

Wisconsin- Exchange 2018/19

In October 2017, I applied for the German-American exchange program and I got accepted in March 2018. It was a dream come true! I had never visited the United States before and I had always dreamed of visiting an American high school. The time until August 25th, the day we left, passed by super quickly and we finally arrived in Chicago. I met my host parents and my host sisters (16 and 14 years old) at the airport and we drove to Milwaukee, their hometown. When I arrived, my host mom showed me my room and I got to know the other family members (aunt and grandparents) in the evening.

Two days later was my first school day, finally! I was looking forward to this day a lot. School started at 8.40 am and ended at 3.55 pm every day, which was great because my school days in Germany are a lot longer. My high school was called Milwaukee School of Languages and had three bilingual systems – English/German, English/French and English/Spanish. I decided to take part in the English/Spanish program, because I had a good knowledge in Spanish before and I wanted to improve in both languages. It was a really good choice because I improved a lot in both languages and my Spanish classes were a lot of fun. Besides Spanish literature, I took American authors (English literature), Spanish World history (World history bilingual), physics, algebra 2, Japanese and gym. In my classes, we had a lot of fun and I made lots of friends really quickly. The students and teachers were really welcoming and never made me feel left out.

After school you could participate in a lot of extracurricular activities. There was a Club for almost everything and you could play a lot of different sports. I played soccer and tennis and I decided to join the basketball team, although I had never really played basketball before. It was a lot of fun and I made lots of friends through the sport teams. I will never forget the day I played my first basketball match and so many people cheered for us. It was a wonderful feeling. Sports are a really big thing and a lot of parents and classmates came to cheer for their school to every tennis, soccer or basketball game. The sport teams did not only practice together, we also had sleepovers and a goodbye party when me and another exchange student left. They were like a second family. I also joined the YES club, a club about human rights and American politics, which was really interesting.

The time passed by really quickly and it was winter break. For me winter break was the hardest time, because most of my friends were on vacation or visited their family in other states. My host sister and I were completely different so I spent a lot of time on my own. Especially my birthday and New Year's Eve were really hard. I missed my friends and family a lot on my birthday and my host family didn't really celebrate New Year's Eve, which was a little bit difficult for me.

After winter break the time was just flying and suddenly it was my last week. I will always remember my last basketball match. After the match some of my friends and teammates and I ended up laying on the floor, hugging and crying. This moment touched my heart. Another really special day was my last day. I got a lot of goodbye cards and presents. I am still in contact with my friends in the United States and we plan on visiting each other one day. I will never forget this semester with all the nice and difficult moments! It was a good experience and I learned a lot. I am thankful for being a part of the program and for being able to take home so many experiences.