My Time in ELC

By Eva McParland

Earlier this year, I made a video of a day in my life in German. I had fun making this video and after submitting it to ELC’s competition I nearly forgot about it entirely. However, a few months later I got an email to say I won a scholarship to an ELC residential camp! I was shocked but delighted, but I knew nothing about it. Nevertheless, I booked a German camp in Wilson’s Hospital School, Multyfarnham (near Mullingar). I had no idea what to expect- I was in for a surprise!

Upon my arrival at the boarding school, I had to complete a COVID test as a safety precaution. To my surprise, most of the other students came alone as well - I was expecting everyone to know each other already! We were given our ‘Studentenausweis’ (ID) and shown to our dorms by the Animateure (the animation staff are called Animateure, and they organise activities and sit with us at meals, as well as helping us with our German.) I was in a room with two other girls. We clicked right away and had a wonderful time for the rest of the camp.

The days were filled with interesting activities and lessons. The teachers were fantastic, they kept a perfect balance between exam preparation and fun activities about German culture. Another key thing was the class sizes - there were only three classes in the entire course. My class only had about twenty people from all over Ireland. We ate meals together, did lessons together and played sports together. I made amazing friendships over the 18 days and there were lots of tears when we had to leave! The best activities organised by the Animateure/Animateurine included Olympics, Casino Nacht, Discos, and Bundesliga; we had so much fun dressing up and cheering each other on! In all the excitement we learned so much about each other, making memories I will never forget.

Lastly, I never thought this course could change my attitude toward studying languages. The first few days were tough, but I soon got in the habit of speaking German all the time. By the end of the course, I was even thinking in German! It helped that lots of the Animateure/ Animateurine were from Germany, and they were only 17 or 18 years old, so we had lots to talk about. Before I went to the ELC camp I was good at German, but I never loved it. After this camp, I genuinely enjoy learning German and I’m far more motivated to study it! I would 100% recommend ELC camps to any of my friends and family as a wonderful experience with so many benefits.

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By Gagik Avetisyan

I went to the ELC 2022 German summer camp held in Wilson’s Hospital School from July 20-August 6th, 2022, after winning the *Stipendium* earlier that year as part of my Transition Year. Going into the Camp as my 3rd Overnight Summer camp, I had some doubts, yet I was still generally excited to see what the next 17 days would hold in terms of meeting new people and improving my German language skills. Now in writing after the camp, I reflect back at what was a fun 2 weeks where I got to really hone my speaking ability and meet plenty of new people from over the country who were there to also improve their German. I would recommend anyone to look into the ELC camps to spend a few weeks of their summer in a different and interesting environment where they can have fun while improving their language of choice.

The camp I went to in question was a fully immersive German camp, with any and all interactions being made through the German language. On top of 3 hour long interactive and fun German lessons 6 days of the week, I really saw my speaking ability reach a new level of fluency and flow, with sentences and vocabulary coming to my head much easier. Every day includes 4 different activities, with a choice between multiple sports in the first 2 and the evening activities often being large, fully inclusive and various events, such as a *Casino Nacht, Talentshow, Discotheke* and *Filmabend*. Especially in the evenings, there is a large variation, with every evening being something different so that you never get bored and there is something new and exciting to do for everyone. All the assistants, animators and teachers were extremely friendly and helpful, with the animators and assistants often being very young, only a year or so older than us and in some cases, previous attendees of the camp, creating a fun and vibrant atmosphere with youth leading youth.

To wrap up, I would very much recommend the ELC summer camps to anybody who is interested, especially as a first overnight summer camp experience as the staff and other attendees make a very friendly and relaxed atmosphere in which you can relax and enjoy your language learning process.