

INTERNACIONAL STUDENT ESSAY CONTEST

Ever since I was a teenager, I have dreamed of living in a foreign country. I am convinced that study abroad experience is a time for learning but not only about English language, it is time for learning about one's own self, personal growth and development. The experience of living in a foreign country has changed my life in many ways. This experience has been exciting because I have met many people from other countries, I have known their cultures and traditions and the most important thing is that some of them are my friends. Now they are my family here. Also I have had the opportunity to travel and visit places that I saw in magazines or Internet and I have enjoyed my amazing university life. My life changed in some ways such as I began to ride a bike as transportation. In my country I only drove my car. This situation has been good for my health because I have lost weight. Nowadays I am healthy and I have a lot of energy. Then I surprised me when I saw a lot of abandoned and rusty bikes. Some parked bikes had white or blue ties. Perhaps a good idea would be donate them to other students because on parking they are just scrap.

Hello... is there anybody out there? When I first arrived in Newark on July 3rd the city was empty, no one walked in the streets just me. And I wanted to know where were the inhabitants of the city and what did they do during the day. Up to now I don't have the answer. When I was walking through the city streets, it started to a heavy rain and I was not prepared for that kind of rain. I knew that it was summer but in my country summer is different, it is very dry and hot.

Then I understood that the weather in summer is warm, rainy and humidity. I suffered a lot with the humidity.

Actually my first cultural shock was at the supermarket. I bought everything that I needed to start my student life in the apartment, thus I waited a taxi more than two hours but it never came. So, because I could not take a taxi, I had to return all the items that I had bought. It was very embarrassing! Now I know that in Newark people don't take taxi because of every person has a car. In my country you can find a lot of taxis in every supermarket and everywhere. Every time that I remember that situation, it makes me laugh a lot.

In addition, I didn't understand when a cashier asked me if I had coupons. I watched carefully when other people bought and days later I understood that in magazines you could find discount coupons. Also all Americans had a "magical key chain". It had a lot of little discount cards from different shops. Now I can say that I have a beautiful one and I use it every day. Another situation that was really complicated was in the Mall. On Sunday afternoon I went to Christiana Mall and when I arrived there a man told by loudspeaker that the mall would be close 30 minutes later and I needed to buy some clothes. Then I realized that on Sundays some shops closed early.

On July 4th I was completely immersed into the American culture because I celebrated the Independence Day. At the University I read a poster. It was an invitation to celebrate the Independence Day. I went with some friends and we enjoyed a delicious picnic and we went to watch spectacular fireworks in a beautiful place near a lake. People were very friendly and kind. On the contrary, in my country we celebrate our Independence Day on September 18th and it is very different. People eat and drink so much and dance our National Dance called Cueca.

On the other hand, I miss two things of my country: My family, I miss my family life in Chile, celebrate holidays and my relatives' birthdays. The other thing is the food, especially avocado and bread. In the city avocado is really expensive, so I have bought once. There is no bread like my country. I have found a few kinds of bread. But I enjoy American food such as baby ribs, cheeseburgers and chicken wings. They are delicious!!!

Finally, I can say that this time has been the best of all my life.