



Liam

from Mississauga West
to
Brazil

"Sunrises"



New beginning and rebirth. These are just a couple of things that come to mind when you think of a sunrise. A new day, another chance to meet new people, make new experiences and better yourself. This is why I think that a sunrise is the perfect analogy for exchange. Imagine you are sitting waiting for the sun to rise. It's dark, and then suddenly you start to see this little ray of light. Eventually that one short ray of light in the distance turns into a wide spread of sunlight over the horizon and, as that happens, the light starts to grow and inch towards you through the sky. Sunrises are often described as one of the most beautiful sights in life. As I see it, I am currently in the middle of this beautiful experience. When the sky starts to go from more of a dull gray-blue to a beautiful wave of colours consisting of every shade of red, yellow and purple, that is where I am right now in my exchange. I believe the image above demonstrates exactly where I am in this beautiful sunrise.

Since the Big Trip I have been on summer vacation up until a couple of weeks ago. Within this time off I had time to relax and get a grip on what I wanted the rest of my exchange to look like. While reflecting, I noticed that I was spending quite a lot of time inside my house. I wanted to get out more. So one day I decided to make a list of all the activities I liked or wanted to try out.

One that stood out for me was Archery. I didn't think that there would be any places to learn here in my city but you never know until you look for yourself. After about five minutes of looking online I found a place in my city that looked trustworthy. I went to check it out and started classes the following week. This was also more or less the middle of my exchange.



As I hit the halfway point of my exchange year, I began to notice just how quickly this year is going. I began to notice the changes in my language skills and in my personality as well. With these two major changes, I began to feel much more confident with things like asking about going out and visiting other cities in my district. With this, I began to travel to the other cities with fellow exchange students. We stayed for many reasons, from just hanging out to saying goodbye to the exchange students from Australia and New Zealand. Funny enough I made the most and strongest friendships in the city furthest from mine, Presidente Prudente. Since then I have been visiting more of my Brazilian friends than exchange students. I also began to hang out with less people but more frequently. Now I have a couple of closer friends instead of lots of acquaintances. I often travel with the exchange student who I am closest with, Simon from the Netherlands.

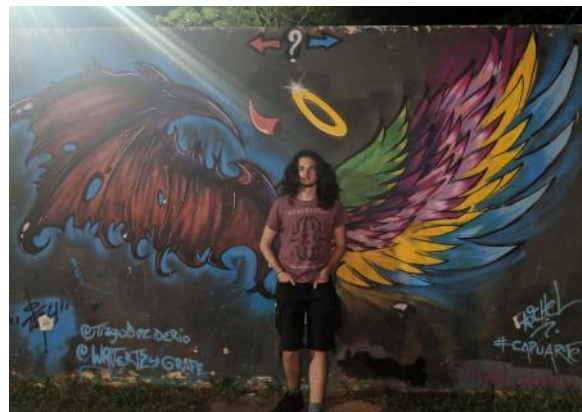


I was invited back to Prudente just a couple weeks ago, however I wasn't sure if was going to be able to go since I had just switched families the weekend before. Luckily for me they are amazing and believe that I need to strengthen all the friendships I can; close and far. Not to mention everyone in my family was busy that weekend so I would have been mostly alone in the house. This past visit with my friends was amazing! We explored the city and talked and laughed until

late at night. Although the nights weren't too bad, the days got up to around 40°C which meant we spent most time during the days in the mall, watching a movie, eating or just fooling around. We visited a pool one day for a little bit as well. Since it was so hot everyone was really tired and had to take showers every chance we got.

I returned from this weekend of fun to a new term of school. With that came a little bit of anxiety because I was starting at a new school that I didn't really know and would need to make new friends again. I was a bit worried. Not to mention my parents were still away until the end of the week which meant I had to get myself to school. Luckily I already knew someone in my class and the school is very accommodating. I was told that I could also take an extra curricular there if I wanted to. I decided that it would be fun to do swimming but on my first day there I found out that they have a robotics team which is more down my alley and not to mention I had tried it once before and loved it.

So I decided to request to do Robotics instead of swimming. I should be starting in the next week or two.



As the end of the month starts to creep up so do many other things including my birthday and Carnival. I am really looking forward to Carnival as it is known worldwide to be insanely fun here. However, this also means that I am coming to the end of my exchange (which I still can't believe). In this stage of my exchange I am beginning to become very comfortable with the way things are done here and my issues have begun to decrease as I become more independent and comfortable. This is definitely the highest point of my experience so far. Now the only thing I need to do is learn how to not be tired and I'll be good to go on forever.

Liam