

This month has been a good one. I have been more involved in Rotary. I have overall been more integrated in Mexican culture and love it so much! This month has gone by very fast, but I loved it.

The beginning of this month started out with a trip with my Rotary club. We went to Zacatecas and stayed in a traditional hotel with the other exchange kids from Zacatecas too. We hiked, went to an archeology site, went to a lake, rode on a boat, toured a mezcal brewery, played games at the hotel, and of course ate lots of delicious food. It was fun. I also got to know the president of my club and his wife a lot better which was nice. I ended up seeing the wife of the president out in the city two weeks later and I talked with her for a bit. So, my Rotary relationships got a lot better and I had other events that also strengthened these relationships too. I went to a club meeting as well this month. We had a speaker of a lady who climbed Mount Everest. It was really inspiring and cool to talk with someone who has done such a cool thing. Me and the other exchange kids sat separately at the meeting, so I got to talk with the people around me a lot. I had a man next to me who was an exchange kid back in his day and he went to Finland, so I really connected with him very well. The food was delicious - I swear all Rotary clubs have really good food. But overall, I got to meet a lot of people and make my presence known in the club and of course express my gratefulness to the club members. I also had another Rotary event when we were there for the presentation for the kids who want to apply to be exchange kids next year. I was proud of myself because I am one of the better exchange kids with Spanish, so I did a lot of talking and I could understand people and answer questions. It was cool. Also, the crazy thing was there was a guy that not only knew Iowa, but when I said Iowa, he was like "oh, like Cedar Rapids." I flipped out and was like "THAT'S MY CITY." Turns out he had gone there many times and his football team is the Hawkeyes. What a small world it is that I am here in Mexico talking with a man in Spanish about my small town in Iowa, which most people don't even know is a state. We also had a Rotary event on a Saturday where we planted trees. Our last Rotary event we had this month is that we visited an elementary school for their cultural day. We talked to the kids about our culture and lives. I was alone going to the classrooms because I am the only one from the USA. I was proud of myself because I could understand the kids and talk to them in Spanish. It was so cute they all wanted our autographs and hugs from us. My favorite part of the day was when a 7-year-old boy raised his hand in class and goes, "Do you have a boyfriend?" It was very funny.

I also want to address how loved and supported I feel from the Rotary in the US. I had some concerns in my last report and I was checked up on a lot and many people voiced their concerns and support for me. It feels nice to know that I don't just have my family and friends supporting me back home, but also, I have a whole club and lots of people caring about me.

We had Fanny's birthday this month. I got her a nice gift and I did it without her knowing which was hard because we are together most of the time. We are close and right now she is gone on a trip for a week with another German exchange student because she invited her. I miss her a lot and it has only been 2 days. Anyways, on her birthday we went on a trip to Zacatecas the city. We went to a mine and toured around the city. I really enjoyed Zacatecas. It is very clean, and the city is very well built and super pretty. We had chicken wings that night. It was Fanny's first time eating them. It was so funny to watch her struggle with them because it is a food that I am so used to eating but so hard for her because she likes to be all proper with her utensils and everything.

I didn't really have any trips this month, but it is fine because I like living the Mexican life here. I have hung out with friends, played games with my family, hung out with other exchange kids, gone to a concert with my friends. I do things that normal teens in Mexico do. I have really embraced my life here and I have made it my goal to hang out with my Mexican friends more than my exchange friends. I still hang out with both, but I make sure I have time for both. There are a couple exchange kids that only have other exchange kid friends, but I am thinking, I didn't come to Mexico to only be friends with Germans or Taiwanese people. Sure, they are still good friends, but I really enjoy my time with my Mexican friends.

I have talked about my good friend group here before, but I am even closer with them and hang out with them a lot. They always help me improve my Spanish and teach me about the culture of Mexico. One of my favorite things here is that they put hot sauce or chili on everything. Things like gummy bears, chips, or fruit. It sounds kind of gross, but it is amazing. I would recommend trying it. I have really bonded with my friends and made even more friends with everyone in my class and other Mexicans I meet at hang outs or parties. One time, I was talking to my friend and I said something about how I leave in June and my friend started crying because she said she is going to miss me so much. Of course, I then started crying because I love all my friends so much (they were happy tears). When I have problems, or my friends have problems we are all so close and there for each other. I remember I was very worried before I came that I wouldn't be able to make friends, but here I am only 2 months in and my friends are already crying because they are going to miss me when I leave

in like 8 months.

School has been going pretty good. I am doing good in my classes. I can pass exams now because I understand Spanish well enough which is cool. I even passed my French exam which is amazing because I am learning a third language in my second language. The homework load here is still so much less than the US which is nice. I know that I try a lot harder in school here than a lot of the other exchange kids, but I also understand Spanish better than them, so it's understandable. Also, the teachers grade me a little harder than the other exchange kids because I do understand more than them.

A cool thing I get to experience here is I get to visit universities here because I am in the last grade. It is very interesting for me every time we go to one because I have visited many in the US and I like to see how they are differ. I have noticed that at almost all we have gone, none have dorms for people to stay in. People told me that everyone just lives at home and almost everyone goes to the same university which is so different than the US.

This upcoming month I am very excited because I have day of the dead. I also was surprised by how much people celebrate Halloween here. I went to a costume party on Saturday. Also, my host siblings went trick or treating in some neighborhoods today. The day of the dead is a way bigger celebration though. At school today, we made giant pictures on the ground with dyed sawdust. They turned out cool (I am adding photos below of some of them). I am excited to see what the rest of this month has in store. My family asked if I wanted to make a Thanksgiving meal this year and of course I do. So, I hope it turns out well for them.

I know this time of the year will start to get harder. I miss my family and friends in the US a lot. I still have my weekly facetime with my family on Sundays and I talk to my friends when I have time. Being here made me appreciate my family so much. Sure, I love my family here, but nothing compares to your real family especially when you have as good as one as I have in the US.

In conclusion, I am very happy here, happier than last month. I love almost everyone here in Mexico. I am so grateful for this opportunity. I wish time would slow down, but it is just flying by. Everything is great and warm in Mexico. Until November or whenever you contact me next. Adios!