



Darren

from

Mississauga

to

Germany

"Why not Celebrate?"

On August 6th, I hadn't realized I would be starting a new life. After a long plane ride, the most amazing feeling is seeing your new family standing in the Cologne-Bonn Airport with a sign saying "Welcome, Darren!" in bright bold letters. The drive to my home immediately set the tone for my year, driving 170km/h on the Autobahn. After a hearty, home-cooked meal of schnitzel, my younger host brother and I spent the afternoon playing ping-pong before I caught up on my sleep.

I was really shocked at first, at how small my town was. With only seventeen people, and the next closest town with only around four hundred, it was quite a big change from Mississauga. Even now, three months in, I find myself amazed by the silence and the beauty of the nature of the Eifel.



Within my first week in Germany, my host mom took my younger host brother and I swimming in a lake nearby. We spent the afternoon skipping stones, climbing trees, catching frogs and laughing at how bad my German accent is. Thankfully it has gotten better over the first few months of being here!

School started about a week after my arrival, and I absolutely love the German system. I spent the first week in school following a friend of my host family, and deciding which classes I wanted to take. Everyone was so nice to me right away, and even though my German wasn't so good, I was still able to make tons of new friends right from the get go. I got to choose all of my classes, and my favourite is art. In Germany, the school starts really early, but it ends really early as well. Some days it goes a bit longer, but it all just depends on which classes you have. I love being able to go home after school and have a full day ahead of me.

I've already seen so much of my beautiful host country, as well as some of the nearby countries like Belgium and the Netherlands. Spending a few days in Amsterdam has always been a dream of mine, and I'm happy to say that I can cross that off of my list. The language was hard at first, but finally I'm understanding more of the vocabulary and grammar, to the point where I can have some pretty in-depth conversations. The food here is to die for, the meals are hearty and the bread is delicious. I've also been to several rotary events, for the exchange students, as well as volunteering at other rotary events. The German lifestyle means party after party, and finding as many things as you can to celebrate. I really like this mentality, because after all the work that I, and so many other people have put into this exchange, why not celebrate?

Ich liebe Deutschland, und ich bin richtig dankbar, dass ich diese Möglichkeit haben.

Auf Wiedersehen, und bis zum nächsten mal.

-Darren