

# Coming to America

## Exchange Students Have the Experience of a Lifetime

Looking at foreign exchange students Ruth Hoekstra, Katarina Kuniakova, Maria Mirek, and Line Lillebekk and knowing Ruthie, Kate, Maria, and Line were two different things.

"Well, all of us (foreign exchange students) have something in common. We are far away from our friends and parents. It sounds scary, but it is not," said Kate who was from Slovakia.

Kate's visit to the United States of America was the decision of her mother. Kate, who said that she would never ask her parents for something as big as a trip to America, was shocked when her mother asked her if she would like to visit the US, even though she wanted to go. Kate said she wished to visit the USA again, but it would be really difficult to get here.

Ruthie decided to come to the USA in December of 1998 to experience life and people on the other side of the world, improve her English, become more independent, and make friends for a lifetime.

"Most people were open and friendly. One person who became a close friend was Drena Smith, but there were many others (especially outside of school, too)," said Ruth who visited the USA from Germany.

Maria, from Poland, enjoyed hanging out with her American friends inside and outside of school. Her favorite song was "Maria, Maria" by Santana; she was psyched to hear her name on American radio.

"I would like to thank all of the people who helped me get along here," said Line.

She was nervous to come here, but she made friends who made her feel right at home.

-Shantel Middleton

"If I could go anywhere in the world as an exchange student, I would go to Jamaica. I would go there because it would give me the opportunity to meet exotic people, learn about their culture, and chill on the beach in my bikini, all while learning ... um... something!"

-junior Madia Brown



"If I could be a foreign exchange student, I would probably visit France. I think France is a beautiful place. It would be a great experience. I can see myself right now visiting all those great sites and learning about French history:"

-senior Anitra Black



"I would visit Africa; it would give me a chance to trace my roots. I have always wanted to do a tribal dance and paint my face with berry juice. While in Africa I could meet Nelson Mandela, my role model. He is someone that I have always wanted to meet because he is not afraid to do what is right."

-sophomore Sylvia Williams



- 1. Say Cheese!** Ruth and Maria break for a quick shot with a friendly puppy. Ruth and Maria developed a close relationship since they shared the same host family, friends, clothes, and gossip. Ruth said that she and Maria were practically sisters; they lived together, hung out together, and even consoled each other.
- 2. All in the family.** Kate takes a moment to show her host parents love. Jean and Joyce Cones were as pleased with Kate as she was with them. They had another Slovakian exchange student the year before.
- 3. Memory makers.** At Ruth's seventeenth birthday party, she and Maria make a memory with members of their host family, Walterboro High graduates, Aaron and Daron Zelmer.
- 4. Just a little closer.** Line, and a Colleton Prep foreign exchange student stop chattering just long enough to smile.
- 5. Catch the Learning Bug.** Kate and her friend Cindy Crosby explore the wide world of chemistry. The girls discovered that the learning was there; they just had to grab a hold of it.

