

AFS Chile Scholarship
AUSYPscCHISH05
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AFS!

Wow! My year is over, what an experience!

Even now, two weeks after my return, it feels like some strange dream. Whilst I am still in contact with both my family and friends, it just feels a bit like something I imagined.

Christmas was really different to what I have previously experienced, I was really nervous about the customs of my family and country.

Of course it turned out to be fine.

However it was different. We celebrated the night before, whereas I am used to celebrating on the 25, they made a big dinner. We ate until 11:30, where we went outside to see if we could see Santa, when we returned at 12 o'clock, Santa had been and gone and all our presents were waiting for us!

The festive time between Christmas and New Year was very quiet. And for New Year we had another big dinner, and waited until 12 to wish each other 'Happy New Year!'.

After that is was the final two-week count down. I wasn't really sure how I felt, it was a confusing time, torn between wanting to see my family again and staying with those people that I also counted family and friends.

My last few weeks with them was about just hanging out and doing stuff we had got used to doing together. I'm so proud of myself that I could understand and participate in conversations by the time I had left. And I realised that my number one goal had been achieved, I could speak Spanish.

It's strange to be back, I feel like I've told the same stories a million times, but everyday I remember something that happened while I was away, and then there is a new story to tell.

I start school next week, its is a new school and I know no-one, but I think I feel a lot better prepared now than I did 12 months ago at the prospect of a new school, new subjects and a new life.

I am also learning to drive; the first few lessons were a bit tricky because I kept going over to the wrong side of the road!

I can't believe how, after everything, I made it through. There were times (like my first week when I understood nothing) that I thought I wouldn't or couldn't make it. That maybe it was just a silly fantasy and I wasn't up to the challenge.

But now I know, I was up to it. And I am so happy to have had this wonderful experience. Thankyou so much.

Forever grateful,
Yours truly,
Kara-Mae Hogan