



The William Colenso College Mexico connection

Valeria Ramón López

Age: 17 years old

Arrive: July 2012

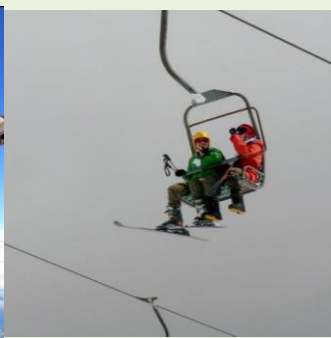
Departure: July 2013



Course subjects:

2012: English, Math, Physics, History, Outdoor Education, Hard Materials Tec.

2013: English, Math, Physics, Biology, Cookery, Soft Materials Tec.



My Experience in New Zealand:

I love NZ, I really enjoyed my time here. It is such a nice country. The people are so kind, funny and friendly. Life here is totally different from Mexico, you can do things that at home is not usual, like skiing, snowboard, surfing, etc.

Maori culture is one of the most interesting facts about NZ. The language, the habits, the traditions and the food are so different as well.

I chose this place, because here I can practice English. It's a place full of beautiful nature, the landscape, and because of the distance. I didn't want to go away from my family. I knew that the distance could be a challenge, and after this successful experience, I am ready to travel to any other part of the world.

My Homestay:

I love my family. I just had my kiwi mum, she is great, she's friendly, funny, sensible, and a really nice cooker. Her kids are so nice, I really enjoy when they visit us.

I have learnt a lot from her, a lot of tips, recipes, everything. I really see her as a mum, I think that my experience wouldn't be the same without her. I will miss her heaps!!





School

William Colenso is a really nice, relaxed, friendly, peaceful place. The teachers are so nice and friendly. They are always there to help you or to explain something. The school has some really cool subjects that we don't have at home, like Cookery, Soft and Hard materials, Photoshop, Media Studies, Photography, Outdoor Education, Horticulture, Barista, nutrition, Arm Forces etc.



ART DECO:

Napier is the art deco capital of the world. There is a main week full of celebrations for this city in February. It's amazing. All the people get dressed up. There are heaps of vintage cars, jazz music, bands, parades, etc. It's a really nice time, and it's an opportunity to learn about the traditions in New Zealand. I will never forget this year; it's the best experience ever!



Cristina Romero Salinas

Age: 17 years old

Time in New Zealand: July 2014- July 2015

Subjects:

Term 3-4 (2014): L2 English, L2 Maths, L2 Physics, L1 History, Senior Dance, L2 Design.

Term 1-2 (2015): L3 English, L2 Maths, L3 Calculus, L3 Health Science, L2 Design, Senior Dance, L2 Cookery.

New Zealand:

My experience in New Zealand has been better than I thought. New Zealand has beautiful natural places to visit, and I had the chance to meet really kind people. I learnt a lot from here, especially from Maori culture. Maori culture has impressed me so much; they have interesting traditions and costumes. The Haka was my favourite part of Maori culture, and it was an honour to see that.

New Zealand has been a big challenge for me; life here is really different from Mexico. Being far away from my family was hard, however it has been an opportunity to learn and try a lot of new things.

I chose New Zealand because of the language, and the beautiful landscape. My first goal before coming here was to improve my English and so far New Zealand has been an unbelievable experience. My life has changed, and I have grown as a person.

School:



Being in William Colenso has been really nice. Teachers are always pushing you to become better and to try new things. Some of the subjects that I chose were part of my education in Mexico, but I also chose some others that I enjoy the most. Dance class in William Colenso has been one of the most remarkable experiences for me, I completely enjoyed it, and I had the opportunity to participate in the Showcase and in the School Production. Participating in the Showcase and the School Production required a lot of time and energy, but at the end all was worth it. It's amazing how many talented people you can find from dancers, singers and musicians to wonderful teachers that were happy to help us.



We worked 8 weeks for the School Production and during those weeks we had the opportunity to show everything we had learnt during the year. The School Production was an opportunity to meet new people and make friends. Kiwi students involved were really talented and friendly, and as an international student it was nice to feel included in this kind of event. There were quite a lot of international students involved in acting and dancing parts.



It is amazing how you make really good friends in such a short time and how you get to know each other just by spending time in rehearsals. I loved the choreographies because it was different from what I normally dance. I created a choreography that was also included in the show, and I can't explain how great and satisfying it is to watch something that you created being part of an important event. We worked really hard and although we faced some obstacles, we worked as a team to deal with them. As part of my L2 Design subject I designed the tickets for the Production, and it was a big challenge for me because it was the first time that I designed something that was going to be presented, and I'm happy with the work I did. I really enjoyed taking part, not only in the performance but also in the artwork. The two shows that we had were amazing, and at the end I was more than happy with my effort and everything that I accomplished. It was sad to know that we were not going to spend as much time together as we did in the rehearsals, but we know that we have a lot of stories and experiences to tell.

Having all my classes in English was a great opportunity to improve my English vocabulary and my analytic skills.

C.A.C.T.U.S:

During 2014 I saw how some internationals were completing this programme. I found it really interesting and at the end of the Term the school invited us to participate. I thought that it was the opportunity to try something different, since I don't play any sport but I dance. We started the 7 weeks programme in February 2015, I wasn't sure if I was going to be able to complete it. Waking up around 5:20am and starting the training at 6 was hard. I must say the first weeks I felt as I was dying; burpees, sit ups, running, and taking heavy logs, and tyres was not easy at all. The main idea of the project was to push us mentally to do things even if our body was hurting, that is why, as a group we were always supporting each other. During every session I tried to do my best, to improve my time and numbers, and in the last session I improved my time by three minutes. The hardest part of the programme was The Longest Day. It was Saturday and we had to be at school at 5. We Went to Pandora Pond and started our 36 km way, taking the logs and tires plus a huge bottle of water.

It's unbelievable how much your body can do when you are mentally strong. The key during The Longest Day was teamwork. We all helped and supported each other to continue and complete it. When we thought that everything was finished we had to pull a tractor all together. I thought that it would never end. The happiness that you feel after doing such a big effort is just overwhelming. To finish our Longest Day, we had a dinner where we received our shirts and certificates. It was one of the most important moments for me because I received the Merit Award. I knew that I was doing my best, but getting the award was something unexpected.



South Island

I had the opportunity to make a South Island Tour, and it was the best experience I could ever have. New Zealand is such a beautiful place to visit and it makes it special to go in a group of people who are also living the same experiences as you. The South Island is a place for trying things that you never thought that you could do. I did Bungy Jump, Skydiving and Para flight. For sure I was so scared of doing these activities but the freedom that you feel is amazing. I met really cool people, and we shared a lot of experiences that I couldn't even feel that we were just 10 days together.



Homestay



I spent my first 6 months in one homestay, and then I spent the other half of the year with a different one. In my first Homestay I had an amazing Brazilian host-brother. I enjoyed it because we were really close. I learn a little bit of Portuguese and I also learnt from Brazil. It is nice to feel that you are not alone and that at the end your friends are your family. My host mum used to cook so good that I just loved it.

In my second homestay I had two host sisters, one from Japan and one from Taiwan. I learnt also a lot about their culture and traditions. My host parents were amazing and we are really close. They became my second family.

Outside of the school



In Mexico I used to dance, and I didn't want to stop dancing. I decided to go to a dance studio, and I spent quite a lot of time there, 3 hours a day, four days a week. It was great to continue dancing in another country and to see how similar and different the dance styles are. I met awesome girls that shared the same passion as me, and my dance teachers were amazingly kind. They all received me and included me.

I was part of a Combined Dance Festival where I danced contemporary and ballet. I also did Cinderella at the end of year recital. It was really important to me, and I shared the stage with really talented girls.

At the end New Zealand, William Colenso and my Dance Studio were my life for one year. It has been the best year of my life and I would never change it. The people I met from all around the world are people that I will always keep in my heart and that I will take my whole life with me. Leaving New Zealand is sad but, at the same time, knowing that it is going to end helps you to appreciate everything. This experience gives you so much knowledge about yourself, people and life. I am satisfied and proud of everything I have done and everything that I have achieved. I return home happy and with new goals.

