

Campo Emilia

# Paradise on Earth - ITALY



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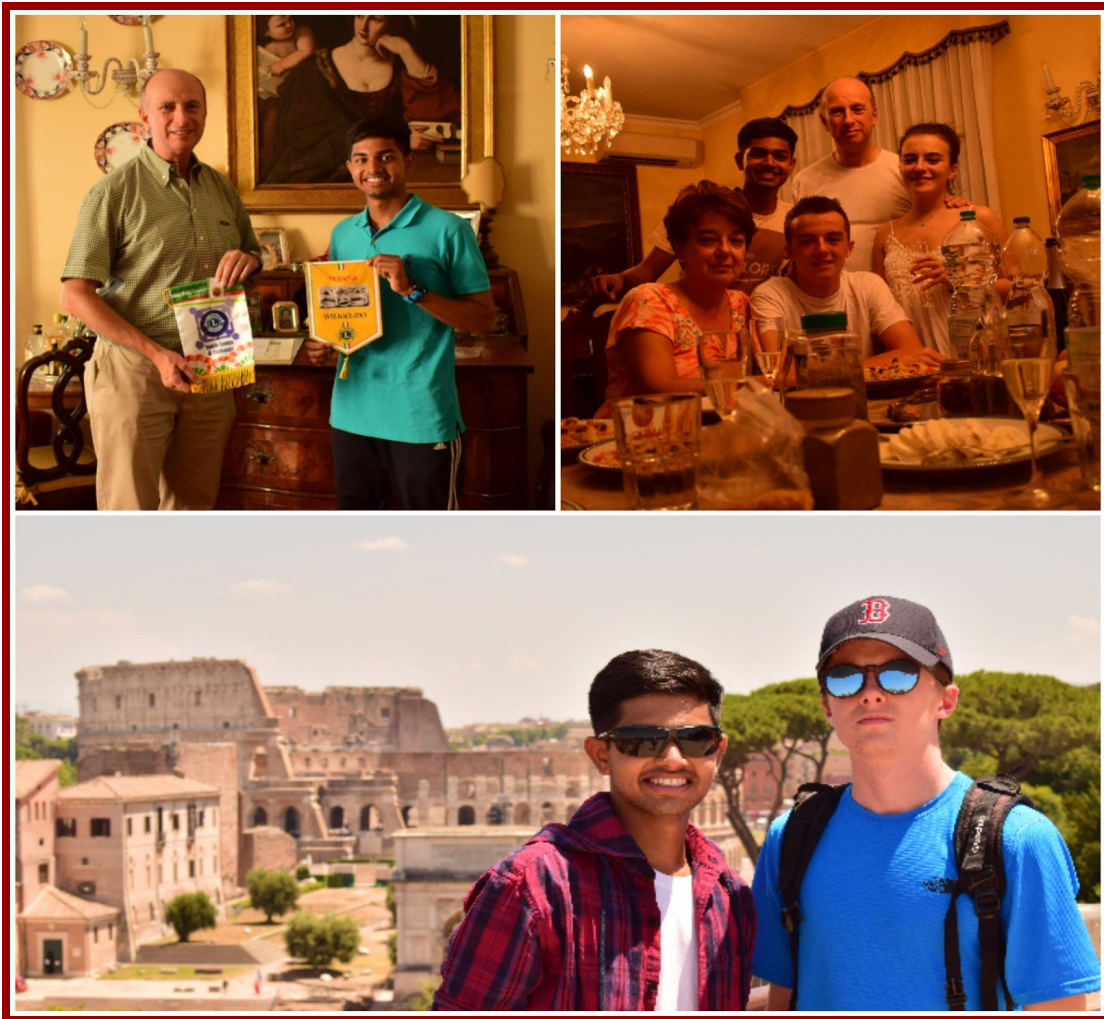
India is very vast and a mega diverse nation. I have been travelling within India since I was a kid. 12 years though, I haven't been to every part of her. This year, I traveled across the seas, to visit another nation. I was fascinated by the architecture, art, cuisine and the rich history of Italy. I shortlisted Italy as my destination.

Since I participated for the first time in the youth exchange programme, I didn't know what to expect. I was warmly welcomed by my host brother and my host mom at the Bologna airport. As I met them, I felt cheerful and I was excited to explore a new land. Having reached the house, I met my host sister and host grandma. I met my host dad the next day when he returned to Modena, from a trek. No sooner did I reach their house, their love and

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affection made me feel that I was a member of their family. I had an amazing experience with my host family. My stay with the family had been absolute fun. Everybody in my host family could converse well in English and language wasn't a barrier for me. One of the best things that I did with my first host family was that I visited Rome. I had never thought that I would visit Rome, so young. Visiting Rome was like my dream come true. I was awe-stricken when we stood in front of the Colosseum, so old yet strong. There were several incidences during which I got a chance to meet their family friends and relatives. I got to know about Italian culture. It has expanded my horizons of knowledge. Trying Italian cuisine was exciting. I wonder how different it is from Indian. During the last days of my stay with my host family, they took me to the beach Gabice Mare which was the best surprise they gave me. Time flew fast, and I did not realize how I spent 8 days with them. It was time for me to join my second host family.





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I stayed with my second host family in San Felice sul Panaro. The landscapes were completely different from Modena. Going out to run and exercise, video-gaming and playing drums with my host brothers never let me get bored. During my stay with them, I was fortunate to eat Tortellini cooked by my host grandma. She cooks it so delicious that even Pope prefers Tortellini cooked by her. I enjoyed experiencing the Italian lifestyle. With them, I also visited Verona, one of the most visited destinations in Italy. With a heavy heart, I departed from them and joined the camp.



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The most awaited part of this trip was there. Campo Emilia! I was fascinated by the idea of staying in a medieval castle. I'd been waiting for it for a couple of months. The ice breaker activities were great fun. Group discussions about Human Rights, ice breaker activities, presentation of the country and interview have boosted my speaking skills. It has given me the confidence to speak publicly. The long-lasting dinners on the terrace of the castle in a backdrop of sunset have always been relaxing. I loved the view of the landscapes that could be seen from the castle. Dinner in the Dark made me realize, the obstacles confronted by visually impaired people. I've surely learned a lot from it. Apart from this, the tours in Milan, Ferrera, Parma, etc have brought me an insight into the prevalent style of architecture. The friends that I made at Campo Emilia are friends for a lifetime. I enjoyed their company a lot. I've definitely taken some good qualities of them. I can never forget the way everybody danced during the disco party. The talent show showcased the talents my friends had. It was very interesting to see them perform. The late-night talks with them, the night sneak outs, the senseless jokes, sharing personal stories and a lot of good memories- I'm going to miss them all. With my eyes misty and a heart heavy with good vibes, I have returned to India.

I am grateful to the Lions Clubs International for providing such a platform where everyone feels a member of the global village. This reminds me of a phrase in Sanskrit, Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam , ("वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्") meaning '*the world is indeed a family*'. I express my heartfelt thanks to the host families who had always been hospitable to me. I also extend my thanks to the camp staff for always being cooperative and helpful.

I hope we meet again in the near future. I love you all. See you soon!







