

## *Florine Dieu, the Club's In-Coming 2012-13 Rotary Youth Exchange Student*

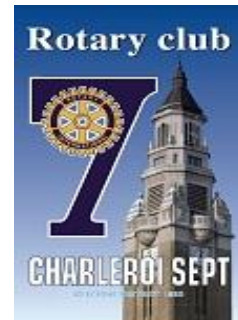


Florine Dieu arrived from Belgium in August just in time to enjoy an ending to a beautiful Okanagan summer and in time to get to know her host family and to acquaint herself with several youth in our community prior to the commencement of the new school year.

Florine's home is situated in Villers-Perwin, Belgium, a small village of 2000 people about a half hour from Brussels, a place where she says "We all know each other well, which is really nice."

Florine is sponsored by the Rotary Club of Charleroi 7 located in District 1620. According to Florine, the club only meets once per month for a dinner meeting that usually lasts three hours. She adds that the

club operates somewhat differently from our District clubs and even with clubs within Europe. The club has a membership of 23 Rotarians and was chartered on October 15, 1988.



### **Florine's Family.....**

Florine is part of a big family and like her, many of her siblings have participated in exchange programs. She has shared that travelling is like a disease in her family. Her parents are both teachers. Her mother teaches English and Dutch, while her father teaches music.

### **High School in Belgium as Compared to Her Experience in Kelowna.....**

Florine graduated from high school a year ago and then traveled throughout Belgium following graduation. Some of the courses she enrolled in were similar to those taken by students in Canada, except there is much more emphasis on languages (French, English, German, Latin, to name a few) and the level of difficulty is much higher. In fact, Florine notes that the level is incomparable, as students in Belgium don't take such classes as mechanics, theatre, cooking and so forth. The focus is on 8-9 academic courses until late into the afternoon!

While enrolled in a grade 12 program in Kelowna, Florine is taking physical education, MMA, Spanish, Orchestra, English and an outdoor education class. Of course, being enrolled in the grade 12 program will give her the opportunity to graduate for a second time. Florine states that “it’s going to be really cool taking classes in Kelowna as we don’t have these types of classes in Europe; and I’m going to the prom and I’m so excited.”

Florine states that she did not have a job while attending school as working and attending high school is unheard of in Belgium. Finishing classes at 4:10 or 5:10 pm, and then working on homework for three to four hours, leaves little time for work and for anything else for that matter. On the other hand, she did enjoy working with children, particularly as a leader with Scouts on the weekends.

### **Interests and Hobbies.....**

Florine enjoys travelling, learning new languages, meeting people and making new friends, socializing, playing sports, and working with children. She also appreciates the opportunities to care for others and to resolve problems.

While in Kelowna, Florine has had the opportunity to go to the aquatic centre, to the cinema, to hang out at the mall, to go to football games, to participate in sport, and to spend as much time as possible with her new friends at school, afterschool and on weekends. She is looking forward to learning to ski and perhaps even snowboard, as these would be new experiences for her; and of course, she would like to travel and learn more about British Columbia and Canada.

### **Florine’s Home Away from Home.....**

While Florine is still unaware of who her second and third host families will be in Kelowna, she does know that she has the best host family possible at the present time.

She shared that when she left Belgium, she was quite anxious at arriving in Kelowna and meeting her first host family. But these anxieties were gone when she met her first host family, Dan and Wendy Hilbrecht and their son. “I just found another family, another mom, and well, the brother I never had,” stated Florine. She added that “people cannot understand what I mean without having lived this fabulous experience.”

### **Florine’s Thoughts on Kelowna, British Columbia and Canada to Date.....**

*Well, I really don't want to go back in my home country because I have an amazing host family and the craziest friends ever. I love Canada because everything is so simple and amazing and people are so nice! You know, the only problem I had here was that I wanted to kiss everyone and this of course is weird for Canadians. But, I am now getting used to hugs! The language is quite easy to understand and usually people love my French accent. A lot of people told me that I have a huge accent, and because of this I'm trying as hard as possible to lose it. The food is much the same as in Belgium, except that it seems that Canadians add sugar to everything and all the stuff is bigger. The only two things that I really hate here are bacon and pumpkin pie. Oh my goodness, this is so disgusting for me! I hope that I can come back next year to see all my new friends and my host families. The only word that could properly describe my adventure thus far is 'happiness'.*