

It has been wild here with only being here a month and half. I have done so much in my time, here and have only had one major problem that I handled. I will be honest, there are good days and bad days and it's starting to get harder, but it's all worth it. Life here feels normal now. I don't feel weird waking up here and speaking Spanish during the day. I have really integrated myself into this experience. This might sound a little unhumble, but I'm proud of myself for getting out my comfort zone to go through this journey. It's so hard, but I know I can do it. I have gained a lot of self-confidence, self-awareness, knowledge, and pride in myself and country here. We had our district conference in early September. It was in the state of Durango. We went to museums, an old western town like the movies, and a camp. I was surprised to find out that out of probably more than 100 exchange students, I was the only person from the United States. It really gave me the opportunity to hang out with many different countries. We had a lot from Brazil and Taiwan. We had people from all over from Turkey to Haiti to India and so many more. We had lots of Rotary presentations. My favorite presentation was of course about all the cool trips will be given the opportunity to take. We had a party and did camp activities. We traded pins. All 150 of my pins were gone because everyone wanted mine since I was the only American. Now my jacket has all my pins and probably weighs a solid 4 pounds. I think my favorite part about the camp was that I got to meet people from all over the world. It helped me realize how small the world is. One-time boys from all the different countries were playing soccer and I found it so cool how they all don't speak the same language or have similar cultures, but they can all enjoy playing a game together.

We started our Spanish class in the university about an 8-minute walk from my house. It is with all the other exchange students in my town and a couple others. We are split into two levels because we all vary in skill so much. I am in the higher level because I have prior Spanish knowledge. I think the class will be helpful and it is nice to get to see my fellow inbounds on a regular basis.

On September 15-16th we went on a trip for my host dad's birthday and the Independence Day of September 16th in Mexico. I told wrote in my last report how it's crazy how my dad here is so like my dad in the US. THEY HAVE THE SAME BIRTHDAY TOO! Sure, my dad in the US is a couple years older, but that's like a whole new level of craziness. I find it so hysterical. Before we left for our trip, I had festivals at school for Independence Day. One of my friends surprised me and brought me a traditional Mexican outfit to wear for the party. We had delicious food, a ceremony, dancing, and lots of fun activities for our party. That afternoon, we left on our trip. We first went to Queretaro. We walked through the city that night. We saw mariachis, ate ice cream, saw fireworks, and got to see the culture of the city. We spent the night in this city. In the morning, we went to San Miguel de Allende and Guanajuato. Both cities were beautiful. My favorite was Guanajuato. It was hilly, so I got an exercise in. We walked around the whole city and we went up one hill to see the most spectacular view ever.

One last adventure we had this month was my family and I climbed up a mountain last Sunday morning. We took some artsy photos with our flags. It was truly one of the most beautiful things I have seen with my own eyes. It was something that we could never do in Iowa. Also, again it was great exercise. I need all the exercise I can get here. I eat a lot more here because they almost eat 4 meals here and the food is so good so I eat too much always. I have been attending our country club and working out in the gym a lot to combat this, but I have also accepted the fact that I will get a little bigger while I am here.

My relationship with my yeo and club is pretty good. I have attended one meeting, I hope to attend more soon. I have also attended some Rotary events to help volunteer to help the people in Mexico City. They were geared more towards the Rotaract clubs, so it was cool to meet all the kids in Mexico who are also interested in Rotary. Since I can speak Spanish better than a lot of the other exchange students, I interact with my Yeo, counselor, and fellow Rotarians more. I really enjoy all they do for me and I have fun talking to them. I still cannot thank them enough for all that they do for me. I leave tomorrow with my club president and his wife, my yeo and his wife, and the other exchange kids in my club to go on a trip for the weekend. I am excited. I don't know exactly what we are doing or where we are going, but I will be sure to update you all in my next report about it.

School lately has been a little struggle-some, but I am in the middle of sorting it out. Everyone at my school is very helpful. I am in a very good friend group who is willing to help me and be patient with me. I have hung out with my friends a couple times outside of school and I hope to continue doing that. I am going to a concert for a Spanish boyband in Aguascalientes in October with my friends. That will be a fun time. Most of my teachers are understanding with me and help me understand or tweak the assignments for me a little so I can do it easier, because yes, my Spanish is better, but I still have a long way to go. I had one misunderstanding with my teachers because at first, they told me just focus on learning Spanish and the culture here so just try your best

and you will pass if we see you trying and improving. But there was miscommunication and the teachers gave me my grades and failed me because I of course did not do well on the tests because they were hard for me. So, I talked with my principal and teachers and they are helping me change my grades and helping me with my notes. It was just a little annoying because the other two exchange students passed even though they didn't do as much work. It was because I do the work and understand more that my teachers graded me harder, but they were very relaxed when I asked them for help which was nice.