



Nathan

from

Woodstock

to

Czech Republic

"A Life in a Year"

Here I am 39 days from the end of my exchange and I just can't get over the fact that it will soon be over. A good friend told me at the beginning of my exchange "Exchange is not a year in a life but a life in a year". This never really hit home until just now as I'm here writing this, and I'm starting to realize that it could not be truer.

Well that's enough with the sappy stuff eh? The past few months my exchange has become a crazy blur! I say that it has been a blur because I have constantly been on the go. Every day every second of my day is filled with school, Rotary events, and outings with my parents, meeting with friends, band performances/practices, and helping mark and correct assignments for many English classes.

In my school I have been very busy helping teach 3 different classes, one of them is my class and the other two are prima classes (our grade 5 equivalent). I also tutor a girl from my class, to help her catch up to where her other classmates are. There is a weird sense of pride that I get when I am in class and the young kids and they speak to me completely in English instead of Czech as they did at the beginning of the year. And on the last test my student had an almost perfect score on her test, I was so proud. In my other classes not too much has changed, I no longer attend my Spanish and religion classes due to my work with the other classes. Beside that I have continued to participate in all my other classes and have started to understand much more in the more technical ones (physics, and chemistry).

I recently moved families and I have really settled in very nicely. With this family I have done some great outings. We often go rock climbing, hiking etc. They live much closer to the city, so I have a lot more mobility. This extra ability to travel between town and my home has allowed me to join a band, STO Jazz Orchestra. Being a part of this band has created some of my strongest friendships here in the country!

I recently returned from my districts Euro Tour! It was the best two weeks of my life. Over those two weeks we traveled to Paris, Barcelona, Rome, Pompeii, Florence, and Venice. But it was not just the amazing places and architecture that I saw that made this trip spectacular, but it was the fact that the other 76 exchange students and I went from being close friends to truly being a family. A fact that really showed when we were at the district conference just a week after. At the end of the student's performances we had a group song, "We are the World" and after we had a very emotional group moment.

I'm starting to fear my return home, because this exchange is more of a dream than real. It is too good to be true. I have defiantly been convinced that every teen needs to do an exchange like this, because this has made me change so much as a person as I have learned so much about the world and myself. I am so very thankful that I have been able to have this opportunity this year. Now that I am returning, I have been bitten by the travel bug and I don't think I will ever be able to stop.

Nathan