

First Report

I decided to go to the USA for one year because my cousins and neighbors who already made an exchange year told me it is a great experience and a lot of fun. And until now it really is. I had a lot of different wishes and expectations about my host family. It started with the hope that I would not be forced to go to church three times a week and ended with the hope that they would live in the south of America. Most of my hopes became true. My family is a non-religious family that lives in Arkansas and I have three little brothers like in my real family. They already hosted 3 other students and they are really nice and do not want to control everything. Prior to my exchange year many people from MAP and CCI told me that my host family would want to know where I want to go, with whom and would want me to come home early. My host family is completely different. They want me to hang out with other people and make friends and although I asked I never got a limit when I should be home. The only thing was that when I was out in the evening I had to get a ride home. It is also pretty nice that we go on short trips very often and with the nice weather it is like vacation.



The exchange year was one of the hardest things to organize in my whole life but it is so nice that it is okay to invest so much time in it. For the adventure of an exchange year we had to drive to different cities in Germany for the interview and the pre-departure orientation session, we had to spend days in front of the computer to complete the application, had to get certifications from a lot of different people and had to come home from vacation one day earlier because my flight changed from August 5th to August 1st. We had a whole week full with buying the last things I need, saying goodbye to friends and neighbors and packing my suitcase. It was very stressful because of the flight change, but we got everything and went on our last vacation before the exchange year. We got back on Sunday in the early afternoon and in the evening my cousins arrived, who were the main factor for my decision to make an exchange year, because they made one, too. They told me it is a really great experience and I totally agree with them.

On August 1st my adventure exchange year finally started. I got up at 5 am and arrived at Frankfurt airport at 8 am. At 10 am the plane took off to the USA. I flew with 6 other exchange students and the flight was without any special happenings. After 12 hours we landed in Chicago O'Hare international airport where we met two members of CCI Greenheart, who helped us to get to our connecting flights to our host families. I had to wait 5 hours at Terminal 1, but luckily the plane of one other exchange student started right before mine at the same gate, so we were able to wait together. The flight to Little Rock took over 2 hours, so I arrived there at 10 pm in the evening after a 24 hours awake-day. At the Hillary and Bill Clinton airport I finally met my host family and my local coordinator for the first time. When I left the airport I was really impressed about the heat, because it was after 10 pm and in Germany it is much colder. When we got home I went to bed right away and the only things I did before that were cleaning my teeth and loading my cellphone. :) On the next morning my host mother showed me the house and the neighborhood. The next thing for me to do was to text MAP that I arrived and put all my stuff out of my suitcase. After that I gave my presents to my host parents and host siblings. The rest of the day I played with the kids. On the next day we went to Clinton's presidential library and walked a little bit through Little Rock. In the next few days I played a



lot with my host brothers, although the oldest one was still visiting his grandparents. I also went to the gym for the first time in America and went to my school to choose my subjects. I was pretty impressed about the many different possibilities and the counselor was very polite and friendly. 5 days later I went to school again to have the pictures taken for the ID-badges and get my schedule. I also heard a presentation about the dress code in the auditorium. In the last week of the vacation we went to a hotel in Missouri, where we met my host brother Easton and his grandparents and we went hiking and swimming.

One day later my school started. I got up at 6.45 am and had a little breakfast. After that I made myself lunch and went to the bus at 7:35am. I arrived at school at 8:15 and already got a few friends via the people driving with my bus. The first day in school was exciting because it is a great experience if you get new, friendlier teachers and the teachers speaks English. In my math class I met the guy who is now one of my best friends and who helped me to get into the soccer team of the city because the school soccer team only plays in spring. After one week I knew a lot of people in the school and it felt like I had never been at a different school. I knew the best ways to get to my classes and to the cafeteria, the office and





the bus. It also became much easier to understand the teachers. On Friday of my second week at school I talked to the coach of the football team and joined it as a Kicker. On the next Monday I got my necessary schedule change and started to practice. Because of this I have much less free time during the week. I have football practice every day and in the evenings I go to soccer practice and when there is no soccer practice I go to the gym. Because of the combination of exchange student and football player I became very popular and know almost everyone in my school.

A new thing for me was that everyone was proud to be at his school and that people support their school and especially their football team in public. I enjoy watching football games with friends (not from my team, for example the 9th graders). A very strange thing for me is the student-teacher relationship. In Germany most students do

not like or hate the teacher and here the teachers are good friends of the students and nobody blames you for having a longer talk with a teacher. In the lessons I now understand almost everything and got 100% in my AR-reading test in English. I did a special test for exchange students and I got the result "advanced English speaker".

On September 10th we went to the zoo and after that I had my first soccer match in America. We won 5:1 and it was really nice because I got a great team. It's one of the best teams in whole Arkansas and my teammates are great. In school I got my chrome book on Friday 9th and it is really nice because it makes everything much easier. For example you do not have to carry that much stuff. It is really strange how much more difficult speaking English is after you listened to German music or skyped with your family. Until now I do not miss my real family, which might be because my host family is very similar to my real family and I got really good friends. One of the biggest differences is that I do much more work in school and have less homework than in Germany, where the school is much shorter but I had to do more at home. In the next week I got the result of my stars reading test, which said my reading level would be the level of a 6th grader. My English teacher said that was very good for an exchange student and she had native US-Americans who only scored 2nd graders.



On Wednesday we had picture day. I was at a taco bell for the first time in my life and it is really interesting that American fast food restaurants are selling what we in Germany would call even bad for fast food and in a normal restaurant you get what we in Germany would call fast food. I also teach some of my friends German words and it is really fun to see one of my friends telling a funny German word to everyone in the cafeteria. I already got a date for homecoming and I will go there with some good friends.