

What parents say about their children on return

Argentina

Strong set of friendships, cultural understanding, language proficiency and a lot of fun.

Brazil

“A self-assurance that she can deal with situations and circumstances that most children her age could consider extreme.”

“Independence, the ability to stand up for herself. She got to experience a completely different culture, learned Portuguese, met other students from around the world, got to know the city she lived in very well (more than other students), [now] really appreciates NZ.

France

“Becoming fluent in another language and learning to cope in a totally foreign environment [where there was] a different culture, different family values and a different school environment. Being more accepting of other people’s cultures and values.”

“A marvellous opportunity to travel to France and to receive total immersion in the French culture. Increased confidence and experience in speaking the French language. Increased personal growth and maturity in having accomplished a feat which many 16 year-old girls would have found daunting or insurmountable”

“Independence, confidence and the opportunity to see a bit of the world to balance her perspective.”

“”Experience of living in a foreign country with a new family, adjusting to their ways, improving French language, maturing, learning to become more self-reliant and gaining confidence because of these things.”

“...made friends on the other side of the world.”

“Confidence in her own abilities, new friends, language skills, appreciation of a different culture.”

“...Ability to adjust and compromise and the kind of appreciation of ones own country that only comes with distance from it.”

“Unanticipated outcomes were that she learned to decorate chocolates and make crepes, to change gear in a Citroen while her host mother held a cigarette in one hand and steered with the other...what could be more French..and to minimize her time in the shower in the mornings.”

“Becoming more independent, worldly and considerate. She is more open and confident in herself.”

“She did it. I think there is a real sense of achievement on her part. It was confidence-building. She is fascinated by the cultural differences and enjoyed the school she attended and friends she made there.”

“Independence. A sense of freedom.”

“Confidence, language skills, experience, enjoyment.”

“...An understanding that in a situation that is sometimes difficult, you benefit more if you make an effort to contribute more.”

“[My son] clearly threw himself into his new life with great enthusiasm and therefore gained a lot from it. Of course his French has improved, but more important, he has gained more self-confidence and the realization that a good attitude takes you a long way.”

“The confidence to challenge herself in strange new environments.”

“A huge boost to her self-confidence, an increased awareness of what the outside world has to offer and the real possibilities for her out there. Also, the knowledge that she can fit into other people’s lives and that she has as much to offer as she has received – generosity making an endless circle.”

“She learned that she is more capable than she thought she was.”

“Competence with French language. Coping with/in another culture. Coping with individual responsibilities related to day-to-day life and more stressful situations. Life skills and emotional control. Fortunately [she] has returned with a positive attitude towards her year. Surprising in some respects taking into account what occurred in her schooling. She has grown as a person, developed into an independent young woman but has retained a caring attitude towards others. Importantly, she maintained her standards and beliefs.”

“Heaps of confidence! She can begin to trust in herself and her abilities. She CAN do things outside her comfort zone and cope! Also a broadening of perspective. It was a wonderful experience for [her] to learn about herself. Thanks to your network and support, all possible problems had been discussed/addressed making the actual 6 weeks as safe and comfortable as it could be. ... Thanks for believing in [her] and accepting her for the trip.”

“Confidence and knowing that she can cope with different life experiences.”

“Experience of another culture and greater appreciation of her life in New Zealand.”

“[She] has definitely learned to make quick decisions and to “think on her feet”. She saw the way other people live. Foreign school experience was very valuable as well.”

“A greater self-confidence in what she is able to achieve. She was able to find an inner strength to overcome any issues she had.”

Japan

“Learned the language, become independent.”

“A huge gain in confidence and maturity [as well as] knowledge of the Japanese language and culture.”

“A much more hands-on knowledge of the language and culture. He has also learned budgeting skills and an appreciation of cost.”

“Experiences nobody else can have. She has grown up mentally.”

“Learning the language fluently and accurately, becoming more mature than before and more independent for life and gaining a wide range of knowledge about other countries and cultures.”

“A unique opportunity to experience a truly different culture in a way that is not possible as a mere tourist. I suspect the enormity of that honour will only be really appreciated by her as she matures over the next few years. She is already thinking about returning in her gap year.”

“A lot of self-confidence, a greater world view, a deeper understanding of another culture, better language skills and more options for his future.”

“He grew significantly in his independence and maturity. [His] language skills have increased during his [three months] in Japan. It was wonderful for [him] to have the independent experience of traveling and staying in Japan on a longer-term basis than his previous trip”

“We are so very appreciative of the support shown by yourselves and JFIE. It seems extraordinary.”

“Invaluable experience. It wasn't just the language fluency she has achieved, she has matured and has grown up since her 10 months in Japan. [The experience] will always be in her memory. Also, she has gained motivation and a dream while staying in Japan.”

“Confidence, self-reliance and her ability to think and act on her own. Japanese language and cultural development. Making lifelong friendships and connections.”

“He has gained as a person. His experiences have helped him mature. I think the experience has helped him become more aware of what is required in order to achieve in life. It has also opened his eyes to what he might want to do in the future.”

“When she came back, she told us that she had thought of her future in depth and that she wanted to achieve her goals. We think [that going on exchange] was the right thing to do because it gave her not only a great experience but also good opportunities and friendships.”

“Maturity. Cultural understanding. Appreciation of world travel. Language challenges. Learning to cope with travel in a foreign land.”

“Confidence and people skills.”

“She learned about Japanese people and their culture. She also appreciated the NZ education system and its teachers. She also learned that to have fun you don’t need a lot of money or expensive baubles.”

“She learned language skills, self-confidence and the knowledge that she is more worldly and industrious than she may have believed. She has come back more mature, just as determined to make her own way and is already working towards her new set of goals. She has also experienced a wonderful Japanese family who looked after her and made her feel like part of the family. I feel that she contributed to the process by partaking of their culture without complaining and by trying to immerse herself in the Japanese way of life. However the [Japanese] family must be very special people to have made her stay such a happy experience.”

“The discipline of living in a Japanese family. The high level of respect to the senior members of the family and school did inspire [our daughter].”

“Confidence, living and sharing in another culture. Dealing with situations and taking responsibility for her decisions without talking to her parents.”

“He was able to gain excellent progress in Japanese language that he can use in later life. He has learned “to stand on his own two feet” and take setbacks in life. He has also learned people are people no matter where they come from.”

Italy

“[She] has gained great experience of travel and independence, another language and learned to live in another culture.”

“Experienced and better understood a family with a different cultural background, made an effort to adapt into the local family, school and culture.”

“The pizza in Italy is yummy! [Understanding of differences] in schooling and culture. Made friends from different countries through the host organization.”

“Thankyou so much NZIIU for an extremely well-organised, prepared and caring exchange. Thankyou for being sincere, honest and approachable.”

“Strengthened independence and maturity. Insight into a very different culture and language – not just ethnically , but also living in a large city having only experienced a small rural community existence until her exchange. Understanding of another family’s dynamics.”

“Understanding and accepting differences in other cultures and family environments. A huge gain in confidence and the ability to communicate confidently.”

Germany

“Self-confidence in coping by himself physically (travelling in Europe) though he didn’t lack this before. An expansion of his understanding of cross-cultural experiences/differences. An enhanced appreciation of NZ culture/lifestyle.”

“Self-belief and confidence. Near perfect German. Lifelong friends and contacts.”

“Language knowledge, confidence, new friends, knowledge of another culture, travel.”

“[She] loved the experience. We had a positive impression of the host mother from long phone conversations prior to and during [her] stay. [She] seems to have been liked by the host family and schoolmates. She is now fluent in German, has more confidence and has an appreciation of a different learning/teaching culture as well as increased awareness of religious and philosophical questions.”

Ireland

“She had to reach out to other people for discussion and friendship and to learn about Ireland. She also had to be with herself.”

Netherlands

He got to know the way he was as a person and that his home wasn't so bad after all.”

“[She] has matured a lot while being away, learned she can do so much on her own, travelling and making arrangements to travel to many places, [she is] more open to new experiences, new food, meeting new people and having to rely on people at the beginning to understand the language but learning quickly and becoming fluent.”

Spain

“She has grown up a lot over the year. We are very, very grateful for all the support that you have given her – I think she is really fortunate to have had such an amazing experience and we really appreciate the huge amount of work that NZIIU puts into making trips like this a possibility.”

“Confidence. A broader and more tolerant world view. A better appreciation of her life in NZ. Improved Spanish language skills and cultural understanding. She feels she should have stayed for the full school year.”

“Self-reliance. Self-confidence. An appreciation for another culture. The ability to fit it and adapt to new situations. Her understanding of the Spanish language has improved to a very high level.”

“Learning a second language, independence and personal confidence.”