



Ethan

from Brampton
to
France

“I have been enjoying myself despite the changes.”

Welcome back valued readers to Ethan Mumford’s Beaver Tale. The last three months of my exchange have been a lot different than what I was expecting them to be like, however I have been enjoying myself despite the changes.

The month of March was pretty calm for the most part. I spent the first week going to school and not doing much else. The first weekend in March I had a Rotary event. Twice a year my Rotary district 1520 holds a dinner to raise money for the exchange student program in the district. For this dinner each student is required to make a dish from their home country, bring it to the dinner and share it with all the people there. We call it an “exotic meal” and it always does really well. This time it was my turn to make a dessert and I made apple crisp. I really enjoyed this event because I got to see all the other exchange students in my district and we had a good time.



The rest of March was pretty normal until the 12th when the French President, Emmanuel Macron announced that schools would be closed until further notice starting March 16th because of COVID-19. The following weekend I changed host families which went really well.



The next day, the French President got on the air again and explained exactly how the lockdown would work in France. He explained how schools and businesses would be required to stay closed until further notice. Also, the rules for going outside were laid out in this address.

If you wanted to go outside you were expected to fill out a form with your name, address and your reason for leaving your house. You were expected to bring a piece of ID with you to confirm the information on the form and if you were a minor you were expected to have this form signed by your parents. Your address was included in this form because if you were out on a walk or a jog, you had to stay within a 1 km radius of your house. (I've included an example at the end of my Beaver Tale) At this moment, these rules were going to last for 15 days and all air travel with France was going to be suspended for 30 days. The lockdown ended up lasting for 55 days and there are still no French passenger planes leaving France. For the rest of March, I got to know my host family, we had multiple video calls to see others and I even was stopped by the police for them to check my papers while I was out on a run.

April started off in a pretty interesting way. In France, April fool's day is called "Le Poisson d'Avril" and you're supposed to stick fish on people. My host family and I woke to two paper fish on our door that the neighbor's kids left there!



In early April it was my 18th birthday. Everyone kept telling me how they felt sorry for me because my birthday was during the lockdown but, it actually didn't bother me at all – I had a great day! My host family threw me a party with just them and it



was really nice. The rest of April was pretty calm. I changed back to my first host family the following week and I'm still there now. During April I was keeping myself busy with running, exercise, homework, video games and group video calls. Normally, during April I would have done a trip around Europe with Rotary but unfortunately, that was cancelled.

May has been very interesting as well. For the first ten days I was still under lockdown. I was mostly staying home, running and doing homework. A couple days into May, my host family and I discovered that I'm pretty good at cooking on the wood barbecue so now I do a lot of grilling for the family. On May 11th the lockdown was lifted and we no longer needed forms to go outside as long as we stayed within 100km of our house. School still has not started again and most people that go to my school don't think it will. I keep myself busy working on schoolwork online. Now that the lockdown has been lifted, I've gone into town and have seen my friends (from a safe distance). However, for the most part I'm still staying home and taking it easy.



May 2020

Right now, I have about 7 or 8 weeks left in Lille. Before I leave, I want to say thank you to everyone that has made my exchange possible and enjoyable. Thank you to the Rotary club of Lille Septentrion and the Rotary club of Brampton for hosting me and sponsoring. Thank you to my three host families, the Sealens, the Leys and the Vignolles, for hosting me during this year. Thank you to the Rotary district 1520 for planning lots of really fun trips through out my time in France.

Au revoir,

Ethan