

AFS North Shore Newsletter

December, 2010

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"From Wellsford to the Bridge"
<http://www.afsns.org.nz>



**Intercultural
Programmes**
New Zealand
Ngā Herenga Tātai o AFS

NEXT MEETING –

Sunday 12 December 2010 10.45am

WARKWORTH WHARF

QUAY STREET, WARKWORTH

Yes – this is it! Our last meeting of the year aboard the “Jane Gifford”.

Join the boat at 10:45am at Warkworth Wharf - if you are late the boat will be gone! We will return at around 3pm.

What to bring:

- Picnic lunch and drinks (there will NOT be a BBQ aboard).
- Swimming togs, towels, and a warm jumper or jacket.
- Sunhat, sunscreen, sunglasses (the water reflects!)
- A big smile!

See you there!



We will also have farewell speeches from the last of our hosted students who are leaving us in January.

There are still a few places available –
contact Winston on 09 426 8429,
027 222 3296, or president@afsns.org.nz



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Let us again reflect on the sad loss of life at the Pike River Mine.

Well as another great year comes to a close, I take this opportunity to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year to you and your loved ones.

To reflect on 2010, what a fun year we have had:

- Ten pin bowling
- Quiz night
- Spring feast
- Farewell speeches
- Intensive programme students
- Judy O'Grady's presentation on her AFS Teachers Exchange to South America.
- Laser tag
- Waitakere Ranges walk
- International food night

This is what AFS is all about, getting together as the family and sharing our culture and views with each other to draw the world closer.

Take a well earned break over the festive season, and reflect on a way you can contribute to AFS next year. Most of the committee are happy to stay on for another year, but we would love a couple of volunteer hands to go up at our AGM in early February.

Cheers

Winston



HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO THE FOLLOWING HOSTED STUDENTS:

Jacopo from Italy on 16 December
Salvador from Argentina on 21 December



ROADSHOW PRESENTERS FOR 2011

WANTED!!

- WHO Returnees or other AFS members
- WHY To promote AFS
- WHERE In local Secondary Schools
- PAYMENT Yes!
- TRAINING Yes! – Prior to starting in schools.
- HOW Contact: Elizabeth Francis (ph. 410 2012 or vicepresident@afsns.org.nz)
Dylan Syben (dylan.syben@afs.org) to apply and for further details.

Returnees who have been back for a few years are ideally placed to be a presenter. Roadshow is an AFS promotion and information session given to our secondary students at school. It's a great opportunity for you to give something back to AFS by sharing your enthusiasm about the AFS experience. University students can fit school sessions in around times you are available – and get paid for doing it!

Ideally we need to have our team of presenters in place before the end of the year. Do contact Elizabeth or Dylan for more information if you think you may be interested.

LOCAL AFS FUNDRAISERS FOR 2011

ALSO WANTED!!

VOLUNTEERS for organizing fundraising sausage sizzles during the year. We usually have four each year, on a weekend outside a popular and busy shopping spot such as the Warehouse or Dunnings.

You don't need to man the barbecue yourself, but we do need someone to set each one up as well as make the bookings for the space, buy the supplies and organize a roster of students to provide the service. These large stores generally have a barbecue facility available near their front entrance.

If you are interested please contact Winston (ph. 09 426 8429 or president@afsns.org.nz) or any one of the committee members.

FAREWELL TO THE FOLLOWING HOSTED STUDENTS

Salvador from Argentina
 Amanda from Costa Rica
 Hitomi from Japan
 Laila from Norway
 Sander from Norway

Jeanette from Norway
 Ana from Paraguay
 Antonella from Paraguay
 Dominic from Switzerland
 Monica from Venezuela

We wish you happy times for the rest of your stay, a great trip home and a wonderful return to your family and friends. Very best wishes for your future studies, and we hope you will always have special memories of your time spent with us.

GENERAL NOTICES

CALENDAR DATES

Dec 8 & 9 Tiri Tiri Matangi Island AFS
 Overnights
Dec 12 AFS meeting – **BOAT TRIP**
Christmas!
New Year!
Holidays!
13 Feb AFS North Shore chapter meeting:
 Welcome BBQ and AGM
13 March Chapter meeting

What's on

11 Dec Coca Cola *Christmas in the Park*
 Auckland Domain 7:30 pm
26 Dec}
28 Dec} Horse races, Ellerslie racecourse
1 Jan}
25-27 Feb Auckland Lantern festival

HOSTED STUDENTS' NEWS

Hitomi from Japan

KIA ORA Hey, I'm Hitomi from Japan, I been here for nearly 10 months.. omg... time passes so quickly.. and this is the last newsletter for me. Thinking back these 10 months I did so many experiences and so many things happened to me.

Well, firstly I love my home stay area, though sometimes I feel inconvenient coz it costs \$20 per way to Auckland. But, I love my area ♥ people are so kind and the view is so beautiful. I love the view I saw every morning from school bus like beach, field...so many cows are crossing a road...all of them were hard to see when I was in Japan..

My host school is so huge and so many things are really different from Japanese high school. I still remember my first day at school clearly, it was so awkward to stay there. From then,10 months have passed... my school life was soooo great, though it was hard to settle in, so I didn't like school at first, but now I really like my school. I had really great days with my awesome friends. I'm already missing them. I experienced a lot which I never done it. Especially school ball was so great. Also set design of school production, archery, snorkeling...whatever yea, pretty much so

HOSTED STUDENTS' NEWS

many kind of things. And teaching Japanese was a really new experience for me, I loved it! After I started to help Esol class or Japanese, a lot of students started to say hello to me. My host high school has quite few Japanese students, so honestly I was little bit disappointed at first, because I was JUST an ordinary exchange student from Japan. But now I'm so glad so many people (doesn't matter the age) know me and they really interested in Japan and that have so many kiwi friends and a lot of friends from different countries.

I went to so many places...^^ Rotorua -Whangarei-Wellington—other areas and South Island! All of them were soooooooooooooo amazing!!! Sooooo beautiful!!!! I really love NZ, soo amazing! I had really great days with school friends in Rotorua. I will never forget that jumped into pool at night or got crash to my friend at luge...hehehe or whatever. It was sooo much fun! And South Island trip, those 11 days were really amazing, I enjoyed every single day.

Through this year so many things happened to me which is not only happiness but also sad thing or shocked or whatever. But I'm pretty sure every my experience made me matured, because definitely I changed a lot (which is not only my weight - hehe) yeah, my way of thinking was definitely changed and I just realized who I am.

OMG... thinking back this year I was soooooo lucky to be able to stay here!:) had really amazing year!!!!!! Can't believe that I will have to say good bye to everyone... it's so sad... and I don't wanna pack my sooooooooo many stuffs in my room!!!!!!!!!!!! haha:P Well,I have still 1 month before I go back to Japan so I'm gonna do everything I wanna do here!!!!:) Lastly, thank you so much for having me here!!! And please visit me when you come to Japan!!!♥

Thank you! love Hitomi

Monica from Venezuela

Hi!!!

I can't believe I just have 1 month left in NZ!!!!, it has been such an amazing experience, I've learnt so much. I didn't really enjoy the weather in the beginning, because even if it was summer it was very cold for me, I never used jumpers so many times in my life, I don't need it in Venezuela .). I had so many friends that I love so much from NZ, I have to say that the kiwis are very special to make friend of them , they are really nice and fun and I make friends from so many other countries, it was a really interesting combination, especially when everybody started speaking their own languages, anyway... I've been through so many experiences, especially because I come from a country not very safe so I could be more independent, especially because I never had taken a bus before and here it was more than once every day, but is awesome I can go to places without my parents having to drop me. I have a great family always helping me with everything. The school is very different, I liked that I could choose the subjects, and that is really big in comparison with my school in Venezuela where is only 500 hundred people.

NZ is a beautiful country with amazing views, I'll never forget my time here.. :D

Monica

MAIL IN-BOX

Elena Sutcliffe (*Germany*) 29 November 2010

Hey All - been busy but seems like I haven't done a lot... been out meeting up with friends and doing Christmas things with my host family, learning their traditions and helping decorate the house...enjoying the weihnachtsmarkt! It smells sooooo good and all the food there tastes amazing as well!! The only thing wrong at the mo is that I am sick :(It's also started snowing here, not a lot of snow but still...its soooo cold! I'm missing New Zealand summer! I seriously don't know how the Germans can go outside...some still only wear jumpers! :O

Yea that's pretty much it :)

Merry Christmas New Zealand!!!

Liebe Grüße,
Elly

Gabriela Visini (*Italy*) 29 November 2010

Wow. Three months in almost, it feels so surreal! Already since my last letter so many things have changed. The first, and biggest, my family. I am not going to say exactly what went down in my first family both for my good and theirs, and because it takes too long to explain, and is really too hard to explain in English!

But basically I am now in a new family and I am so so so so much better here. I have a brother of 16years, a sister my age who I share a room with, and another sister who lives elsewhere. My parents are great, they are just like parents, which is really what I had wanted in the first family. I feel like part of the family here. I have set rules, and I know if I screw up that they will punish me like one of their kids instead of straight up telling me they don't want me anymore. I am so much more happy here, I feel like I have started my experience again, on a better note.

And a word of advice to you all. Before I came here I told myself over and over that even if I didn't get along with my first family that I wouldn't change, that changing was the weaker option. But it's really not. A lot of people change, over half of us in Sardegna have, and more counting. It's perfectly acceptable. Often your family isn't your perfect match, or often you start off bad, then improve, and they don't forget it. But if you have big problems that you know you can't solve, changing is really the best option. After all, like my assistant said to me, a year really is a long time to be unhappy in a family.

So yeah, my life is way better at the current moment. Although English is getting SO HARD!!! I rarely speak it, only occasionally to the American girl here, although I tell her over and over that I am not here to speak English. It takes me so long to write these letters, and even longer to correct them with English grammar!

It was a sad day yesterday for me, I went to the airport to see off my best friend here, Alyona from Russia. She was only here for three months. It killed me to see her go, these kind of experiences, as most of you know, really are made by the right friends. We both cried a lot, made a lot of promises of future visits, and took a lot of pictures. My sister in New Zealand will also be happy to know we made a scrapbook page (I swear I have never felt nerdier in my whole life).

So I am sorry this hasn't really been a long letter, I just can't put everything I am feeling and experiencing right now in words for you, let alone in English words!

Hope you are all well,
Gabry

MAIL IN-BOX

Bryan Wong (*Denmark*) 29 November 2010

Hej alle sammen,

It's almost Christmas time. It's unfortunate I won't be spending Christmas here in Denmark because I get back just before then, but at least I get to take part in the amazing Danish Christmas preparation traditions: putting up Christmas decorations and making Christmas candy. It started snowing about a week ago. Now the entire landscape is white, as if Mother Nature herself is getting ready for a white Christmas. The days are quickly getting shorter and shorter. The sun rises at 8 and sets around 4. It's strange having to readjust to the long dark days I experienced when I first arrived here in January from the 18 hour long days in the summer.

It's sad knowing I have less than a month left. It's sad to say goodbye to all the new friends I have made and my new family. It's an huge achievement to buy Christmas presents for all my friends here and back in New Zealand with what little money I have left.

I recently had my last AFS camp here in Denmark with the few students that arrived here in January like me. We were fortunate to not have a very large group like those who arrived in August, because we have become so much closer with each other.

That's about it. Vi ses.

Bryan

Katrina Rothwell (*Santiago, Chile*) 29 November 2010

Well, unfortunately and all too soon the countdown has turned into only a matter of weeks. The year has just flown by so incredibly quick, this week is the last week of classes and then start the exams. We've also had prize giving and various activities to end the year. So, what have I been up to this last month? To start with I went with 31 other students on the AFS tour to the south which was a tremendous experience! Every exchange student will tell you that the AFS trips are among some of their best memories on their exchange and they'd be right, we went to visit many places whether it was stopping on route or a planned day out and took millions of photos among the 32 of us. Some of the highlights: Hand feeding sea lions, handling tarantulas, jumping into a freezing lake just for the heck of it, playing karaoke on the tourbus, sniffing around in the flea markets, getting very lost in an enormous botanical garden, visiting a floor to ceiling-wall to wall chocolate and marzipan store and on the last day taking out an eight person water bicycle. These are just some of all the great things we did.

Classes have now ended, which was an extremely difficult goodbye for me. We still see all our friends as we're still coming in for exams but knowing that my academic year here is over is a heavy weight. I thoroughly enjoyed my time studying here and all the activities that come with it. However I do leave rather pleased as they informed me that not only had I won an end of year prize but that I had also come out with an excellence grade point average in Spanish. With this I know that I've not wasted my time here.

The time that still keeps will be spent on vacations with family and friends over Christmas and New Year. It's a strange sensation to pause and realize you've already passed 9 of the 11 months. So, adiós, I'm off to make the most of my last few precious weeks!

Good luck to all those students in North Shore! Merry Christmas!

Katrina Rothwell

MAIL IN-BOX

John Allis (*Bolivia*) 29 November 2010

Counting back the months, I wonder how it all managed to disappear so quickly. Now, 10 months into my Santa Cruz, Bolivia exchange and thinking about countless amazing things I've done, I know I'll never have another year quite like this one..... going to crazy football games, learning to speak Spanish, digging water wells in an untouched Guaraní speaking village, and more recently getting taught how to play football by twelve year old kids, are just some of the things I'll never forget.

And if travelling is about the people you meet, rather than the places you go or the things you do, then I now feel as if I have travelled the entire world.... Canada, Alaska, Germany, Austria, Australia and not to mention Greenland and many more, on top of the hundreds of Bolivians.

Going from just a year and a half ago, when I googled Bolivia, to discover that actually, it isn't in eastern Europe, and never having met a Bolivian in my life, until now, I feel like so much has changed, and I ask myself how it might be, going back to my normal life, although at the same time I know it will never be the same again.

John

Samantha Te Au (*Denmark*) 1 December 2010



Hello to all of you AFS folk in the land of warm.

I am Samantha Te Au and writing from Denmark, where it is -6°C.

I am currently sitting looking out the window looking out at the meter-thick snow capping all the trees and roofs and pondering the past year.

I have now been in Denmark 11 months.

I remember arriving here in the snow, just like it is now, and thinking "what on earth am I doing here?"

Since then I have experienced more than I could ever have imagined. Made amazing friends, become a part of a second family, learnt a new language!

I have travelled, I have learnt, I have integrated myself in a completely new culture, on the other side of the world!

It's a big thought to wrap your head around. A whole year, that seems like such a never-ending stretch of time when you're looking out on it from Auckland Airport, sobbing tearful farewells to family, friends, home. Yet now, on the other side of that year, I stand astounded. How can a year go so fast?! And how could I have fit so much in to it?

An exchange year is a funny and very unique thing. You leave home, you miss home, of course (hopefully not too horribly), then you make a life for yourself again and you have to pack up and leave again. But it's worth it!

I just came back from my last AFS camp, the 'farewell camp' where they prepared us to come home. We all arrived together in January, strangers from all different parts of the world, almost forced to be friends. It was so strange to be together

MAIL IN-BOX

again, about to go home again. Everyone has grown so much in so many ways. There will always be a special kind of bond between AFS'ers.

For the most part it was rather bittersweet. I find myself torn between dreading the dooming goodbyes I face, and greeting the familiar faces on the other end.

I may be an exceptional case with the luck I have had, but this year has been the most amazing, eventful, year of my life. Cliché, I know but I would never take it back. The things I have learnt and the people I have gotten to know so well will always be priceless to me.

I could not be more supportive of budding AFS'ers considering going on exchange, or more grateful for the opportunity to do so myself. Those of you preparing to leave, I am jealous, best of luck and make the most of it! Be curious and say yes. For the rest of you, looking forward to seeing you all in January!

Sam

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