

## **My German-American exchange review**

It was a dream come true for me to be part of an exchange and experience the life of a teenager in another country, getting to know new people and improving my knowledge of the English language. In autumn 2017, I applied for the German-American exchange program. The whole time after my application I was nervous, but then, in May 2018, I got accepted and couldn't believe how lucky I was. The time before we left for the exchange went over quickly. After all the information meetings and the things my family and I had to organize for my exchange, the day finally came and my family and I met the other German exchange students with their families at the airport. At first I was really sad to say goodbye to my family and friends for five months but I got over it pretty fast.

We arrived in the United States and received a warm welcome from our host families with nice banners. I met my host family and my host brother, who was 16 years old, and we drove to Milwaukee, my new hometown for the following five months. After we got to their house, my host brother and his little brother showed me the house and my room and I needed time for myself to unpack my luggage and get used to my new surroundings.

My first day of school finally came. I was super nervous but I also had looked forward to this day. At first I felt very lost and thought I would never find all my classes or make friends. But everybody was super nice and helpful and by the end of the week I managed my whole schedule and had already found the group of friends I stayed with until I returned to Germany. My school was called Milwaukee School of languages and you were able to decide between Spanish, German or French for your second language. I took math (algebra 2), world history, Japanese, physics, English and gym. All of my classes were super fun and I never felt overstrained. My school day begun at 8.40am and was over at 3.55pm every day. After school you were able to join a lot of extracurricular activities. My school had clubs for almost everything and you could play a lot of sports. I participated in tennis, soccer and a political club for students called YES. High school sports are a big thing for the people in America. A lot of students, parents and classmates came to cheer for their school. It was a wonderful feeling to be able to play and win with your team, for your school.

Throughout my whole time in Milwaukee, I experienced a lot of things I had never seen before with my host family and my friends. The most amazing experience I had in America with my host family was the day we visited Chicago. Chicago is only about 2 hours away from the city in which I lived and we had a wonderful time there. I loved to spend the day in a lively city that appeared very contemporary and full of business-like atmosphere. I also enjoyed all the big sport events I went to with my host family like the Bucks game (professional basketball team of Milwaukee) or the Brewers game (professional Baseball team of Milwaukee). Of course, I loved doing things with my friends like spending the day in downtown Milwaukee, cheering for our school at tournaments and all the movie nights and bonfires we had together. But the most wonderful memory I shared with my friends was homecoming. We went to the dance as a big group and had a beautiful night together and a lot of fun. I also loved to be able to be in America on traditional holidays like Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas, where I got to meet the whole family and spent the day with them. They welcomed me like a new member of their family and I never felt like they didn't want me to be there.

All in all, I can say that my time in Milwaukee was the best time of my life so far. I am so thankful for all the people I got to know there, but especially for my amazing host family, who

never said no to any activities I wanted to do and made me feel like a part of their family and to my friends, who never made me feel left out. My time in the United States passed by really quickly and, because of all the new things I was able to experience there, I didn't even have time to miss my family and friends at home. I would recommend this exchange to everybody who is curious to explore the world and find out more about another culture.