

Exchange Student Amadine Delmas 1999

Please say hello to the Christchurch Sunrise Rotary Club for me. I am forever grateful to the club for taking me as exchange student in 1999. Up to this day, it has been one of my best years in life and I regularly think about NZ, the club, my host-families and St-Margaret's College. That year had a massive positive impact on the rest of my life and in a way defined my studies and life choices.

After my year in NZ, I went on to study business and was accepted at McGill University in Canada (in Montreal), where I graduated with a Bachelor of Commerce. I then worked for a Canadian company for three years (in Toronto) before deciding to return to France. By then I had been gone for 7 years and was only 25. I moved to Paris and worked for a watch company as International Sales Manager. During that time, I travelled extensively to Middle East, South America and Eastern Europe. I had the chance to visit Syria before the war, and meet extraordinary people there. I later changed company and worked for another watch company still based in Paris, but this time managing their french market. I later decided to do a master degree, and graduated from a Master in Business Administration from HEC Paris. This has led me to then take a role in the United Kingdom, as Managing Director, for a French company that produces spectacle lenses. The group is now called Essilor-Luxottica (makers of Ray-Ban, Oakley...etc). I am now discussing a move to Prague, Czech Republic starting next year to take on a Vice-President position.



Amadine Matt and Mum

On the personal side, I am a happy wife, married for 5 years now (but celebrating our 11 years together this year). My husband's son, Thomas (17) lives with us, and we have been enjoying our life in the UK very much. It was difficult for Thomas at first, as he was 15 when we arrived and did not speak well English. I kept reminding him of my year in NZ, and how I would not understand anything at first. I was able to tell him about the process of assembly, tutor, and houses (which do not exist in the French system). After a few months, he settled and is now fully bilingual and enjoys life here. My husband is a very passionate scientist about the universe. He graduated with a PhD in Astrophysics, but life took him to work in different engineering roles. When the opportunity for us to relocate to the United Kingdom came up, this was the opportunity for him to come back to Astrophysics (and music, which he also loves) and he is now almost working full time (as a free lance) as an astrophysicist researcher (working from home). This makes him very happy. His very generous personality means that he is also always looking after the family and making sure everyone is okay.

My family is still in Brive (Correze, France), where I try to go at least twice to three times a year. My parents have now retired and their new passion is home-exchange with other Europeans. They travel almost all the time (mostly to Spain and Italy I must admit); so I would say that they are definitely enjoying their retirement. My brother also lives in Brive and spends a lot of time on the family farm. My grand-parents are both still in the house, although my grand-father is now soon turning 90.

These are some quick news in a nutshell. I cannot stress enough how my year with the Sunrise Rotary Club had a determining impact on my life. It enabled me to consider studying in English in Canada. It later gave me the confidence to take a job in Toronto before relocating to Paris. All along, my family has been very supportive and always proud of my achievements. Finally, I met such great people and great host-families. I have told my husband that we must make the trip to NZ in the next 5 years.

I hope I get to come and visit the club in the future, With kind regards, Amadine

Roger Turner has been following up on these students. This is the first of a series