

Elise Ducam – EurAupair Au Pair of the Year 2016

By the Bussieres/Borkowski Family from Corpus Christi, TX who hosted Elise for one year.

My husband and I are both physicians, and we have three very active children. I am always very upfront with the au pairs during the interviewing process, warning them we run a busy life, and life with three kids, while a lot of fun, can be chaotic at times! Elise arrived in our family from France in August of 2014. Elise comes from a multiethnic background. She arrived into our family open-minded, flexible and very adaptable. She came to America to fulfill a dream - to learn about a new culture, to be an integral part of a new family, improve a second language, travel, and build new long lasting relationships. She accomplished all of this, but also marked so many lives during her stay with her generous and fun-loving personality.

As soon as Elise set foot in our house, she immediately reached out to the children, always smiling and willing to help. She adapted so well to each one's personality, which we recognize can be challenging. She was very patient and understanding with our hyperactive 11 year old son and connected well with his dry sense of humour. She understood his difficulties concentrating with homework at night and tried all sorts of things to help him focus, taking academic performance seriously. She was genuinely interested in our middle daughter's horse passion (to the point of taking horseback riding herself!) and never missed the girls' horse competitions. She was very creative coming up with new games and projects with our 7 year old daughter and was attentive to all of her needs. She was also comfortable and friendly with adults, she had a special ability to connect with people, a gift.

My children are



Elise and her host sisters on a ski trip.

involved in numerous afterschool activities and she was a big help driving them back and forth. Elise was organized and always punctual. She did homework and piano with them and demanded that things were well done. She took their performances seriously. Because she was mature and responsible, we

felt that our kids were safe with her at all times. Elise seemed to consider the kids as her own siblings, her own family. She communicated with them and understood them on their level. She knew how to bring out happy vibes yet she was firm when needed. She was extremely involved in the children's activities in and

out of school. She even volunteered to help first graders with reading and math. In doing so, she not only improved her English significantly but also got to know many children and their parents and the teachers, most of which still ask about her. She volunteered for all the school field trips and as such visited many places she would not have had a chance to see. She always gave herself 100%!

Elise's initiative and open-mindedness helped her adapt to her new situation and even adopt several of our ways of life. For instance, she appreciated our healthy cooking and even started going to the gym on a daily basis.



The Bussieres/Borkowski Family and Elise.

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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 Pairs Expressing their Gratitude

Before returning to France, Lucile Lecourt wrote this cute email to her Community Counselor Natalie Kratzer-Gushwa.

Hi again :)

Thank you very much for everything you did, for caring about your au pairs. You are always trying to find the best for everybody which is so appreciable. Your meetings were always fun and interesting to go to. You are a good person and the best counselor! You can be proud of yourself for the way you do your counselor

job :) It was a real pleasure to meet you and to have you as a counselor in this experience!!! I wish you the best!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

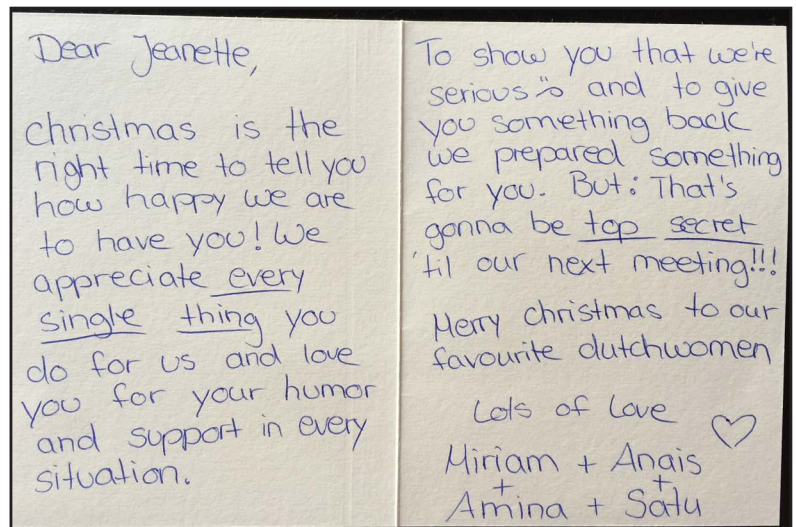
PS: Thank you for the good-bye present. I am happy about what you wrote and I already have all the chocolates in my tummy :)

Take good care of you, Lucile

Lucile, we like your sweet note to Natalie very much – thank you for letting her know how much you appreciated her.



Natalie and Lucile at the St Patrick's Day parade in Seattle. Fun photo!



Jeanette Schoonman, San Francisco Community Counselor, received this beautiful card from her group of Au Pairs. What a wonderful way to say Thank You!



Here you can see Jeanette with her Au Pairs. Two previous Au Pairs who visited their host family joined the meeting as well.

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She was definitely hooked (she has maintained this habit in France). She even started Spanish lessons just like the children! She kept saying that she didn't have the impression that she was really working when she was with us. When she came along with us on various trips, including Disney World, Colorado skiing and a visit to Quebec City in Canada, she was always grateful and did all she could to be useful at all times. She made friends in many places, friends who continue to invite her back! I guess in her case, her actions really justify the expression you "reap what you sow".

She was helpful in the good times and also in difficult times, such as when our 11 year old had a severe life threatening accidental chest injury one week into our Canada trip and required emergency thoracic surgery. She had such a maternal response: as I was attending my son, she instinctively took the girls away, read them stories and pretended

that she wanted to sleep with them while my son Alex was rushed to the hospital, not knowing for many hours what his outcome would

be (he survived and has now fully recovered).

It turned to be a great exchange for all of us. We even met ten of



Reading by the fireplace – looks so cozy!

her family members who at one point came to visit her in Texas; we immediately connected and enjoyed a lovely crepe dinner at our home where we somehow managed to find a little corner for all of them to sleep in! She was such a blessing to us but I think she also grew up during the year, became more self-confident about who she is, her capabilities, pursuing further studies, and finding a vocation she loves. I made her understand that if she survived one year with us, she could accomplish anything in her life!! When she thanked us at the end for an amazing year, I smiled and told her we are the ones that should be thanking her.

Thank you for this beautiful essay about your time with Elise. Congratulations, Elise, for winning this year's Au Pair of the Year Award!!

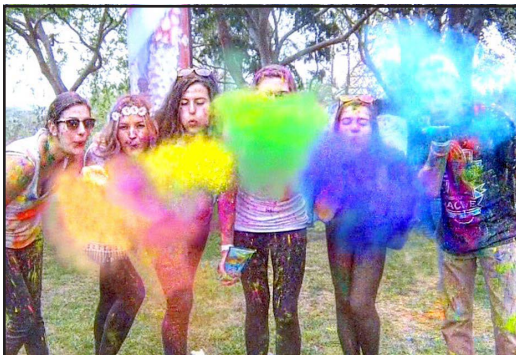
EurAupair Photos



Jenny from Germany is enjoying her time in New York with her host siblings Mia and Trevor.



Danville, CA Community Counselor Julie Molkenbuhr and her group of Au Pairs tested their ice skating skills and had a lot of fun. In the photo, from left to right: Fadile (Germany), Catalina (Colombia), Alisson (France), Manon (France) and Lisa (Germany). Julie is in the front.



Fun times with Los Angeles, CA Community Counselor Erika Loder and her Au Pairs at Disneyland and the Holi Festival of Colors. We love the photos!



South African Au Pairs Belinda and Bronwyn explored Arkansas during their vacation. They have become great friends during their time in the US.



Melanie Spigelmyre, Community Counselor in Fresno, CA, and Yulan from China attended a Fresno State baseball game for their cultural event. This was a new and unique experience for Yulan.



Chicago Au Pairs, Host Families, Community Counselors and Area Coordinator attended a Chicago Wolves ice hockey game in February. Everybody had a great time and EurAupair was even mentioned on the scoreboard!



Delphine (France), Lucile (France), Community Counselor Natalie Kratzer-Gushwa, Community Counselor Shari Rust, Yueming (China) and Tori (South Africa) went snow tubing at Snoqualmie Summit in Washington State. What a fun meeting!



This picture shows our March arriving Au Pairs at the EurAupair workshop in New York City. How convenient that the Au Pairs can take their break just across the street at Central Park!

A Spring Story

By Colleen Gibson, Community Counselor in Virginia Beach, VA

March 26th, 2016 was the coming together of many minds and spirits: young, older and in-between. The small group of au pairs in Virginia Beach, VA partnered with Girl Scout Troop #73 to help deliver spring and renewal to the King Grant House (assisted living) facility. The group shared many different colors to dye eggs and combined colors to create their very own egg dying masterpiece. We colored nearly 100 hardboiled eggs: pink, blue, green and all colors in between. Cups of dye were spilled: an egg dyed in pink and then in blue to make purple was

what one of the residents willed, she was absolutely thrilled!! The young brought smiles to the residents and the residents took it all in with such joy. Stories were shared, laughs were had - all in all as a community counselor I was more than glad. The event was a success and enjoyed by all!! A great community volunteer sharing! Happy Spring! Happy Renewal!

Thank you, Colleen, for writing about your March meeting and for bringing spring to EurAupair and the Gazette.



Colleen, her Au Pairs, the Girl Scout Troop and the King Grant House residents present their freshly colored eggs.

Farm Life

By South African Au Pair Nomvula Khoza who lives with the Koopal Family in Sarcoxie, MO.

Even though we live on a farm, the house is very modern. I practically do everything with the family, especially the kids. There's so much nature around which I love, a lot of space to play with the kids and because it's remote, there's no bad influence on the kids which makes them grounded and appreciate life more. The food is great: we have chickens that give us fresh organic eggs every day, we have a seasonal

garden with organic fresh produce. It is a very loving community around here and with a generous family friend that lets us ride on her horses.

As a young person I know you might think, there's got to be more to life than farm life and nature and yes, there is more. The family has been very generous to me, by me using their car to get me around. Plus I'm a very responsible person and

I have earned their trust, so there are nearby towns that I visit occasionally during my off days with my friends (Joplin, Carthage and Springfield). There are malls, night clubs, outdoor activities and the YMCA.

Thank you, Nomvula, for writing about living on a farm and for sharing the fun photos with everybody at the Gazette.

Horseback riding in the beautiful Missouri nature.



Alexis and Madison with their own chickens.

Nomvula and host sister Madison having fun on the trampoline.

