Students connected to France share their reactions to the Paris terrorist attacks

CONTINUED FROM ‘PARIS’ ON PAGE 1

“...”

Kelsey Thomas
editor-in-chief

The November terror attacks in Paris hit home for two Central students, Tinca Joyner and Louise Requin, a French student spending the year in Omaha, sharing their experiences with the Paris terror attacks.

Tinca Joyner, a Central student studying abroad in France, and Louise Requin, a French student spending the year in Omaha, share their experiences with the Paris terror attacks.

Kelsey Thomas

The Paris attacks, according to Requin, caused more fear in the hearts of the French public.

“In Charlie Hebdo, it was really an idea that was attacked... But with [the Paris attacks] it was just this massacre of innocent people that were just there, simply in the street eating, simply at a concert. And that was really terrible, to [think], ‘That could have been me,’” Requin said.

In France, the Paris attacks occurred around 10 or 11 p.m. local time. The Friday consisted of normal activities for Joyner, including going to school and meeting with her host father for lunch. Thus, it was not until late at night that she was affected.

“When I learned of the attacks I was watching a movie in the family room, it was probably 11 p.m. My host father came in and told me that there had been a terrorist in Paris and there had been three separate shootings and bomb that had gone off at the stadium, and that he was going turn on the news. We just sat on the couch in silence watching the news coverage...”

Joyner resides with Requin’s family, meaning that her family and friends, but she is with them at heart, though land and sea may separate them.

“I see messages [from] people telling me ‘It’s awful’ and ‘I am French. And I am Muslim. I don’t want anyone to think I am a terrorist because of my religion that has nothing to do with this,’ she said.

The attacks on Charlie Hebdo, though, were driven by much different motivations than the Paris attacks. According to Requin, caused more fear in the hearts of the French citizens here,” Joyner said.

Though Requin agrees that French citizens did not feel directly threatened, she did recognize tension between the country and ISIS. The Charlie Hebdo attacks this past January, which were led by a group of radicals claiming Islam as their justification, sparked a fear of radical religious groups in France. Requin said that the attacks caused French citizens to feel the pressure of ISIS in the region, a feeling that contributed to anti-Muslim sentiments among some people.

“Muslim people did [the Charlie Hebdo attacks]... but terrorism has no religion,” she said.

In the hours following the Charlie Hebdo attacks, Requin remembers seeing an interview featuring a French-born Muslim woman. “I never watch television, but I did this night. It was a Muslim woman, and she was saying, ‘Please, French people, I am French before I am any kind of religion. I am French. And I am Muslim. I don’t want anyone to think I am a terrorist because of my religion that has nothing to do with this,’ she said.

Meanwhile, Requin tried to cope with the loss in a community that reacted much differently to the attacks.

“I just felt isolated. It’s the type of situation where you just want to be with your people. I wanted to be there. I just wanted to be with my mom to make sure she was okay,” she said.

She appreciated the comfort that most people tried to give her, but she still felt misunderstood being in the U.S. She spoke with several other French exchange students staying in the States in order to share their emotions and grief.

“I felt really alone. I felt so alone,” Requin said.

As the people of France try to heal and the world searches for a solution to end terrorism, Joyner and Requin try to find their proper place in the difficult situation. Joyner is an American in a foreign land, aiming to help her host family and new friends cope with their loss. Requin is isolated from her home, family and friends, but she is with them at heart, though land and sea may separate them.