

BEFORE YOU LISTEN TO THIS EPISODE OF AN INSIDE PERSPECTIVE I HIGHLY RECOMMEND LISTENING TO OUR PREVIOUS EPISODE TITLED “FROM GERMANY, TO AMERICA, AND BACK AGAIN” ON WHJE.COM. IT DIVES INTO JANA KOCHWOJ’S EXPERIENCE AS A GERMAN EXCHANGE STUDENT AND GIVES A LOT OF BACKGROUND FOR THIS EPISODE.

FOR NOW THOUGH: I’M ALEX CROOKSHANKS AND THIS IS.. AN INSIDE PERSPECTIVE.

WE WERE STANDING IN A LARGE CROWD AT THE AIRPORT. WAITING TO MEET THE STRANGER THAT WOULD BE LIVING IN MY FAMILY’S HOUSE FOR THREE WEEKS.

NOW I SIGNED UP FOR THE GERMAN AMERICAN EXCHANGE PROGRAM OVER HALF A YEAR AGO FROM THIS POINT WITH ONLY A SMALL IDEA OF WHAT IT WOULD ENTAIL. YES I KNEW I WOULD BE HOSTING A GERMAN STUDENT FOR THREE WEEKS, BUT I DIDN’T REALLY KNOW WHEN OR HOW ANY OF IT WOULD HAPPEN. AND ON TOP OF THAT, NOONE IN MY FAMILY REALLY HAD ANY IDEAS EITHER

[START MOM INTERVIEW]

I FIRST HEARD ABOUT THE PROGRAM I WAS EXCITED TO WELCOME THE CULTURE IN I THOUGHT IT WAS GOING TO BE AT A DIFFERENT TIME FRAME (SPEAKING NOW IS MY MOTHER)

SO WHEN I REALIZED IT WAS ONE TIME WHERE IT WAS THE BUSIEST OF THE
BAND SEASON I GOT A LITTLE OVERWHELMED

[STOP MOM INTERVIEW]

HER FEELINGS OF ANXIETY WERE PRETTY SIMILAR TO WHAT I WAS FEELING. OF
COURSE, I WAS EAGER TO BE ABLE TO EXPERIENCE THE GAPP PROGRAM, BUT
AT THE SAME TIME WE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT AS WE WAITED IN THAT
AIRPORT

[START MOM INTERVIEW]

MY NERVOUSNESS CAME IN MAKING SURE SHE WAS COMFORTABLE I DIDN'T
KNOW WHAT SHE LIKE TO EAT I DIDN'T KNOW IF YOU KNOW THE ROOM WAS
GOING TO BE OKAY AND THAT WAS MORE THAN NERVOUS IT'S NOT THAT SHE
WAS ACTUALLY IN THE HOME I JUST WANTED TO BE A GOOD HOSTESS

[STOP MOM INTERVIEW]

AS MY PARTNER JANA GOT OFF THE PLANE THE VERY FIRST THING I SAID WHEN
SHE GREETED ME

“WOW YOU'RE SHORT”

AND THAT...WAS ONLY THE BEGINNING

[START MOM INTERVIEW]

IT WAS NICE TO SEE THAT TWO TEENAGERS THAT LIVE HALF A WORLD APART
ARE ACTUALLY VERY VERY SIMILAR VERY MUCH GOING THROUGH THE SAME

STRUGGLES VERY MUCH GOING THROUGH THE SAME JOYS AND LAUGH AT THE
SAME JOKES EVEN THOUGH THEY ONLY MET EACH OTHER A FEW DAYS BEFORE

[STOP MOM INTERVIEW]

JANA AND I BECAME FAST FRIENDS AS SHE GREW MORE AND MORE
COMFORTABLE IN HER NEW AMERICAN LIFESTYLE. AND WITH THIS I FOUND
BEAUTY IN INTRODUCING SOMEONE TO SOMETHING THEY'VE NEVER
EXPERIENCED BEFORE. MY SISTER, CLAUDIA, ALSO BECAME FAMILIAR WITH
THE FEELING OF THIS SECOND HAND DISCOVERY

[START CLAUDIA INTERVIEW]

IT'S LIKE SOMETHING LIKE GROWING UP IT'S LIKE EVERYTHING FOR THE FIRST
TIME THAT FEELS AND HOW IT WAS FOR YOU. YOU KIND OF RELIVE IT

[STOP CLAUDIA INTERVIEW]

AND NOT ONLY WAS CLAUDIA ABLE TO SEE JANA GROW AND LEARN, SHE ALSO
FOUND CHANGE IN THE GAP PROGRAM

[START CLAUDIA INTERVIEW]

I MEAN YEAH IT'S DIFFERENTLY I'VE SEEN HOW MUCH LIKE I'M GRANTED AND
EVERYTHING AND HOW TOUGH IT IS AND LIKE CARMEL IS AND EVERYTHING
AND HOW DIFFERENT IT IS EVERYWHERE ELSE

[STOP CLAUDIA INTERVIEW]

HOWEVER, LIVING WITH JANA MEANT MORE THAN JUST EXPERIENCING FUN
NEW THINGS. MY FAMILY HAD TO ADJUST TO LIVING WITH A WHOLE NEW
CHILD.

INSIDE OF SCHOOL JANA SIMPLY FOLLOWED ME AROUND TO MOST OF MY CLASSES, BUT OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL WASN'T SO EASY. MY SCHEDULE WAS EXTREMELY BUSY WITH THE END OF THE MARCHING BAND SEASON AND THIS PUT A LOT OF STRESS ON OTHERS TO MAKE SURE EVERYTHING SAILED SMOOTHLY

[START CLAUDIA INTERVIEW]

I COULDN'T THINK ABOUT JUST MYSELF GETTING READY IN THE MORNING AND GOING TO THE BUS TO MAKE SURE SHE WAS READY AND THEN AFTER SCHOOL TO MAKE SURE SHE WAS ON THE BUS AND SHE HAD FOOD AND EVERYTHING AND SHE KNEW WHERE EVERYTHING WAS IN THE HOUSE

I KIND OF REALIZED THAT I COULDN'T HANG OUT WITH MY FRIENDS CUZ YOU WERE GOING TO BE OUT GONE AND SO I HAD TO SPEND MOST MY TIME WITH HER.

[STOP CLAUDIA INTERVIEW]

BUT EVEN WITH ALL THE ADDED COMPLEXITIES I STILL FOUND THE GAPP PROGRAM EXTREMELY REWARDING -. MY FAMILY, TOO, FELL IN LOVE WITH JANA AND THE WHOLE EXPERIENCE.

[START CLAUDIA INTERVIEW]

I THINK EVERYONE ENJOYED IT MY DAD LIKE THE MOST AS HE COULD TALK GERMAN WITH HER AND LIKE KIND OF RELIVE MOMENTS FROM MY DAD'S GERMAN YEARS WITH HER AND LIKE CONNECT THINGS FROM HIS CHILDHOOD AND HERS AND JUST OVERALL I THINK EVERYONE HAD A FUN TIME AND ENJOYED HER

[STOP CLAUDIA INTERVIEW]

[START MOM INTERVIEW]

OVERALL THE EXPERIENCE WAS FABULOUS AND I WOULD ENCOURAGE ANYBODY TO WELCOME AND THEY GATHERED IT INTO THEIR HOME IT WAS A GREAT EXPERIENCE FOR EVERYONE IN THE HOUSE

[STOP MOM INTERVIEW]

[START CLAUDIA INTERVIEW]

SOME OF MY FAVORITE PARTS WERE JUST HANGING OUT WITH HER AND LEARNING HOW IT WAS IN GERMANY LEARNING NEW THINGS AND JUST ACTING LIKE SHE WAS LIKE ANOTHER SISTER TO ME.

[STOP CLAUDIA INTERVIEW]

OVERALL, I FOUND THAT EVEN WITH MY ORIGINAL ANXIETY I WAS STILL ABLE DISCOVER A NEW CULTURE AND A NEW FRIEND DURING THE GAP PROGRAM. I WATCHED TWO WORLDS COME TOGETHER IN THOSE SHORT THREE WEEKS AND AS WE SAID OUR GOODBYES TO JANA, I KNEW THAT THIS EXPERIENCE WAS ONE I WOULD NEVER FORGET.

[START MOM INTERVIEW]

WELL I THINK THAT IT WAS BITTERSWEET IT WAS VERY VERY FUN TO BE AROUND HER YOU COULD TELL THAT SHE WANTED TO GO HOME SO SHE WAS A LITTLE BIT HOMESICK SO I WAS HAPPY FOR HER BUT SHE ALSO WANTED TO STAY SHE GOT VERY CLOSE TO YOU AND I THINK IT WAS SAD TO HEAR GOING TO MISS HER BEING IN OUR EVERYDAY LIFE

[STOP MOM INTERVIEW]

FOR 91.3 WHJE THIS HAS BEEN ALEX CROOKSHANKS. TO LISTEN TO MORE WORK
LIKE THIS OR MORE EPISODES OF AN INSIDE PERSPECTIVE VISIT OUR WEBSITE
AT WHJE.