



LIONS CLUBS INTERNATIONAL
District 201W2

Dardanup Lions sponsor founding member's granddaughter on European Youth Exchange

In 2009, after an international exchange youth visited Bunbury Catholic College, Madeleine Tyrrell "googled" the Lions International website searching for similar programs which would enable her to travel to Europe after completing Year 12. The Lions Youth Exchange program suited her plans perfectly. The Lions Club of Dardanup, of which grandfather, Robert 'Bob' Tyrrell was a founding member, offered to sponsor her exchange.

After a long flight from Perth through Sydney to Italy in mid-December, Madeleine met the first of her three host families, the De Carli family - mother Sara (a history teacher), father Parlo and sons Enrico and Fredirico. They live in the town of Majano in northern Italy. Madeleine joined in the family's normal routine by attending morning school with Sara or exploring the local village with the family's maid. Each afternoon Sara would take Madeleine to neighbouring towns to learn more about Italy. She skied the Alps and visited the city of Udine, medieval castles and a ham town. Eating real Italian pizza and gelato, as well as learning to cook Tiramisu were part of her cultural experience with the De Carli family.

Madeleine's second host family, the Giammarrusti family, live in a small ancient town called Matera in southern Italy. Nine Australian Lions youth were also staying in Matera during Madeleine's visit. During the day the Aussie exchangees went sightseeing with Giovanni Cuoco, a member of the Matera Lions Club. All the host families often came together for dinners which added to the cultural atmosphere of the exchange visit. While the host parents cooked, the exchangees and children would play games together. "Instead of getting to know just my host brother and sister from Italy, I became quite good friends with the other Italian host brother and sisters and the nine Aussie exchangees. I was able to meet other Australians and share my stories with them", said Madeleine. "I also went to school with Simona (an Italian friend) and music school with my host mother."

During her Italian visit, Madeleine was asked to give a speech on human rights at a Lions Youth Function in the city of Matera. Many Italian youth spoke at the function and although it was a little scary, Madeleine was thankful she could present her speech in English. The message she conveyed in her talk was that despite countries looking different we are all humans.

The sights of Italy were visited - ruins of cliff caves; the port of Bari; a day trip to Bari and Napoli; trips to Treviso, Venice and Gemona which was rebuilt after a severe earthquake in the 1970's; San Danielle which produces Perchutto; the ruins around Matera including the world famous "Sassi" of Matera and the largest Christmas tree in southern Italy.



Left: Madeleine with school kids in Matera, Italy



Right: Madeleine with first host family, Sara and Parlo de Carli

Madeleine travelled to Austria for Christmas and lived with the Dragovits family in Salzburg. The family members - mother Romana, father Werner, daughter Teresa and son Mario - own four restaurants so Madeleine enjoyed eating out most evenings with the family and watching the chefs cooking. During the day she attended school with Teresa and Mario. Madeleine helped prepare the Christmas tree and dinner for her first white Christmas which surprisingly was celebrated on

24 December rather than Christmas Day. Morning mass was attended on Christmas Day. During the Christmas holidays Madeleine joined the family skiing in the Austrian Alps, touring Salzburg, visiting the home of Mozart and seeing sites from the movie "The Sound of Music. They also rode a horse-drawn sleigh through snow-covered fields in the mountains and saw Hitler's summer villa, the village of Hallen close to the Germany/Australian border and the Salzburg salt mines. Salzburg will have special memories for Madeleine because she celebrated her 18th birthday in the city with the Dragovits family and their friends.

"A cultural tradition I have seen little in Australia but more in Europe is the "three-kiss meeting" where people greet each other by kissing three times on the cheek", commented Madeleine.

After leaving Austria, Madeleine met up with nineteen other Australian youth exchangees for two days in London. They saw the main sights including Tower Bridge, Big Ben, London Eye and Buckingham Palace.



Left: In Austria with Dragovits host family and friends



Right: Madeleine skiing in Austria with host family friends



Left: Australian Lions youth sightseeing in Matera, Italy



Right: Aussie exchangees with Giovana from Matera Lions Club, Italy.

The highlights were meeting new people, making friends around the world, seeing other countries and learning more about myself as a person.

"I thank the Lions Club of Dardanup for supporting my trip and for being so generous and Lions International for offering this program which allows young people to travel the world safely. Also, I am very grateful to the families I stayed with in Europe who opened their hearts and homes and allowed me to become a part of their families", said Madeleine. "I had an amazing time and I hope to see my host families again".

Back home, Madeleine is working in Bunbury during her gap year and planning to study Exercise Physiology at University in 2011.

LIONS YOUTH EXCHANGE – TRY IT, YOU’LL ENJOY IT

For more information about the Lions Youth Exchange Program, go to www.lionsclubs.org.au/ye or contact your local Lions Club