

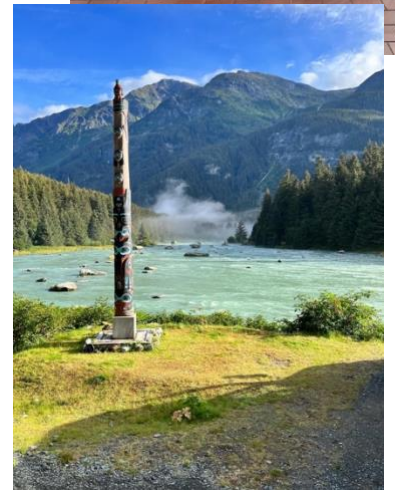
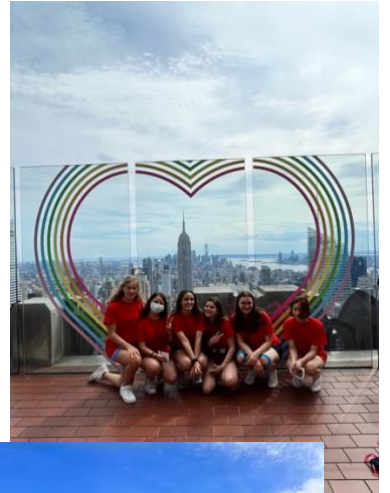
MY EXCHANGE YEAR IN IOWA, US (2022/23)

New York

Weren't you scared? Didn't you miss home? Is it worth it? All of those are valid questions, even I asked them myself. Let me answer them for you, while I tell you about my experiences during my ten months in the heart of the US.

I am Sophia and I spent my exchange in Indianola, Iowa surrounded by corn and cows. You might think, corn and cows isn't that boring but let me tell you: I had the best year.

On the 27 of Juli I left Germany at Munich airport after saying goodbye to my family and spent the next eleven hours on the plain, with a layover at Heathrow airport. Though it didn't go straight to Iowa. My organisation had a camp in New York, I stayed at for a week so I won't have that big of a culture shock when arriving at your final destination. For me it wasn't the first time meeting my host family after having had a short get together with them in Munich through a school trip of theirs. The camp was held at a university just outside New York which of course we couldn't have left without visiting. I meet a lot of great people who were as excited to make memories and have the best year as I did. After some weather



Alaska

difficulties on my way to my host family (in form of hurricanes), they picked me up at Chicago airport and drove five hours to get me home. They told me later that I was talking non stop the whole ride. (To my defence I was really excited.) First stop was the Iowa fair which is a huge event like the Oktoberfest for us just Iowan. You

State fair cow
made of butter

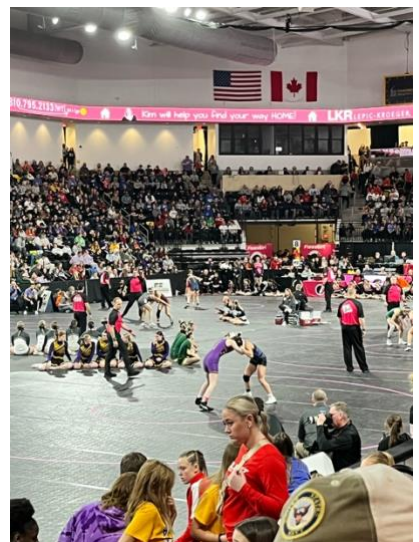


could watch animal babies be born, attend huge concerts and

enjoy fried butter on a stick. However we only had one day there because we got right back on the road this time it was a 7 day cruise to Alaska. It was terrific, I saw brown bears, whales, dolphins and elks. I got really close to my host family during that time. As soon as we got back, school started. My classes PE, English, Math, AP chemistry, United States history, pers/bus



law, foods, choir and drawing, I chose myself. They were the same every day and only changed during second semester. Also very different was that if you wanted to pursue a sport you had to do it by joining a school team instead of our used to sport clubs in Germany which of course I couldn't miss out on. (I mean the whole American experience and stuff.) When decided to do



State wrestling meet

Softball

Washington Dc

so, you had three seasons to choose a sport for. My sports consisted of cheerleading (which I personally didn't really enjoy), wrestling (I still pursue in Regensburg) and track. Those were done every day of the week right after school and on the weekend and even during the week you had meets. (Which are basically competitions.) It was my favourite part of the day and got my head cleared out. The best team spirit I had though which I felt really supported by, found my best friend at and spend a lot of my time with, was my softball team. I joined them through my host dad being one of the coaches there. My time there was filled with even more unforgettably things done with my host family, like going skiing in the Colorado mountains, getting fresh apples and apple cider in Illinois, driving 16 hours to see all of Washington DC or working at a haunted house during Halloween season, etc. Since that wasn't yet enough for me I



also decided to go on a second trip with my organisation. Ten days where other exchange student and I exploring cities on the southern coast like LA, Las Vegas, the Grand Canyon, Sedona and Phoenix. Furthermore there are experiences like homecoming and prom which you won't ever

Grand Canyon



forget. Nevertheless it all had to end at some point and I left on the 13th of June. I am not exaggerating when telling you I was bawling my eyes out.



Cas Vegas themed Prom

HOST FAMILY

I found friends for life, a second home and family. My host family consists of: my host mom and dad, my three older brothers (18,21,25) and older sister (22)



arriving in Chicago

ADVICE

Over time I got more and more extroverted and from the beginning on I tried to have a lot of conversations, which helped to get to know one and another and improve my English. But don't let all of my happy moments fool you. It was ups and down throughout the whole trip which of course made me stronger in some ways and the person I am now but it also left me feeling really weak during those moments. Like when being homesick or when my host mom and I didn't see eye to eye or when I tore a muscle during wrestling season. In the beginning there might also be times you feel lonely because you haven't found your kind of people in school yet or you don't like the sport your picked. However you have to push through it! Don't let them drag you down! The darkest hour is before dawn. Believe in yourself and everything is possible!

If you have any questions regarding doing an exchange year, finding an organisation or even if you have applied for one already and just wanna talk it over once more, feel free to ask. You can contact me under my name on our school website "Talk".

- Sophia Juhasz-Böss



← first
country concert