



Thomas

from

Tillsonburg

to

Italy

"You wish that you could press pause and live it all over again"

I am just over halfway through my exchange, and to be honest what comes with the halfway point is a lot of mixed emotions. You are excited because you finally feel at home seeing as by now you speak the language pretty well, and you have many friends that you are never going to forget. But there is also a feeling shock and almost a sadness that you only have five months left of the best year of your life. Your life here goes by so fast you wish for just one day that you press pause and sit back and live it all over again because you never want a single moment on exchange to end, and with the writing of this Beaver Tale I know that I only have one more to write before that plane ride home is staring me in the face.

Since my last Beaver Tale so much has happened and changed. I changed host families just three days before Christmas. At first I thought that was going to make Christmas a really tough time for me. Honestly though my new host family is so great that Christmas was probably one of the best times I had on exchange. For Christmas we went to the mountains for the weekend. I got to spend two days with my older host brother and my younger host brother of my next family. We spent those two days skiing in the Italian alpes, and although there was only snow on the ski slopes, the mountains were absolutely breath taking. That weekend was and still is one of my favourite weekends ever, not because of the mountains or the food, but because I got to do that all with people who I consider family now.

New Years now was a big mess. In Canada we have our little house parties with family and friends and have a nice time. Here it's chaos with people firing fire works everywhere, and throwing fire crackers at people. There also was no official count

down for midnight so you just have to guess. The weirdest part of New Years was however that about five to ten minutes after midnight, the streets start to empty and all of a sudden a place where you could barely take half a walking stride was only filled with ten little exchange students trying to take all the chaos in.

Later in January we had a dinner that no one really wants. It was the dinner to say good bye to all our Australian friends. It was a bitter sweet dinner, we were sitting there talking about all the amazing memories we shared together, but we were also realizing that this might be the last time we ever see them again. So after a couple of classic exchange student pictures with our flags, we said our final goodbyes for now. Not even three weeks later our new inbounds came. Just last weekend we got the opportunity to meet all of them and just like that our family of exchange students just became even bigger.

These past five months have been undeniably the best five months of my life. I have learned so much about my self and cultures of the world. I wouldn't be where I am today as a person if it wasn't for every single person I have met along the way of my exchange. The biggest lesson I learned on exchange is that "everyone is a teacher, take what they have to say and think about it. Everyone has made mistakes and every one has knowledge to offer you".

Grazie mille!

Thomas