

Exchange year final report

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The second semester was only different from the first in a few aspects. I started to play soccer for my school and I only took part in the weight lifting of the football team. We started practicing for soccer in February and the matches started in March. We practiced every day except Wednesday for 4-5 hours because most people went to church on Wednesday afternoon. I went quite a few times but not every week. And this was additionally to the lifting for football during 7th period. At the beginning we mainly practiced basics because my team consisted of a lot of inexperienced and new players. But we quickly started to practice harder and more advanced things. In the middle of March the games started. We played every Tuesday and Friday. On every home game we did not have to lift for football so me and a few others got out after 6th period and then we normally went to eat something and started



warming up a little. Then we watched the girls' game at 5 pm and got ready for our game during the second half. Our game then started at 7 pm and sometimes we had a JV game that started at 4 pm even before the girls' game. I usually got home at around 9 pm. On away games we got out of school after 6th period and traveled to our opposing school. Again we watched the girls play first and then played our game. On away games I usually got home at around 9:30 till 10:30 pm depending on the school we played. For the state tournament we got out of school at 9 in the morning and drove 3 hours to Valley view, the host school for the state tournament. Because of the long drive our school had to pay a breakfast and dinner for us and on the way there at around 11 am we stopped at Wendy's. Once we got there we watched the girls play and after that we played. At around 8 pm we started to drive home and stopped for dinner on the way, once at a Pizza buffet and once at Popeye's. We got home at around 12 am. We were able to reach the state tournament after reaching the third place in the district

tournament where we beat the local private school for the first time in 15 years. For the state tournament we got out of school a lot. But we lost against another high school in the quarter final and the soccer season was over. During spring break we did not make any vacation but I met up with a lot of my friends for cookouts and to hang out or play soccer / football. I also started going out on the weekends more and more and met with friends to hang out together. One of my main problems was that I lived in a neighborhood that was quite a bit away from the school, my friends' houses, the most restaurants and the most places we hang out at. My host parents often did not have the possibility to give me a ride anywhere but luckily almost always I was able to get a ride with a friend of mine. It was completely natural for them and they even offered to give me rides even if they would not plan to go there themselves or just pick me up and drop me off somewhere else. I often wanted to make my driver's license there but I always realized very quickly that this was pretty expensive and I did not have the time to do it either. In school we prepared for the AP exams which I took in AP Physics and AP Calculus AB. I got a 4 on my AP Physics I preparation exam and a 5 on my AP Calculus AB preparation exam which are the second best and best grades possible. My real exam scores matched these results and my final grades for the semester and the school year were all A's. I learned quite a few things for my German school too, for example I realized the Computer Programming is not one of my favorite things to do so I exchanged it with Physics in my Abitur.





I started packing about 3 weeks before my flight home. At first I had to buy a second suitcase to be able to take everything home with me. I checked my flight information and passport and started to read some German books and skyped with my family a few times. On the last days of school I said most of my goodbyes but in my last week I met some people again. 4 days before my flight I moved to my local Coordinator because my host family had to move as my host father is in the Air Force. She brought me to the Airport and helped me check in. I had to pay a fee due to my second bag but nothing special happened. I boarded my first flight from Little Rock to Houston on Saturday morning and arrived after an hour of flight shortly before noon. In Houston I quickly found the gate for my second flight and waited there for about 4 hours. On the 9 hour flight to Frankfurt I watched some movies but mainly in English. I arrived at about 8 am on Sunday morning due to the time difference and was welcomed by my family. I still spoke English because it felt easier and often did not remember a specific German word. My mother did not bother this, she just said it would help my little

brothers learning English. In the afternoon a few friends of mine came over to barbecue and they often made fun of me when I used English words in a sentence, which happened quite a lot, so I tried to speak only German. After one week I did not have to think about German words anymore and after about 2 week when I started going back to school in Germany I stopped thinking in English. I still continued watching movies in English though to keep it up and I am still afraid that I might lose some of my language skill. In my English lessons in school I observed that the spoken English of my teachers sounds very sharp and unpracticed and I can see big differences between the English of my classmates who made exchange years and the ones who did not. I only had to go to school for 2 more weeks in which I mainly took care of electing subjects for the next year and reintegrating into my grade. One of the most interesting and different aspects was the way of teaching. I got very used to using my chrome book for all of my schoolwork which made it kind of difficult to get used to writing in pencil again. I also experienced the return of other students that made an exchange year and it was very interesting to share all the different experiences. One of my friends went to Florida for 10 months. He started wrestling for the high school team and learned a lot of useful stuff for his later career in his elective subjects. Another friend of mine went to Texas for one school year and he also played football and soccer. The other exchange students were a boy and a girl who went to the USA for 10 months, a girl that went to Canada for 10 months, a girl that went to Ireland for 10 months and a girl that went to New Zealand for 1 Semester. After I got back I started playing for my soccer team in Germany almost immediately and was quickly able to get my position back and did not have to fear to loose playing time due to the exchange year. However, I did not start to play in a German football team because there is no team close enough for me to be able to go to practice.

In a few days I am going to visit my cousins, who both made an exchange year, in Berlin and we will probably talk a lot about their and my experience. They are both planning to go back to the United States, the younger one just for a few weeks and the older one for a year as an Au pair.

As I see now making an exchange year was one of the best decisions in my life and I highly recommend it to everyone else because it is an absolutely amazing lifetime experience and extremely helpful for your later life. Like my cousins convinced me of the idea of making an exchange year I convinced my brother to do it too, even though I did not really have to convince him. :)

