

2010 – 2010 District 5060 Outbound Student Spring  
Edition



## Evan Frederick

**Host Club: Gifhorn / Wolfsburg, Ribbesbuettel, Germany**

**Sponsor Club: Armstrong Rotary Club, Armstrong, Canada**

In my exchange year so far, I have learned to experience and to love a new language and culture that is not the same as my own. I have had the time of my life here and hope to continue on like this for the rest of my exchange.

One of the points of my rotary exchange year was my ability to become very close with my host families. Even though I had stayed with my first host family for more than half my exchange year, I was able to become very close with them in a very short time. I also think it makes it easier on yourself when you feel part of the family. My host mother and I got along very well from the start, and at one point she would sometimes buy me little presents of appreciation. They were just little things but it made me feel very special. Also my host father and I had been getting along really good for the last couple of months, especially when there was a soccer game on. And I know now that my host brothers will always be my host brothers. I loved my family so much and did not want to leave.

I think I left a pretty good impression with my host family. My last dinner with my family was "barbecue", and probably

one of the best I had. What made it better for me was the fact that my host father had to stand outside in the cold winter weather grilling, and my family had to go through lots of trouble to specially order all the meat in advance. They also bought me a brand new sports bag packed with all my favorite chocolates and sweets as a goodbye present. The bad thing about getting to close to your host family was when the time comes for you to change families it can be very hard and I don't mean in just the "feeling way". You start to wonder, and ask yourself question: like was your time well spent with the family, and was your last impression with the family a good one? Did you accomplish all your goals? And whether or not you should visit them frequently after changing families? Talking to your family on facebook or hearing from other people that your family misses you helps a lot. And also knowing that you can always go back to visit whenever you want. All your questions are put to rest.

Whenever I had a problem, I always tried to look at it from both sides. You have to be able to stand back and see where and what the problem is, before you come up with a plan and try to handle it. For example, I had just moved in with my second host family. We had already done the "first night questions", so I knew what my boundaries were and the rules of the family. One night I was up at about 10:30pm, making some food because I had come home from soccer

training late that day. My host family's dog had started to bark outside, because she wanted inside. My host father came tramping down the stairs to let the dog in, came into the kitchen, and started blaming me for the dogs barking, and why was I eating so late at night. To make a long story short, I did not know what I did to upset him, but pretty much I had a terrible night. I started to asking myself questions like "why did I get sent to this family", and "the next three months are going to be terrible". In the morning my father called me down for lunch and before we went in the kitchen to eat. He stopped me and said, "Evan about last night...", and because I did not want the problem to go on any longer, I just simply said to him, "Don't worry about it". I thought about it later and realized, that he has a pretty long and stressful job, and he does not get many hours of sleep. My point is, I knew after 24 hours what the problem was, and instead of being mad at my family for a period of time. It was all behind us in a day.



I don't know if I am the same person who left in August. You definitely feel more grown up and more independent.

But for me, I just have this plan in my head. And when I am done here doing all the things I want to do, and arrive at home. I am not going to stop going 100%. I just have this confident feeling that everything is going to be alright.

The advice that I have for other rotary students and anyone about to go on exchange, is to try very hard to learn some of your language skills, before you are going out on exchange. Make sure you have all the basics of the language already. It will save you so much time and hard work trying to ask, and figure out the language. And try to get to the point where your host family starts to feel more like your real family. It is better to be a member of the family, rather than being a guest. You have to show that you want to be an active member of the family, and make sure you are becoming a part of their family, instead of you trying to make them a member of yours. And always be willing to try new things. If someone asks you to participate in something you know you will not like, or asks for your help. I would recommend going to the thing you hate, and helping out the person because you never know down the road who you will meet and the people you will influence.

I would just like to tell everyone that you have this one year chance, to live that perfect life and to see the world. And you will never get that chance in your life again. So make sure you don't waste it!

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## Olivia Colson

**Host Club: Las Colonias, Corenel Suarez, Argentina**

**Sponsor Club: Wenatchee Sunrise Rotary, Wenatchee, USA**

To sum up this year in just one word, that one word would have to be "full". Not to be confused with busy, oh no, the Argentine culture doesn't allow that. And not full in the sense of the word that you feel after eating Thanksgiving dinner and all the blood rushing to your stomach makes you want to hibernate and just drift away into a warm sleep. Full, as in fulfilling, complete, well rounded. I leave Argentina full. My head has never stopped spinning this year and even though school in Argentina sucks; it is now filled to the brim. I'm overflowing with memories of the beautiful places I've visited and with all the love of the people I've met and will miss so much. I'm taking so much more of Argentina back with me than what is in my bulging suitcases, the wild gestures and colorful phrases in Spanish, the music (viva la cumbia), the customs, like talking at like three times the volume as an American conversation, the recipes, the kindness of the people, mate and hopefully, the siesta.

I didn't have an impossibly hard year, but I sure didn't have an easy year, and I really wouldn't have it any other way. That mix, of days when I felt a sadness that was so solid and heavy and could only be alive by some good cathartic

crying, and then those days when I was on top of the world, surrounded by people who love me, laughing together, feeling inside like I was in a place of absolute peace. That mix of ups and downs, challenges and triumphs, falling down and finding myself on my feet once again, taught me so much. I struggled here in the beginning, with more than just the language and filling that strange and ringing silence that followed me around for months until I regained me voice. I struggled to show the world who I was, since, for the first time in my life, I was in a place that didn't already have a definition of 'Olivia Colson' and that could nudge me back in the right direction when I myself forgot.



So I've changed. There's no doubt about that. Now the next step is seeing what sticks, coming back and readjusting to my old life, and what other changes that will provoke. I found something made out of iron in me this year, a strength that I know will never fail me, and I don't really understand it, or where it came from, but just accept it. And even though I still have a month left, I've already learned that goodbyes are the hardest things in the world. But at the same time they make you realize just how much you love someone and that makes life

beautiful, even in all the pain of knowing you may never see them again.

This year was exactly what I needed. And it was a wonderful year, learning, traveling, experiencing, and making friends and family. I've had more fun this year in Argentina than I could ever describe and for that, the concept of coming home is something my mind likes to shy away from. A paradox, as I count the days left I am counting them down and at the same time lamenting every week that slips away.

I am ready to come home, to move on with my life because that's another thing I learned this year, that at least for now my life is firmly rooted in America. I'm ready to come home, to finish high school, see all my friends, spend SO MUCH TIME with my family, and to start thinking about my future, what I will study and what kind of life I will lead. Argentina will always be a part of me, there's no way that it can't be, and I will be back. The only thing that really makes me sad, other than the goodbyes which just kill me, is that to the rest of the world, this year it's just not real. Some kind of fantasy tale set in an exotic land that they can't relate to at all. And to me, it is so so much more than just a story

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**Alex Bugert**

**Host Club: Valle Interoceanico,  
Quito, Ecuador**

**Sponsor Club: Wenatchee  
Downtown, Wenatchee, USA**

This year has probably been the most fun, most awful year of my life. It's been a change in perspective, an awakening to appreciation, a test of homesickness, and a whole new world.

I'm looking forward to the obvious simplistic items such as my own bed, my kitchen with a real stove, dishwasher and sink with hot water. Along with washer & dryer, carpet, drinkable water from the faucet, good food, and people with cars. I also look forward to the freedom of being who I am.

As the year comes to an end, I realize two major things. In the beginning I was in culture shock, not understanding how these people can live without simple things such as heaters and air conditioning, clean water or non-gas stoves. After living here for a year my appreciation for both homes has gone up. I appreciate both the luckiness I have around what I have, and I appreciate a life more simplistic and how it can still, be just as good. My perspective on life is changed, but it's not just one simple "this is how it has changed", nor is it always explainable at all. It's a bunch of little things, I think, which would explain it the best. From the baker down the street, to the poor kids on the street playing soccer on a cool summer evening, life is so simplistic here, and I realize how great both here, and the U.S.A is.

I've learned not only the changes that have happened to me, but also just figured out who I am. I couldn't sit you

down and start bulleting points out explaining my personality and behaviors, but I have figured out how I think, why I think that way, and I have a drive to do whatever I want to do.

My friends back home, some I feel like never missed me, but most I feel miss me just as much as I expected them too. It's different too I think, to be doing an exchange after you senior year, when all your friends have gone their separate ways too, to college, to work, to travel... and so on. It's less like your just taking yourself out of the picture, and more like this is just your path, like they all have theirs.

I have plenty of plans for work and fun when I get back. Starting up the week I get back with photography, and going from there. I can't wait to see all my family and friends, explore the beautiful Washington state, and be sleeping in my own bed, with a new pet guinea pig.

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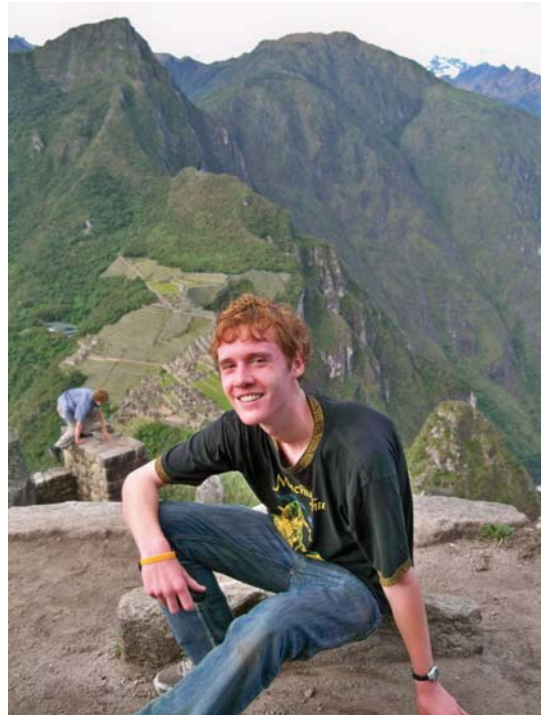
## Garred Kirk

**Host Club: San Borja Sur, Lima, Peru**

**Sponsor Club: Yakima Sunrise, Yakima, USA**

Well it's hard to believe I have been here for more than 10 months and there are only a few weeks left. It's strange because even though I am looking forward to going home yet at the same time it feels like I have been here in Perú for much longer than a year. I miss the food, my friends, my house, my family

and I look forward to seeing them. Yet it seems so long ago that I saw them last.



I wouldn't necessarily say that Lima is my new "home" so to speak as when I think of home I still think of Yakima, but at the same time while here in Perú I come to think of Lima as where I belong. When coming back from a trip to the wonderful places Perú has to offer I would always look forward to getting back to my house and the familiarity of Lima. I don't think too much of what I am going to miss about Perú because I can't know what I am going to miss until it is no longer for here for me. Maybe it will be lomo saltado (my favorite Peruvian food), my host-dog Nieve, the giantness that is the city of Lima, the sitting on a bud for hours just to get somewhere. I know I am going to miss my host families and all my friends obviously. But at the same time I remember when I got here that even though I was sad about what I was

leaving in the US that I was going to get to see all of it again, and that is the feeling I have right now about Perú. It is now always going to be a part of who I am. From the Spanish language, to the food, the cultural need to always show up at least an hour late. Everything has had an impact on me.

I have had a lot of time to discover who I really am this year, and I'm not going to go in-depth into that as that would take up a bajillion pages. But this year basically accomplished for me what I wanted it to. I have a better understanding of who I am and I got to experience an entirely different life than the one I had grown accustomed to.

Getting back is going to be so weird. As I write this I have less than 2 weeks to go. I can't imagine myself at my house in two weeks. I see myself here in Lima. But I do indeed have to go back to summer where I will be spending time catching up with friends, family and other things in preparation for my freshman year of college. At the same time as I find it hard to believe my year is almost done I feel I am ready to go home. I have gotten what I have wanted from this and I feel almost like I am just counting down until I get home. I find myself struggling to find things to do for these last few days, and I'm starting to come to the realization that pretty soon I am going to be saying goodbye. So I guess that about wraps things up. I am glad I got to have the year I had and shall miss it a lot, yet I feel ready to face the next phase of life.

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## Maddy McCuaig

**Host Club: Rotary Club de Florida, Argentina**

**Sponsor Club: Shuswap Rotary Club, Salmon Arm, Canada**

I am still having difficulties believing that I have less than a month left in Argentina. The time has absolutely flown by, it seems like just a few weeks ago that I was struggling through my Spanish; I feel that I still have so much to learn. I am hesitant to leave, but at the same time, it will be wonderful to see my home and family again. This experience has truly been a once in a life time experience and I feel that I have grown as a person due to it.

Currently I am living with my first host family as my last family lived to far from my school and rotary did not sanction the move. Therefore, I am sharing a house with an American girl, it is nice to have another exchange student here for my last few weeks, as we are able to take the bus into the city and explore. I have seen so much lately, it is almost overwhelming. I have gone to a petting zoo with lions and tigers, visited beautiful old buildings, visited with my friends. I can't even list all of the amazing things that my families have taken me to do. I am going to miss being able to visit all of the historic places and learning about another culture. Yet I am excited to return home at the same time. There are things that I have missed but they are odd things. I want to be able to breath clean unpolluted air, or walk on even sidewalks, I think I may have

broken a few of my toes on the old sidewalks that the trees have ruined, hahaha. Once I was rushing to get home and literally sent myself flying through the air, and people came rushing over to see if I had injured myself, so my pride is really looking forward to those even sidewalks.

I am going to miss the culture from here though; it is so different from Canada's. Canada accepts everyone else's culture, and being here has made me see just how accepting we are, to the point what we almost don't have a culture of our own; there are traditional foods, dances, and music from here. I mean I had to make a presentation about Canada, and the hardest part was our food, all of it comes from another country. This is Canada's culture, it is mosaic of other countries, and these different traditions are what make Canada what it is, though I will miss the traditional foods and dances that I have gotten to partake in here.

Yet as excited as I am to see my home in Canada again, I am going to miss it here, as this has become my home as well. I have another life here, and in order to go back to my life in Canada I need to leave the one that I have here. So I am both excited and hesitant to go back to Canada. As for the year, I am beginning to put it in perspective. I have learned a lot about myself here, not that I have changed who I am, but have accepted it. I have also learned to be more accepting towards other, not that I wasn't before, but being here has showed me that optimistic and a good attitude will get you further than anything. As for learning things about "here and back home", I

have found that people are generally the same. They all just want someone who is enjoyable to be around.

As for next year, I am going to go to university. I am going to go to Simon Fraser University in Burnaby. I am extremely excited to go, and to experience yet another new thing, as being on this exchange has really taught me to embrace change, not to fear it. I am very grateful for the opportunity that Rotary gave me, and I will definitely recommend the program to other people. Not just because an exchange is a wonderful experience, but because doing the exchange teaches you so much, especially the Rotary Youth Exchange, as it truly allows you to immerse yourself in the culture. This is the last of my emails as an exchange student, so I would just like to fully express how extremely grateful I am, this has been a once in a life time experience. Also I would like to wish the future exchange students good luck, and just tell them to enjoy it, as it really is a wonderful opportunity.

Sincerely,

Maddy

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**Zev Isert**

**Host Club: Brest, Cote des Legendes, France**

**Sponsor Club: Revelstoke Rotary Club, Revelstoke, Canada**



Bonjour le monde!

Time, it goes by too fast. Days, weeks, months, and now, almost a whole year that's passed in front of me. I sure I enjoyed every second I had here. These days were one of a kind. Whatever words, stories, gifts, memories, and souvenirs I've collected throughout the year will never be forgotten.



This year I spent in France was wonderful. I've met so many interesting people and made so many friends that I'm so glad to have come across! Looking back I've made my way across hundreds of new experiences and situations that I would have never believed myself able to pass at this time last year. My new life is coming to its end, I can see my day on the calendar.. However I still have trouble deciding on which emotions to feel. In the last couple months I've really got the language down, and all of the really awesome stuff comes out to play. I don't know if I want to go home this soon. It's almost as if my year is just starting.

Then there's the urge to get home to my friends and family which is, problematically, contrary to other emotions. Other than my friends I'm going to miss many other aspects of my

new culture. Ranging from foods to the stuff we do to keep ourselves entertained. There are so many little aspects of this life that I love, all the bits and pieces swept into the corners. Traditional festivals, regional foods, people's accents, places histories. I've really learnt a lot about myself this year, I know it, but can't explain. There is a new taste for adventure, to really seek out and learn about these new cultures. Someone told me that "If one wants to describe the human condition, he'll need to travel to see it flower all over the world." I thought I knew so much about how the world works, how people interact, but there's way more than I ever thought. The other question for me to talk about was my future. I've been putting lots of thought into what I'd like to do with my life, but really can't decide. I love doing so many different things; too many that I can decide what I'd really like to do. I figure it's okay though, I still have two years of high school to do. So I've got time. Anyway, I wish you all the best times to come!

Zev.

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**Sandra Gongora**

**Host Club: Rotary Club of Rodez, Rodez, France**

**Sponsor Club: Rotary Club of Prosser, Prosser, USA**

My exchange year has come to its end and it's easy to say that this was one of

the strangest years of my life. There is no way I could begin to describe everything I have been through, the beautiful places I have traveled and the amazing people I've met. I made long life time friends. Living in France has changed me in unexplainable ways.

My outlook and perspectives of the world. I have expanded my horizons and opinions on people and culture. I could call France my home, for I have a family there that I can consider mine, and friends that are unforgettable! I learned on how to deal with many difficult situations, and how to smooth out the awkward moments :) haha



Next year I am going to attend, Western Washington University and hope to major in world languages (Spanish and French) and business. I am looking forward to it, and I think that this year

has prepared me for so much ahead of me ! :)

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## Alyssa Stowell

**Host Club: Klepp, Naerobo and Bryne Rotary Clubs, Bryne, Norway**

**Sponsor Club: Merritt Sunrise and Merritt Rotary Clubs, Merritt, Canada**

So final Rotex Roundup and I remember the exact spot where I sat to write my first one and who would have thought that time has come to do our last report.

Well, this year abroad has been the most independent adventure I've ever been on, so for that I m grateful. Grateful for the things I've learned, the people I have met, and the places I have seen. Sure I have had people by my side the entire way cheering me on, but I've had to step up and make it happen myself. I've learned that hard work pays off, and a good attitude is key to everything. I have learned that good friends are hard to find and once you have them do everything to keep them as friends. I've also learned adapting to your environment is essential, but scary at times. I've learned to be myself and not to be to easily influenced. Also I've grown a greater appreciation for other customs, other languages, and other beliefs. So to sum up, this year has meant the whole entire world to me.

I go home in exactly 2 weeks, and what I'm looking forward to the most is seeing my mom, dad, and Katy my older sister, to see my best friends, and guy friends, to go to University, to make my own money, and to drive!!

When I leave Norway, I am going to miss living 5 minutes from the ocean, my 3 Norwegian best friends, and all 3 of my host families, my rotary counsellor Olaug, Norwegian food, culture and language. I think I just named everything there is to miss about Norway haha, but that's full on what I am going to miss.



I am starting to be able to put this year in perspective, and the way I see it, if I can learn a new way of communicating, live in a town where no one knows where Merritt BC is, or my parents, learn new household rules, new eating habits, new way of presenting myself, and being great friends with people who have a slightly different definition of every word, then I can handle the next 5-6 years of University. It goes beyond school as well. I feel that I will be able to

make a nice new life for myself if I go out on my own. It's nice to have the option of being independent and knowing that if I go out on my own I will be just fine, but now moving back to Canada, I have that same independence, and only now with family support, so I am extra fortunate.



I have learned that if I make a mistake, that I learn from it, that I can adjust and adapt, that I can do anything that I want to do if the necessary amount of effort and energy is put into it, and definitely not saying it will be easy, but that it can be done if I want it bad enough.

I have learned from others their view on the world, from their thoughts on religion and politics, science and art, education and culture, all the way to the more simple topics, where I have learned their ideas and thoughts about food, hair, clothes, jobs and family. So all in all, I ask a lot of questions, so I guess I have learnt a lot about people, and a lot from people.

When I come home to BC, I start work 1 week after arriving. During the weekdays I will work for the City of Merritt, mowing lawns etc, and on the weekends

I will work Weekend Clean up Crew at Tolko. After the summer I start my first year of University at TRU studying Sciences.



Looking forward to seeing everyone at the Rebound weekend, and Rotary, you guys are the best. See you soon : D

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## Chelan Pauly

**Host Club: Rotary Club of Rimac, Lima, Peru**

**Sponsor Club: Downtown Wenatchee Rotary, Wenatchee, USA**

I can't believe I'm leaving home again. It's time to say goodbye to my family, my friends, my dog, my running routes, and everything else that has become mine in the past year. Basically I have to say farewell to an entire culture, language and life. But it's also welcome back. The months and days have flown by and in less than two weeks I will be in Wenatchee. I'll be in my own bed, in the valley where I have spent 18 years of my

life. I'll be back in the real world where I don't stand out as the gringo girl and where my family looks like me. I'll be with the people I loved and missed all year long. I'll see snow, eat chocolate chip cookies, speak English, swim in Lake Chelan and live the life that until this year was my only reality.

I don't know what to think. In some ways it feels like I have lived in Peru forever and at the same time I feel like I just arrived a month ago. Time is playing tricks on my mind and blurring everything together. Each day of this exchange has been an adventure and everyday I thank Rotary for the opportunity of a lifetime, for the dream come true. I have seen, heard, loved, felt, and truly become a part of this incredible country. I have learned about a culture, a history and a language... and even more importantly I have learned who I am. I have discovered my strengths and tried to overcome my weaknesses. Now I know what I value in the world and what is important in my life. I have defined myself and I can say with confidence that I am Chelan Pauly.



To tell you the truth, I very have mixed feelings about the end of this exchange.

There is no denying the fact that I am sad. I have become accustomed to my life in Lima, the food, the music, and the energy of the city. And the life of an exchange student is obviously fabulous... for an entire year my only responsibility has been to travel, learn, and experience. It is going to be very, very difficult to leave that paradise. But I think I am ready. I feel as if this year I hit the pause button and it's time to push play again. These months have been the perfect sabbatical to find myself and recharge my batteries but now it's time to get on with life. It has been one of the best years of my life and I'll miss it like crazy but it's time to move forward. I have a career to study and a future to pursue!

Living every moment,

Chelan Pauly

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## Leanna Gruendel

**Host Club: Recklinghausen-Vest, Marl, Germany**

**Sponsor Club: Ogopogo Rotary Club, Kelowna, Canada**

I can't believe I am now writing the final Round-up for my year. It seems like just yesterday I was stepping off the plane and into my new home. I have now been here for ten months and I have only a few weeks left. Although I am excited to see my family and friends back home, I am sad to be leaving Germany. These past months have been the time of my

life. I have experienced and learned so much, and I know that this year abroad has changed me in many ways. What I will miss most about Germany is the friendships I have made. And by this I don't mean only my school friends, but also my host families and the other exchange students in my district. My 'family' is no longer just my immediate family members back in Kelowna, but now also includes my three host families and the whole exchange student family. I have been so lucky to have come into contact with so many wonderful people. I am now in my last host family, and all three of my families have been absolutely great. They have all shown so much kindness and patience with me. I am so thankful to have had families who welcome me in as a member of the family, who I can turn to for advice and help, who I can trust and have fun with.

One thing I am really looking forward to in Canada is putting my new knowledge of Germany and its language to use with my father's family. My grandmother and relatives all come from Germany, and I am so excited to be able to build stronger connections with them through my understanding of their homeland, language, and culture. Speaking with my grandmother on the phone in German has really made it clear to me that my life here in Germany doesn't just "end" when I return to Canada, but that the things I have learned will be carried with me for the rest of my life.

It is hard to believe that one year ago I knew not a word of German, and very little about everyday German life. I will be coming home with a new language and a whole new view on how life can be

lived. This, I find, is amazing. This year has meant so much to me that I cannot even describe it. Picking up and moving to a new country where you really have no idea what life will be like and where you don't speak the language is taking a huge jump into the deep end. But coming on this exchange was one of the best decisions I have ever made.

Next year I am going to study at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. I plan on majoring in International Relations, because after this year, I cannot imagine going back to only learning and focusing on Canada. I want to experience and learn about so many cultures of the world. I would love to be able to do another exchange during university and have this sort of opportunity again.



I cannot speak highly enough of the Rotary Youth Exchange Program. I would recommend this program to everyone. Through my exchange I have had so many opportunities and I have learned so much that I know I never would have experienced had I not done a year abroad. Thank you so much!

Tschüß! - Leanna Gründel

The picture is from when I celebrated Germany's Karneval in March.

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## Kolton Procter

**Host Club: Manisa Rotary Klubu, Turkiye**

**Sponsor Club: Armstrong Rotary Club, Armstrong, Canada**

Here it is, the last one. Since the winter report, a lot has happened. I have done an immense amount of traveling: from the glistening mineral deposits of Pamukkale, to the countryside's of Sart and Kula. Çanakkale (a land rich in war history) spent with Aussies and Kiwis, the far east of Mardin and Mount Nemrut, to the west as far as Athens and north to the Black Sea region. The Turks tell me I've seen everything there is to see, besides İstanbul but, "that's another world all on its own" they say.



During the months of February and March things really slowed down for me. I felt the weight of every day pass in this little satellite city. Out of all of the

exchange students in this district only my friend Fernanda from México and I was placed here. School became too routine and although I had been going to the gym to try and keep busy, the horizon only looked grey. It didn't help when Fernanda decided to go home either because it meant I didn't have the safety-cushion-like quality of my good friend who understood what I was going through. I had to try harder in all aspects of my exchange at this point. I needed to put more effort into making closer relationships with my host family and school friends. I pushed through those sluggish months this way, simply keeping on, and again returned to bliss. I feel utterly spoiled by the amount of travel offered by my host district. I honestly travel somewhere new almost every weekend may it be by plane, bus or simply exploring a new part of İzmir (the big city where the other exchange students live) by foot.



Most recently here in Turkey's Rotary world they had their District Conference. The Youth Exchange program had to put on a show so, naturally, we dressed up in our finest traditional Turkish costumes and shook our tail feathers\*. Also presented that same day was a video I

made on behalf of all of the Exchange Students\*\*. Our presentation was a huge success. It brought the Governor General to tears!

Something that I think will be challenging when I return is speaking one language. Even now I catch myself before I throw Turkish words at my parents over Skype. For example, "Yes, you know we just gezed around..." I don't even know what word explains 'gez' in English. I'm sure any exchange student can relate. Some words simply work better in a language other than English!

At the time I write this, I have 43 days remaining here in this *harika* land. That means only six more weeks of tomatoes and cucumbers with breakfast and ice cold refreshing ayran with lunch. All but a little over a month until my relationship with çay (which we never wanted to call 'tea') ends; it's leaves swirling about at the bottom of the glass. A little more than a month to emerge from the metro and get lost in Kemeraltı's seemingly endless streets or just to sit on Kordon with friends... or even taking the public transportation around the city; shimmering blue eyes swaying on the rearview mirror of the dolmuş... Michelle you will soon know what I'm talking about.

As for what the rest of my exchange holds: a few more trips have been planned (you cannot get tired of those). And tomorrow, for the first time all year, I'm going to experience what it's like to have a host brother. His name is Rıza and, as I write these words, has just landed in İstanbul after a year in Arizona. I wonder what it's going to be like for me

when I follow suit. It's interesting how an exchange student always prepares to leave their true counties, but does one honestly prepare for coming home? Rotary, you've given me a year that has expanded every aspect of my life ten fold.

*Size ne kadar teşekkür etsem az,*

Kolton Procter

\*Turkish dance we preformed (I am front-center). The end is definitely worth watching:

<http://dokuzeylulrotary.shutterfly.com/8547>

\*\*D2440 Inbounds 2011 video:  
<http://www.facebook.com/video/video.php?v=10150260622131233>

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## Michelle Yelland

**Host Club: Club Uri, Altdorf, Switzerland**

**Sponsor Club: Rotary Clubs of Westbank / Peachland, Peachland, Canada**

As I sit here, writing this Rotex Roundup, it keeps dawning on me that I only have 4 short weeks left in Switzerland. After being here for 10 months, the reality of that statement still hasn't hit me and I know that in a couple weeks it will suddenly be a shock. How can I possibly return to normal life back in Canada after having a year filled with amazing,

new, exciting experiences? At this point, it doesn't seem possible.

The last three months have absolutely flown by. March came and brought the Swiss festival of "Fasnacht" with it. The atmosphere of this week-long event is one that I can never forget. Cities literally shut down for a week straight. In my town, Altdorf, the main street was shut for pedestrians and bands so that they could walk freely down the street without the worry of traffic. I saw about 6 parades, had 3 different costumes and have never slept so little in my life! The Swiss people are really intense about Fasnacht. In Altdorf we had an opening parade on a Wednesday night with incredibly well done costumes and practiced musicians. The drumming bands went into the night until about 2-3 am. This is a tradition that started off religiously to say goodbye to winter and to welcome spring. It is now, however, not so traditionally practiced, but more of a fun, family time to dress up and have parties with your friends and families. I would explain it as a week-long celebration of Halloween. Every night different bands would walk through the main streets and play music until 1 am. I was living almost right downtown Altdorf at the time and I heard the music as I was lying in bed as if they were playing in my room. The atmosphere of this Carnival was so cool! From little kids to adults, absolutely everyone was at some point dressed up. Living in such a small town as Altdorf, it made it even cozier when everyone knew each other. It was an experience I will always remember.



April approached and I celebrated my 19<sup>th</sup> birthday. It was one that I will never forget! My friends and I had a great time barbecuing and enjoying each others company. In mid April I traveled to Germany to the beautiful town of Heidelberg with my Rotary club. We spent an amazing weekend touring the city and learning many historic tales. It was neat to see another country's culture and compare the difference and similarities to Switzerland.



Since then, I've finished my season with my soccer team, been to the "Disneyland" of Europe and have already started to say goodbye. Two weeks ago my two best exchange student friends left and returned home. It's really got me thinking about how many close relationships I've formed here and how in one month I will have to finish saying my goodbyes. I'm not looking forward to that, in fact I am dreading it. How can I say goodbye to this place I've come to know as home?

My year has been one non-stop learning experience. Everyday has been something new, exciting and worthwhile. I am very grateful for this chance that I've had, to see and do so many things I couldn't have otherwise done. Thank you Rotary for making it possible!

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## Rebecca Fafard

**Host Club: Medemblik – Koggenland Rotary Club, Bevenkarspel – Brootebroek, Netherlands**

**Sponsor Club: Summerland Rotary Club, Summerland, Canada**

This past year has had its ups and its down but each up and each down came with a memory that I'm happy to look back on and learn, laugh or cry from. If I had to summarize the past year I would put it into a couple different world like a challenge or mesmerizing but in the end it end up as another learning curve that will help me in the future. Though as the moment seems I'm looking forward to seeing my family in Canada and just being back in the atmosphere of my small little town. It's funny after this year I really understand the saying "Home is where the heart is" because as much as I love travelling I feel the best in the country were I grew up in. This is because a person understand and that how your body has learned to grow to understand it is probably why a lot of people who immigrate usually sometime

end up after sum odd years moving back to their birth place.



As this journey come to an end I find myself wondering is it really the end, was this “Home” for the most part and what am I going to miss the most from going back to Canada. Well after having to look back on what I have done this far I would have to say no it’s not the end it’s just the beginning of a lifelong friendship and i hope to be able to travel back to visit everyone that I have met during my stay. As far as I know I have several homes all over but again back to the saying before “Home is where the heart is” come in, my home is where my heart is and my heart is with everyone I have met and gotten to know over the time here in the Netherlands. Hmm now for the last thought what am I going to miss the most I would have to say the people I have met and always being surround by history and the ancient architecture of the buildings though I’m not going to

miss the wind and rain that I have been biking in for the past year.

I still can’t really say that I have truly learned more about myself, though I can say I have found myself to be a very quiet and introverted person. Which probably affected my exchange for a big part but I have learned to figure out and problem solve situation fast and I have become more easy going and more relaxed. From being over her in the Netherlands I have become less conservative and more open minded to bad language and the way people act or show affection and as far as I can remember about how myself and my friends and family dealt with or thought about bad language is very closed minded or narrow minded but again in different place very one acts differently but as I say I have opened my mind to it but I still don’t do it so I know I have kept the same about myself. As I find myself coming close to returning home I find myself wondering will everything this be ok or has the way we grown been too far part to be able to still pull together our old friendships.

For the up and coming year after my exchange I am going to a community college to get my certificate in business and I hope to then transfer to Kwantlen polytechnic University for my bachelor’s in Fashion design and Technology. I also hope to volunteer and maybe be able to help out with the Rotary Program in my town or with the new exchange student as a rebound. So well though life we learn that as we grow up, we learn that even the one person that wasn’t supposed to ever let us down, probably will. You’ll have your heart broken and

you'll break others' hearts. You'll fight with your best friend or maybe even fall in love with them, and you'll cry because time is flying by. So take too many pictures, laugh too much, forgive freely, and love like you've never been hurt. Life comes with no guarantees, no time outs, no second chances. you just have to live life to the fullest, tell someone what they mean to you and tell someone off, speak out, dance in the pouring rain, hold someone's hand, comfort a friend, fall asleep watching the sun come up, stay up late, be a flirt, and smile until your face hurts. Don't be afraid to take chances or fall in love and most of all; live in the moment because every second you spend angry or upset is a second of happiness you can never get back.

Rebecca Fafard

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## Misha Noble-Hearle

**Host Club: Rotary Club Udine, Udine, Italy**

**Sponsor Club: Rotary Club of Penticton, Penticton, Canada**

After a slight modification to the popular saying, the words become the perfect closure to this rhythm of life we have lived for the past nine months and, as they are quickly coming to an end I keep thinking this: "As a one door closes, an old one opens." Everything that has become everyday routine will just be completely cut off, most likely forever, and we will return to the exact same

lives we left, only as different people. Not to offend any of my other fellow exchangees, but frankly, I am excited. This year has meant eating pasta everyday for nine months, not getting (too) excited anymore about Venetian canals, taking a train on a regular basis, drinking wine at dinner, eating at 930pm every night, forgetting English vocabulary, forgetting Italian vocabulary, and speaking Italian for several days without having one conversation in English. As strange as it will be to have this current life just torn from its hinges, and as much as I will miss my life here, I also miss Canada.



Currently with my third and last family, I am finally completely comfortable in an Italian home, and have a family who I will miss once returning to Canada. I am living a little outside of the city where I go to school, and I love the little town and the neighborly Italian feel of the area. It's starting to feel a lot like summer in Italy, as it warmed up earlier than Canada and the Italians, who are a little afraid of the cold, have returned to the streets and the gelato shops and the cafes making the typical Italian lifestyle come back to life.

Italy is an amazing place with a rich and colourful culture, and it truly is a passionate place with passionate people.

The Italians put passion into everything they do, where it is necessary and where it is not. Obviously the quaintness of the cities, the beautiful landscapes, and culture are what will be expected to be missed the most, but for me, I will miss this passion that the Italians put into everything, as well as little things that make me happy every day (oh and Italian gelato...). On the other hand, I am most excited to go back to Canada because of how relaxed Canadians are, in general, which is something I really miss about everyday life, as well as the hockey hype (which unfortunately will be mostly over). As much as I love speaking Italian and I am proud that I have learned a whole new language almost fluently in 9 months, I miss being able to say *exactly* what I am trying to say.

Everyone has a different exchange year, some better and some worse, but in my opinion everyone learns similar things about themselves and about others. Living with host families has made me accustomed dealing with anyone in a pleasant manner because when you have to continue living with them, mature is all you can be. The Italian school system has made me appreciate the success of the Canadian school system and how lucky I am to have been taught how to learn and how to think, instead of how to memorise. I have learned how to deal with situations I never thought I would encounter and how to be with myself when I have no one else to go to for company. As difficult as many of these learning experiences were, I think that they have made me a better version of who I used to be.

Last year at this time, after a stressful, studious final year of high school, the thought of going to university and stressing some more was something I couldn't even think about, but after this year, I am extremely excited about going to university next year to learn because even though I learned in a different sense this year, I miss the school kind of learning (it is difficult in Italian). I will be attending Dalhousie University in Halifax where I will be, yet again, a several hour plane ride from home but it will definitely be a different year. I would like to thank Rotary for everything they have done for me this year, and although it was not the easiest year of my life, it was definitely an experience I needed to have and a year that was well worth it. I will miss hearing Italian floating through the house, but I am excited for English; I loved the year, but I am excited to be home.

Grazie e arrivederci; thank you and good bye.

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**Erin Kinsey Miller**

**Host Club: Carolinekilde Rotary Club, Odense, Denmark**

**Sponsor Club: Rotary Club of Kamloops Daybreak, Kamloops, Canada**

It is absolutely astounding to think that these are my last two weeks left of my exchange to Denmark. As I sit on my Eurotour bus, weaving its way through

the Dutch countryside, I remember all the reasons why I wanted to participate in this exchange. A little over a year ago, I would have never believed that I could have, not one, but two home countries; I would have never believed that I would ever be able to call Europe my home; and I would have never believed that I would become family to a group of complete strangers. This year has brought me so many opportunities that I would have otherwise never received. I have traveled more this year than I ever have before, and it has brought me to countries such as Spain, Italy, Germany, France, Holland, and many more. I have learned and grown more than I would have ever thought possible, and have created friendships that I know will last a lifetime.



Although I am ridiculously excited to be back home in Canada, I know I will miss my host families and friends immensely. It will be strange to wake up at home once again. However, I am actually going to be attending school in England this coming September, so I will be off traveling once more. I imagine leaving Denmark will be a painful experience, and I will miss many things about this fantastic country. I will miss even the smallest details like my favourite

restaurant, Bagels and Coffee, the ability to take trains nearly everywhere, and I may even miss biking everywhere. However, everything must come to an end eventually, and I feel as though I am ready to return home. This truly was one of the best years of my life, and I have had some unforgettable experiences with some unforgettable people.

Vi ses Danmark, og tak for en rigtig fantastisk oplevelse! Jeg skal savner dig!

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**Kiah Allen**

**Host Club: Rotary Club of Milano, Milano, Italy**

**Sponsor Club: Kamloops West Rotary, Kamloops, Canada**

As I sit here on my host family's terrace in Italy writing this round up I don't even know where to start. I don't think I yet know what this year has meant to me. I've had the best, the most difficult, the most rewarding and the most life changing year of my life. I am looking forward to seeing my family and close friends at home; I miss my brother more than anyone else I think. But other than that I don't want to leave. Italy has become my home. I can't even count the number of times I've been talking to someone and I refer to 'home' in a sentence or a story, and they always have to ask which home, because I refer to places in both Italy and Canada as home. Even though I'm taller than half of the men here, have blonde hair and freckles, I am now certainly an Italian-

Canadian. My Italian friends and I joke that my real name is Chiara (pronounced 'Kiara' and nicknamed 'Kia') Allenino (which really means 'small Allen' I suppose).

I've learned many things about myself this year, I've learned that I love literally every food Italians have to offer, I've learned that I am actually not as outgoing or brave as I thought I was (or in fact was) in Canada (I thought I was just going to stroll into Italy and make friends and fit in immediately, not the case). In terms of what I learned about people back home is who really cared enough to stay in touch throughout this year, but also that my friends back home can't grasp what I've done, what I've been through, experienced and accomplished in Italy.



I think that one of my biggest challenges going home will be relating to people

who used to know me inside out and now don't understand me as well as they did before. I have also learned from my friends back home that University is really difficult and I am going to have a tough year ahead of me at UBC. I was just choosing my courses for my upcoming year in Canada and I was thinking how sad it is that I won't see Federica painting up a storm everyday, or Alessia sculpting her heart out, at my art school in Milano. My class at school in Italy is like another host family for me, they were my main support system in Italy. I really am amazed with them that even the first week I was at school I was immediately accepted into their circle of friends and treated as if I'd been there all along.

I'm going to miss the language, in my opinion the most beautiful language in the world, speaking it and hearing it and living it. I will miss the overly emotional, charismatic, outgoing, loving, crazy soccer fanatic Italians that I have met this year. I will miss 'la mia mama ospite' (my host mom) making me pasta every single day without fail for lunch. And me never once getting tired of eating it.

In short I will miss everything and everyone so much, this year has been the most amazing experience of my life and I know I will be back in Italy to visit my family very soon. Thank you Rotary International for everything. Or 'Grazie Mille' (A thousand thanks) as the Italians say.

## Kathleen Schut

**Host Club: Club Entlebuch, Ruswil, Switzerland**

**Sponsor Club: Rotary Club of Yakima Southwest, Yakima, USA**

I'm lucky for what I've had and been given but now my biggest fear is not what lies ahead but what I have to leave behind. Home is a scary thought because I have three. Looking back Switzerland has been a dream chiseled to perfection through rough times, hard work, and more often than not having no clue what's going on. I don't know what to think and I have no stinking clue how to feel.

We as Exchange Students have been handed no guide book on how to leave our countries with whole hearts or advice on how to say good bye to our new homes millions of miles away. We've handed out promise after promise to all our new best friends filled with the hope of keeping in touch and the pledge to cross endless miles for visits. Now were alone, packing our suit cases reviewing a year of memories and packing away a new life...

I remember going skiing for the first time with my second host Mom Uschi; at the end thinking I'd lived through it and she would never go skiing with me again. Getting lost in the fog that would lead me completely alone down a restricted glacier wasn't in the plan, but my search for help and the pride I felt speaking German that would find me an eight

person van functioning as a 13 person bus (with ski gear) putting me at the base of the mountain, stepping onto the third and last gondola to the top of a 3020 meter high mountain and the sheer joy of seeing Uschi on the other side when all hope was lost.

I remember traveling southern Switzerland with my first host family. After a day of hiking in the Verzasca Valley two of my host sisters Cami and Linda, my host dad Guido, and I were sitting below the famous double arch bridge waiting for my host mom, Susanne, to arrive with the car wishing the weather was warmer. The sky was over cast and the water was ice cold any sane person could tell by just looking at it. We were sitting enjoying the moment when I realized I had only one life. No matter how long I live, when again would I be sitting here in this spot on this perfect day with these people I loved? Only one answer, never. So I asked if I could jump, if I could jump into the freezing water and seal the moment forever. Guido said it probably was illegal but because of the bad weather no one was around and he didn't mind (thinking I would never do it) and my sisters begged me not to so I peeled of my shoes and jumped.

I remember the waiting five months before I was given the opportunity to play in my first volleyball match and how happy I was that I had stuck it out week after week for that one game. I remember every night at around five when the smell of cow poo would float in from the farms. I remember falling off my bike while helping my friend train for a half marathon because I was behind

and the pipe looked a bit smaller than it really was. I remember leaving the window open every night no matter how cold just because I liked to hear the sounds outside.

I wish I could pack a fondue pot, a Roclette pan, a bread knife, a train, a Swiss Cheese and Chocolate factory, my class mates, my host families, and for heaven's sake a decent bakery in my suit case. But I can't and this year will always be my one Swiss life. The one year I took a chance bigger than my little world that without knowing would change my life forever. And over all I will always remember those that were there with me and made my one year more than just a year.

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## Melisa Ferrigno

**Host Club: Dazaifu Rotary Club, Chikushino, Japan**

**Sponsor Club: Kalamalka Rotary Club, Vernon, Canada**

I feel like I could stay one more year and still not be 100% satisfied about returning to Canada. I now have a home away from home with four wonderful families and awesomely wonderful friends who seem to understand even when I'm blabbering nonsense. Leaving is a bit bittersweet but my year here has been worth it even if it means parting for awhile.

I've discovered that learning another language will help deteriorate the ones I already know; talking to friends and family leave's them wondering what I'm saying since the words I use aren't always English. Even now while writing this Rotex Roundup I'm trying very hard not to insert a Japanese word here and there because I've become so use to mixing both languages.

The Japanese have a word for their English it's called "Katakana English" so everything is pronounced with a Japanese accent or modified somehow; examples are coffee, it becomes kōhi, my name Melisa becomes Merisa; L and R do not exist separately.



Getting use to being stared at everywhere you go is an interesting skill to posses. I can now go to a room where all the heads will turn and stare openly at me; don't mind( that's not a mistake there's the exact same saying in



Japanese, minus the I) . While flying one time on a domestic flight I was the only visible foreigner on the plane, I don't think that happens very often.

Taking everything in stride and not blowing up every time one of your hosts or Rotary members comment if you've gained weight or lost it; I think they should make allowances for weight gain considering the amount of food fed to exchange students.

It will take a while before I can look back at this year and fully understand the changes in me and my outlook. It might be that once in Canada I'll have to use the patience and tolerance I've built in order to help change people's attitude towards Japan especially now that Japan's reputation is somewhat tattered. During the March 11<sup>th</sup> disasters I've seen the compassion that human beings have for each other, despite borders and conflicting values. Thankfully no one I know personally was harmed by the events that followed, but they have changed the way we live and what matters most now in our busy lives. I'm thankful for the support of my friends and family gave me once I decided to stay despite ongoing issues. I'm glad all the Rotary students in our district and in Japan have had a safe and wonderful time during this exchange year.

This coming year I'd like to continue my studies in Japanese so as not to lose what I've learned, even if most of it is slang. I hope to improve even more and shock my friends here in Japan and back home.

Melisa