



Nathan

from

Woodstock

to

Czech Republic

This year I have the privilege to live in a very small village called Nepasice with a population of about 700 people. I attend school in a nearby city called Hradec Kralove which is one of the biggest cities in Czech Republic. Hradec Kralove the original name of one of the oldest settlements in the Czech Republic was Hradec (the Castle) Králové (of the queen) was affixed when it became one of the dowry towns of Elisabeth Richeza of Poland. That's right she was given a city a wedding gift! The city has a very beautiful old town with an amazing main square, and cathedral.

My school is called Biskupské Gymnázium, a grammar school that is very similar to our high schools back home where we take a very wide array of classes. The only major differences between our schools and the ones here is that students don't have the chance to choose their classes, and that the class groups move together to all of the subjects. I have a large amount of difficulty in participating in most of my classes due to the language barrier, I participate in Biology, Math, and English. My English teacher likes to get me to assist the other students just by speaking so they can hear a native speaker talk, this is a joy to me because I love talking. In my other classes I often study Czech or read. While here on exchange I have read the entire Game of Thrones series.

I have made a very good group of friends since my arrival here. I met most of my friends through my school group; they have been a great help in getting me all situated in my school. They all speak English rather well, they learned not from English class but through playing a lot of video games. These guys are great because they are always willing to help me out and are always a good laugh. One activity that I never thought I

would participate in here is the table top game, Dungeons and Dragons; we play about once every two weeks.

I have become apart of a church congregation here through my host family, and have started practicing to become apart of its worship team. The church is a great comunity that has a rather young congregation and a very enthusiastic pastor name dJacob (we call him pastor J). The only real problem is, I can't realy understand the sermons. Sometimes my Norwegian friend translates the basic meaning of the message for me. The church youth have great meetings once a week that are a wonderful chance to talk to like minded people and worship together. About once every month the group organizes a trip to get eveyone together. The last one took place at a cottage in the mountains near the boarder with Poland. On that weekend we played team building games and just bonded.

My host family is great! We have grown very close to each other and do many activities together. They have got me involved with a few sports that I would have never tried otherwise. One of these sports is orienteering. This is a sport where you are given a compass and a map and then you proceed to run around the woods to try to locate check points. It is a very competitive sport but it is great fun. By my last completion I actually placed in the top ten in my category, blowing my previous record out of the water! Another sport that I have done quite a bit of here is rock climbing and bouldering.

I have been many places so far with my host family! Twice to Prague, a few times into the mountains on the Polish border, an amazing city called Kutana Hora where they have two cathedrals and a church that is furnished by human bones! Traveling is one of the best things about the exchange, not only because of the places you get to see but the time you get to spend with your travel companions.

Words to live by: "Proč Ne?" Translated means Why Not. Take advantage of every oppportunity by simply saying "Why Not". None of the great experiences that I have had during my exchange would have never happened if I didn't use these words!

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