

## Fast Food, Prom, and - 40°F... America

### My life in Benson (Minnesota)



#### **The time before the big trip:**

After two months in France I was inquired for more adventure. I wanted to see the world, get to know new friends and get more of this exciting experiences which follow my life as good as they change me and help me to see the world through another pair of eyes.

So my own decision was made. I wanted to make a trip. I wanted to make my own big adventure.

People asked me, why I would do an exchange and why for such a long time. Everybody always just thought I want to improve my English skills, but nobody really understood, that I expected much more than just the learning of a language. I wanted to get to know new people, I wanted to learn new traditions and cultures, and I wanted life experiences, new experiences.

My parents helped me a lot and supported me in every way. And then everything happened so fast. I got my placement, my flight tickets, and the date came closer and closer every day.

I was so nervous and even more excited for my adventure. The little girl from the country travels through the big wide world. And then, it was the 31<sup>st</sup> of August, the day of my flight and the start of my exchange year, the start of one year in the USA, the start of a new life!

#### **America, another world:**

I have to say, that it is not the first time for me in the USA. I have already been in Florida with my family, but it is a long time ago and I was too young to remember everything. So most of all was new for me. My host dad waited together with his adult daughter at the airport for my arrival. I was so nervous in the plane. My flight was from Frankfurt to Chicago and then to Minneapolis.



I should say, that I will live for the next nine and a half month in Benson, a small community in the state of Minnesota. I arrived in Minneapolis and we had to wait in the plane. It felt like it was hours. I was just so excited to see Jack, my new hostdad. Finally I could leave the plane. Of course I had seen Jack from pictures, but

actually I had no idea where I have to go and how I will find him. I just went with the crowd and suddenly I found me in the arms of my hostdad. It was such a friendly welcome.

On the way home (3 hours to drive) we talked and got to know each other. And than we arrived Benson. Jeannette, my hostmom, waited already for us with supper - my first hotdogs.



This showed me, I was in America. From now on I got Fast Food to eat and some other things will change too. But from the Minnesotan winter, I did not feel much, yet.

The next day, I went to school with Jack. The principal and the teachers are so nice. I knew directly, it will be an amazing High School Year. I



chose the classes Business Law, Higher Algebra, Chemistry, Life Skills, USA History, Englisch, Biology and Study Hall.

The first week was pretty busy. We visited the school and Jack showed me Benson.

I felt pretty fast how much different the USA is compare to

Germany. And some I even liked a lot. Others were just amusing like that almost everything is XXL, not just the food, also simple things like shampoo are all in oversized bottles. But still the most changing aspect was the food. Nearly everyday fast food or mashed potatoes..... ( But honestly, in the end I even liked the American Food.)

### High School; life like in the movies:

Have you ever seen movies like "High School Musical" or other american school movies.

Before my trip, I thought like everybody else,



that Hollywood is exaggerating, but I am 100 percent sure, It is not.

High School in the USA is like we know it from the movies.

Proudness for their school, these one

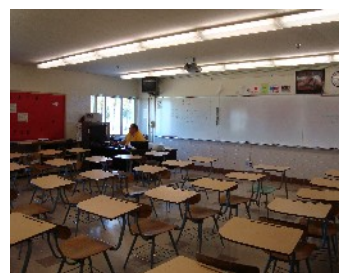
person chairs, lunch in school

and not to forget everybody a little bit crazy.



We were 14 exchange students from all over the world. And everyone of us loved the school.

It was all so new for us, especially lunch. We waited alone 15 minutes in the line and than we had just these 10 minutes to eat. We had no other choice than try to eat fast and in the beginning to be hungry.☺



I found new friends very fast.

Most of my classes were with Sophmores and I was a Senior, but this did not matter to me. I had a lot



of fun and I just loved to go to school there. I



had so nice teachers and very interesting classes. In the second semester I got Environmental Science and Computer Application ,instead of Business Law and Life Skills, new to my other classes. And after school I met my friends for sports like tennis, softball, or dancing.

I learned a lot in Benson High School and I had so much fun like never before.

### Homecoming, Snow Week, Prom and Graduation:

Homecoming was the first time I realized how much I love this school and I asked me, why can't we make something like this in my school



at home. We had everyday other themes. From "Wake up, no make up"-day



over "Camoflash"-day to days like "School Spirit"-day and "Color"-day. It was so fun and everybody had a smile on his/her face. And in the end of the week

we had the big football game and after the dance.☺ The whole school wore the school colors and everybody screamed by the touchdowns.



Snow Week was pretty much the same as Homecoming. The Seniors elected the Snow Week King and Queen, which was so



amazing. The girls with their pretty dresses and the show was awesome. We had theme-days and in the end a dance. But this time the girls wore wonderful cocktaildresses.

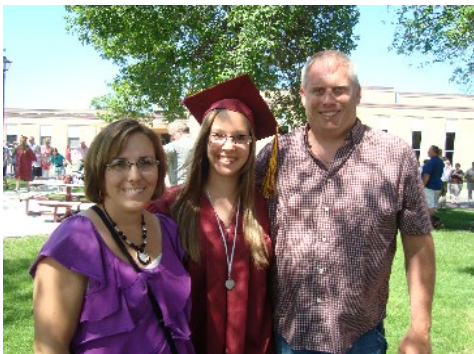
The best and most impressiv event was Prom! All started with finding the perfekt dress. A dream for every girl comes true. She can go shopping for wonderful long dresses and be for one day a princess. After I



found my princess dress and I ordered the flowers and so on, the big day was coming. Hair styling, make up and other styling followed. And finally I was ready for Prom. Together with friends and my Date we went for supper. We made tons of pictures and everybody looked so gorgeous. Where ever you looked girls in long, sparkling dresses and the boys in their suits which let them look like bodyguards.☺ The Grand March was succesful and godness I didn't fall.☺ The dance was at least as awesome as the Grand March. And After Bush with the topic "Las Vegas" was not just fun, it also brought the on or other person some dollars in the pockets.

Prom was an amazing night, I will never forget!

Graduation was great. I wore this read square cap with the tassel and this long gown. And



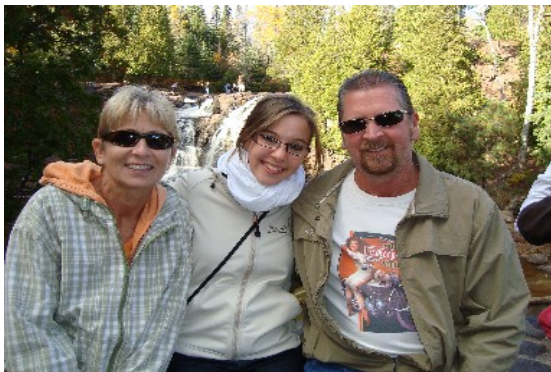
we really throw the cap in the air and tried to catched it back.



The ceremony was fantastique and again the same as in the films. The graduation and also good bye party from my hostfamily was amazing. So many

people came and we celebrated all night long. It was a great party!

### Fall Cruise:



For the fall my hostfamily made something special for me. Jack and his brothers and sister have all an oldtimer and they

drive every year with them somewhere. And this year, we all went up to Lake Superior. It was an awesome trip. All the trees were in color and the waterfalls, we visit, and the lake were amazing. It was a wonderful cruise with so many pretty pictures.



## Cold, Colder, Minnesota:



It is not like I would not know what snow is, but I didn't know, that it is possible to have 7 months of snow. It started snowing in the middle to end of oktober and the last snowflakes melted away in april. And it was so freezing cold. The deepest temperature was -40°C. Usually we had around - 15°C. Brrrr.....

but on the other side, it was a very pretty winter with LOTs of snow.

## Down and back to the top:

The time in Benson was great and the best time in my life. But even the best moments can go down. Every time has ups and downs and one of these downs came in march.....

Sadly I had to change my family because my

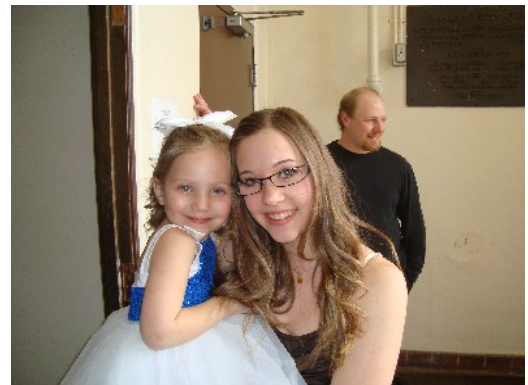


hostmom was sick. Friends helped me to find another

family. And my second family was the best hostfamily you can ever imagin. Now I got a

little hostsister

who was 4 years old, my brother was 1,5 and my second sister was 11 years old. Missy and Chad were so wonderful hostparents. My last three months were amazing and we did so much together. I knew I will miss them more than anything else.



## Time to go Home:

After 9,5 months it was time to say good bye. It was not an easy good bye, because i got to love my family a lot. Special to say bye to my little sisy. We all drove a few days earlier to Minneapolis, because we wanted to visit the Minnesotan zoo and spent a few last days

together. It was a wonderful time, I will never forget. And finally I had to take my bags and say good bye with a face full of tears.

### **America, a fantastique memory:**



If I would have the choice to turn the time back, I would. I had an amazing time. I learned in one year more than in three or four. I grew up, found new friends, had lifechanging experiences and the time of my life.

Thank you to my parents, my amazing hostfamily, and everybody who crossed my time and helped me to get an adventure I will never forget.

I had ups and downs in my time in the USA, but I learned from both. I could improve my English skills, get new experiences, get to know new friends and friends for my life, saw other cultures and traditions

and I got an adventure; an adventure, which is more than just an exchange year. It helped me to see the world through another pair of eyes.

Timea Z. (August 2011)