



Tristen
from
Burlington Central
to
Peru

“The hardest part of exchange...realizing it's almost all over.”

With the help of my friends in Canada, I have been reminded how soon I'll be back and be able to see everyone again, but I think I'm in a bit of denial that my exchange is almost over. It's hard to believe that I'm only left with a little bit more than a month until I return; like, how did that happen? Of course I miss my friends and family back home, but I also have my friends and family here that I am going to miss so much. I think that it will be a lot harder leaving everyone here behind than it was in Canada just because I knew I was going to go back to everyone there, but here, I don't know who I will be able to see again in the future. With that being said, I am trying to do as much as I can with the time that I have left.

In about a week we will be having a conference in Arequipa for 4 days, which will present the students who will be traveling abroad in a few months, and also the “goodbye” to the exchange students of this year. For many of us, it will be the last time seeing each other, or the last opportunity to say goodbye. By the end of the conference it will be very emotional, but knowing me, it won't really hit me until later what everything means and that it is coming to an end. The whole experience of exchange has taught me to treasure the time you are given and take advantage of every opportunity you have.

Since being back from Iquitos, I have been going to university which is pretty interesting and eye opening to be given more freedom than before where I was in a school for my first 4 months here. The universities and colleges here don't have

residence, meaning no one lives on the campus, because there are so many of them within very short distances. Everyday I take a public bus which takes about 45 minutes depending on traffic and afterwards the same way back, but I always stop on the trip back to buy some cane sugar...it's so good! Every Wednesday we have off from school, so my friend and I go to eat sushi. We eat so much that we are there from the hour they open until the hour they close for a break; 3 hours. I will definitely miss the little things like that; having a good time talking and laughing with each other.

In March I was very happy and surprised to finally get a package from my dad for Christmas...yes, in March, 3 months later. The really funny thing is that most of what was in the package wasn't even for me, but for my host family. Not to worry though, I knew what would be in it once I finally received it, but needless to say I was very relieved once I did finally have it to give my family a Christmas in March. I will say that there were a few things for me as well, but for my family there were some Roots shirts and a few other little Canadian things. I'm not sure why it took so long to get here, but I'm happy that it did before I left (which was my fear).

I can't believe that this will be my last ever BeaverTale, but this year has been an amazing one. I would have never experienced what I have without this opportunity that Rotary has given to me, and something I will never be able to forget. Living in another country for a year teaches you so much about life and also about yourself; you will find that you have matured over the months, and have a better understanding of who you are and how life can be in another country. I would, without a doubt, recommend going through the Rotary Youth Exchange, you won't regret it! Of course it is normal to be faced with some problems through the time abroad, but Rotary is always, always there to give a helping hand and wants you to have the best exchange you can.

Thank you to everyone in Rotary, my parents, and host family for all that you have done for me and to experience the best exchange possible.

Tristen