

My Europe Adventure

Hello! My name is Kaitlin Coughran and I live in Australia from a city called Lismore. I took place in the International Lions Youth Exchange Programme for six weeks adventuring to Europe in 2016 from December to mid-January. The places I visited were Italy, Germany and London, both amazing places with lots of history. I found out about the Youth Exchange through a family friend and couldn't pass this amazing opportunity, so I applied.

My first Youth Exchange

After I applied I got into contact with my local Lions Club (Lismore City Lions) who sponsored me throughout the year while I was involved in many fundraising events. I chose Europe as my destination because I was fascinated by its spectacular Historical architecture and culture. My Visit to Europe was of one of the best experiences *I have had*.

Second Exchange- Italy

Experiencing the excitement of my first Youth Exchange I decided to travel to one of my dream countries in Europe- Italy representing Australia and my Local Lions. Experiencing the long flight and boarding from Australia's hot weather was a big shock when I landed in Europe Winter weather.



The Saying "Italians like Australians" was very true in Italy. I meant my first host family in Turin who were very lovely people and waited for me at the airport. They wanted to know all about me and my country. It was a pleasure to share my experiences and learning about theirs as I experienced Italy's culture and learnt how Italian people lived. I engaged in many fun activities my host family planned for me such as Site seeing, visiting museums and visiting a Christmas market. After an adventurous week in Turin I sadly said "goodbye" to my host family and travelled to Brescia where my second adventure began.

I meant my second host family who welcomed me with open arms. I stayed with them for over two weeks and explored many new cities and small towns. We visited Venice, Bologna, Verona and Milan which were very beautiful places. The best part about these places was visiting the local Christmas markets which had a lot of custom made food, Jewellery, hot chocolates and handmade gifts.

My time in Italy I also got the rare opportunity to go to school with my host sister for a week. I enjoyed visiting the schools as it was a very different experience altogether. The subjects, the language and the early hours made the experience worthwhile. I got to meet a lot of people and made many friends whose friendships I will cherish. At the end of my three week adventure in Italy it was very sad to say goodbye, and not imagine seeing my host families again as I waved them good.



My second Exchange- Germany

Everybody knows Germany is famous for their Sauerkaut and bratwurst sausages and big pastry Pretzels. I totally agree as I got to experience this first hand! After saying goodbye to Italy, I fly to Germany arriving in Berlin where I spent the day waiting to catch a train to a small historical town in Weimar where I meant my host

family. I stayed with one wonderful host family over two weeks where I experienced Christmas, New years and white snow!

My host family took me too many places such as Erfurt and Hamburg where I stayed and tried the big pastry pretzel. I visited many churches, museum and was involved in a radio talk show which was a great experience. I travelled on the tram and trains living a city life which was full of lights and busy people. My host family really cared that I had a good time and experienced as much as possible in a short time.

Having the opportunity to spend Christmas in Germany was very heartfelt as I got to share this with my host family and experience how others celebrate Christmas. Weeks after Christmas we finally got snow and had the opportunity to go sliding down snowy hills and make a snowman. Finally after two weeks I had to say "goodbye ". It was a very sad moment.

Third Exchange- London

My final destination was the London stop over where the Youth Exchange group meant up and spend the next four days exploring London city. We stayed in a hotel called St Giles which was a good central area and was close to many shops and food stores. London was a very beautiful city and always busy. During our time we went site seeing as a tourists and saw the Tower of London, Westminster Abbey, Buckingham Palace, Trafalgar Square, St Paul's Cathedral and many more places. Also on the last night with a group of friends we went to a musical to see Wicked. London was an amazing experience as I got to know my group better and share magical experiences.

Throughout my journey in three countries and many cities, I have heard so many interesting and wondering stories. The cultural experience has allowed me see more parts of the world and has taught me to become independent. The whole Youth Exchange experience has allowed me to meet other Lions members who also done a similar exchange and make international friends. It is difficult to find anything that compares with the experience of love, friendship, culture, and hospitality experienced through this wonderful youth program. I am 18 years old now and would go back for another adventure any day.



Would I recommend Lions Youth Exchange to young adult? Yes I would!

I would suggest to all young people to grab the opportunity Lions Australia is giving them and travel, meet new people, learn about other cultures, countries and people from different nationalities and come home with a new outlook on life. My three countries have given me a lifetime of memories I will never forget.

My Youth Exchange interest began with the wonderful support Lions International gave me for this amazing opportunity and for providing important details throughout the year. From the beginning I want to thank Lismore City Lions for sponsoring me and supported me throughout the year whilst allowed me to become involved in community Fundraisers and events. I want to thank my host families and leaders in Europe, without them the program is not possible.