sessions that were designed to build genuine connections among all participants. I specifically designed activities that encouraged both Zambian students and our international guests to step outside their comfort zones and learn from each other.

One evening, I organized a lively karaoke night which turned out to be one of the most memorable events of the entire exchange. We started with just four people, but it soon blossomed into a lively gathering, with nearly everyone joining in the singing. The music, laughter, and emotions filled the night, creating a beautiful moment of connection and happiness that I will never forget. This evening truly broke down cultural barriers and forged lasting friendships.

At the end of the week, my friend Faith and I gave an emotional speech expressing our gratitude and joy for the incredible experience, reflecting the shared feelings of connection that everyone felt. The joy of these shared experiences was palpable, creating a warm and friendly atmosphere that made this event so special.

One of the challenges we faced during the exchange was the limited availability of cooking equipment, particularly a shortage of chopping boards. This could have slowed us down, but I was able to overcome this by teaching my group how to cut vegetables without a chopping board — a skill that impressed my friends from Hathaway Brown. This experience taught me the importance of adaptability and resourcefulness in solving problems.

I also learned valuable lessons about teamwork and communication, especially during group activities where cooperation was key to success. Beyond practical skills, the cultural exchange deepened my understanding of different backgrounds and showed me how much we share despite our differences.

This program strengthened my confidence in expressing myself and highlighted the power of empathy and connection across cultures, lessons I will carry with me for life. The personal growth and life lessons I gained from this experience are invaluable, inspiring me to continue seeking out opportunities for cultural exchange and personal development.

