

Ronald McDonald House Charities

Since 1974, the Ronald McDonald House Charities have helped families whose children are seriously ill and are undergoing treatment. RMHC has been making children happier and healthier by keeping their families close – giving them a place to rest and refresh – while the children are at the hospital. Even though RMHC may not be able to make the medicine taste better or erase the pain of a much-needed treatment, they have helped lessen the burden of millions of families by providing them a place that feels like home. Because of the efforts of RMHC, seriously ill children can have their families where they need them most – by their sides.

EurAupair proudly makes a personal contribution to Ronald McDonald House Charities in each host family's name. Our involvement with the RMHC dates back to 1989 and has raised thousands of dollars annually to help provide a home away from home for sick children and their families.

For the annual volunteer meeting in April, Community Counselor Darcy Voreis and her group of



The Au Pairs were able to tour the house and learn about the various volunteer opportunities.

au pairs visited the Ronald McDonald House in Indianapolis, IN. They toured the facility which houses up to 58 families per night and is located close to Riley Hospital for Children. The au pairs learned a lot during their visit and expressed their wish to volunteer more. They

also shared what medical treatments and facilities are available in their home country.

Thank you so much, Darcy, for organizing such a meaningful meeting and for introducing your au pairs to the high value volunteering has in the United States.



April (China), Carmen (South Africa) and Sara (Sweden) in front of the Ronald McDonald House in Indianapolis, IN.

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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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On the Bucket List: Baseball

By Laetitia Mouton, Community Counselor in Tampa, FL

Baseball... the great American pastime! Every au pair has their little or huge bucket list! As a former au pair myself, I have a clear idea of what kind of activities au pairs are excited about. Playing baseball is definitely on most bucket lists. It's a typical activity and can be very exciting to discover while in America.

Americans love baseball. We see it everywhere in the movies and the people of the USA support baseball as much as we support soccer in other countries. They are crazy about it! So, it's time for the EurAupair au pairs to experiment with this game during Tampa's August meeting.

The group showed up very

excited and determined to hit the ball on August 28th. Around some popcorn and conversation, we were getting ready for a funny afternoon. It seems so easy when we see other people playing baseball. We all took turns to play like Derek Jeter - famous Yankees Player - but that Sunday, it was a different story...

Bats in hand and helmets on our head, we got in position and focused on the ball about to come toward us. We tried to hit the ball, and tried, and tried... We tried just to touch it at least. It is really not easy! And when we succeeded to touch the ball with the bat, all the vibrations from the hit came back to our hands and went all along our body. Ouch! We were all very surprised by the pain in our hands and now it's clear why baseball players wear gloves when they bat.

But we had such a good time! A lot of pictures and videos were taken and a lot of laughs were shared. The girls bonded and created a solid link by discovering another aspect of the American culture together. Cheers to

another exceptional adventure in being an au pair in the USA!!

Reading the article makes us want to try to hit the baseball as well. It seems you had a great time! Thanks much, Laetitia.



Laetitia and her group of Au Pairs during their very sporty meeting.

Ravinia Festival

By Chicago, IL Community Counselor Gila Peller

Gila Peller's au pair group spent the evening under the stars at the Ravinia Festival. Although it is an au pair favorite tradition to visit Ravinia, this was a different experience. The Chicago Symphony Orchestra played the score for the movie Titanic in real time. What a great experience! The girls enjoyed an authentic picnic with delicious homemade dishes, including Spanish empanada and Turkey's tavuk sarma.

The evening was wonderful despite the many tears shed at the end of the movie.

What is Ravinia? Ravinia

is one of the oldest outdoor music festivals in the United States with many outdoor concerts and performances. It's the home of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. People from all over come not only to listen to music or see performances, but to dine in restaurants on the premises or picnic on the beautiful 36 acres of ground.

This sounds like a wonderful and unique meeting! Thank you, Gila, also for submitting article and photo.



Community Counselor Gila and her Chicago Au Pairs enjoying a picnic, movie as well as live music performed by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

Forever a Part of the Family



Holly Meltesen was the flower girl at her former au pair Carolin's wedding in Germany. We love this photo - it shows how au pairs are true family members, even after they have returned back home!!

We thank Dotty Meltesen - Community Counselor in Des Moines, IA and previous Host Mom - for sharing this beautiful photo with us.

EurAupair Events



We had a great day at Wunderlich Park in Woodside, CA! Everyone brought great food and juices to share and we followed our picnic with a nice hike, overlooking parts of Silicon Valley, going through majestic redwood trees. We also visited the carriage museum and got an introduction to Woodside's rich history, its horses and got to see some of them as well - most of us being absolute horse lovers and riders. Happy day = happy girls!
Thank you, Jeanette, for always making sure that your au pairs are happy. The photo is great!



On a sunny Sunday in August, Chicago au pairs, counselors and host families got together for the annual boat cruise on Lake Michigan and the Chicago River.

It was the same weekend as the Air & Water Show, so once in a while we could see and hear the planes overhead, which included the Blue Angels. The Blue Angels is the United States Navy's flight demonstration squadron, with aviators from the Navy and Marines. Personally, I think the sound of six F/A-18 Hornet aircrafts flying above the lake is awesome.

From our tour guide we learned about the Chicago lakefront and all the different buildings along the river. It was a perfect day for everybody! The Chicago boat tour in August has become a wonderful tradition for Chicago au pairs, counselors and host families – thanks to Area Coordinator Vivi!



For their cultural meeting, Community Counselor Kristine Ceaser and her au pairs visited the art museum at Stanford, CA. Looks like a very interesting exhibition – thanks for sharing!



In 1863 the four-wheeled turning roller skate (or better known as quad skate) was first designed, in NYC by James Leonard Plimpton. It became such a huge success that in 1866 the first public roller skating rink was open in NYC. In America this hobby was most popular in 1935 through the early 1960's then again in the 1970's. Still to this day it's among one of the "hottest" pastimes in America.

Our Cultural Event was a 2-hour skating session at Brooklyn Bridge Park (Pier 2). All the girls enjoyed it and of course the view was a bonus. Thank you to Community Counselors Danny and Rosalind Rivera, for organizing and sharing this fun event with us.



German Au Pair Sarah visited California during her travel month at the end of her program. Of course one stop had to be Disneyland - she and her Area Coordinator Cynthia had a blast! Very cute photos – thank you.

On Sunday, April 17th we were able to take part in Volunteer Month. We had a great experience giving our time to PACT (People Animals Community Together), a Humane Society Adoption Center in Chicago, IL. The au pairs and I were able to help by cleaning, making blankets and of course giving the animals some much needed playtime love and affection. We also got to take care of other small tasks that are sometimes difficult for the regular volunteers to do on a regular basis.

In the photo we are decorating bottles that will be delivered to classrooms in a local school. Each class will collect donations and the class with the highest amount donated will get a pizza party. All donations help pay for veterinary services for the animals. Our group happens to be full of animal lovers so it was definitely a day well spent and I plan to make this an annual meeting in honor of volunteer month each year. This experience taught us that we really are our best selves when we are caring for our animal friends. It's a wonderful idea to also help our furry friends during National Volunteer Month. Thank you, Ashley, also for the nice article and photo.



When One Gap Year Turns into the Best 4 Years of Your Life

By Andrea Geldenhuys, hosted by the McGown family in Fair Oaks Ranch, TX

I decided to become an au pair in my last year of school when I realized that I had no idea what I wanted to become or who I really was.

December 2012 was my first year as an au pair and also my first time being abroad! I was so excited and had all these dreams of living abroad. I remember the day I said goodbye to my family like yesterday... I was so excited that saying goodbye was easy for me but really hard for my family.

I had the idea that being an au pair will be like a year of vacation, traveling, making friends, that it was going to be easy and that working with kids was easy. I quickly realized that being an au pair is being part of a family, loving the kids like they were your own, pushing yourself out of your comfort zone to make friends and that taking care of kids is a lot of responsibility. I never expected to make friends from all over the world! I didn't just make friends with au pairs but students and world travellers. I never in a million years would

have thought that I would be able to travel this much, that I could say that I have lived in 3 different countries abroad and travelled to 11 countries – something not a lot of people of all ages can say.

I have been an au pair in The Netherlands, Belgium and am now almost done with my second year in the USA. In my 4 years as an au pair I have had one bad experience with a family. I stuck with that family because I had a great relationship with the kids and they made it worth it. I learned a lot about that year and learned a lot about myself. Even when stuff was not perfect, I always tried to keep myself busy with what was positive. After the one bad experience I had 3 years of wonderful host families!

After 2 years in Europe I decided to become an au pair in Texas! This time we were a group of South Africans flying together to NYC and how exciting was that! We arrived in busy NYC for the au pair course and had the opportunity to meet



Andrea visited a lot of places during her time in the US.

au pairs from all over the world! The week in NYC at the au pairs course was so much fun and we also had free time to explore NYC. After that week I arrived in Texas with my first family and what a great year I spent with them! I did change families after that year only because they moved to another city and I really missed the friends I made in San Antonio. I moved back to San Antonio and it was great to be back. It has been busy with taking care of 4 boys, but I feel at home and part of the family.

I always had the idea that a Community Counselor was only there to help if something was wrong, but our Community Counselor ended up being one of my best friends in

America! I have also worked with different au pair companies and I'm so glad that I found EurAupair! They have been a great support system!

Currently I'm in my last few months in Texas and I'm so excited to go back to South Africa to study, work and to see my family, but I'm also really sad. Being an au pair has been the best few years of my life and definitely something I'll remember for the rest of my life! I'm so grateful for every host family who has opened their home for me and making my dreams a reality!

Thank you, Andrea, for sharing your story with us. We are glad you had such a wonderful time as an au pair!



Andrea and her friends in front of the Chicago Bean.



Enjoying life as an au pair!