

EurAuPair GAZETTE

Intercultural Child Care Programs

A Publication for EurAuPair Program Participants and Friends Around the World!

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PACKING UP AND HEADING HOME "HOW CAN I EVER SAY GOOD-BYE?"

By Laura Hillstrom

So you've lived for an entire year in the United States. You've mastered your Host Family's washing machine. You can tell a joke in English and people actually laugh! As the end of the EurAuPair exchange year draws to a close, you may be thinking "Hey, the roller coaster ride of culture shock is over and I only got sick a couple times!" But please wait until the car comes to a complete stop before exiting to your right! Experience and studies show that returning to one's home country, also known as reverse culture shock, may possibly be more difficult than the initial culture shock experienced upon arrival to a host country. So what are you in for with this reverse culture shock? How can you help prepare for the anxiety and emotions related to the impending separation and return to your native country? And, finally, how can all those involved in the exchange experience ensure that they reap the benefits of the learning experiences that have occurred during the exchange year? Below are some hints to help you get through the ups and downs of "cultural re-entry." While many of the suggestions may be intended for EurAuPair Au Pairs, Host Families, Natural Families and EurAuPair Community Counselors may adapt these ideas for their own use as they also say good-bye.

One of the best places to begin preparing to go home is at your last two monthly meetings held by your EurAuPair Community Counselor. Sharing your hopes, expectations, concerns and fears about going home with other EurAuPair Au Pairs will help you to understand how normal your feelings really are. This realization alone can help relieve much of the anxiety surrounding the transition of going home. Likewise, host family members may want to sit down and discuss together their expectations and concerns about how family life will be after their Au Pair returns to his or her home country. Host parents may also want to be sensitive to the difficulties children may have in letting go of their "old" Au Pair and welcoming their "new" Au Pair.

Try to discuss such feelings early on and plan for ways of maintaining communication or contact in the future. By arriving at mutually agreed-upon decisions ahead of time, you avoid throwing together last-minute plans while you are tearfully saying good-bye on departure day.

Remember some of the fun activities you enjoyed most with your Host Family throughout the year? Well, who says you can't go back and do them again? You might



also want to do some new or special activity together now that you understand your host culture and the language better and feel more like a member of the family.

Make sure to allow yourself "down" time. It may be hard finding time just to be alone with your Host Family. With the parties and possible traveling you have planned before leaving, you may think it impossible! But this quiet time will allow you to reflect on your exchange year and upcoming return while giving your Host Family a chance to do the same. Just as initial culture shock can be exhausting, the return anxiety associated with cultural re-entry can be physically and mentally draining as well.

Why not make a photo collage with your Host Family of all your special memories together? This is a great way to remind yourself to concentrate on the positive aspects of your exchange year and remember that leaving your Host Family can be just another phase of your relationship with them. The collage can also help your Natural Family to understand what you have experienced and how you have changed and grown.

And what about your Natural Family and friends anxiously awaiting your return? Have they been forgotten in your whirlwind life abroad? Now is a good time to imagine some of the concerns they may have about your return. It may be difficult for your Natural Family to know that you have a new "second family." They may still hold the notion that you are the same girl you were before you left home. While this may

be frustrating, realize that it is a common symptom of reverse culture shock and one that will diminish with discussions and patience.

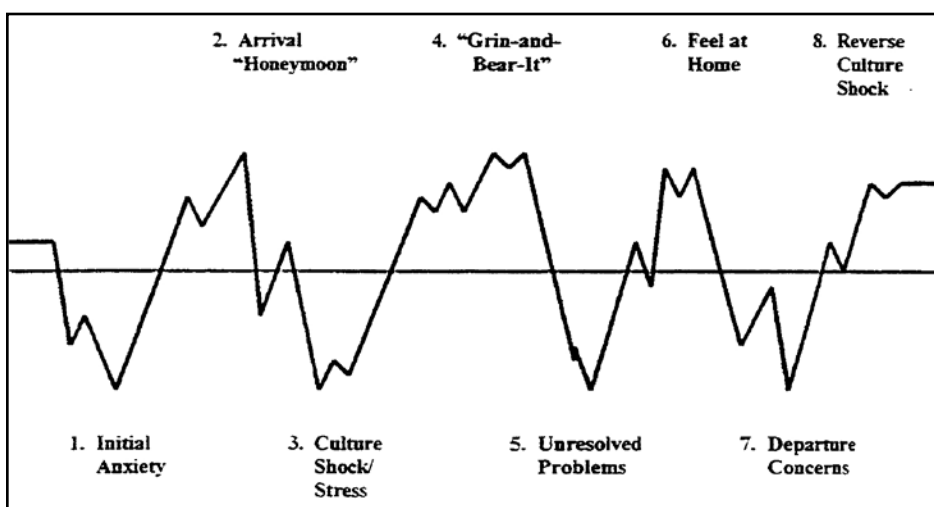
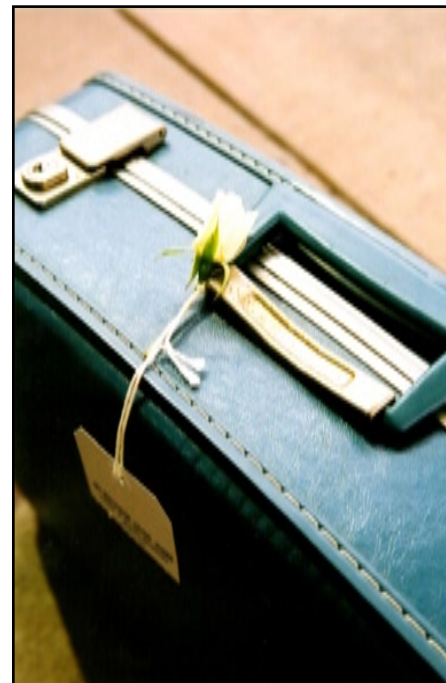
You may want to write a personal letter to each member of your EurAuPair Host Family to be opened and read after you have returned. This is one way to show that although you are going home, you want to maintain contact with your Host Family. It is also something that the members of your Host Family will treasure for years to come.

Finally, take a trip to the library or bookstore and check out the books on reverse culture shock. There are volumes



written on the subject that provide good food for thought for both you and your Host Family. Whether you choose one of the above strategies or make up your own, the important thing is to remember you've only just begun your lifelong journey filled with a world of opportunities.

"The human mind once expanded to a new idea never returns to its original dimension." (Oliver W. Holmes)



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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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Au Pair Outing-Russian River

By Natalie Vance, Au Pair from South Africa



Left to right: Jenny Lindner (Germany), Marianne Ribault (France), Andrea Geisinger (Community Counselor), Natalie Vance (South Africa)

The Bay Area au pairs decided to take a leaf out of their charge books this past June and enjoyed a sunny day canoeing the Russian River in Sonoma County. Divided into groups and armed with a paddle, swimsuits and long hours to do with as we wished, we launched our canoes. We spent a full day paddling, picnicking on empty beaches, rope swinging and swimming in the cool, clear water. The 8.5 mile stretch of wild river can be completed in 3 hours if you are in a hurry. But EurAupair au pairs know how to relax. We took our time paddling with nothing but the company of our friends, nature and the occasional friendly stranger making their way down the river as well. We could take

as long as we liked knowing that there would be someone to pick us up at the end and transport us to our car. It's not all just a gentle float to the end though. There are times when you have to work to avoid hidden objects and direct your canoe in the fast currents without spinning in circles or crashing into the embankment. There are beautiful stretches where you can lie back and watch the fish undulating beneath your boat, hear the wind in the trees and watch turtles and ducks. Canoeing, it turns out, is a great way to team build! (Who knew?) With the Bay offering so much to potential adventurers these au pairs plan to make the best of the sunny months by being out and about.

Why I Volunteer For EurAupair

By EurAupair Community Counselor Vicki Cooper

People come to volunteer or work for EurAupair for a variety of reasons. Recently, EurAupair Community Counselor Vicki Cooper decided to share with us at *The Gazette* why she continues to enjoy volunteering for EurAupair. Thank you, Vicki, for reminding us all of why we are part of the EurAupair family!

Vicki writes:

"As a Community Counselor for EurAupair, I get to witness the benefits from both sides of the placement. For the au pairs, it's a great opportunity to come to the USA and experience life here first hand. Not only do the au pairs feel like part of an American family, but they attend college, meet Americans their own age and meet other au pairs from around the world. I love

to see how much the au pairs mature during the year that they are here.

As a mother, I can appreciate what a gift it is for the host family to have an au pair live with them. To know that the person caring for your kids really cares about you, the children, and your home is a very reassuring feeling. Also, to have the security of knowing that your children are cared for in their own home is an invaluable gift!

My entire family truly benefits from me volunteering for EurAupair. My children enjoy meeting the au pairs and asking questions about their culture. To be sure, we have as much fun as the au pairs on the Cultural Events. We have been to Broadway shows, baseball games, pumpkin picking and to museums! Being a part of EurAupair has been a great experience for me as well as my whole family!"

Batter Up!

EurAupair Community Counselors Show Au Pairs One of America's Favorite Pastimes!

EurAupair Au Pairs dug into some baseball this summer and fall! A big Thank You to all the EurAupair Community Counselors who organized these cultural events! As you can see from the photos, Au Pairs and Community Counselors alike had a ball!

Au Pairs Anne Gaspar (left) and Jasmin Gellen (right) from Germany along with their Community Counselor Kristine Ceaser of the St. Louis, Missouri area had a great day watching the St. Louis Cardinals take on the Milwaukee Brewers. While the Cardinals ended the season with a 9-7 loss, the group still enjoyed the game at Busch stadium.



Au Pair Verena Weigert, Community Counselor Stacey Gallant, Au Pairs Julia Becker, Flávia Vasconcelos and Carolin Haas take a moment to smile for the camera at Fenway Park in Boston, Massachusetts. After taking a tour of this iconic baseball park, the group was lucky enough to catch the Boston Red Sox during their batting practice!

"We are in the middle of Phillies fever!" writes EurAupair Community Counselor Susan Ryan. Susan took her Philadelphia, Pennsylvania-based group to check out the famous Philadelphia Phillies in action!

Pictured from left to right are: EurAupair Au Pairs Melanie Bluhm (Germany), Ana Luiza Silveira (Brazil) and Mariana Bohnome (Brazil)



Au Pairs Learn of the History and Importance of Architecture in the Windy City!

This past August, a huge group of Chicago-area EurAupair au pairs (59 in all!), along with seven Community Counselors and EurAupair Area Coordinator Vivi Frumkin took to the water for the fascinating Shoreline Architecture Cruise! Vivi writes, "Since it was an arrival weekend, we had 7 newly arrived au pairs in the group. What a start of their year!" Indeed, the entire group got quite an education about Chicago

architecture during the one hour boat tour on the Chicago River.

As you can see from the photo below, several of the EurAupair Community Counselors craned their necks to see the top of the skyscrapers, as the narrator explained about the history of the buildings. Thanks, Vivi, for sharing these great photos!



Pictured left to right: Community Counselors Gila Peller, Lea Bradley, Area Coordinator Vivi Frumkin, Community Counselors Vicki O'Leary and Dawn Rothermel



EurAupair Au Pairs from every part of the city came together for this beautiful cruise on the Chicago River!

EurAupair Photos

With a Chill in the Air, EurAupair Au Pairs Head Out for their October Cultural Events!

Check out these wonderful fall photos sent in by our dedicated EurAupair Community Counselors! Thank you so much for all you do, all year 'round!



EurAupair Community Counselor Dawn Rothermel of the Chicago, IL area sent in this photo of her group gearing up for Halloween!

October 18, 2009: Au pairs in Counselor Dawn Rothermel's group got an early start on Halloween. Braving the spider webs illuminated by eerie black lights which blocked their entrance to the house, the au pairs were surprised to see the size of the pumpkins they were to carve. After receiving some basic information about cutting the lid, being careful not to break off the stem (or cut themselves), and yes, they would have to stick their hands inside to remove the seeds and goo, the au pairs began the sticky, gooey task. Afterwards, it was on to the painstakingly detailed task of carving the face of their pumpkins. All the while the au pairs shared with each other how they and their host children were dressing up for Halloween and how they were anxiously looking forward to 'trick or treating'.

Pictured from left to right: Tatjana Darscht (Germany), Laura Pahk (Finland), Sarah Dittmar (Germany), Renata Gama (Brazil), Charlene Egenschwiller (France), Charlotte Mueller (Germany), Karina Schaper (Germany)



EurAupair Au Pairs in the Virginia area show off their Halloween-ready pumpkins. The event was hosted by EurAupair Community Counselor, Jennifer Dandridge.

Pictured from left to right: Sripan (Mayo) Nammuangrak (Thailand), Triin Tameparg (Finland), Jennifer Dandridge (Community Counselor), Maimouna Gassama (France), Ina Perevedniuc (Moldova), Johanna Franck (Germany), Cecile Malod (France), Nadine Tomozyk (Germany)



*EurAupair Au Pairs follow the yellow brick road at Cox Farms in Centreville, Virginia!
From left, top row: Pia Borsutzky (Germany), Petra Ruokojavi (Finland), Sanita Pike (Latvia), Cathrine Ebbesen (Denmark), Michele Arnold (EurAupair Community Counselor)*

From left, bottom row: Patrizia Karmazyn (Germany), Ana Claudia (Brazil), Jacky Moraes (Brazil)



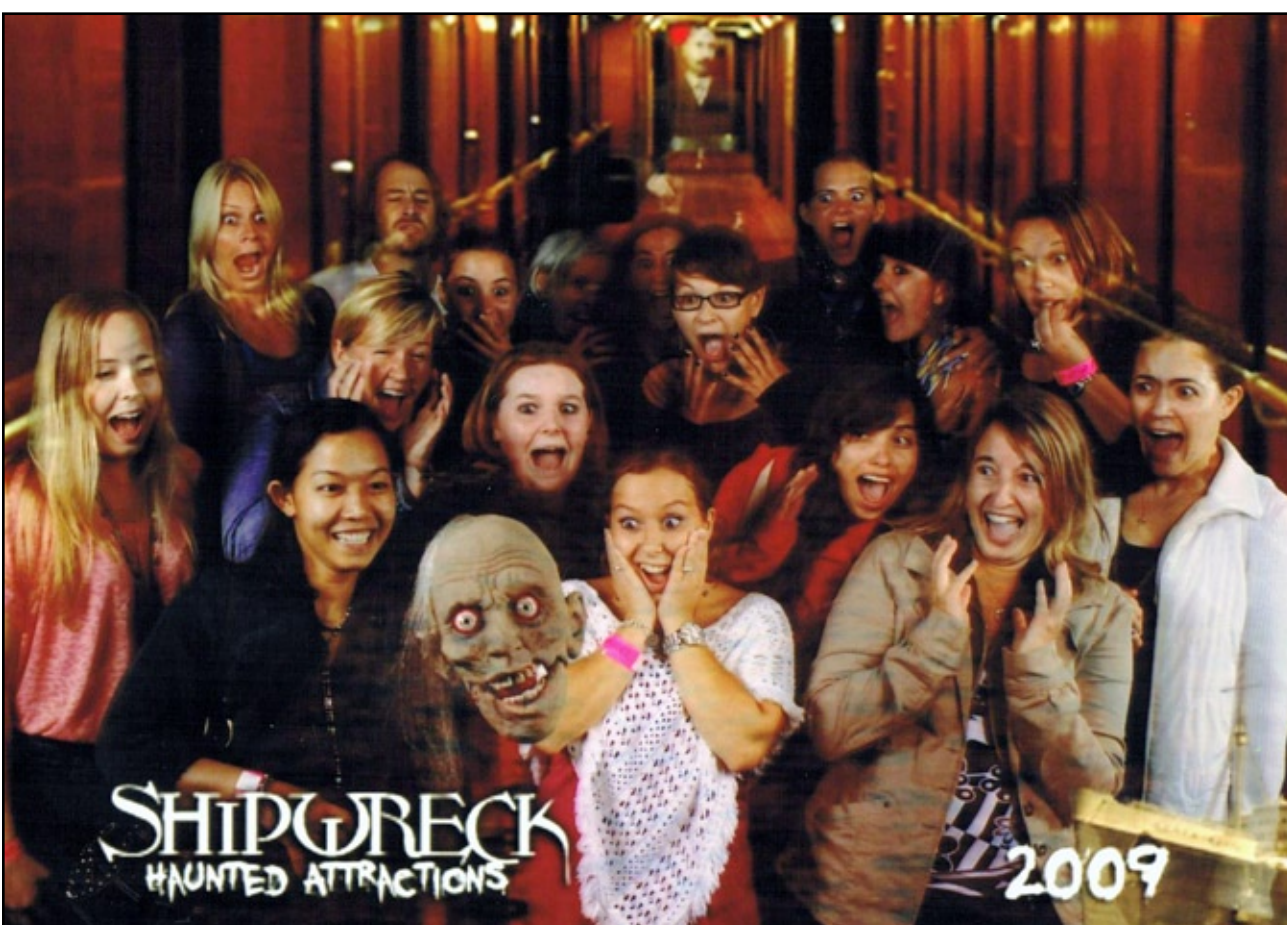
A sudden cold snap did not derail plans for a potluck picnic on the Hoboken, New Jersey waterfront! For Julie, it was her first trip to Hoboken and for Lu, this was her last meeting before travelling home at the end of eighteen wonderful months!

Pictured from left to right: EurAupair Au Pairs Luciane Luza (Brazil), Isabella Norrbo (Finland), Astrid Strohmeyer (Germany), Julie Sheng (Germany) and her friend Monique



In Philadelphia, EurAupair au pairs experienced a traditional fall American custom in October. EurAupair Community Counselor Sarah Carley's group went apple picking at Linvilla Orchards in Media, Pennsylvania. The weather was perfect for strolling through the orchards – cool, crisp and sunny. Unfortunately, though, there weren't too many apples to be found as the trees had been picked over. Just when the group was giving up all hope, they stumbled upon a row of trees laden with fruit. Everybody got enough for the pies and sauces they wanted to make. After apple picking, one member of the group stayed on to meet another au pair for an evening hayride followed by bonfire and marshmallow roasting.

From left to right: Charlotte Guyard (France), Marine Jelic (France) and Carolin Moret (Germany) enjoy picking apples at Linvilla Orchards in Media, PA



Southern California Au Pairs from San Diego, Orange County and Los Angeles met on October 17th at the Queen Mary Ship in Long Beach, CA for a scary night! Thank you to Community Counselors Sylvette Ortiz, Lisa Dupre and Mike Eggers for driving some of the au pairs to the meeting and a special thanks to Area Coordinator Jill James, who managed to get VIP tickets for everyone!

How We Found Nadine

By EurAupair Host Mom and Community Counselor Dotty Meltesen

Being a EurAupair Host Family with an au pair has been one of the most rewarding experiences for our family and children. So we would like to take this opportunity to share our story to give others an opportunity to also understand what it means to host an au pair.



The Meltesen Family of Grimes, IA

Since 2006, our children's grandma was their sole caretaker for two years. Her dedication to our children only ended as she became terminally ill with lung disease and passed away in Fall of 2008. The children loved staying at home every day, so it was my

mom's diagnosis and worsening health that brought us to EurAupair last year. We needed a solution that would allow our children to continue to be at home. My mom was told in May 2008 that she needed to put her affairs in order and that her

time was limited. Luckily, when we saw an advertisement for EurAupair in our local children's magazine some time ago, that's where our story began and how we found Nadine.

Knowing that we had three very busy children and also that my mom, Kay, was terribly ill, we needed to find an au pair quickly that could handle three small children and also have the ability to cope with some potentially stressful situations, no matter what they were. I'll never forget

Nadine's application. "Loves America, Wants to Visit Washington DC, Disciplined, Structured, Loves Her Family, Likes to play Board Games, and she helped coach a boys soccer team in Germany". We knew right off the bat, Nadine would be someone who would be just fine with two very active boys and not be shaken with all the stresses we would soon have. We were right; Nadine was everything!

Nadine arrived in August, 2008 and so was able to meet my mom early September 2008. I will never forget the words Nadine said after meeting my mom. She said, "I REALLY like your mom, if you ever need me to bring the children over to see her, I would be happy to". She offered that helpfulness out of the kindness of her heart. Those words will forever touch my heart. I never had the heart to tell Nadine how badly my mom was sick. We simply enjoyed that moment.

Sadly, those kind words from Nadine were never able to be carried out. My mom took a turn for the worse a few weeks later and passed away October 2008. So Nadine's first three months were spent experiencing an American funeral and also watching the children and her host family grieving and mourning a loss that was terribly traumatic for all of us. Nadine, as strong as she



Nadine having a laugh with her host brothers and sister!

is, was able to endure it with perfection. Honestly, at times, she was the one that kept us normal and together! I seriously don't know how our year would have been, had she not been here.

Over the course of the year, Nadine fell in love with the kids. She also learned a lot about herself and grew as a fine young lady. Of course, we would love to say our au pair year was perfect, without the stresses that we all had to deal with. What we can say though, is our children

now have the best sister in the world due to cultural exchange! The children were loved for 360 days by Nadine. She was able to fill my mom's big job as a caretaker with absolute grace and gave the children exactly what they needed. Nadine really loves the children. As a parent, that's the best gift you could ever receive for your children - love, understanding and their happiness.

Nadine will be leaving our family in August 2009. We are so sad to see her go, of course. It's just heart warming, though, as this is what the EurAupair program is all about. It's about giving for the "right" reasons, helping an American family that needs it and becoming a big sister for the children. In exchange, as an au pair, you get an awesome year in the USA, travel to new places, make new friends, get lots of memories to take with you that forever touch your heart, and the best of all....a second family to call home!

So with that....I present to you, Nadine Rohland from Germany, whom we feel should be chosen as the Au Pair of The Year. She's absolutely amazing! We Love You Madine/Wadine!

ASK DOT!



A regular feature of the EurAupair Gazette, Dear Dot! gives EurAupair Au Pairs and Host Families the chance to get answers to questions about proper etiquette in the USA! Ms. Soskin is a trained etiquette instructor and columnist, as well as one of EurAupair's longtime friends.

ADAPTING TO THE AMERICAN CULTURE

Dear Dot,
Could you give me some information on how to introduce people properly? I certainly meet many people in the USA, but am unsure if I am doing it right.
- Antonia from Germany

Dear Antonia,
Two of the most important things to remember in etiquette are shaking hands and introductions. Failure to introduce others is a lack of good manners.

Here is a simple formula:

- Always say the name of the more important person or older person first.
- Say each person's name once.
- Add some information about the person.
- When introduced, always stand up. Standing up shows respect!
- If you forget the name of anyone, say, "I'm sorry, I forgot your name." Develop an interesting self-introduction for yourself.
- When in doubt, don't use first names. Wait until you are asked.
- Be sure to use direct eye contact if you are to present yourself with confidence. To be a good listener, let your eyes say, "I'm listening."

If you need more information, let me know!

Kind regards,
Dot

Keep the questions coming...
E-mail Dot at:
d1manners@sbcglobal.net



Thanks for the visit! EurAupair host mom Aimee Tabor and her au pair Jasmin Lorenz with the twins George and Elise stopped at the Laguna Beach office for a quick visit.

San Francisco: All Aboard!

Bay Area au pairs can be accused of many things but not a lack of sense of adventure. We recently all donned life vests and climbed aboard a 38-ft sailing boat to experience the Bay Area from a whole new vantage point this past May. Each girl had to try her hand at some activity on the boat itself. From hoisting the rigging to taking the helm (wheel for the novice) we all got involved in getting the boat underway. We spent a glorious day out on the water looking at the city, going under the Golden Gate Bridge and just sailing the waters of the bay. We were lucky to see porpoises and have a good breeze to fill our sails. With an experienced sailor such as Andrea Geisinger, our community counselor, and her husband the day turned out to be a success.



From left to right: Marianne Ribault (France), Natalie Vance (South Africa), Andrea Inglin (friend from Switzerland), Jenny Lindner (Germany), Nicole Doering, Andrea Geisinger (Community Counselor)

Up, Up and Away!



Pictured from left to right: Anne Gaspar, Jasmin Gellen, Marketa Spitzenberger (all from Germany)

EurAupair Community Counselor Kristine Caesar of St. Louis, Missouri sent in this great photo of her area's au pairs at the 20th Balloon Glow and Race! This breathtaking event gave the au pairs a rare chance to see the inflated balloons lit up by their burners at night. The group was also able to get up close and also walk around the balloons. The unique evening was topped off with a beautiful fireworks display! Thanks, Kristine, for sharing the fun with all of us at The Gazette!

Gazette Info...

The EurAupair Gazette is published four times a year. It is provided free of charge to EurAupair Host Families, EurAupair Au Pairs, EurAupair Community Counselors and staff, and friends of the EurAupair program around the world. Any copyright material published with the written permission of the publisher and is so indicated. Any other material may be used for publication without permission of EurAupair.

Photos & Stories Wanted!

Pick out the best pictures you have taken and tell us...

- Who
- When
- What
- Where

and maybe even how or why! We'll take it from there!

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