

SEATTLE

Thanks to the Christchurch City Council and the Sister City Committee I, Sophie Peacock, was fortunate enough to be chosen to take part in an exchange to Seattle, USA.

To apply I simply wrote a short essay on why I was interested and had a casual interview with two lovely students that had been on a previous exchange. I was absolutely thrilled to be picked and now believe that taking the afternoon off school to meet the deadline for my essay was one of the most beneficial decisions I've ever made (but don't tell my teachers!) Ingrid (my host) and I were a match made in heaven, excuse the cliché. It felt as if we'd known each other for years. If you're travelling as a student I couldn't recommend a better way to experience life than in a home away from home. The Americans I met were very hospitable people- perky is possibly the best word to describe them; U-prep was just as friendly and welcoming.



U-prep is a small close knit school with an energetic and encouraging environment. I must have been introduced to at least 100 students all bursting to ask me about New Zealand and what I thought of America. Pat Grant, one of the teachers there, deserves a special mention. He's a standout favourite among the students, with a friendly, quirky character and expansive knowledge of NZ (admittedly greater than mine!)

Seattle is beautiful. If you appreciate the clean green décor of Christchurch but thrive on the excitement of city life you're sure to fall in love with this remarkable city.



It is everything that's great about Christchurch magnified for your enjoyment! (Apart from our stronger emphasis on sports and our noticeably larger male... 'talent')

For the 16 days that I was in Seattle I visited a wide variety of tourist attractions. This included museums, zoo, aquarium, high school, primary school, shopping, lacrosse game, city tours, baseball games, rock concerts, plays, fabulous food and more shopping. The highlight was definitely the Mariners baseball game where all the exchange students and I shook the stadium with an ensemble of "take me out to the ball game" accompanied by tens of thousands of enthused and bloated fans.

The most rewarding parts of the exchange would have to be experiencing the subtle differences in American lives such as driving on the right hand side, attending compulsory classes on US history and having the option to 'super size' any purchase. I have also built foundations for long and valuable friendships.

Travelling independently and taking part in such a successful exchange has given me a very positive out-look for my future and some unique memories I will always share with my new foreign friends (who I e-mail regularly). I have kindled a passion for travel and would definitely visit again.