



## Desiree From Bolton to New Zealand

### *Lets have some yarns Bro!*

Yes. Well, here we are 10 months in, and 10 years older it seems. Now as I wrack my brain to remember all the amazing things I've done since our last Beavertale, I have to refer back to my journal with all my experiences logged. (Thank you to all the rebounds that pushed me to keep a journal!)

Most recently, I've moved to my fourth host family. Leaving my last one was very sad, but I've been told to keep my house key so I can go back anytime! In my current 'whanau' (family) I have a host brother (my age), and a younger host brother whose 8. Their daughter is currently on exchange in Argentina so I'm playing 'sister' for a few months! I'm mentioning this because I have had such a good time and variety of host families, with and without kids so I have gotten many different versions of the Kiwi lifestyle. And having a host brother my age makes for some great party planning partnership. Ha! Ha!

Since February, I've gone on my second IFFR (International Fellowship Of Flying Rotarians) excursion, and this time we spent a weekend in Hamilton. This city is only really an hour away driving, so it made for a short flight most definitely, but not short in scenery. It was a lot of fun.

With some of the exchange students, an annually organized event is one called 'Farm Weekend.' And it is just as self-explanatory as it sounds. We spent a weekend on a farm about 45-minutes south of Pukekohe, and that was a really

different experience. First of all, we arrive with country road bags in tote, looking cute, and we are shown to our accommodation. Otherwise called the sheepshed. Yes. That is pretty self-explanatory too. This is where the sheep on the farm are sheered (given a haircut) and also acts as a storage place. Now, myself and two other girls were not to keen for this, but we tried...so hard that the next morning we ended up on the cozy living room floor of the people who owned the farm. We did heaps of things while there. Such as watching a sheep be sheered, caving (walking through a cave, ouuuu spooky), doing the haka on top of a hill while the sun goes down (it was imperative), target shooting and so much more!

Another Rotary event for the exchange students was another pretty obvious one called 'Boating day'. We were boating for a day. ☺ This boat was amazing! It had an amazing balcony (three of them actually!), a mean sound system, luxury straight out

of a JLO video, and a toilet with a lookout! A lookout! Whoa! We all dived into the water over and over again.

My third host family also took me to a place further south called Napier. It was a legit family road trip. 6 hours later, we arrived and had such a good time. Napier is known for its art-déco style buildings and accents around the city. It was really cool to see. Its one of those places they say is like a 'completely different New Zealand.' I even got to visit and go out with the other Canadian Rotary student in the North Island, which was really nice!

We also just recently returned from our district conference held in Paihei (PIE-HE-AH) in the Bay of Islands. The conference was really unique, and even held a Mardi Gras theme. I never thought I'd see Rotarians fight over beads! We went and visited the Waitangi Treaty house (Google it!) and went dolphin sighting! 'Twas Never a dull moment.

Now, onto my own business not directly rotary affiliated. A few months ago, some comedians came to our school to just hold a fun workshop with students who like and dabble in improv, and want to learn more about comedy theatre. So I went to this, played some improv games, and we were all asked to do about 1-minute of stand-up comedy. We all somewhat ignored the camcorder flashing red at the back of the room, and we all went up and had a minute more of fun. A few weeks later I got a call from 'Class Comedians' who watched my audition

(if you went to the workshop, you auditioned!) and they said they wanted me back to work with them and get assistance from some of the best New Zealand comedians on my set in the Class Comedians show as part of the New Zealand International Comedy Festival. I was one of the 12 selected out of about 200 from schools all over Auckland. Give me a second while I melt. This led me to 4 weeks of intensive comedy training taken under the wing of one of the best up and coming comedians named Rhys Mathewson. We got to meet all types of different comedians such as radio hosts Fletch and Vaughn, as well as people on a popular music show called ULive, we were even interviewed and that was on TV! But every day we'd have a special guest come in and I've met people like Steve Wrigley, Ben Hurley and Dai Henwood (YOUTUBE THEM!) Such an amazing program. Just this past weekend was the final performance in front of about 400 people, and words can't even describe how amazing this was. I will always remember this program as part of this year and one of the opportunities that came with it! And now, I'm just about ready to start going to raw comedy nights all around Auckland and get my name even further out into the comedy scene. One day...this name will be up in lights. If not...it will at least be one of the names once affiliated with the comedy fest...? Ahhhh-mazing!

But now as I see my last 8 weeks in this wonderful country, I cannot help but to look back and reminisce on how much I've changed, and how much I've done that's made me change. I'll never forget this experience and all those involved. Now, before I get teary-eyed, I will say, thank you to the rotary club of Bolton, and Pukekohe for being there and allowing me this amazing opportunity. Thank you for the past 10 months, the past few days, and the memories I will have forever. Even comedians have soft spots.

Cheers.

*Desiree*