



Educational
Enrichment for
Romanian
Children

EERC Magazine

Alumni 2015



What have the EERC Alumni been up to?


Editors' Note

EERC gave us the opportunity to do so many things for the first time. Even if it was the first time when we left the country, when we took the plane, when we went to another continent or when we drank coffee from Starbucks. And you never forget the first time you did something wonderful, like going to the U.S.A. .

*Maybe you'll decide to keep all the little things from your journey to yourself or talk with your friends about them, but you will surely keep these amazing moments in your heart forever. And that is the main reason of this magazine: to live again all the beautiful parts, to say things we haven't had the chance to say, to **thank you**.*

So, what have you done for the first time in the USA?

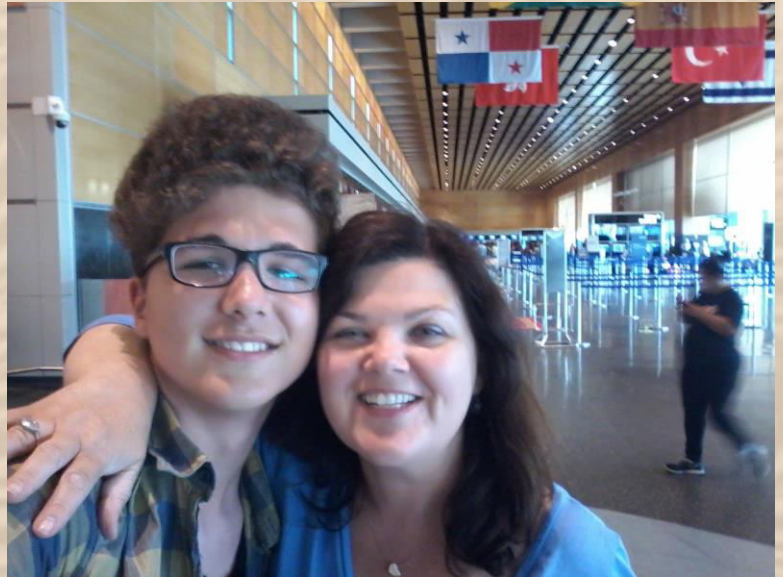
Andi and Ariana



*The 2015 alumni
have some great stories
to share with you
and here they are...*

Vlad

Hello, I am Vlad, one of the many students that had experienced the priceless chance of participating in the EERC program last year. I am a student from Brasov that was lucky enough to learn about the unique opportunity that this program can offer. This summer, I had the big honor of going in an awesome journey in America.



I think one of the most interesting things in this experience was the long flight to Boston. We started at an airport in Romania where all the participants met and got to know each other. We took a plane to Germany and there we waited for a couple of hours. After that, we took another plane that flew over the Atlantic Ocean for 8 hours. The flight itself was pretty boring but I had luck because I had the opportunity to speak with some of the other participants. The interesting part began when we began descending and we saw the big city of Boston.

It was dark outside and all the city lights shimmered through the sky. A whole new world was awaiting us. We got off the plane, we met our host families and everybody said goodbye to each other and went to their temporary new homes. I remember that, on our way from the airport to the house, I couldn't take my eyes off the car window, looking at all the new buildings and sights of America. When we finally arrived at the house, I got settled in and from then, I've started the exciting adventure.

I've discovered a whole lot of different cultures in this new world, got to meet a lot of new people, including the best host family ever and learned new stuff that I couldn't have seen anywhere else. Through my one month stay in America, I've attended to CRCAP, an arts summer camp where I've learned a lot about electronic music, stone carving, filmography and, of course, made friends with which I still talk to weekly.



In my spare time, in weekend and such, I visited the most interesting historical places in Boston like MIT and the Museum of Science. I think that the most different thing in the USA compared to Romania is the general relaxed feeling in the people on the street. It looks like they have no worries at all. This thing made me think different, and changed the way that I see the world.

In conclusion, the EERC experience was one of the greatest things that happened in my life. I want to never forget this massive life-changing journey and I want to truly thank the EERC team for making the dreams of the children possible.

Adriana

Hello, there!! I'm Adriana, I live in Sebes and I visited America in the summer of 2015 thanks to EERC. I'm in the 8th grade now and I can honestly tell you that this is a once in a lifetime experience. I met some wonderful host families, very open-minded people and friendly children. This "trip" definitely changed me as a person and taught me interesting things about American culture and important life lessons.



I visited famous places like Harvard University, MIT University, The Museum of Fine Arts, The Museum of Science and many more. You can't believe the difference between The USA and Romania unless you see both countries with your own eyes. Somebody once said that America is the country of all possibilities, well true words my friends. Yes, there are some things that can be changed, but there are any more other things that are just the way they should be.

The very first time I flew with a plane was when I went to America. In America I visited an actual farm for the first time. I learnt how to swim there, and I tried a lot of cool stuff for the first time such as: paddle boarding, sailing, snorkeling and canoeing.



I made new friends, who I really hope I'll stay in touch with just the same as with my host family. I fell in love with the places and the people and I really want to thank you, people from the EERC program, who gave me this big opportunity!



Florena



Last summer, EERC offered me the unique opportunity to spend one month in Boston, MA.

I lived like a typical American teenager and I adapted very well as everyone treated me like a friend, not like a stranger.

From the first hug shared to the last photo taken in the US, my American experience meant making new friends and discovering new things.



In the first two weeks, I attended Camp Frank A. Day where I learned a lot about the American culture. I remember my first basketball game, everyone laughing and yelling, just like a match at home. I mostly enjoyed the activities on the lake, such as swimming or snorkeling. I made a very dear friend there, Roksana, with whom I still keep in touch.

I managed to create a great relation with the Purnickescu family who hosted me for two weeks. When I met them, I was very nervous, but they were so kind and amazing, so we got along very well. I loved playing and talking to Matthew and Eddie who, despite being so young, were smart and creative.

The family treated me like a member of the family and it was a pleasure meeting those successful, inspirational people.

My American experience was one-of-a-kind and it showed me a different world from mine. So, in order to describe the impact this journey had on me, I decided to share with you a passage written on 25th July 2015 from my diary: “[...] Then my whole life flashed in my mind from birth to the present, with every detail that ever happened, every feeling and thought, visual and emotional was there in an instant. And I realized that was the most beautiful, exciting and interesting month of my life. This month will live with me forever, I feel I was shown a side of life that most people can’t even imagine. I feel a special connection with this place, that even the simple and mundane have such a power and meaning. Who has ever thought that having interesting talks, going to unforgettable places, doing spontaneous things and spending time with special, blessed people could change my life entirely?”



Thank you America for being beautiful, enigmatic, divine, intangible, interesting, mysterious, poetic, astir, untiring, balmy, ethereal and, most of all, ineffable! And, God, thank you for all the heavenly places I’ve seen and for every brilliant, successful, serene person I’ve met!

Thank you EERC for making all of these possible! EERC changes lives and it definitely made mine better!

Ioana

The best phrase to describe my American experience would be “my first” and these are a few things that I did for the first time: I travelled by airplane, saw geese in front of a museum, swam in an ocean, ate Chinese and Mexican food, was inside the car during a car wash, did a flip turn in water, was to a music festival. Even if some of them might not seem big deal, for me they were and it took America to do them.



I was hosted by the Springer family—extremely generous people, who treated me like I was one of them. The camp that I attended was called Charles River Creative Arts where creativity literally touched a level that I would have never imagined.

I won't say that everything was just amazing because everybody knows that it was so. Instead, I want to present the moments that made my journey.

So, one day at camp, I was eating lunch alone on the bleachers when a boy (whose name was extremely long so everybody just called him Gus) came to me and talked with me. I was impressed how friendly those people could be. I mean, everybody had his unique story for example: there was an Asian girl who was adopted and a Harvard student who worked there as a counselor during summer and they were still interested in my story and what made me be right there with them instead of being thousands of miles across the ocean.

In the last day before July 4th, there was a kind of game-party called Ice Cream Social. We had to choose an unknown partner and find 2 things we had in common to enter the main building. Once arrived inside, the counselors drew smiley faces on our hands and we left on the other exit. We went under the big tent, where we received ice cream and everything turned into a party. The CRCAP band had a concert on the stage and we were all dancing on famous songs. I can't describe the feelings that I had then. I was so happy and thankful that I had the chance to take part at something like this.



Another overwhelming thing for me was visiting the 2 universities from Cambridge: Harvard and MIT. A walk in the campus was enough for me to know that I want to come back and spend my student years there. So back in Romania, the hard work began, hoping that my dream will come true.

Also, the Museum of Science was a place where I could stay forever. There were dozens of exhibitions about the Universe, the human body, math, dinosaurs and many others and I couldn't get bored of what was there even in a million years.

*I don't know how I can make a conclusion of everything that I did there, but there's one thing I know for sure: no matter how much time will pass, **I'll never forget my first journey to the USA and all the people who made it possible and amazing.***

Medeea

Hello! I am Medeea, one of the EERC students this year from Valcea. My journey in America was one of a kind! I discovered wonderful host families, nice camp friends, learned about the American culture and new things to share for when I am back home.



I had the chance to visit really interesting and historical places in Boston like the Museum of Science, Harvard University, MIT, Isabella Gardner Museum and many more. All of them were amazing but what impressed me the most was when I entered the MIT and I could see a class full of students. Through the class's window I saw everyone working in their own projects and all seem to be very focused on the work.



I stayed for the first 2 weeks in a camp, where I could see what Americans do in their holidays, in their spare time. I did a lots of sports like basketball, soccer, diving, tennis, fitness, paddle boarding (it was amazing) and many more, I could see that Americans take very much care about their culture because everyday at 7:00 am we rose the American flag singing the American Hymn and at 18:00 pm we descended the flag.



Besides the fact that I had a lot of fun, I tried many amazing new experiences. I ate for the first time shrimps, octopus, clams and sushi. I saw incredible skyscrapers. I also did for the first time sailing, paddle boarding (which was my favorite) and tennis. I went in a camp where I played an exciting "Color War" . I saw a big campfire and I also played a really funny game named "Broomball".

Most importantly I made lots of new friends and I met nice, friendly and open minded people. I am very happy because I can keep my relationship with my friends across the ocean and through this way, I always learn new things from them and I realized that time and distance don't matter when you care.



I do believe that visiting US is not just "seeing the big cities" and having fun, although one will have plenty... it's more than that. It's about seeing the world with new eyes and understanding another culture. It's about meeting new people and forging alliances and friendships. It's about unforgettable moments! It's happiness, it's fun, it's a beautiful challenge, it's a chance that might happen only few times in life.



*In short, I had a unique experience made possible by the huge and constant efforts of the EERC team! Thank you for all you have done for me. I will always have you in my heart! **It was surely the best experience of my whole life!***

Patricia

A new experience, a new world

In the summer of 2015 I have had one of the greatest experiences of my life: one whole month in the USA! In 2014, I couldn't even dream about travelling so far from home. But it happened!



The first thing that I noticed since my very first day was the fact that everybody around me was very outgoing and prepared to show and to explain me and my friends all they know about their amazing country. I visited many important places, like Concorde, where the American Revolution had started, the Science Museum in Boston, Harvard Square and many others. I have learnt so much about America's tradition and about its history by exploring museums such as Harvard Museum of Natural History and Harvard Art Museums.





But visiting museums is not the most important part when you are in a foreign country. It is also nice to travel around Boston and admire the Hancock Building, MIT and even the finish line of the Boston Marathon. I have seen all this during night time, after I had dinner at the Liberty Hotel. The views were magical: the lights blended into each other, forming a very different world, where it seemed like anything was possible. Magic had been freed into the air.

I have had a lot of fun among my new friends in the USA. I loved the basketball games, the photo shoots at Charles River Creative Arts Program and the articles I used to write for the camp's newspaper. Exploring and doing experiments in the Science Museum was also an incredible and very helpful experience. I have learnt a lot about an astronaut's life in space, about the birth of Universe and about the phenomenon of lighting. If there is a place where you never want to get bored, the Museum of Science is the right destination!



Thanks to my American journey, I have understood that I can do anything if I am patient and if I listen more to the others around me. I have done things that I didn't even enjoy doing before, such as painting and writing, with a lot of pleasure! I learned how to be more independent, which is very important in life.

*It is hard to choose a favourite experience, a favourite activity I have done in the USA. The truth is that every moment I have spent with my host family, with the wonderful teachers and children at camp and with the ladies who developed the EERC project was special. **The friendship and happiness I felt around me was the best experience I have had in the USA.** I would love to come back someday, "hungry" for more.*

Ariana

Hello, I'm Ariana and now I'm at the Otopeni Airport, Bucharest. I've just seen a plane which was landing and I'm wondering how she is. Is she looking on the window or talking to someone? Is she sad because the best month of her life ended or happy because she's going to see her family? Will she ever return to those places? The girl that has just arrived from the journey that changed her life.



There are bad days, days when everything is so boring, and you can't bear all the monotony anymore. In those moments I go for a walk and put on repeat a song which I've heard for the first time in the US. Or I go to the shop and buy some orange jus or chocolate milk, something I used to drink when I was in America. And this gives me the strength to do my homework over and over again and to accept all the monotony. I have a postcard with Boston on the inside part of my wardrobe and every day, when I dress up for school, I see it. It's like a promise. That one day I will have that life. A life full of new and interesting things. A life in which you don't have time to be bored.



The month in the USA represented an escape for me. It was the first time when I had the chance to see a different way of life and because of this it is so special. It was the first time when I felt that my life really started. Because there was just me and the chance to be whoever I wanted to be in a whole new world.

One night I was on the top of the Prudential Tower. There was a fancy and elegant party. In that moment I realized that I wanted this: a life in which I spent every night at height. I've seen a lot of wonderful places and I've got to know a lot of new things, but one of my favorites parts was watching a Robin Williams' movie on Netflix with my host family - Uyar. By the way, it was the first time when I watched a movie on Netflix and all my friends were so excited about this when I told them.

Camp Frank A. Day was a special place for me. Waking up every day on the Beyoncé's songs, the campfire, all the stories about the camp. There everything was new and wild. I liked even the fact that I couldn't pronounce the near lake's name. It was actually the first time when I had chips and hamburger at the dinner. During the two weeks I spent in the camp, every time someone did something good, respectful, caring or bravely, he or she received a little candle and the candles were kept in the dining hall. One night, Zac, the camp director, told us a story about the lighthouses: "Hundreds of years ago, when the ships arrived in harbors at night, they used to crush. So they built the lighthouses to guide the sailors when they were lost in the dark. ". He lighted all the candles that represented the good qualities and told us that no matter where we go, from now we will be like the lighthouses: lighting others' ways.

I want to thank EERC for believing that I'm worth it and because they gave me this opportunity. And also to Uyar family, because it's not easy to open the door of your house for a stranger and to make him feel like he's part of your world. All of them gave me more than just a month in the USA. They showed me that life could be more interesting and fascinating. They gave me the chance to live the things that I could've just read about. They gave me a dream: to make my life the best. And to come back one day.

Thank you.



Andi

Hi, I'm Andi and last year was the second time I visited the USA through the amazing EERC program. For me, this experience was absolutely incredible, because it offered me the unique chance to see how the Americans' daily life is, to visit places I had only dreamt of before and the most important thing, to make friends across the ocean!! I was overwhelmed when I saw my host family again after two years: it brought back to me so many beautiful memories and the cheerful American crowd waiting for us at the airport reminded me that it was going to be another month to remember!



The family, the camp, the amazing EERC members, all seemed to be unchanged, just as I had left them two years before. It warmed my heart to see Mary Bess, Reese and Devon again (and of course their dog Lulu!), to get to know what they had done in all that time and to tell stories. At camp I had Reese as my CIT for almost all my classes (because we apparently both love sports and games) so you can imagine I definitely had a really fun time every day. I was gladly surprised that most of the friends I had made at "Derby Summer Arts" were still going there, so I got to live and share with them some amazing moments once again! It was also amazing to see the founders of the Summer Arts Program again, Ms. Thalia McMillion and Ms. Susan Ploss. I thank them so much for their help for me to come back at Derby again.



Outside the camp, I had so many beautiful moments I would like to share with you. The one that impressed me the most was the day I had the opportunity to spend with my host family in New York. I don't think there are words that could describe my feelings and excitement I experienced that day. I visited the Empire State Building, Times Square, Hard Rock Café and last but not least, the Statue of Liberty. I loved visiting all of them, especially because I shared all those moments with my host family and I can certainly say that it was one of the best days of my life.



I also spent a couple of days with Florentina and Florin Anastasoae, as well as Vlad Similie and Vlad Refec. One day we travelled to Portsmouth and we got to see a former American submarine (from the inside!), and another day we went to Newport, where we visited one of the famous Newport Mansions and we swam in the Atlantic Ocean! The EERC Welcoming Party was amazing for me, because I had the occasion to talk to the members of the board and the other families, whom I had missed so much, as well as spending more time with the other alumni.



I believe that going in the USA isn't just "seeing America and its big cities", it's more than that. It is a chance for the children to learn and exchange culture with the Americans and, most important, to bring back in Romania what they've learnt there, to help our country to improve. After all, Romania is ours. And Romania is us. These I've heard from Prof. Radu Florescu at Brasov in 2013 and I will always have these in my mind and my heart. Thank you for these amazing experiences, EERC!



Testimonials from

- *Dr. Florentina Anastasoai*

Director of Program Development

- *Lidia Bradley*

Director

Dr. Florentina Anastasoae

Director of Program Development

I have volunteered for EERC for 5 years already, and it always brings me great joy. Joy to see how each student accepts this American adventure, how she/he learns from it, how she/he grows from it ! Every year the process starts with the applications, then interviews, then the selection process. And I can tell you that this is the most stressful part for all of us, applicants and EERC members alike.

Stressful because almost all of our applicants are outstanding kids in their own right, and selecting just a few of them is always difficult. If not for our limited financial capabilities, many more kids would be coming here for the Summer Camps. But once the selection process is finished, and the travelling arrangements are done, we enter our second part of the program, which is actually the most rewarding one !

Being part of an American summer camp is a unique experience in itself. By being among children of so many different backgrounds and being exposed to so many different forms of activities, gives our students the possibility to challenge themselves and discover, I am sure, skills that they never thought they have.

For me, each and every year, it is a joy to see how amazed and happy they are once they integrate in these camps. And how much they learn and absorb this new culture, from the family life to the cultural one. But I believe the best moments for them and for us (!) are when they are all together as a group, either at the pool party or during the already traditional Duck Tour. Between the moment they land on the American soil and the moment we say good bye at the airport it is only a month. But a month is all it takes to see how they have changed.

And this is why volunteering means so much for us at EERC. Knowing that we can offer these kids a new perspective on life. For my part, I enjoy immensely seeing them grow. I remember all our moments together, our laughs, and our shared experiences. And I enjoy so much staying in touch with them along the years ! In time, they become young adults and it is a privilege to know that I was, somehow, somewhere, a part of their young lives !

I wish them all to always remember what they have learned here, and not in the least, to remain close to each other and EERC for the years to come.

Florentina Anastasoae,

February, 2016

EERC,

Director, Program Development

Lidia Bradley

Director

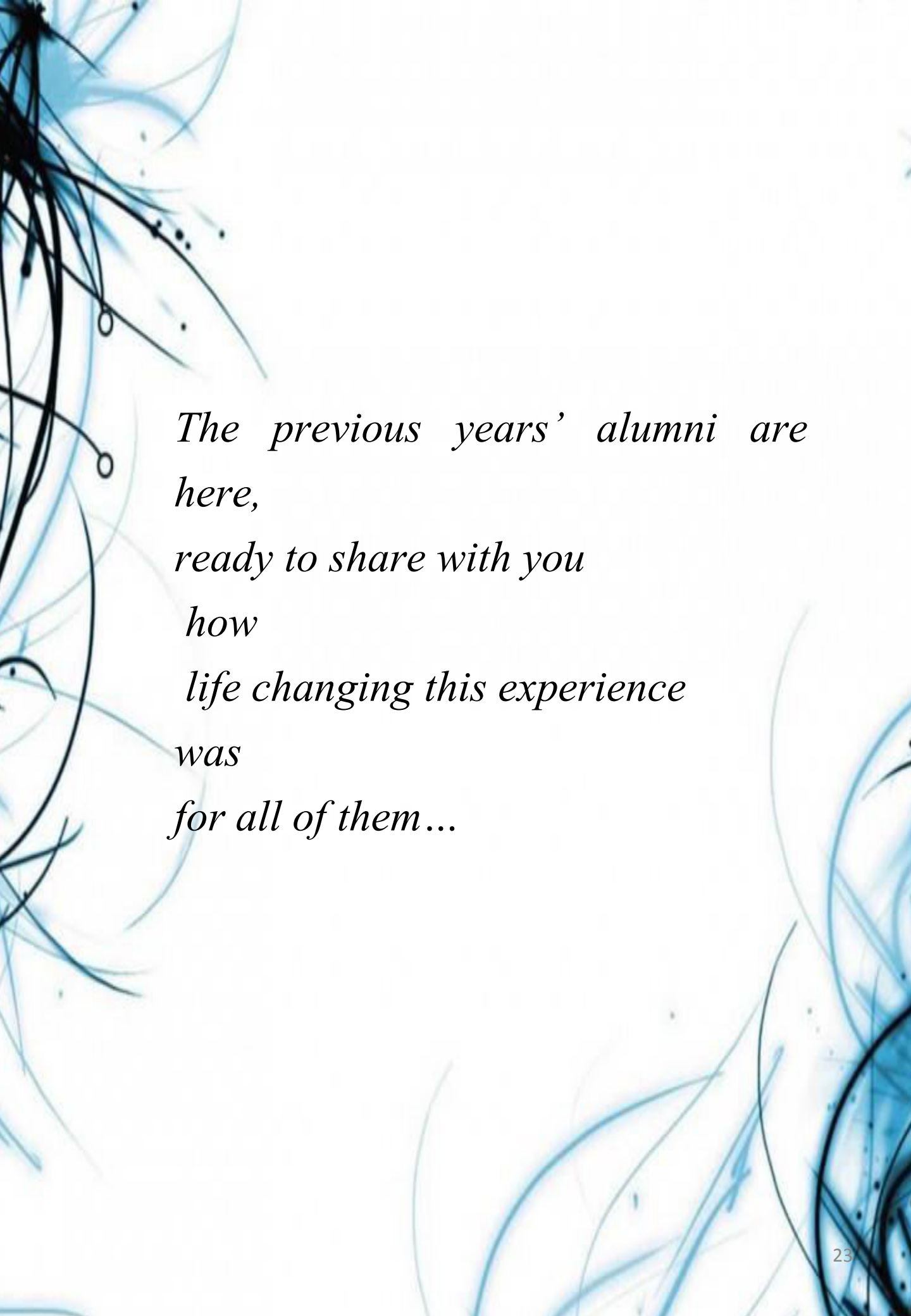
Hello to everybody! I am Lidia Bradley, and I have the double joy to have hosted a wonderful girl from Romania in the first year of the EERC program's existence – in 1998 or 1999, almost two decades ago! – and to have been invited by Dana Floru, who runs the program, to join the EERC board a few years ago. I will relate here my first impression of my guest, Nora, an impression that I have described to everyone who has asked about EERC over the years.

I went to Logan Airport with my daughter, then 9 years old, to pick up Nora, who was only three years older. All I knew about this girl except for her age was that she came from Maramures, a very picturesque region in the north of Romania and that she played the violin. She turned out to be a brunette with sparkling eyes, which was a nice complement to my blonde daughter with sparkling eyes – here I was, a mother of two cuties instead of one all of a sudden.

Nora said hi, or the equivalent thereof in Romanian, and announced she had a question to ask: “Would it be possible that I spoke to the camp she was supposed to go to and asked them if she could attend the program only in the afternoon instead of the morning?” “Why would you do that?”, I asked. “Because I practice my violin much better in the morning.” “How many hours do you practice a day, Nora?” “Four”, she said. I knew then that I had met a girl who really loved her instrument, who really wanted to excel. No child I had met before – and I had been a teacher for several years - asked me to make arrangements so that she could practice for four hours on end!

Of course, I had to “disappoint” her. The program ran mostly in the morning, ending in the early afternoon. And it turned out that Nora was by no means a child obsessed by her violin, but a child that could enjoy all the activities at the camp, make friends with my daughter and her American friends, join our family on trips and games and every aspect of our daily life with good-will and joy. We had music in the house, a friend for our daughter for the summer, and not only: we have been in touch ever since, visited her and her parents in Maramures, and are following her career as a violinist with many great orchestras around the world.

This is what happens when you host a child recommended by EERC: friendships come into being, “cross-pollination” of ideas and customs and characters and experience. That is why I so strongly believe in the program!



*The previous years' alumni are
here,
ready to share with you
how
life changing this experience
was
for all of them...*

Andreea Robu

Alumna 2013

It was a day I will never forget: the 29th of June 2015. Excited, I got on the plane with lots of mixed feelings and emotions. I knew the next four weeks would be unforgettable experiences.

After a "pretty" long flight, which made me realize how big is the Ocean, fact that made me think of Cristofor Columb, I landed in Boston.

Since I arrived in the airport, I've been surprised how friendly and open were Maggie, Charlotte, Kristen, Andrew and Ben, shortly, my family from Boston. During all this experience I discovered how nice and positive are most of the Americans. What came next, is a story hard to tell.

The first two days were full of adventures in the water, as well as on the ground. During those days I settled really easily, because I became friends with the children of my family from there. I was happy to find out that they were really interested in my country and how are we, the Romanians, like. They concluded that Romania is "a beautiful country" filled with mountains, sea and plains even our territory is not very big. In my heart grew the feeling of pride because I was Romanian and all the Americans who showed pictures of Romania were impressed how beautiful my country is.

The third day began with lots of emotions, because it was the first day in "Summer Arts at Debby Academy". At the summer school I made lots of friends and I discovered the differences between Romanian teenagers and American teenagers. I consider that between Americans is more respect and they help each other whenever they need help.

On the 4th July, I cooked a cake with the USA flag on it with Maggie and Charlotte. Then, I went on the beach and I realized that everybody said "happy fourth" and I realized that the Americans are very patriotic, because all of them had the USA flag in their yards. I wish on the 1st December all the Romanians to put our flag in the window or in their yard and I also wish my family from USA to spend a 1st December in Romania and to understand the differences between us.

After one week I realized that it would be really hard to say goodbye to everyone who I met there. The next three weeks was as wonderful as the first one.

I was happy to meet the members of EERC foundation and to discover the life of the Romanians that live in the USA. They still keep the traditions and the patriotic feeling always in their heart.

The time passed really quickly and the four weeks ended as the most beautiful experience in my life. Maggie and Charlotte promised me that next year they will visit me to spend an amazing summer together. It also means to me to discover the secret of the traditions of our countries.

My family from there is really close to me, that's why I consider them my second family. Their gift for my leaving really impressed me: an album with all the pictures that we took during the four weeks and a letter from every member of the family, that always bring the nostalgia in my heart.

Behind the fun, I realized that every country has its traditions, its differences. But I can say that the Americans are as hospitable as the Romanians and the thing that differences them the most is their positivity.

The thing that I liked the most was that I met wonderful people (I really miss my second family) and I discovered amazing places and things. I am really grateful for the organization with big heart that created this connection between Romania and USA. I would like to go back there, to learn more good and useful things that I can bring back to my sweet country: Romania.

Dragos Crisan

Alumnus 2014

Two years ago, when I arrived in Bucharest, after a wonderful month spent in Boston, I felt I was another person. This experience has changed me from the roots of my personality.

When I firstly heard about this extraordinary opportunity, I decided I would do anything to be able to see a small part of the "American Dream". Now, I can say I wasn't disappointed at all.

Actually, there weren't any bad things in this experience. The thing that shocked me from the first day was that everyone was very friendly to me, although I was a complete stranger. When my host family picked me up from the airport the night I arrived there, I could barely understand them.

But, as the time passed, I was able to talk to everyone and I discovered the Krauss were the most friendly and nicest people I have ever met. They helped me every time and showed me all the interesting things about Boston and USA. The thing that really surprised me was that they really wanted to learn about Romania, about our culture, our traditions and our history. Even more, every person I met there was eager to discover Romania, just as I wanted to discover America. Being there I realized what multiculturalism really is.

*This thing has really changed me **irreversibly**. Now, when I talk to a person I've never met, I don't care about it's appearance, I try to see its personality. Even more, when I meet someone, even if he is from Romania, I try to learn about his culture and about his view of the world and, at the same time, I try to show him the beauty of knowing a bit about everything. Trying to answer the question "How has this experience changed me", I can say it has changed my opinion about the modern world and, of course, it has changed my plans for future*

My unforgettable EERC summer

The time I spent in the USA was all about long-lasting friendships and broadening my horizons. It meant experiencing the American life, in an American home, with a truly special and good-hearted American family and meeting the very active Romanian community in Massachusetts. My hosts, the Springer family, were very kind to me and made me feel like home. They showed me Boston and Needham and museums and countless other beautiful places. I also spent a few days with other EERC families, and visited, for instance, the Rosecliff Mansion in Newport, which looked like a place the Great Gatsby would call his home.

The CRCAP summer camp blew my mind. CRCAP stands for “Charles River Creative Arts Program” and, believe me, the creativity there was off the charts! There were so many brilliant kids and teens and adults there, I just couldn’t believe it! These were people who loved art, writing, reading, music, sports. For example, I think I saw tens of my peers sitting outside, on the grass, during lunch break, enjoying nature and reading “Harry Potter” or other books. This was so different from what I typically see in my country: kids running for their lives when they see books...

The camp had a daily “Noon Time Show”, in which the participants showed what they could do and what they had learned at camp. I saw 10-year-olds playing the piano with a passion and talent I’ve rarely had the chance to witness. I saw videos and photography presentations that made me feel like I had replaced my eyes or my brain with someone else’s. That’s how new and brilliant and fresh the perspective was. I saw people dancing with an unbelievable fluidity and control over their bodies. You could feel the talent and the hard work in the air! The “Noon Time Show” gave you goose bumps and warmed your heart. Imagine how happy I felt when I played the guitar on stage with my fellow Guitar Workshop students! We were especially proud because our teacher, who was quite young himself, managed to teach us 9 songs from scratch in just 3 weeks, and some of us had never played the guitar before! Talk about being efficient!

*I remember the mixed feelings I had in the beginning, when I saw what activities CRCAP offered. I was very excited because there were so many awesome things that you could learn there, from hip hop to swimming to ballet, creative writing, professional video editing, acting... Anything you could dream of! However, I also felt a bit sad because there were so many cool things going on and I wanted to try all of them (*sigh*). Alas, the things that I did learn were amazing. I acted, edited videos, made little artsy projects, learned to play the guitar and learned a hip hop dance. It was so much fun!*

How EERC helped me when I came back to Romania

EERC opened so many doors for me. It helped me improve my English and it broadened my horizons more than I thought possible. Without the EERC experience, I wouldn't have become a part of Interact Sibiu, I probably wouldn't have went to a summer camp in Turkey, I wouldn't have started the "Jump Club Workshops" in my school (which came to life with the help of the EERC mini grant), and I might not have become a part of the Aspire community. What is more, during Aspire High School, which is a week-long leadership "school" for people in Eastern Europe, I met Anca Balaceanu, another EERC alumna! How cool is that? 😊 We had no idea we would meet there.

To sum up...

It's been almost 5 years since I became a part of the EERC community, and, with the passage of time, I have not lost touch with these amazing people. On the contrary, they have become even dearer to me. My host family and I regularly share news using e-mails or Skype. They're like a part of my family! Facebook and the Alumni meetings in Romania also help me keep in touch with EERC friends.

EERC has a warm and cozy place in my heart and it will stay there and do wonders for me for the rest of my life. Sincere hugs and a huge "Thank You!" to all the people who worked so hard to give me and other Romanian youngsters the EERC gift!

Andreea Barbu

Alumna 2012

14 years old, chance, USA, deadline, hope, news, passport, emotions, first flight, welcome, my family, Boston, New Hampshire, Cape Cod, sightseeing, photos, kayaking, camp, musical, Target, sushi, jazz, LOVE...and Red Sox!

2012 was an amazing year because of EERC. Every day is a new chapter in life waiting to be written. New questions to be asked, embraced, and loved. Answers to be discovered and then lived in this transformative day of delight and self-discovery. Only dreams give birth to change. This is what I learned from attending to this project.



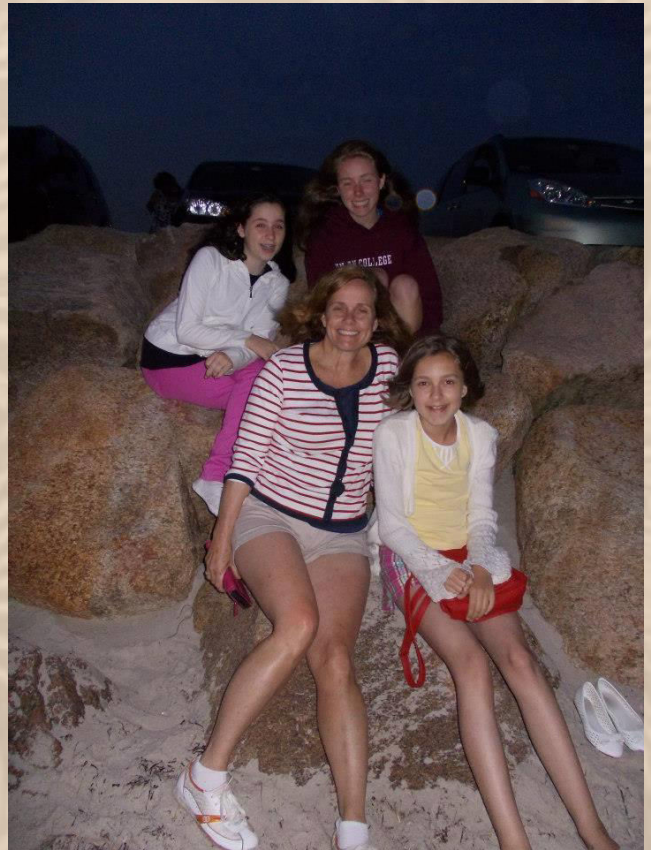
Everything began in one of my Romanian classes. I applied and there I was checking my email adress every hour, waiting and waiting until the mailbox buzzed and in a few months I was packing a lot of things, many of them unnecessary, because the most important ones were in my heart: love and curiosity. Boston became 'my home sweet home' for 5 amazing weeks.

The first memorable moment was meeting my family, the Kundert family, who considered me one of them from the beginning. They helped me discover the American culture by interacting with the daily life. They helped me grow. Going sightseeing was an adventure. Institute of Contemporary Art, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum or The Aquarium were some of the places, which amazed me.

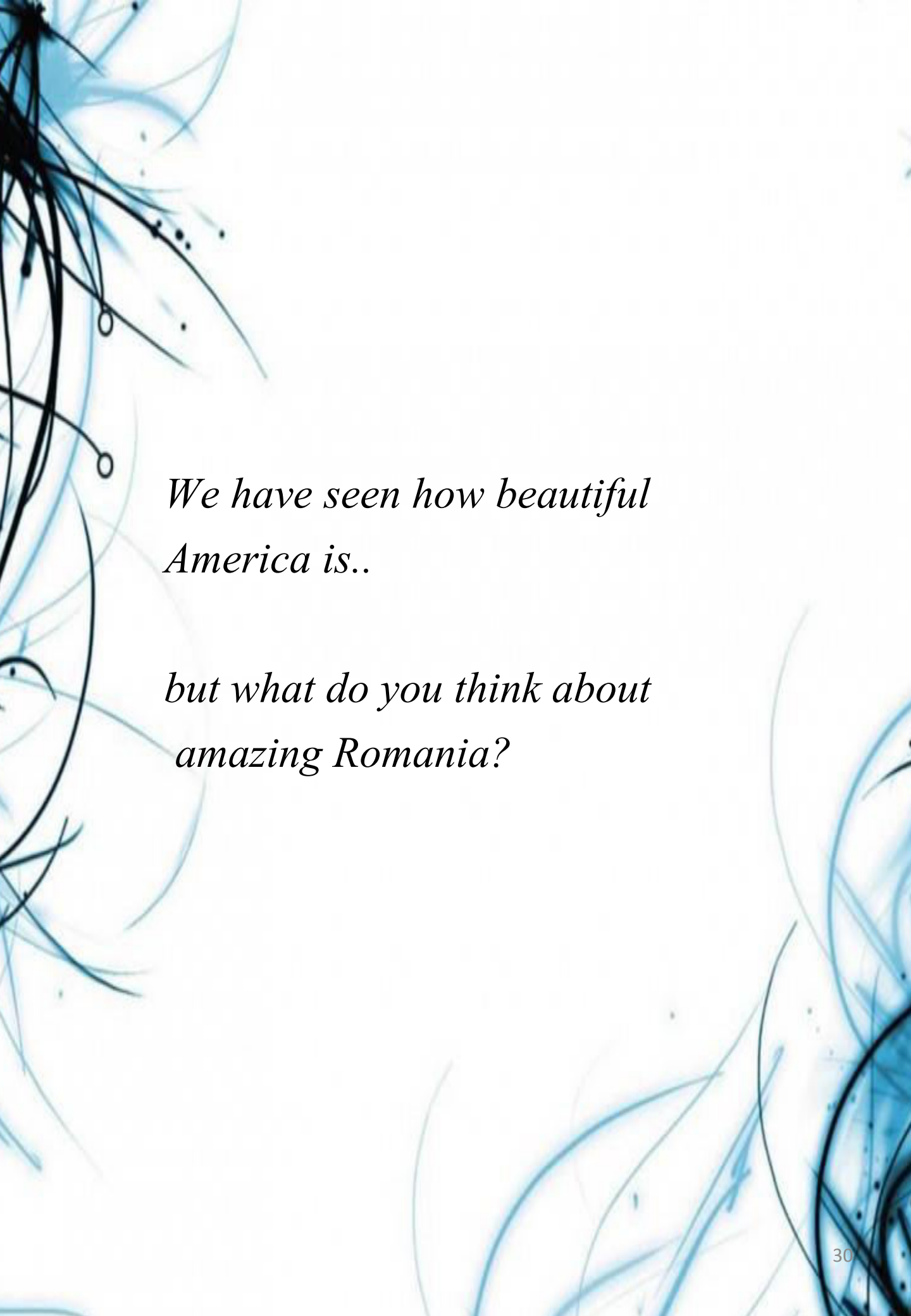


The Weston Drama Workshop camp felt like a breath of fresh air. Anything you could dream of! There I discovered more about myself. I saw diversity and I learned that everyone is like a star. 'Something happens to burst us open; but when we burst open; we're actually turning into a supernova. And then when we look at ourselves again, we see that we're suddenly more beautiful than we ever were before' as JoyBell C said. Being part of a musical and also trying new things gave me confidence.

Joining this beautiful family changed completely my life. Because of EERC I discovered my love for helping others. It taught me that I need to experience the Unknown and live every moment. Although, the time has passed I still have a strong connection to all my American friends and family, with who I share news from time to time. The Alumni meetings in Romania and even the Facebook page build a bridge between us and help me keep in touch with EERC friends.



*When I left USA I let a part of my heart there...I left with the promise of coming back, which I did in the summer of 2014 with the help of my amazing American family. EERC means a lot in my past, present and future. It is the key to a different world. EERC is home to so many of us! Here I find what I need- memories, friends, love of learning, and other such things. That way it will go with me wherever my journey. **Thank you, EERC!***



*We have seen how beautiful
America is..*

*but what do you think about
amazing Romania?*

The Best Places To Visit In Romania

by Florescu Medeea

Peles Castle



The Peles Castle is undoubtedly one of the most exceptional tourist attractions in Romania, boasting a fabulous architecture and a rich heritage. The castle can be found near Sinaia in Prahova County, nestled within the majestic Carpathian Mountains. This fantastic landmark was built by King Carol I of Romania between 1839 and 1914, and it was meant to serve as the monarch's summer retreat.

Some of the most notable rooms in the castle are called The Honor Hall, The Imperial Suite, The Arsenal, The Playhouse and the Florentine Room, each housing its own unique treasures. The Arsenal, for example, displays 1,600 examples of armor and weapons, including a 15th century German decapitation broadsword and a full Maximilian armor for rider and horse. The Florentine room features a more artful approach, boasting Italian Renaissance elements such as a Grand Marble Fireplace by Paunazio and massive solid bronze doors made in Rome.

Bran Castle



Also known as Dracula's Castle, the Bran Castle can be found in Bran, in close proximity to the important city of Brasov. This majestic structure is commonly regarded as the home of the famous Dracula character brought to life by Bram Stoker, but its history is much more comprehensive than that. Actually, the first written mentioning of Bran Castle dates all the way back to 1377, when Louis I of Hungary allowed the Saxons of Brasov to build their own stone keep. In 1920, the Bran Castle was an official royal residence and ended up being the favorite retreat of Queen Marie.

Nowadays, the Bran Castle operates as a museum that houses a large collection of art pieces and furniture that used to belong to Queen Marie.

Corvin Castle



The beautiful Corvin Castle can be found in Hunedoara, in the Transylvania region of Romania. This Gothic-Renaissance masterpiece was commissioned by John Hunyadi in 1446, and it was meant to replace an already existing keep that was built by Charles I of Hungary on the same site. The original Corvin Castle was built in the Gothic style, but it did feature a few Renaissance design elements as well.

The building served as John Hunyadi's home but was also used extensively for defensive purposes, which is why it gradually received multiple towers and extra fortifications. Some of the towers were meant to be used as prisons, especially the Deserted Tower and the Capistrano Tower, while defensive towers such as the Buzdugan Tower featured large openings that would house imposing weapons. Notable improvements were made during the 17th century, including the addition of a new Large Palace and the construction of 2 towers named the Artillery Tower and the White Tower. Sadly, the building fell into ruin after numerous years of neglect, and it even caught fire at some point, which caused extensive damage. The present version of the Corvin Castle is actually the result of a successful restoration.

Due to its incredible history and long lifespan, this majestic building is still shrouded in mystery and legend to this day.

Palace of the Parliament



The Palace of the Parliament is a record-breaking building that can be found in Romania's capital – Bucharest. This massive structure was designed by Anca Petrescu and flaunts 12 stories, 4 underground levels as well as a total floor surface of 3,7 million square feet. Finished in 1997, the Palace of the Parliament is a fine example of neoclassic architecture, but it does feature multiple design elements borrowed from other sources.

The construction costs for this massive landmark soared to \$4.1 billion, and so the palace currently holds the record for the “most expensive administrative building ” while other records include “heaviest building” and the “largest civilian building with an administrative function”, all 3 titles being acknowledged by the World Records Academy.

During his days as Romania's leader, Nicolae Ceausescu named the building “The People's House”, which is why the Palace of the Parliament is more commonly known in English as the “Palace of the People”.

Transfagarasan



The Transfagarasan is one of Romania's most exceptional roads, and it can be found in the Southern Carpathians, between the cities of Sibiu and Pitesti. The road stretches for 60 miles from north to south, and it runs through some of the highest peaks in the country, including Moldoveanu and Negoiu.

Built between 1970 and 1974 by Nicolae Ceausescu, the road was meant to provide quick and easy army access across the mountains in the event of a Soviet Union invasion. This means that the road was constructed using a military workforce, and it is estimated that its building process claimed the lives of 40 men. This worrying death toll was probably the result of the massive use of dynamite (13,337 pounds) which was necessary in order to forge a path through the unwelcoming mountain terrain.

Due to its impressive elevation, the Transfagarasan is usually closed off each year from October to June because of heavy snow. Moreover, if weather conditions are unfavorable, the road can be closed in other times of the year as well. The Transfagarasan is known for its numerous hairpin turns and steep descents, which is why it can prove relatively difficult to traverse, especially for inexperienced drivers or bikers. Breathtaking panoramas and unique experiences are all in reach for those that get a chance to travel across this magnificent road.

Transalpina



The Transalpina is a road that can be found in the Parang Mountains in Romania, and it is currently the highest road in the country. The road connects the Novaci city and the Sebes city, and it runs across 4 counties as it traverses the mountains from south to north. Since it is an alpine road, the Transalpina is closed off during the cold season. There are numerous hypotheses regarding the origins of the road, each being quite controversial in its own way.

Some say that the road was first build by the Roman legions during their wars with the Dacians, while other sources state that the road was paved by the Germans during World War I. What we know for sure is that the road was once called “Devil’s Pathway”, and that it was initially used by shepherds. In 1934, King Carol II wanted a modern pathway that would ensure easy access across the mountains for his armed forces. The pathway was completed in 1939 and was named The King’s Road.

Palace of Culture



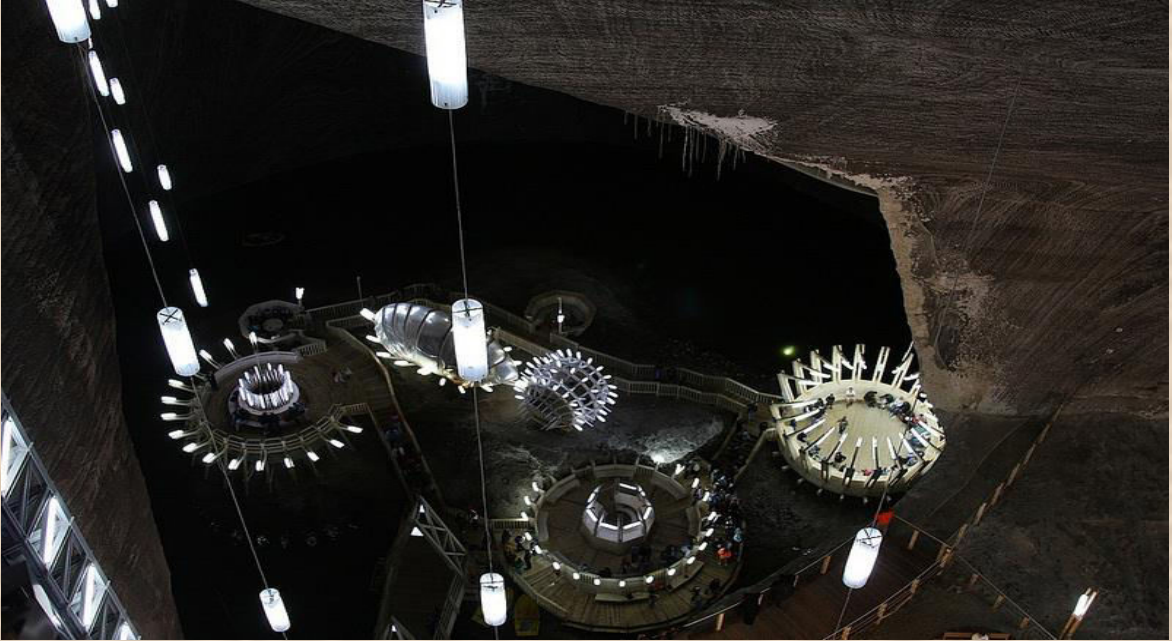
The Palace of Culture is an extraordinary palace that can be found in the city of Iasi in Romania. As one of the most exquisite examples of neo-Gothic architecture in the country, the Palace of Culture occupies a total area of 390,000 square feet and boasts no less than 298 massive rooms.

The construction process of this fantastic landmark started in 1906, and it replaced the ruins of the old Royal Court of Moldavia, which was built in 1434. Even though the construction process started off nicely in 1906, the process had to be halted during World War I because of scarce resources. It wasn't until October 11, 1925 that the Palace of Culture was finally completed and opened by King Ferdinand of Romania himself.

During our modern times, the palace is home to 4 important museums. These are called The Museum of Science and Technology, The Museum of Ethnography, The Museum of Art and The Museum of History. During their visit, guests are able to admire numerous historically significant objects related to many fields, including decorative art, archaeology or documentation.

Due to its rich heritage and incredible significance, the Palace of Culture hosts a great number of important events and exhibitions, and it is currently a part of Romania's National Register of Historic Monuments.

Turda Saltworks



The Turda Saltworks represents a very important tourist attraction in Turda, Romania. This place was a very important salt source ever since the times of the Roman Empire, but salt mining was particularly popular between the 15th and 17th century, especially during the Hungarian occupation of Turda. In 1932, the Turda Saltworks officially went out of business, mainly because of obsolete technologies and low salt yield, but also because of increasing competition. In 1992, the Turda Saltworks was opened once again as a tourist destination, and it can currently be visited all year round.

Attractions include the old Rudolf, Tereza and Iosif salt mines as well as a great deal of perfectly preserved medieval tools. In 2009, the Turda Saltworks was the subject of a massive restoration project that was completed in January 2010. Nowadays, this place flaunts its own amphitheatre, treatment rooms and a fantastic salty lake that has extraordinary curative properties.

Danube Delta



The Danube Delta is located in Tulcea County, in the Dobrogea region of Romania, and it is one of the largest and most well preserved deltas in Europe. The Danube Delta includes numerous ecosystems, 23 to be precise, which house a significant number of flora and fauna. The delta was formed around the 3 primary channels of the Danube River, and it comprises a complex network of waterways and large bodies of water.

As far as tourism is concerned, this place is hugely popular, since it offers endless opportunities for exploration and sightseeing. Bird watchers would definitely enjoy admiring the majestic beauty of over 300 species of migratory and local birds, including geese, cranes, egrets, vultures, pelicans and graceful swans. Fishermen can also test their skill against the delta's 160 species of salt-water and fresh fish such as pike, carp and catfish.

If you do decide to visit the Danube Delta anytime soon, we advise you to go during the spring season, especially if you don't want to be bothered by mosquitoes. If fishing is your favorite past time, however, then you should probably schedule a visit during fall in order to enjoy larger catches. Accommodations include the Delta Miraj Pension or the more luxurious Pension Perla, but tourists can also opt to sleep at local private homes, which are a lot cheaper and offer a much more authentic experience.

We hope you enjoyed it!

*We strongly recommend printing the magazine,
so that you can unfold its pages once in a while.*

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