



# Nathan

from

**Brampton**

to

**France**

## *“French Yet?”*

It's been nearly three months since my first BeaverTale report and to compress all that has happened since then, might take an overwhelming page count. So I'll narrow it down to what I recall as the most exciting and memorable moments and experiences. To reflect on my first report I can outline so many changes that I've made, now that I've grown accustomed to the French normalities, including the type of music I listen to, the act of using both knife and fork, the way of greeting new people, wearing a new style of clothing, etc. Because each of these little things is evident to the genuine change of who I'm becoming...French-like.

It's been less than a week since I've changed families, and this one counts the third. The time I spent with my second family was great, but what felt very fast. Like my first host-family they were just as warming and trustworthy, if not more. Unfortunately I remember at the beginning of my family-change I was very sick for about three weeks and wasn't able to go to school. Luckily after some time along with medicine and twenty-three hour sleeping sessions I was back on my feet! I am including this to exemplify that exchange is not always pretty-perfect nor exactly what you want it to be every day, there are “downs”, but “downs” that make you stronger, and “ups” that will surely be the majority of anyone's time on exchange. Like when I went to the Alps in Megève with my host-family, which was magnifique. I conquered climbing a 2236m mountain which was by far the toughest endurance challenge I've faced.

Then Christmas came around the corner which happened to be quite fun because the tradition of the family I was staying with had a very jolly mood, singing songs, dancing, and playing gift-exchange games. These are my fondest memories with my second host-family. Then sadly leaving them with some Canadian gifts and a drawing I made I was onto my third host-family. This family has four children, two of whom live at the house and currently staying with them for a week is their previous exchange student from Germany. And this family is awesome. It's only been five days with them and I've already been go-karting, to the beach, to a really fancy French restaurant, to my host-brother's college party, and again to his family football get-together (by the way Paris beat Barcelona 4-0). Next week we're going to Strasbourg which is a really nice city four hours from my city, Lille. They've also suggested that I can tag along with them to Germany on the next vacation break. Truly some of the nicest people I've met.

I also assume that my relationships with my host-families are improving because of my French, and the bases of communication are probably the only thing that relies on a good relationship. I can't say I'm bilingual, in least not yet, but most of the time I understand most of what is being conversed and able to reply accordingly. For now I have to work on the past tense, future tense, and vocabulary and then will I be able to understand, infer, and reply so much better. In terms of school, everything is going smoothly, understanding more and more every day, minus the math language. I've also taken upon swimming classes, and being that I can't swim makes me a bit of a black sheep in the class, but the upside is I sort of now know how to swim, but will certainly learn this skill completely before school ends.

In my rotary district 1520 we luckily take in the most diverse group of exchange students in France, because we have those who come from the southern hemisphere starting and ending their year at a different time from exchange students from the northern hemisphere. And so, sadly all our New Zealand, Australian, Chilean "oldies" those who were here longer than the rest of us have left and the "newbies" have arrived, thus making me and the other exchange students coming from the northern hemisphere "oldies." And I was already able to meet all the "newbies" at a Rotary weekend to welcome them to our district, getting to meet even more exchange students and collecting even more pins for memories.

All in all, France is making for a great exchange. The weather is warm in February, generally around ten degrees, the people are nice, the city is beautiful, and the food is French. I have to learn how to not spend so much money here because Lille's food and clothing stores are tempting. I've lately been more outgoing with all the friends that I've made and gaining a lot more weight. At least for now I guess you can say I'm living the French life.

Bisous de France.

*Nathan*