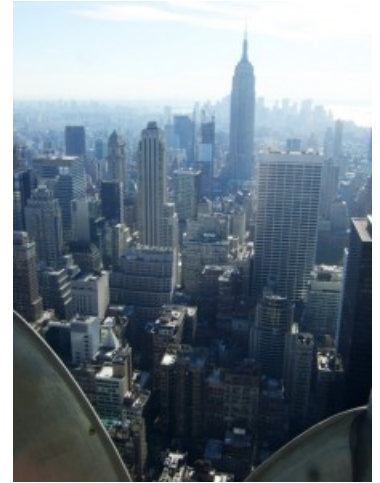


Echange scolaire avec Allentown (Pennsylvanie) 2009/10



First day at school after our trip to Allentown several of my colleagues, their faces expressing sympathy and dismay, would ask me: „How was it?“ And for the first time as a group leader in this exchange program my face would light up and I'd tell them wholeheartedly: „Good. It was good.“

It started out smoothly, with the parents being supportive, the train on time, the flight as scheduled, immigration just bearable, the bus waiting for us.

It turned out that we couldn't have found a nicer bus driver or picked more perfect weather for our stay in Washington - three days of vacation - before settling in into strange homes, hosts, and school life.

This was when every teenager had to adapt to their respective hosts and their families: wealthy or poor, Caucasian, Hispanic or African-American, formal or casual. And they did well: No late-night phone calls, no hysteria, no unfounded complaints.

Instead, all of them demonstrated an open-mindedness, a curiosity, and a ‚go-with-the-flow' attitude that helped make the trip a success for all, me included. Due to trouble in the past I had made it a point that some of our media-evoked expectations might well be shattered, and some were. But we all had one experience or other that can never be transmitted by the movies, even if it is just how we appreciate our standard of schooling.



The kids who joined this year understood that this is no vacation booked from a brochure, white beaches and all. They realized that as a tour leader there is only so much you can do from here, depending on people over there.

You got the spirit. You proved that this program is worth the bother and time well spent.

Thank you all.

Karin Lothschütz