



Nathan

from

Brampton

to

France

“Better Than Ever”

And just like that I have nearly one month left. Nearly one month and I can't even comprehend how fast these days have gone by and how everyday had its climax or its little memory that all regroup to one whole idea. The idea that exchange made you prosper, that it really is a “life in a year.” Through all the things I've done and that I've been through, I've learned an important lesson and it's a lesson that all exchange students have learned, which is to embrace that you're different, because you realize that you know things that most people don't, and those are the things that will make ever more interesting to your family, friends and everyone you come in counter with. And so, let's get into my exchange life.

About one month ago I moved into my fourth and final family, who are extremely nice people yet again. Before my moving day I spent a week in Germany with my third host-family. This trip became special because the reason we stayed there was to meet one of their previous exchange students who had lived with them for one year. We stayed in a large luxury apartment two hours south of Berlin in a city called Dresden. Being hosted by the parents of the exchange student we witnessed and experienced the real culture of Germans. Eating like kings, having beers the size of a litre Coca-Cola (I was given a limited amount by my host-family), and free-roaming around the beautiful city, visiting castles, churches, and museums.

Arriving back in France I only had two days left with the family I have bonded really well with. We created a huge supper on my last day containing all my favourite French foods, escargot, clams, welsh, and of course a variety of cheeses with a chocolate cake I made to top it all off.

April 20th came along and it began all over again, with new people, new routine and new culture. Always having a positive mindset I bond really well with my host-siblings and now I have a great relationship with my host-parents. A few weeks ago in fact we went to Geneva for a big family reunion and I was able see the pureness of Switzerland. With its large blue lake, the tall white mountains, the large beds of yellow dandelions and the bright green parks, Switzerland is a place picturesque.

Within the first two weeks with this family I have already met both sides of my host-parents; my host-mom's in Geneva, and the week after, my host-dad's in Orléans, which is approximately two hours south of Paris. I was given the key to my own hotel room in a castle-hotel we stayed in and was greeted by a lovely number of people. We visited parks and museums and made the most of our time together. Eventually we returned home from our four hour drive and returned to our normal student/work life.

Unfortunately, the student life in France consists of a lot of hours at school, but everyone's schedule is different. Fortunately I've become used to it over time being that it is quite long and making the most of what it is. But the difference is now; I can understand and take note of what's happening in class. And because the school year is coming to an end with the exams approaching, everyone is spending a little bit more time with each other.

Coincidentally I find that everything is getting better as my time to go is getting closer. The weather is sunnier, the relationships are stronger, the communication is easier, and to make light of it most, I've made more friends than ever, along with this amazing French girl whom I think may also like me.

To make most of it all, I can't wait to spend every minute with my friends and family, and for those end of the year trips to come, like Disneyland Paris with my District, Justin Bieber concert with my friends, and maybe go back to London or something. I can't say there's still so much more for me to do, because frankly I feel I've done everything, and I'm on the tip of finishing and fulfilling this exchange. Something I will always carry with me and never forget, because my bond will forever continue with those I've made friends and family with over the course of this year.

À bientôt Canada!

Nathan