



Sarah
from
Ingersol
to
New Zealand

“This Year is a Blink of Your Eye.”

May 2017, eight and a half months into my exchange and I'm going home in two months. Does not feel like a phrase that I thought I would be saying this soon, everyone says before you leave it will be the fastest year of your life but that's an understatement: this year is a blink of your eye. This year has been the best year of my life. I have challenged every fear I've had, I have grown as a person and I have created a life in another country that feels like it's been my whole life. Reflecting on my year I have no regrets and I feel it has been whole heartedly and adventure filled and I couldn't imagine changing anything. So what did happen in this year?

During my time in New Zealand I have been Bungee Jumping, scuba diving, snorkelling, hiking endless amounts of volcanoes, sat on the beach with my best friends an unforgettable amount of times and have been constantly amazed by how beautiful this country is. But to reflect back on my most cherished moments it would have to be between four different events.

1) My most cherished once in a life time experience. I went on a three day kayaking trip with all of my best friends for my Outdoor Ed class and the one night we were all sitting up in this tree on the beach under the stars and moon light and my one friend realised that the waves crashing against the beach were glowing and we went down to check it out and the whole beach was full of bioluminescent plankton which meant that the water pretty much looked like it came from the avatar movie. My whole class of nine people and I all went swimming in this water and every time you moved the plankton would light up the beach. It was the coolest thing I have ever experienced in my life and I don't think I will ever do anything more cooler then that.



2) As sappy as this sounds but something I will always be thankful for from this exchange is the friends that I have made. I have made a best friend over here who has been by my side everyday and for every adventure and to think about living in a country without her makes me sad. Even though we have known each other for less than a year it feels like she has always been there and without her I can't imagine that I would have had the same experience.

3) You only get one family in this life but when you leave that life on pause for a year and start another one you create a new family that you love. And I was so blessed to have been put in a family for five months that I loved and I could come home everyday after school and honestly feel like it was home. Its such a rare and unforgettable feeling and experience it is to walk through a strangers door one day and the five months later that same door is home. I will always have that family in my heart as my family, and I'm thankful to say that I have one Canadian family and one kiwi family.





4) Going to a school where it was a completely different culture, to go to a school where everyone was from different countries and completely different school system is like going to school for your first time ever. Everything that you know about school you don't because they do it differently. I went to a Pacifica school and it really gave me an experience that I would never get it Canada. I would get to attend culture nights where all the different nationality's would sing or dance traditional songs and everyday you would learn different things from all these kids. And then there was the school system, in New Zealand they wear uniforms which is something that I will not miss at all. They also only have 5 classes a year. Even after being in school for almost a year I still do not understand the New Zealand schooling system, it is beyond confusing.

I could spend a week typing all the things that I have done in New Zealand and still even then I wouldn't be able to explain how life changing and amazing this has been. Everyday is a gift and I try to fulfill it as much as I can and my only desire in the next two months is to spend every possible minute with those who gave me the feeling that this wasn't an exchange and that this is home.



I can't wait to re read this a year or even ten years from now and remember how happy and life changing this has been for me.

Sarah,