



JHC Ball



Kia ora!

My name is Zora Grossenbacher and I'm from a little village near Bern in Switzerland. I was an exchange student at James Hargest College in Invercargill for

one year. My adventure in New Zealand started in July 2018. In the beginning everything was new and unknown: living in a new family with a host sister from Italy and going to a school where I knew nobody. On my first official day at Hargest I really appreciated the welcoming of the school. They tried to explain us everything, we met the other new international students and everyone got a buddy. I was really lucky with my buddy. She showed me around patiently and picked me up after classes. I suppose without her, I would have been completely lost in the first couple of weeks.

Hargest offers a lot of different subjects. I remember that I struggled with deciding

as there were so many options which sounded interesting to me. For me it was new that the school offers many different sports and music lessons. I decided to take singing lessons and later in year 13 also guitar lessons, which were held during school. Furthermore, I also joined the choir "Anchora" - a mixed choir.

Outdoor Recreation is a really good choice for international students to experience the outdoors of New Zealand. We went on a snow camp where we did cross country skiing and slept in our self-made snow caves in Term 3. During Term 4 we went mountain biking, sea kayaking and several times to Adventure Southland, where we did abseiling, different rope courses and adventure based learning. Term 1 was all about kayaking, concluded with a camp in Mavora Lakes. In the last

term we did the 3 day Rakiura track on Stewart Island and some orienteering in the end of the year. Every theme was always accompanied with theory classes to learn the skills we would use later in the outdoors. The subject was also a great opportunity to get to know people and spend a good time with them.

In year 13 I chose Te Reo Maori as a subject. Apart from the fact that I could improve my language skills, this also gave me a very interesting insight into this culture.

The two Geography trips and the year 10 and year 7 camp, which I could join as a helper were definitely also unforgettable experiences offered by Hargest. In the very beginning I also went on a ski trip to the Remarkables - an opportunity for me to experience the winter sports here in NZ.

#### Caving



Another adventure was "Paddles Up" - a multi days kayak competition with other schools, where our principal himself was helping me improving my kayak skills.

Near the end of my year here in New Zealand I could experience a real school ball like I knew it only from the movies with a live band and ballroom dances. Afterwards we went to the afterball party,



Adventure Southland with Outdoor Education



Bo the horse

which was most certainly a really nice finish of this exciting day.

During my exchange year I started to play underwater hockey, which turned out to be a crazy, but superfun sport. There are heaps of different clubs here in Invercargill, so there is probably hardly any sport that you can't practice here and as I already mentioned before, they are often even connected to the school.

I was really lucky with my host family and my host sister from Italy. The host parents wanted to show as much of the country as they could. One day, for example, we went to Curio Bay where we could swim

right next to the dolphins. Another day, we did a trip to Dunedin, had a tour in the speights brewery and went to the rugby game in the evening. We could experience the NZ farming:lambing, tailing, duck shooting or mustering cattle. Especially in the summer holidays my host sister and I did heaps of tramps, either with friends of our host family, tramping clubs or our friends. Tramping is definitely one of the best ways to experience the great outdoors of NZ and there are so many stunning tracks. In general, I got the impression that people here in NZ are extremely generous and always superkeen to show foreigners around and share their culture with them.

My host family has a little farm with some cattle, horses and cats. Shortly after I arrived we got a new big horse - Bo. As my host sister and I both enjoy riding, this was wonderful for us, we had the opportunity to ride whenever we wanted to.

After this exchange, I'm looking back on a wonderful year! I made so much great experience, met so many lovely people and saw some of the most beautiful places in the world. NZ is a great choice for an exchange because it is extremely various - there are snow covered mountains, beautiful lakes, beaches, native bush and the list goes on and on.

I really enjoyed my time at James Hargest College. If you want more information about the school, you can always contact the school ([jelder@jameshargest.school.nz](mailto:jelder@jameshargest.school.nz)) or you can message me.

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Cathedral Caves

Greenlake Tramp

