

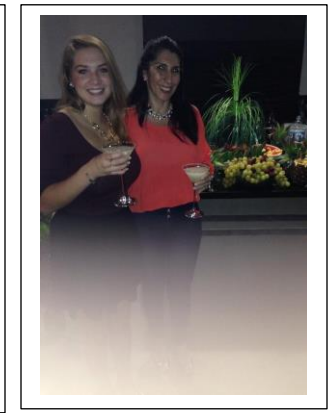
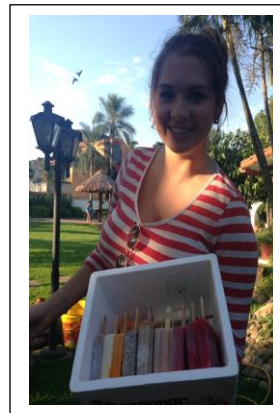
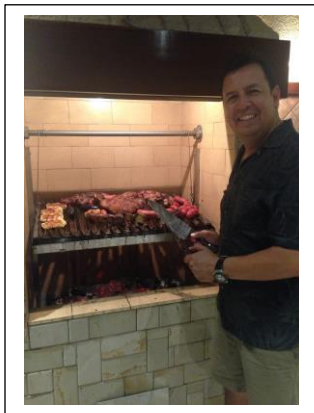
Jennica Sedmak, 2014-15 Out-Bound Rotary Youth Exchange Student



Jennica Sedmak, the daughter of Jerry and Anke Sedmak, and a 2014 grade twelve graduate from Rutland Secondary School, arrived in her host city of Santa Cruz de la Sierra in Bolivia on September 13th to begin a year-long exciting experience as a Rotary Youth Exchange student.

She was met at the airport by her first host family, Mirko Sempertegui and Gabriela Bloomfield and their daughter Pamela. Mirko is a cargo pilot flying across the American continents. Gabriela works as a rental agent, renting out apartments in the city. Pamela, a 22 year old university student is studying computer graphic engineering. Jennica's host brother is currently on a Rotary Youth Exchange in Penticton, BC. Jennica also has a half-sister (Xiomara) who is pregnant and due with her third child later in October and a half-brother

(Christian) who is a farm labourer. Upon her arrival at her new home, Jennica was excited to find that she also had a three month old puppy named Molly and a cat named Pelusa.



The Rotary Club of Grigota

Jennica's host club is the Rotary Club of Grigota, one of seven Rotary clubs organized in Zone 7 (Santa Cruz), what is referred to as Areas in District 5060, and one of forty-one clubs located in District 4690. District 4690 is made up of ten additional zones. The club, under the leadership of 2014-15 club president Herman Urisote, consists of 30 members.

The Rotary Club of Grigota is well known for its support of the Rotary Youth Exchange program and the Group Study Exchange program before it was terminated. At the current time, the club is hosting five exchange students, three girls from France,



one girl from Belgium and of course, Jennica. The club is also very much involved in humanitarian work through projects and activities.



The Club celebrated its silver anniversary in December of 2013.

The Country of Bolivia

Bolivia, officially known as the Plurinational State of Bolivia, is a landlocked country located in western-central South America. It is bordered by Brazil to the north and east, Paraguay and Argentina to the south, Chile to the southwest, and Peru to the west.

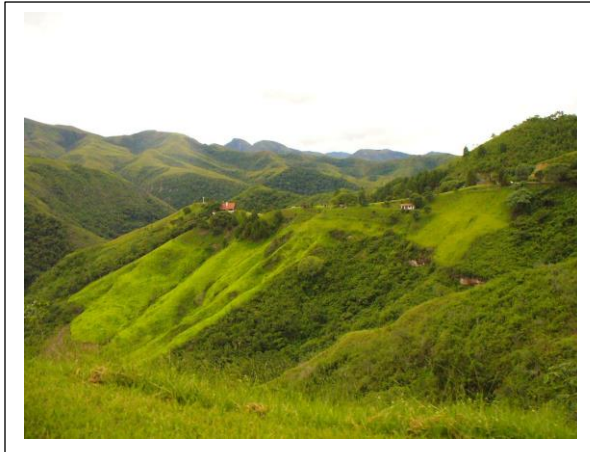
On 6 August, 1825, Bolivia was established as a republic. Today, modern Bolivia is a democratic republic that is divided into nine departments. Its geography varies from the peaks of the Andes in the West, to the Eastern Lowlands, situated within the Amazon Basin. It is recognized as a developing country, with a poverty level of 53 percent.



The Bolivian population, estimated at ten million, is multiethnic, including Amerindians, Mestizos, Europeans, Asians and Africans. The main language spoken is Spanish although the Guarani, Aymara and Quechua languages are also common, and all four, as well as 34 other indigenous languages, are official.

The City of Santa Cruz de la Sierra

Santa Cruz de la Sierra, translated in English as the Holy Cross of the Mountain–Range, and commonly known as Santa Cruz, is the capital of the Santa Cruz department in eastern Bolivia. It is situated on the Pirai River and located in the eastern part of Bolivia at 416 m above sea level. It is part of the province of Andrés Ibáñez. The city of Santa Cruz is located not far from the eastern-most extent of the Andes Mountains which are visible from some parts of the city.



Santa Cruz and its metropolitan area are home to over 70% of the population of the department with a population of 2.4 million (est.). It is one of the fastest growing cities in the world. Today Santa Cruz is modern and prosperous and Bolivia's financial center.



The city was first founded in 1561 by Spanish explorer Ñuflo de Chavez about 200 km (124 mi) east of its current location, and was moved several times until it was finally established on the Pirai River in the late 16th century. For much of its history, Santa Cruz was mostly a small outpost town, and even after Bolivia gained its independence in 1825, there was little attention from the authorities or the population in general to settle the region. It was not until after World War II and profound agrarian and land reforms that the city began to grow at a very fast pace.

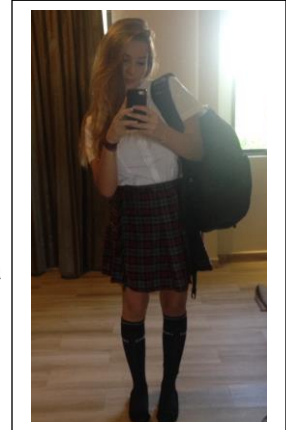
Attending School in Santa Cruz de la Sierra



A week after arriving in Bolivia, Jennica began attending Cambridge College, a kindergarten to grade 12 International School founded in 2001 where all classes are taught only in English by qualified teachers, many of them British and American. The College also provides a university program with its operations licensed by Cambridge ESOL, a department of the University of Cambridge in England.

Jennica is required to wear a uniform and describes the school as “quite strict.” She is presently enrolled in grade twelve, with graduation from the grade taking place in November, as the Bolivian school year extends from January to mid-November each year. She will be graduating with 25 of her fellow Bolivian students and taking part in the prom. Her classes include English, biology, chemistry, geography, chemistry, business, drama, physical education, mathematics, Spanish, morals and philosophy with classes commencing at 7:00 am and ending at 1:30 pm each day except for Thursday when she enjoys a gruelling day of classes from 7:00 am to 5:00 pm. She also takes Spanish classes from 5:30 to 7:00 pm on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday.

Jennica will commence attending university classes in January and hopes that she will be able to begin to study medicine.



Jennica’s Educational Experiences and Special Interests in her Home Town of Kelowna

Jennica attended secondary school at Rutland Senior Secondary, graduating with a grade 12 diploma in June of 2014. In her final year of secondary study, she took University level Biology AP and Art AP as her advanced courses. Her academic achievement resulted in the attainment of a \$1000 bursary as part of the “Passport to Education” program, along with a \$1000 scholarship from the Rotary Club of Kelowna Morningside. In grade ten, Jennica received the top English student award and a band award; and in grade ten and eleven, she was recognized as the top production graphics student.

Beyond her school life, Jennica participated in Kung Fu from seven years of age until grade nine, started piano lessons at age six and continued to participate in lessons until grade nine. In grade 11 she began taking guitar lessons and continued to do so until she left for Bolivia. Her music ability was also recognized with an award for her singing at the Kiwanis Music Festival while in grade ten.

Clearly, Jennica enjoys music (guitar, piano, and singing), as well as art (drawing, painting), and spending

time with her family and friends.

Looking Forward to a Year in Bolivia

When asked why she applied for the RYE program and what she was looking forward to, Jennica replied that she was “looking forward to becoming immersed in the culture and becoming fluent in the Spanish language, as well as building new friendships, families, and everlasting connections.” She added that she is “excited to learn new music and art styles to apply to my future career plans and projects; and I am anticipating that I will experience many adventures.”