



Surprise Guests

Indeed, it was a pleasant surprise when Pam Pettigrew introduced three guests at our November General Meeting.:

“Two exchange students from South America, accompanied by a young elementary school student.

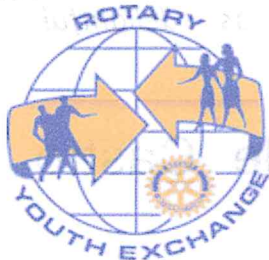


Why were they there?

They were anxious to get to know more about the life here in Canada, our health care and all about our hospitals, as well as about what we are doing as an auxiliary.



In a quiet pleasant manner they took part in our meeting and at the end they offered to write something about themselves for our News-letter. You will find it on pages 7 & 8, exactly quoted as it is written.



The story of my Exchange



Since I know Rotary I've wanted to make an exchange. My Dad is taking part since 10 years and he always told us that he would love us to make an exchange.

For the past three years I had been taking part of interact, which is a subdivision of Rotary. It is a Rotary for kids between 13 and 18 years old that want to help their communities. And it also has the option to make an exchange so with my sister we start taking part of it because of the exchange. But I really enjoy helping people.

My city always send more than one student. So this year we are three. Two in Germany and me. My story is a bit strange because with my Rotary you can't pick the place where to make your exchange, so you just fill some forms that take part of folders that are send all around the world to see which country accept you.

After that, every district will make a conference with all inbounds students. Where they'll tell you where you are going in the exchange.

So, in that conference they told me I will go to France. But I wasn't getting the city or the applications needed to go there, so I waited like 1,5 or 2 months and they didn't arrive. And then one day I woke up and my Dad told me that I will come to Canada.

I went to Buenos Aires (capital of Argentina) to do my Visa but they told me to do it online. So I got stucked in there because it was not working and then I had to go back to Buenos Aires and make my Visa face to face which was 10 minutes. But they couldn't say if I will get it because you don't go to the consulate. It is an office that make visas.

After that I was really short in times because I had to be here between 18 and 28 and my Visa wasn't arriving. It end arriving on 28 and I take the plane on 30 to start this year. .

Juan Martinez



Ambassadors in Training

Hello! I am Eloisa, I'm 17 years old and I'm a Rotary Exchange Student from Brazil. I come from a small town called Presidente Venceslau, Sao Paulo state, that has about 40.000 people.



When you move to a country, (specially from a small town), the moment you step on to the airplane everything is brand new. When you realize how much your cozy and comfortable little world had grown... you become a baby again. Phrases like: "I am lost, could you help me, please?" will be part of your life just like water is. There will be moments that you'll have to go with the flow and try to understand what's going on just by observing people (what we call "smile and wave" moments). But there will be times that you'll have to overcome shyness and ask, even if it is an obvious answer for the others around.



To be an exchange student was really simple; I just had to follow the steps to apply for the Rotary Youth Exchange Program (RYEP). However, the process to be an ambassador of my country was quite different: I had to do a 17 year course, full-time, and the main professors were my parents. An ambassador is a representative, who speaks for a country, therefore, our attitudes and everything we say will be always connected to the image of our home country. That's why we bear a huge responsibility: we don't want to build stereotypes.



The culture shock is inevitable, but how to react to it was a choice. I've been learning something new every single day, which keeps my teenage mind working twice as hard. *Adaption* is defined in the Cambridge Dictionary as: "the process in which a living thing changes slightly over time to be able to continue to exist in a particular environment, or a

change", which explains the life of an exchange student. Two choices are given to us every morning: adapt and enjoy or resist and complain. We can't be 100% adaptable and flexible, that's when the host family plays a key role: my host family received me with open arms, a warm welcome and involved me in their routine, making me feel part of the family, which helped me to get over my home sickness.



Rotary gives us an unique opportunity to travel abroad in a cultural exchange year, but it's up to us to get as much experience as we can. Serving and taking part in the community helps us to become tolerant, cosmopolitan and preparing us to be future leaders.



From the time I arrived in Canada, I have met wonderful people who have been with me every step of the way and who are committed to my success. I am grateful for my teachers and the staff at ENSS, who have been assisting me so I could become an active Blue Dragon. I'm thankful for the friends I have made (without them...no way I could fin my classes at school!), for my host families and Brighton Rotary who support my ideas and make me smile every day, as well as my church in Brazil that keeps me in their prayers. I'm grateful for my Brazilian parents who worked so hard to make my dream of going abroad come true, for the lovely ladies at the Trinity St. Andrew's Clothing Depot who have been blessing me with their inspiring life stories, and their Pastor KEN, who is also my Canadian Dad, who revised this text for me. I am grateful for God, who placed all of them in my path. *Many thanks to all of you. Without you, my experience wouldn't be as delightful.*



Eloisa de Castro
Costa