

# LANGUAGES CAN CHANGE YOUR WORLD

## Annika Sudlow's exchange experience

I started French Immersion in kindergarten at Camille J. Lerouge in 1999. I had taken two years of school previously in Chile learning Spanish so when we returned to Canada it seemed natural that my brother and I would keep pursuing languages. After a couple of years I switched to Oriole Park elementary, and then Central Middle School.



I got the opportunity in the summer between grade 7 and 8 to visit some family friends in Québec. This trip was my first chance to learn about French culture. It is safe to say that I loved every minute. It wasn't long after that I was talking to my mom and teachers about spending some time in France.

A couple years later we decided that for the first semester of 2010, my grade 11 year at Lindsay Thurber, I would be going to our sister school in Mulhouse, France. We accepted an exchange student in June named Laura from Jean d'Arc, the school that I would be attending. She stayed for 6 weeks while we got our visa and made all the preparations.

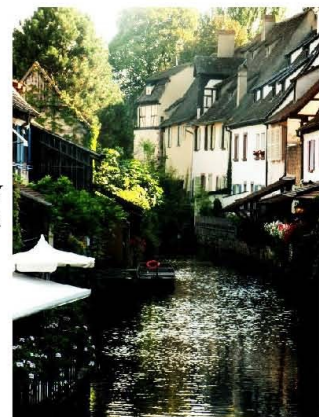


Finally, on the 27th of August I said my goodbyes to my family and friends and started my adventure. I spent the first couple of days at Laura's place in a little town about a half hour from Mulhouse.

From the very beginning school was a challenge; I spent most of my nights studying so I could keep up with the pace of the class. I think it's important to say how different the school is from ours: the classes are short, the content is heavy and the school doesn't offer any kind of extracurricular activities. Most of the teachers were very helpful though and I met some friends there that I will never forget.

The most enjoyable part of my trip was being surrounded by French culture. I could not get enough of the history and beauty of the buildings. I loved getting to speak French at home and to my friends. Gossiping with my girlfriends is probably where I learned the most: I became more confident in expressing myself.

In October my dad came to visit and we took a road trip to Paris. It was without doubt the highlight of my trip. I recommend to any students interested in doing an exchange to at least check out Paris, the city is unbelievable.



I came back in December, just before Christmas. Looking back I think the trip was really valuable. I learned so much and made some great friends. Overall I am glad I went despite missing home and the challenging school work. This trip is something I will never forget.

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