



Kari

from Burlington
Central

to

Taiwan

“How can one put to words.....”

..... an experience like the one I have been through in the last 9 months? By talking about what they did, how they felt or how their life has changed. I am truly having a hard time trying how to explain my new life in words. Since my last report I have done so much and at the same time it feels like barely any time has passed.

I have now been attending my school for nine months and I have made so many friends of all different ages. They no longer treat me like foreigner (as much). I have gotten the opportunity to take classes with many of the students at my school. From joining a hilarious chemistry class with 3rd year junior students (9th grade) to joining/teaching English classes with 高三 and 高二 (11th and 12th grade) students. I'm so happy to get to know so many students at my school and I am so sad that I have to say goodbye to them in 3 weeks.



One of the things I was most looking forward to in Taiwan was getting the chance to climb the tallest mountain in Taiwan. 玉山 or Jade mountain is 3952 metres tall and takes about 2 days to climb up to the peak and back down. Rotary gave me and 20 other exchange students the opportunity to climb to the top of this beautiful mountain. It was an amazing opportunity that I would never trade for anything, however it was one of the most difficult things I have ever done in my life. Unfortunately, while we were climbing to the peak it was raining and the weather was about 0°. This made for no view and everything I was wearing to be soaked.

Before this exchange the only natural disasters I have been in were big snow storms and hail. That has completely changed since I've lived in Taiwan. I have felt many earthquakes but all of them were small and nothing happened. In April a 6.1 magnitude earthquake hit the east coast of Taiwan. It was so big that my school got evacuated just in case the building collapsed. I had a range of emotions when it happened, I was amazed because I had never felt an earthquake like that before. But at the same time I was a little scared because my classmates said that was one of the biggest earthquakes they had ever felt and I didn't know if anything was going to happen because of it.

I'm the last three months I have experienced so much. Experiences I wouldn't trade for anything. Having chances like going to Jade mountain or going to a Buddhist temple and learning about Buddhism. These are things that I would have never thought about doing until now. I'm so thankful that I have gotten the opportunity to learn so much about this culture. A culture which was foreign to me 9 months ago.

Now that I only have one month left, I'm making the most of it. I'm trying to use every day as if it is my last day. I am so grateful to everyone who took part in giving me this opportunity; all of my host families who helped me with adapting to this culture and trying to teach me Chinese. My host club who has been allowing me to join their club and welcoming me in it. My parents who always believed in me through all the hard times and who supported me during all the good times. And lastly all the Rotarians who without I would not have been able to have this experience. Thank you to everyone involved in RYE. You are changing lives and the world.

See you all in 5 weeks!

Kari

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