



Riley

From Guelph Trillium

to Brazil

*Brazil is a warm Country in Many ways*

It's hard to believe that I have been here almost four months. I understand from talking to people back in Canada that it is starting to snow. That is something I am strangely missing! Brazil is just so hot! I never thought I would miss winter. But there is some part of me that does.

On the other hand, Brazil is amazing!

When I first arrived, the only words in Portuguese I knew were "oi" and "Tudo bem?" "Hi" and "how are you?". Now I can understand what people are talking about. I think it is amazing in this short time, I have already been able to learn so much Portuguese!

A typical Brazilian day for me is waking up early, attending school, going home with my host family to a terrific lunch and then comes my free time. I

often hang out with my host family or friends. School goes from 7:00 in the morning until 12:20 each day except for Tuesday. Tuesday is a super long day. School starts at 7:00 but ends at 4:30. I play soccer after school every Tuesday too. Tuesday is even longer because I attend Interact and Rotary Meetings. Interact is a group of student volunteers that help out in the community.

On the weekend, I also volunteer at a dog shelter, partly because I miss my own dog at home and partly because it makes me feel so good to help out.

My first three months, I stayed with my first host family. Now I am with my second host family. It has been great to feel so welcomed and a part of a family so quickly. They have been so kind and loving. They are simply amazing people. I am very grateful.

Being in Brazil has taught me to embrace adventure and take risks. I have realized that through some of the interesting challenges presented to me. At a Rotary event a rebound student told me and my friend (an inbound from France) that it is a tradition for inbounds to take a "date" to the party. At the party, apparently part of the custom also included changing outfits with your "date". I soon realized that when the inbound from France and I were the only boys in dresses, and that our dates looked rather silly in our clothes, that we had been tricked but that we could have fun with this! We showed up to dinner in a dress, our "dates" in our outfits, and then we went to a dance party too. It was hilarious! We had so much fun and laughed so much. I realized, that I could either feel silly or embrace the fun. Every time I look at the pictures from that night, I get to laugh all over again.

One of the things that being in Brazil has also taught me is to be extra proud of being a Canadian. I have talked to people about my home, our country and our culture and every time I do, I am super proud. I have also learned to appreciate Brazilian culture. Aside from the country being warm, the people are too. They have welcomed me right off the bat. I was welcomed with hugs

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and kisses. My host families have even reached out to my family at home to reassure them that I am being well-taken care of.

Brazil is awesome. I have been here just four months and had so many amazing experiences already. I have learned so much. I have made such amazing friends. I have eaten such delicious food. There is just nothing about this experience that I haven't just loved. I know that the next eight months hold even more memories to be made for me. I am super excited!

*Riley*

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