

*The following “testimonial” was sent to me by Kandice Tillman, a 17-year-old girl who lives in Waterloo, NY. Kandice, who will be senior at Waterloo High School in September 2018, went on a Short-Term Youth Exchange (STEP exchange) to Austria. She and her family later hosted Leila Pollheimer (from Maria Anzbach, Austria) in their home as part of the family-to-family exchange. Here is what Kandice wrote:*

My name is Kandice Tillman and this summer I traveled to Austria for three weeks, through the Rotary Short-Term Youth Exchange Program. This experience was one like no other; it was full of adventure, making new friends, and learning about a whole new culture.

In the three short weeks that I spent in Austria I tried new foods, I learned parts of German and so much about their culture and their history that simply cannot be taught in school. I had the privilege of staying with a wonderful family who showed me so much and allowed me to really see their country in a way that most people never will. At the beginning I was very nervous to go and stay with another family in another country all alone, but once I met them I immediately felt welcome, and after returning home, I did not regret a single thing. This summer taught me so much about myself and allowed me to see the world in ways I never thought were imaginable.

This summer was clearly one of the best summers that I’ve ever had! I had the opportunity of a lifetime, to travel to another country. While in Austria, I was able to see many famous castles and palaces, such as the Belvedere Palace and the Schönbrunn Palace. I also had the privilege to see Salzburg, tour Vienna, go to the highest mountain in Austria, visit a concentration camp, and so much more. One of my fondest memories from my trip was the Flying Fox, an amazing zip-lining adventure through the mountains, with the most incredible views. Another memory I have is going to the top of the highest mountain in Austria, which was covered in snow and ice; it was amazing to see and feel the difference in the temperature.

Going to Austria this summer was truly the best experience ever and I hope I can inspire more and more kids to do this each year. It is truly the most amazing opportunity for young teens who have a love to travel.

Thank you,

Kandice Tillman