

We Are Water West Central MN
Minnesota Humanities Center

Gabriel:

My name is Gabriel Elias. I'm from the Federated States of Micronesia that resides here in Milan, Minnesota.

So my brother and uncle were the ones who came here first in Minnesota. And they sent me some pictures of them interacting with the snow and I thought it was pretty cool. So I came here in October 2002. They told me that it's winter time, anytime it could be snow. So every morning I got to get up and peek out the window, see if there's snow on the ground. That's how I excited I was.

Finally one early morning, the kids had to wake me up and told me that there's been snow, and I walk out and yes the snowflakes was falling. And I started to grab some of them off of the ground, in the grass and I was excited, but at the same time, I said, "well, wait a minute. It's ice. It's actually ice!" So from there, the first one was pretty cool, I got to have a lot of fun with the kids, with my uncle's kids. Second one, it's okay. And third one, probably I had enough and every winter I'm worried from now on. The one old man told me, "you just got to get out and do winter activities. And you won't feel like it's a long winter."

So I got out with my brothers and some friends and got out, doing ice fishing. I thought that was the coolest thing I'd ever done in the wintertime, fishing from a house or something. We rented an ice castle, or what they call those? Ice castles. When we catch it then we just throw it outside and it'd get froze up.

One scary part was we brought all the fish home and we would fill one cooler up, fill up with hot water, we'd throw all the fish in there thinking the fish were all dead, but they started moving and making noise. I had a cousin, 30 something years old. She had to run out of the kitchen because she thought there's a ghost or something, when the fish started running in the cooler. Everybody thought they were dead, because they were frozen, but when we brought them in, put them in a cooler, fill up with water and they become alive again.