



Dear Youth Exchange;

Hello, my name is Alan and I went on a magnificent trip to Germany and the Netherlands this summer. All my thanks go to the Lions Club that helped me find such a great opportunity to explore the world. I was able to do many things I would never have imagined of, and now have many memories to call my own. The people I met from all stretches of the planet each had their own style, and I learned many different things about their culture. Of course, I learned many interesting things about the German culture as well. No book could teach someone my experience; it's just something you have to be there for.

Greeting my host family was something I was anxious about, and I was so relieved to see them smile and welcome me although I was a complete stranger. I believe that the Lions Club is trying to accomplish such a relation internationally between people, and I respect that. I am happy that I was hosted by the Schilders family because they tried to the best of their ability to show me everything they could about Germany and the German people. I really liked trying foods I had never seen before, and being embraced by the environment. I made a lot of friends (most whom I have not yet contacted) that I miss, including Marco. Two weeks really is not enough and I wish I could have stayed longer.

The camp was spectacular and I wish I could relive the experience. I know I will never forget the people I met and neither will I forget the things we done. My favorite was the Netherlands trip on the sail boat. It was so fun and it really brought me closer to everyone on the boat. The captain and his mate were always had a sense of good humor. Often they complemented that we were good at taking orders when the wind changed or something occurred. I won't forget Eric and Ron, not even their dog they brought. I enjoyed other parts of the camp too, like going to Bonn and seeing the remnants of Beethoven and his legacy. Everything from going to Kōln and taking the time to reach the highest possible distance in the cathedral to playing ultimate Frisbee on an island beach I will remember. Of course I miss Germany, but I miss the people I met even more. Maybe one day I can host one of them at my house and show them all about America.

Sincerely,
Alan Lardie