

The Best Time of My Life!!!

By EurAuPair au pair **Carolin Kosbab**

Carolin Kosbab from Germany, hosted by the Meltesen family of Des Moines, IA, wrote in to share how she spent her au pair year in America.

Carolin writes:

"My story begins about one and a half year ago, when I decided to apply for being an au pair with EurAuPair. I always wanted to go to the USA for an exchange program. After short thinking I decided to be an au pair because I love to work with children and that's what I want to do in my future. About 2 months after finishing my application a family sent me an email because they were interested in me as their new and 3rd au pair. I read the email and saw their pictures and fell in love with this family and especially with the kids. The Meltesen family comes from Iowa. As I was reading Iowa I thought immediately: 'Where is Iowa?'"

So the host mom, host dad and I decided that I would be their next au pair. I had very good contact with my new and '2nd family' until my departure. I was so nervous every time we talked on Skype. And so I learned a lot about my host mom Dotty, host dad Tom and the kids T.J. (7), Cody (5) and Holly (3). I was so excited to meet them by the end of August 2009 and spend one whole year with them. It sure was very hard for me to let my German family go and be on a big journey all by myself. On August 24th the time had come. It was time to say goodbye to Germany and hello to Big New York city. It was my first time traveling to the USA and the first thing I saw was New York! Wow. I was so amazed how big everything was. I loved the 4 days in NYC.

After that, it was time to move on and meet my new family in Des

Moines, Iowa. I had been so excited while I was leaving the airplane. Now just a few feet separated me from my host family. I came down the escalator and there they were. The two boys were holding two

posters in their hands, which had written 'Welcome Caro, we love you!' on it. It was just so cute to see those three kids. Especially Holly, the little girl, she was just the cutest thing I had ever seen. She was sitting in her stroller with a big teddy bear in her arms. The teddy bear was as big

as her! I was so excited and super happy that I could barely talk. I was so shy and scared to talk in English.

After arriving in my new home I was so excited to see where I was going to live for the next year. My room was so beautiful and already with all of my favorite pictures and photographs of me and my family and friends. It was like coming home, not like being in a strange room. After a while I got used to talk in English and to all my activities and tasks. My host parents became my best friends, and the 3 kids are like my own. At the beginning the kids tried out how far they can go with me but they learned fast it's not too far and I have my very own rules. They started listening to me and they mostly did what I said. My host Mom and Dad didn't introduce me as their au pair at all. They told everybody I am their daughter. I



got integrated in the family. I was and still am a family member.

like brothers and sisters. We went to fun things together, like the zoo, the park or the science center in Des Moines, Iowa. The kids loved to have those trips to different places and were very excited for everything new. One day I planned to have a treasure hunt with the kids outside. Sadly it was raining so I had to think about what to do now, because I already told the kids we are going to do this. I decided to have an indoor treasure hunt. The kids loved it. The treasure was a big box with lots and lots of

candy in it. We also had a lot of fun with different kind of crafts and roll plays.

The most interesting thing about my year in the USA was the culture and the celebrations. Most impressive was the Iowa State Fair. A lot of yummy food, rides, animals and interesting things to learn about Iowa. And the 4th of July was very interesting and colorful too. I also had my very first American Halloween, which is very different to the German one. I had Thanksgiving, which was very interesting and yummy. I really liked the turkey! I liked it to join all this events. It was amazing, even Christmas is different. I really liked this traditional preparing for Santa. Cookies and milk, that was very cute. The American Christmas is one day later than the German one. I liked it how the kids ran down the stairs on Christmas day to open their presents. It was nice to watch them unpacking their presents and be so happy.

That was something I still needed besides my family. Friends! After about 2 months after I arrived my new family, I found a free time activity for myself. I am a dancer since more then 11 years. I found a group of 15 guys, which are break-dancers. Those guys became my friends, and some of them are very good friends. We danced, had fun, and were there for each other.

My year with the both most important things in the world has

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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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get integrated in the family. I was and still am a family member.

My host family and I traveled a lot. We saw the Mall of America, Kansas City, Disney World and Sea World Florida, Southern Iowa and Illinois. I am so thankful for taking me everywhere they went. I enjoyed every single moment with my host family. The kids and I we are

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Annual EurAupair Chicago Boat Outing

Chicago-land au pairs and Community Counselors gathered together for their yearly boat ride on Sunday August 29th.

Area Coordinator Vivi Frumkin writes:

“This year, we were on board the Wendella boat, which took us on a 90-minute tour. We sailed west on the Chicago River, turned around, sailed back east, went through the locks and out on Lake Michigan.

The river part of the tour was



Flag of Illinois



Flag of Chicago

sunny & hot and everybody had to look up to see the skyscrapers. Nothing like being at the bottom of a skyscraper trying to get a look or photo of a building!

To get out onto Lake Michigan we had to go through the locks. We learned the reason for the locks is due to the lake being higher than the river.

Once out on the lake, we all felt the wonderful breeze. The Chicago lakefront is always a beautiful sight, even though it was a bit hazy that day. Everybody was at the railings with their cameras!

Then back through the locks and under the bridges we sailed. The Michigan Avenue Bridge has several flags flying. The American flag, The State of Illinois flag and the City of Chicago flag. All au pairs recognize the American flag, so here is the explanation about the others.

The State of Illinois flag has the Great Seal of Illinois on a white background with the word Illinois underneath the seal.

The Municipal flag of Chicago has 5 stripes and 4 stars: Three white stripes signifying North, West and South side of the city. Two blue stripes being 1) Lake

Michigan and the North Branch of the Chicago River and 2) the South Branch of the Chicago River and the Great Canal.

The 4 stars represent: Fort Dearborn, The Great Chicago Fire, The World's Columbian Exposition, and The Century of Progress Exposition.

We were a group of 51 people, including six newly arrived au pairs. What a way to start the au pair year. Arrive to Chicago on a Friday and be part of a huge group tour on Lake Michigan on Sunday. We always organize our boat outing at the end of August. What better way to say – Welcome to Chicago!”



EurAupair Chicago-land au pairs, community counselors and area coordinator

A Year Simply Magical, With An Incredible Ending Surprise!

By Julia Poullaude from France, hosted by the Lammey family of Ridgewood, NJ

Julia and her host family enjoyed their time together so much that Julia wrote in to *The Gazette* to share some of her memories.

“My story starts with my arrival in NYC October 12th, 2009, a big city which I immediately fell in love with. On October 16th I joined in NJ my host family Paul, Noelia, Tyler (5 years old) and Kevin (3 years old).

Arriving in the USA I right away felt the need to travel and that

is exactly what I did! So off I went to visit many beautiful destinations: Miami, Key West, Las Vegas, Grand Canyon, Philadelphia, Washington DC, Bahamas, Niagara Falls and to top it all an 8 days trip to discover California.

The last 12 months have been magical for the magnificent places that I have visited, but also and most importantly by the indescribable relationship that I lived with my

family. I love them as much as I love my own family; they will without a doubt be forever in my heart and my life. I can say now I have a second family. My two boys Tyler and Kevin have been so adorable, silly, lovable and cute all through the year which will make my departure much more difficult. Who will tell me in France ‘I love you soooo much’ or who will make me ‘chupa ears’ or even ask me to stick my crepes to the ceiling!

I have mentioned my two ‘monkeys’ but to this magnificent family we must add a name, the one of a little princess born August 13th, and guess what they decided to name her? Julia, yes, yes Julia, like me! In fact, my host parents Paul and Noelia decided to give their newborn daughter my name. You can imagine my surprise when Noelia told me the chosen name! Isn't this a beautiful proof of their love?

I have made such a strong bond with the Lammey family, I would have never imagined before coming to the USA. They have done everything to make me feel welcome and part of their family, and the result could not have been more satisfactory. Today I know it will not be a final goodbye because we will

see each other again either in France or in the USA but still my departure will be difficult. Now I know they will not forget me as their daughter's name will remind them of me.

To my host family: I would never thank you enough for all the love you have given me. Our story is only beginning; it is just the start of a long and beautiful story of love and complicity. I LOVE YOU and I am going to miss you a lot!”



The Lammey family and their au pair Julia Poullaide (France)



Julia Poullaide with her family's newborn baby, who is named Julia in honor of Julia! Little Julia arrived one month prior to Julia's departure

Happy 21st Birthday to All of You!

By EurAupair Community Counselor Dawn Rothermel

Most, if not all, societies have rites of passage that mark different periods of a person's life. These different periods are typically when the person has reached a new and significant change in her life. Regardless of where the society is located around the world, sometimes the rites of passage occur at the same age; other times, the rites of passage occur at a different age.

Rites of passage may be, and often are, socially celebrated - with friends, families and other people of importance to the person experiencing the rite of passage. Rites of passage can come in all degrees of importance depending upon the culture and the person experiencing the rite of passage. Here in the United States, for example, and, in particular, in Illinois, an important rite of passage for a young person is to attain the age of "21". That magical age when beer and wine can be consumed, oftentimes in large, noisy, social settings with lots

of friends and a dance floor in the nearby vicinity! In other countries around the world, this same rite of passage may occur when the person turned "16" or "18".

Certain au pairs will have the distinct pleasure of experiencing this rite of passage twice; once in their home country and then again in the United States. Of course, from the au pair's perspective, this might not be a good rite of passage to have to wait and experience a second time.

But just as it was important the first time, it is even more important the second time. In late August, Daniela Schwensen, of Antioch, IL, hosted by the Pasch family, experienced this rite of passage a second time here in the United States. Daniela, however, was not alone. In Daniela's group of 10 au pairs, she was joined in the '21' club earlier in the year by Laura Pakh (July-Finland) and will be joined in the coming months by

Katharina Motsch (September-Germany), Anne Schmetzer (November-Germany), Anna Kahlisch (January-France), Alice Gouennou (February-France) and

Audrey Marais (March-France).

A Big Thanks to Dawn for sharing the story with The Gazette!



Pictured left to right: Katharina Motsch, Daniela Schwensen, Jennifer Strehlow, Anna Kahlisch, Anne Schmetzer (all from Germany)

Drive-In Theater Experience

On a hot and humid Saturday night in July, Community Counselor Dawn Rothermel's group of au pairs experienced an American icon for sure - the McHenry Outdoor Drive-in Theatre. The outdoor theatre was a first for most of the au pairs in Dawn's group. As most of the

au pairs live in the suburbs of Chicago, it was also a first for them to see the darkened sky and its assortment of twinkling stars. The first feature was Despicable Me followed by Toy Story 3!

Thanks Dawn, for taking the time to send the Gazette this great picture of your group!

Pictured left to right: Jennifer Strehlow (Germany), Laura Pakh (Finland), Susanne Stroh (Germany), Anja Endler, visiting from CA (Germany), Sarah Dittmar (Germany), Katharina Motsch (Germany), Mailys Daoud (France), Anna Kahlisch (Germany), Alice Gouennou (France) and Audrey Marais (France)



And the Award for the Best Host Parents for Celebrity Gigs Goes to...



Zac Efron, Isabella Souto (Brazil) and host children (2010)

It's not everyday you wake up and hear, "Today's the day you'll meet someone with a little extra international clout." In the Morain family household, this seems to happen a little more often than it may for other Atlanta host families.

Host parents Grant and Kristine Morain have enjoyed having au pairs with EurAupair for more than five years. This year, they welcomed Isabella Souto from Brazil. What a nice surprise when they presented her with an extra special treat this summer- she met Zac Efron! The host dad, Grant Morain, is the president of an in town Little League

where Efron promoted his new movie Charlie St. Cloud released on July 30th. While participating in the Dan Perez Baseball Camp at Murphy Candler Park, he took time out to take a few pictures with some awesome fans. Lucky girl!

Last year, host mom and General Counsel to the Boys and Girls Club of America, Kristine Morain, introduced their au pair, Tatjana Fertich (Germany), to long time B&GCoA supporter Usher.

We can't wait to see who they'll deliver next year, and what a treat to share in the excitement!



Tatjana Fertich (Germany) and Usher (2009)

Continued from front page...

been the best year in my whole life. I had an experience nobody can take away from me. I got a second family, which I love so much, that it was hard to think about saying goodbye. I found a lot of good friends, which were there for me when I needed them. I learned so much about the life in just this one year. I learned how to be independent, a mom, a good friend, an adult and responsible for important things. I got prepared for my whole future life and nobody can take this away.

I am EurAupair and the German office is so thankful that they gave me this opportunity to find out who I am, what I need and what's important in life.

At this point I want to say you thank to a lot of people. To the people from EurAupair, my lovely Mom and Dad in the US and my beautiful host kids. I also want to thank my family in Germany to trust in me that I am strong and brave enough to take this step.

Special thanks again to my American host family for giving me a home, a new family and showing me everything about the American way of Life!

Now it's Irina's turn to live with my American family and to spend one year with them and maybe my friends. I hope she is going to take good care of 'my kids' and will have a great time with 'my family'. I hope her year is going to be as perfect as my year! As I can say... this year was the best time of my life!"

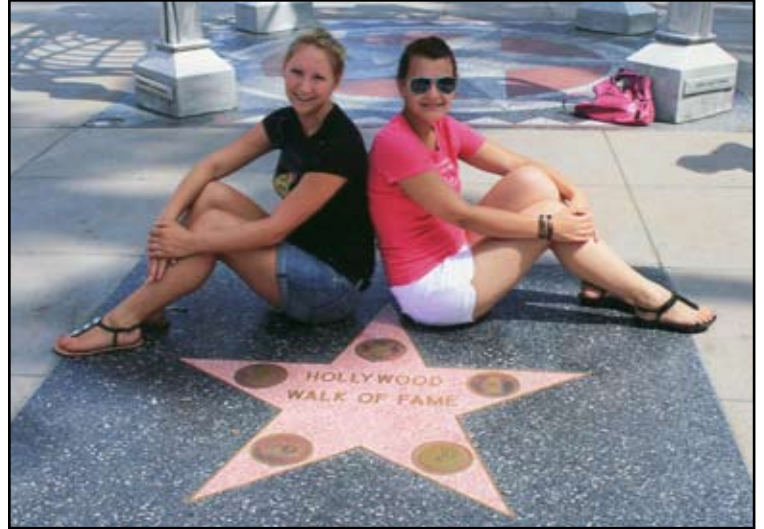
A Very Special "Thank You"

Jana Jessen, from Germany, hosted by the Sussman family of Irvine, CA, wanted to share her wonderful experience of life in the USA by sending a very nice note to EurAupair.

"As I got my departure flight details, I knew that my year was going to end soon. At first, I was really sad because I am leaving Orange County with so many good experiences and memories but on the other hand I am happy to finally see my family and my friends again after one whole year. And I am going to move on with my life and start my journalism studies – how exciting!"

This journey was one of the best decisions I ever made in my life. Going to a foreign country as an au pair makes you become more self-confident, gives you tons of good experiences with kids and leaves many good memories which you are never going to forget because they are saved in your heart.

So I have to thank you for making this year happen. To know that there was always somebody from EurAupair to talk to was great – your support meant a lot to me."



Maike Gross and Jana Jessen (both from Germany) met at the workshop in NYC and became friends right away. Maike's host family spent the spring and summer in Newport Beach, CA, where the two au pairs reconnected building a great friendship



Jana Jessen with the Sussman family

EurAupair Pool and BBQ Party

The Lodge & Spa at Cordillera, overlooking the beautiful Vail Valley in Colorado, graciously hosted a pool party/bbq for the EurAupair au pairs, host families and community counselors in the area on Sunday, August 15th. Although not everyone

was able to make it, we all had a great time and look forward to the next event!

A Special Thanks to Area Coordinator Kathryn Troy for organizing the event and for sharing the photos with The Gazette!



Back row: Thais Madeira (Brazil), Eija Puustinen (Finland) and Isabel Lima (Brazil)

Middle Row: Kathryn Troy (Area Coordinator), Kari Marino (Community Counselor), Karolin Schmidt (Germany) holding Kyenne Kueper, Leonie Schwarz (Germany), Ina Dietrich (Germany), Kristina Schwarz (Germany) holding Cole Tebol, Jon Tebol (EurAupair Host Family), Brian and Tiffany Ingoldsby holding their children Olivia and Carter (EurAupair host family)

Front Row: Hannah Hardenbergh, Daniela Kueper (Community Counselor), Katy-Jane, Ian, Patti and Dylan Hardenbergh (EurAupair Host Family)



From left to right: Karolin Schmidt, Ina Dietrich, and Leonie Schwarz (all from Germany)



Left to right: Isabel Lima (Brazil), Kathryn Troy (Area Coordinator) and Thais Madeira (Brazil)