Canada 2018

After years of dreaming to spend a few months abroad I finally got the chance to take part in this exchange program. From the moment I received the message that they had found an exchange student for me, I was so excited to get to know her and her family and to start into this adventure. Although I was thinking about it the whole time, I didn’t realize what awaited me until it was time to say goodbye to my family at the airport and get into the plane.

After a long flight and changing planes in Calgary, we finally arrived at our final destination. At the Edmonton airport, our host families welcomed us with posters and hugs to their country. As soon as I got my luggage we drove to their home in Stony Plain, where they gave me a little tour of the house to show me where I was going to live for the next three months.

The next days we were still on vacation and my family took me to British Columbia where we stayed at their cabin, which was located on a beautiful lake. Although we had a little smoke from the nearby forest fires, we also got some days with good weather, which we benefited from to do boat tours, tubing or work in the garden.

On the way back we passed Jasper National Park, where we stayed in a hotel to get some more time to explore nature. Jasper had a lot to offer, from beautiful views to impressive waterfalls, which makes it the perfect location to go hiking.

On my first day at Spruce Grove Composite High School my exchange student showed me around the building and introduced me to the teachers. The Canadian school system is different compared to the German one, because Canadian students just have four courses every semester. As we figured out my schedule I was free to choose my courses, so I took French, English, Sports Performance and Drama. After we also got our lockers, had our pictures taken and received our bus passes, I was prepared to be an SGCHS student. Every day I got to school on one of the typical yellow school buses and listened to the national anthem and the morning announcements before we could start into our school day.

Before it was time for the adventure camp, we had the first snow in the middle of September.
Together with all the other German exchange students, we spent a long weekend at the Nordegg Centre in the Rocky Mountains. We stayed outside the whole day, doing team building, climbing, rappelling, hiking, canoeing, archery, zip lining or sitting around campfires making S'mores. During this time we had a lot of fun with these outdoor activities and our group grew together even more.

During the following weeks I got used to an daily routine, where I went to school in the morning and twice a week I had Cross Country practice or races after school. After school I usually spent the rest of the day at home doing my homework or with playing, comparing our countries and cultures or watching films with my host family. The weekends gave us a lot of time for trips and, together with my family or friends, I went to the mall, the cinema, the water park, the corn maze, the ice rink and other places around Edmonton.

My host family and I spent fall break and Thanksgiving at the cabin again, taking part in the traditional Horseshoe Tournament. Almost everybody around the lake took part in this game which was about throwing horseshoes at stakes in a sand pit. Although we both threw for the first time, my partner and I had some surprisingly good throws and finally ended in second place.

A week before my departure, my host family wanted to show me Banff, so we stayed at Canmore for a few days, which was just outside the national park. We visited the Nordic Centre and drove into the park to go skiing and took the gondola up the mountain to go hiking at the top.

As the flight back was getting closer, it was time to pack my bag, say goodbye to my teachers and go to the farewell party my friends organized for me. On the day of our departure, our host families drove us to the airport where it was pretty hard to leave, but we had no other choice than to say goodbye to everybody and to get on the plane. Although I never felt homesick during these three months, I was really looking forward to seeing my family and friends in Germany again.

Being back in Germany was a little confusing at first, because of the language, but I got into my old routine quite fast. Soon I felt like I had never been away from home, but a lot of memories will always remind me of the great time I had in Canada. Now I'm really looking forward to the arrival of the Canadians to introduce my exchange student to my life in Germany.