

## Cultural Exchange – A Journey that Changes Lives!

By Colombian Au Pair Viviana Rodriguez Chaparro who is hosted by the Murphy Family in South Amboy, NJ

My second Christmas season with the Murphy family has arrived. It brings back beautiful memories of visiting NYC last year, where we headed to Little Italy for coffee and dessert, pushed our way through busy streets to catch a glimpse of the tree in Rockefeller Center, and ended Christmas night with an amazing performance at the Radio City Christmas Spectacular. The time to leave my lovely host family is approaching quickly. I have been in the US for almost two years.

I arrived to the Murphy family in NJ sixteen months ago. They rescued me from rematch, but that's another story. For now, I want to share some of the amazing memories I've been creating with my handsome host child Matthew, who is 10 years old, and my beautiful host mom Lynn.

Growing close to Matthew has been one of the most amazing journeys of my life. I have learned so much from him. I learned what makes him happy, when he's not having a good day, or finding the perfect time to make jokes, and share unstoppable laughter. He has become an important part of my life. He is one of the most amazing kids I've ever met, and I feel so thankful to God for being part of his journey.

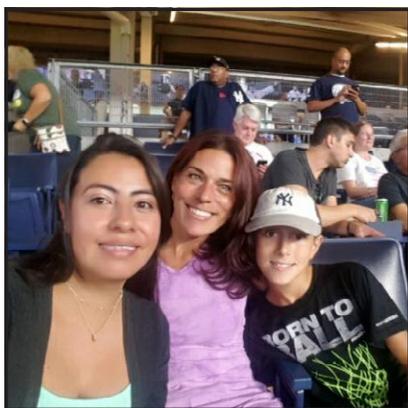
Also, I should share how much Lynn means to me, and how much I've learned from a wonderful single mom. She has done a marvelous job with Matthew. She is a really hard worker. She is

always trying to learn something new, in order to improve her and Matthew's life. She is one of those people who always has good advice for me and also has taught me invaluable wisdom for my own life. I admire her, and I thank her for every moment we share together.

I cannot omit Pop-pop and Mark, a friend of the family. They have also been a part of my adventure. I have shared good moments with them as well. Pop-

children dressing up in costumes, with Thanksgiving and Christmas season knocking at the door. Lynn had been planning to take Matthew to see his favorite baseball team play one of their last games of the season; the NY Yankees. When she found out how much I would like to go, she bought me a ticket; I was so happy. It would be the first professional baseball game I would attend. The day came, and we started our trip to Yankee Stadium with "New York, New York" by Frank Sinatra playing in the background. We arrived to the game, and had to go our separate ways. Our seats were in different sections, because my ticket was purchased after the original plans were made. About a half hour after we arrived, she found a way for me to sit with them. It was an incredible view, and a magical time with my host family, laughing, eating and singing as well.

Amongst so many other great trips, I had the opportunity to spend quality time with Matthew while Lynn was working. We went to Happy Day Farms, where there is pumpkin picking, hayrides, an intricate corn maze, and lots of other fun activities for the family. We also took a trip to Six Flags Great Adventure. Lynn decided to invite one of my friends to join us, so the four of us embarked on another incredible adventure. We were having a good time, between riding  
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Viviana and her host family at Viviana's first professional baseball game.

pop helped me improve my driving skills when I arrived. He also shared with me some of his cooking skills, and I will never forget him. About Mark, he is one of the funniest people I've met. He always has a good joke, a good movie or a good book to share. Thank you, Mark and Pop-pop, for the great memories.

A few other memories I'd like to share were during the fall. The time where trees change the colors of their leaves, pumpkin pie, pumpkin carving, and all the

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### About Us...

EurAuPair Intercultural Child Care Programs is a non-profit, public benefit organization designated by the U.S. Department of State to conduct the Au Pair cultural exchange program under the Fulbright Hays Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961 and is intended "to promote mutual understanding between the people of the United States and other countries by means of educational and cultural exchanges".

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# Chicago Marathon

By Chicago, IL Area Coordinator Vivi Frumkin

The Chicago Marathon is one of six World Marathon Majors, the others being Boston, New York, London, Berlin and Tokyo.

The 40th Chicago Marathon took place downtown Chicago on October 8, 2017. The course snakes along major streets and goes through small neighborhoods. It is a 26.2 mile long race. For those of you counting in



Community Counselor Dawn after having finished the Chicago Marathon.

kilometers that is 42 km.

44,000 runners including our Community Counselor Dawn Rothermel ran this year's race. Dawn finished in 5 hours 31 minutes. Congratulations Dawn! I know you had the Chicago Marathon in the back of your mind, when you started running some years ago and I am impressed you reached this goal.

A group of au pairs and I ventured into the city on race day. We were among 1.7 million people in downtown Chicago that day. I had hoped we could see Dawn either running or afterwards, but that was not to be. When I realized how impossible it would be to find Dawn, I asked a runner from Milwaukee, WI to please stand in for a photo.

As we walked around Chicago, we saw a lot of the runners with their medals around their necks. One could not help but to say - congratulations. I must have said that a thousand times. I was both impressed and humbled by the fact they a) ran the race and b) were

able to walk afterwards.

*Thank you, Vivi, for showing your support to Dawn and for describing this very special event and its atmosphere to us. Dawn, we congratulate you for this major achievement!*



From left to right: Susan (Germany), Ana (Spain), Sabrina (France), Yuly (Colombia), runner from Milwaukee, Astrid (Venezuela).

# Grits y Salsa: A South American's Visit to the South

By Clemson, SC Community Counselor Rebecca Dalhouse

I first met Maria when she was fresh off a plane from Medellín, Colombia. She was staring out the window into an endless expanse of lake and pine trees. So many pine trees. I wasn't sure what she was expecting the U.S. to be like, but I was pretty sure this wasn't it. She grew

up in bustling, cosmopolitan Medellín and had just landed in the heart of the rural South. What do you mean there's no public transportation? I anticipated a culture clash, a culture train crash even, but Maria took every bit of it in stride and embraced us all with the heart of a true

adventurer. She gobbled down Southern barbeque and danced to Appalachian folk music, swirling and laughing and pulling us all into her shining orbit. She wore high heels to an outdoor bluegrass concert and hiked a nature trail in a sundress.

Toward the end of her first year, her host family nominated her for "Au Pair of the Year." She didn't win, but we crowned her "Au Pair of the South" instead. It's hard to leave your country. It's even harder when you have no idea what you're getting yourself into. But Maria made brave look easy. She enthusiastically leapt out of her comfort zone and into her new life. As I watched her fall hopelessly in love with her two young charges, I realized that in leaving one family behind, she gained another one. After two years, Maria is leaving in January and going back to Colombia and



What a beautiful photo of Maria and her Community Counselor Rebecca.



Rebecca and Maria enjoy a nice walk, together with Rebecca's mom.

bright, sophisticated Medellín. She'll leave behind snail's pace Oconee County, SC and all of us that claimed her as an adopted Southerner. She never did learn to appreciate grits for the delicacy that they are, but she'll always have a family here.

*EurAupair sends a big Thank You to Rebecca. We truly enjoyed your fun article about how Maria became an "adopted Southerner". Safe travels back home, Maria.*

# EurAupair Photos



At the beginning of December, Indiana Community Counselor Nancy Paschal and her group of Au Pairs visited the Fort Wayne Gingerbread Festival. We like the lovely photo and Christmas tree a lot.



Here you can see Au Pairs Hanlie (South Africa), Luyao (China), Livia (Brazil), Aline (Brazil) and their Community Counselor Nancy Lehmann (center) at Johansen Farms in Bolingbrook, IL during their October meeting. What a happy fall picture!



Community Counselor Lorna Morgan from Tiffin, IA took her group of Au Pairs snow tubing. We love the photo and all the beautiful smiles!



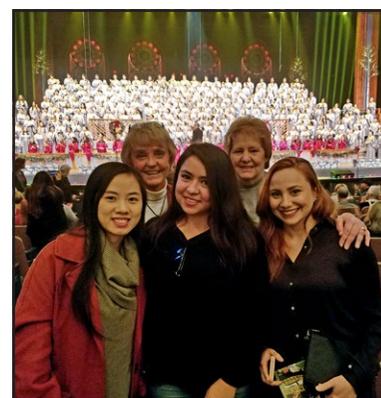
Our Idaho Falls, ID Community Counselor Mary Patricia Murphy, her husband and her Au Pairs Shirlyanny (Brazil) and Lisa (China) enjoyed a beautiful trail ride at Harriman State Park, ID followed by lunch in The Frosty Mug diner - specialty, Root Beer Floats. It looks like an amazing cultural event!



Community Counselor Laura Piuanno from Ontario, CA with Au Pair Laura (Colombia) visiting a pumpkin patch for their cultural event meeting. What a beautiful photo!



The Minneapolis Au Pairs, Community Counselor Crystal Bray and Area Coordinator Sarah Norman attended a masquerade murder mystery dinner. Gabriela from Colombia got the "Best Dressed" award – congrats!



West Lafayette, IN Community Counselor Lynne Noble writes, "CC Darcy and I finally got the girls together! We attended the Purdue Christmas Show put on by the Purdue Musical Association (PMO) at the university. What an amazing show with over 300 singers, dancers and bells." From left to right are: Boya (China), CC Lynne, Yeny (Colombia), CC Darcy and Ana (Brazil). Happy Au Pairs and happy Community Counselors! :)

# Exploring Colorado Springs, CO

By Colorado Springs, CO Community Counselor Elizabeth Young and German Au Pair Andrea Leinberger

Every month I try to think of cool fun activities to do with au pairs Andrea (Germany), Tania (Colombia), and Tiffany (France). In December, we attended Free Museum Day at the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center. We were greeted

very warmly by the staff and personnel there. The first room we visited, a very sweet elderly woman greeted us and explained to us the arts and statues that were in that particular room. In this room we could touch and feel the statues that were made.

We spent a great amount of time at the museum for there was so much to see.

The Center of Fine Arts is located north of downtown Colorado Springs.

The Center of Fine Arts has a lot of interesting galleries. One of them is the Tactile Gallery. It

is the first artwork spot in the museum. Each artwork in the gallery has two labels. One label is printed in large print and the other label is printed in Braille. These labels make it easy for blind and visually-impaired people to read about the pieces of art.

The Fine Arts Center also has other art areas like glass-sculptures, computer animations & videos and portraits.

I enjoyed going to Fine Arts Center, because there is a great opportunity to see art in a whole different way and you can explore all

galleries of the museum.

Thank you very much, Elizabeth and Andrea, for your great contribution to the Gazette – it's always so nice to learn about fun places to visit. We also thank Elizabeth for always organizing such entertaining get-togethers.



The picture of Tiffany (France) and Andrea (Germany) was taken with the backdrop of Garden of the Gods.



Andrea, Community Counselor Elizabeth and Tiffany at the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center.

# Every Step of the Way

By Wichita, KS Community Counselor Pamela Porvaznik

When we come to work with EurAupair, most of us find a kind of second home.

For one thing, we Community Counselors are given a wise Area Coordinator who has been with the organization a long time and seems to know the rules backwards and forwards. She keeps in constant touch, conducts one-to-one or group trainings, sends out weekly emails, answers questions immediately and is there to support and encourage every step of the way. Those working with different generations of parents and young people know this is invaluable.

We Community Counselors talk a lot about our au pairs, comparing notes on how to intervene in challenges, how to calm homesickness (some of the au pairs are away from home for the first time and are surprised how much they miss their families), how to navigate country, state and city regulations (such as driving on the “other” side of the road, getting a driver’s license, filling out tax forms, what to do when sick), but hardly anyone shares about the wonderful host families. We must think it’s a given that every family will be welcoming and loving when the au pair arrives to help with child care.

I’ve only been a Community Counselor for three years and

I’ve had four au pairs and two families in that time. I’ve had to rely on my Area Coordinator a lot.

My first family set the bar very high. They just really wanted an au pair experience for their children and they never looked back. I have to say, my first family—now with its third

American mores and the family dynamics, weren’t afraid to confront and sit down with their au pairs to instruct them how they wanted their children disciplined, accepted them as part of the family, taking them to dinners, ballgames, their children’s drama productions and even on family vacations to show the au pairs new and exciting

the moms and dads are quite affectionate. They naturally want to feel that sense of belonging in their American homes. It has helped on some occasions to sit down in a round-table atmosphere and air out differences, each expressing how he or she feels without interruption or cross talk. Usually this puts everyone on firm footing again and the repaired family moves on with new tools to deal with the everyday challenges of living together.

Both au pair and family need support. And that’s the best thing about EurAupair. The organization has been around for 30 years and its whole mission is to ensure that children, au pair and family feel safe and secure and to provide the best resources to make sure that everyone has a positive experience.

Working with EurAupair has been a joy.

*Thank you so much, Pamela, for another magnificent article for the Gazette. Your words reflect perfectly what the Au Pair Program is about – we are very lucky to have you as part of the EurAupair team!*



*Community Counselor Pamela, Au Pair Charlotte (South Africa) and Pamela’s friends Shirley and Jean Ann enjoy a beautiful sunny day.*

au pair—has been wonderful to observe. The parents of three children, the oldest now in college, wanted their youngest two to meet a child care provider from another country and to glean some of the culture of new lands and customs by that contact.

From the beginning they have welcomed the au pairs into their home, decorated their rooms, supplied them with car and phone. They’ve supported them as the girls adjusted to

adventures in America.

Sometimes a CC, as we’re called, has to act as a counselor of sorts to the parents. We’re a liaison between au pair and host family, but we’re there to give help to both. Often the host parent just needs someone to vent with. Sometimes a first-time host dad isn’t sure how to show encouragement to an au pair and may tend to clam up and avoid. This, too, needs to be addressed.

The au pairs I’ve had have come from loving homes where

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the roller coasters, enjoying fun food, the beautiful Halloween decorations, and the staff’s amazing make-up and costumes. We also made plenty of time for pictures, because it’s one of my favorite hobbies. It was a great night I shared with my host family and close friend.

My time in the US has been one of the most beautiful experiences I’ve had. A changed woman is going home to Colombia. My family is going to be so happy to see a stronger, more

independent, and passionate girl that I’ve become. To all the au pairs out there, the day you decided to leave your country, and start a new adventure, don’t ever forget that everything happens for a reason. We are in a process where life is teaching valuable

lessons. It is our decision to enjoy the good, and the not so good moments.

*Thank you very much, Viviana, for sharing your and your host family’s story with us. We enjoyed reading about your adventures and the photos are great, too.*

*Viviana, her host brother Matthew and her host mom Lynn had a great time enjoying typical US fall events.*

