



## Nick

### From Burlington Central to Switzerland

## *“cheese, chocolate and skiing”*

Switzerland is lovely in February. Right now I am sitting out on the porch enjoying the beautiful, sunny, ten-degree weather. The mountains are glowing an awesome orange on the horizon. It's the perfect way to spend the evening after a day skiing in those mountains, the Alps.

Since November it has snowed a lot. Perfect for skiing. My first time skiing this year in December, there was powder up to my waist off of the ski runs. It was an excellent introduction into Swiss skiing, perfectly groomed runs, not a lot of people and amazing views of the surrounding mountains. I was able to hit the slopes two times before Christmas holidays, which began on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of December and ran till the 9<sup>th</sup> of January. After celebrating a very white Christmas and eating a lot with my host family over Christmas weekend, I had an entire two weeks for more skiing. I went several times with my host family and with friends from my school. We had great conditions until the second week, where it warmed up too much and melted most of the snow. I have learnt a lot more about skiing from watching other people ski here. It seems like a lot of them are experts, and I had to learn a lot just to keep up with them.

A week later things got really busy as I got back to school and as I changed host families. I am now living in small town of 500 people that is right in Switzerland's Emmental region, where all the good cheese is made. My host family own and operate a bakery/ chocolate factory in another town not too far from here. So I can now say I live a very stereotypical Swiss lifestyle, cheese, chocolate and skiing. The train connections to skiing are much quicker from here, and during my school's ski holiday (this past week), it was easy to catch the trains and bus to the lifts. And even though it was 10 degrees here all day, in the Alps it was still cold with great runs!

February 2011

By far one of my favorite experiences thus far on my exchange was spending a week skiing in Pitztal, Austria. My host family and I had a week of great skiing. We hardly saw a cloud in the sky, or a crowd at the lift for an entire week. The food was great too, traditional Austrian Wiener schnitzel, apple strudel and cheese dishes. To cap off the week we took one last day skiing, this time we went to Wildspitze, the highest point in Austria. To get to there we took an underground train from the base that ran for ten minutes up to the skiing. We came out of the tunnel and were right in the center of the mountain range. Then we took a gondola up to 3440 meters. The view at the top was incredible; there were mountains as far as I could see in every direction. Afterwards we skied down from 3440 meters all the way back to the parking lot. It was an amazing way to end the week.

My adventures and experiences this year have been amazing! The possibilities that this exchange has created are endless! I'm going to make the best of every moment while I have it. This is truly a once in a lifetime experience.

Liebe Grüsse und Bis Bald

*Nick*

Switzerland