

IN..Lingua

School Exchange Kolbe Catholic College in Melbourne
di Davide Nicolichia

Everything started 2 years ago.

One of my teachers said that a class of our institute could participate in a school exchange with an Australian school, the Kolbe Catholic College in Melbourne. My classmates and I were excited to be one of the selected classes that could try this unique experience.

Some months later the same teacher told us that the 2^A BT (the actual 4^ABT, my class) could take part in this school exchange. Screams, tears and hugs: this was our reaction to those words.

In 2 years we would have gone to Australia, but before the Australian students would have come to Italy, hosted in our families in Udine and the travelling around Italy.

They arrived in Udine on the 5th April, 2014. We were waiting for them outside our school, the coach arrived and we met them. Everyone was excited but worried, new people never seen before from the other side of the world. Different language, different culture, different way of life.

Unfortunately, I couldn't host any Australian guy, but I could spend a lot of time with them during the trips we made with the school (we went Venice, Trieste and Cividale) and during the afternoons spent all together. We said goodbye on the 12th April, when they continued their journey around Italy (visiting Florence, Pisa, Costiera Amalfitana and Rome), after a fantastic week spent together. Everyone was sad because they left but happy thinking about the friendships we built with them and what we would have experienced the following year travelling to Australia. A year after, it was our moment.

20th February 2015. The day of departure. The night

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before was hard: thinking if everything was in the luggage, hoping that the flight would have been safe and thinking what would have happened along these two weeks. But when I woke up, everything had disappeared. "I'm going to Australia!"

After more than 20 hours flight my classmates and I arrived in Melbourne. Tired but excited, our friends were waiting for us outside the airport. The meeting was very exciting, hugs and big smiles, we were together again after a year.

I was hosted by a girl that didn't come the year before, so for me it was different than for the others: I would spend 11 days in Melbourne with a person never seen before, but she and her family were so gentle with me and I enjoyed the time spent with them.

In those 11 days I visited a fantastic city, Melbourne, with the unexpected contrast between nature and man, skyscrapers and rivers, busy streets and calm green parks; tried the school-life of Australian teenagers, very different in comparison to ours, in which I cooked pasta, I made a boomerang and I could paint it, too; I saw the unique views (Great Ocean Road, the Tweve Apostoles) and animals (kangaroos, koalas, platypus, emus) that only Australia can offer; I could try the hospitality of the people, in every shop you go they always say "g'day, what's up?" and always answer with "no worries" (it means you're welcome). Unfortunately those fantastic days passed fast, and again we had to say goodbye to our Australian friends, maybe for the last time...

The last 4 days my classmates and I went to Sydney, another beautiful city, in which we could appreciate the Opera House, the Harbour Bridge, the beaches of Bondi and Manly, the Royal Botanic Gardens and the

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Sydney Tower with its beautiful views of the whole city.

This fantastic trip finished the 8th March, when we came back to Italy to our normal life.

A special thanks to the teachers who shared this wonderful experience with us.

This school exchange, personally, was the possibility to realize my childhood's dream of visiting Australia. Beyond this I met a lot of people that now are my friend and I hope see them again.

One thing is sure. I'll be back soon Straya, wait for me!

Davide Nicolicchia - 4^{BTur}