

Could you tell us something about yourself?

You know, I'm an exchange student in Veszprém, and I was always very interested in travelling, because since I was young my family needed to go to another country every year, so I guess it's in my nature to really love to travel and go to different countries. I never really heard much about Eastern Europe so I was very interested in Hungary. That's why I wanted to come here.

I like reading books – Harry Potter is my favourite book – and I like some kind of sports like badminton and soccer so the World Cup, I'm really into it.

Which is your favourite team?

Oh, I support a few, like France, England, Ivory Coast – there plays my favourite player Didier Drogba.

Why did you choose Hungary from all the countries in Eastern Europe?

Well, my options were Hungary, Poland, Romania, so I had a list of countries to choose from and I also wanted to do some kind of teaching job, because the other opportunities were just like desk jobs like secretary jobs and I don't like that kind of thing. I like to be more active and meet people and teach people and learn something. In Hungary I found some high schools to where I could apply.

And how come you chose Lovassy?

I didn't know it was Lovassy, I only knew it was a high school. There were a few other schools I think but I did like this one because the kind of things you learn in school in English lesson – I found it interesting. Like it's not just dry grammar stuff, but you learn about different countries and all kind of different people and I like that.

What kind of things did you expect from Hungary and Veszprém?

I never heard about Veszprém before and I didn't know very much about Hungary either, except for a little bit of history – that it used to be communist and it became independent in 1990. But about the people and lifestyle I didn't know much. I heard lots about Budapest. Like I heard that the buildings and the scenery is very beautiful. Yeah, and then I came here and I've been learning slowly and now I think I know more about Hungary.

And what have you managed to do and see in Hungary so far?

I think I've seen almost all of Veszprém and I went to Budapest a couple of times and I've seen Visegrád also. And in Budapest I've been to the Gellért Mountain and to the castle and I went to some festivals and concerts at night – so that was nice.

Could you swim in Lake Balaton?

Oh, no, no, I didn't go swimming, but I have been to Balaton a few times – to Füred, to Almádi and to Tihany. I took a lot of photographs.

Could you tell us three of those places you liked the best in Hungary?

Ok. The first would be the Gellért Mountain. I liked the history behind it, I think it's very interesting. And I really like Visegrád as well with the Danube and the view. In Veszprém the castle area, because

you know that kind of history for me is really rare, because in Singapore we don't really have a history like going back to the middle ages, so you can learn about the king and the queen.. all that kind of things are very new for me. Because Singapore have like 50 years of political history, but here you have thousands of years.

Did you have any difficulties during your stay?

I guess the main problem was speaking the language, because some of the older generation often found hard to speak English, so like at the place where I stayed I usually communicated with them by drawing pictures or asking someone to translate for me, but with the younger people it was ok, like in the school it's fine. And I had other problems like taking a bus and stuff, but these are not so bad.

Did you get an impression about Hungarian people and life here?

The first thing I really noticed was the quiet life in Veszprém compared to Singapore. Because, you know Singapore is a city and nobody says 'hi' to each other and we don't really talk to each other, but here around the town people it seems like they all know each other and like saying 'Szia', So I like that kind of atmosphere. I think being in Budapest is really similar to Singapore, people there can be more rude, because it's a big city, but here it's much better and I've also been surprised in high school, you know because I expected that in high schools nobody is interested in studying and stuff, but most of the classes I've been through people were curious and they were willing to learn also. And I think the level of English in Hungary is quite good compared to some other European countries, because with young people it's easy for me to communicate.

Could you tell us about what kind of festivals do you have in Singapore?

Oh, yeah, we have mainly cultural festivals, because we have four different races. We have Chinese New Year around February and then we have Hary Raya which is around April I think, and then we have Deepavali which is in October or November for the Indians so it's like each race has its own festival, so it's really colourful. And we have Christian holidays like Christmas Day or Easter.

I've heard something about a so-called dragon dance. Is it only connected to the Chinese culture or is it a Singaporean kind of thing?

It's actually Chinese, but so many people in Singapore are Chinese, so it's kind of a Singaporean thing also. It's a lion dance actually, they wear costumes and then three or four people are standing inside and then they dance around, move around the streets, so it's usually very nice.

Could you compare Singaporean high schools to this high school?

I think the main difference is that in secondary schools in Singapore we have to wear uniforms, so I guess that way there is more order and it's more proper, but here it's more free and you have more breaks in-between the classes and then you finish school much earlier than us, like we always finish school at six, because we have lessons until two o'clock and then we have our activities, like sports, or you know..

But you don't have homework then, right?

Yeah, we have.

Oh, then it's hard. Harder than in Britain.

Yeah I think so.

Which one do you think is better? The stricter schools or this freedom?

I think a bit of both. There are good points in both, like coming to school without wearing uniform is good because you have your own sense of identity, you don't have to wear the same things as everybody else and you feel special or individual. On the other hand it's good because it gives some order and some kind of discipline and it is also good because you know people are young, they need that kind of stuff.

Is there any place in Singapore that you would recommend for someone who goes there?

Yeah I would recommend Sentosa, it's an island, it has a big beach, and we have Universal Studios there, some casinos, some restaurants, it's very good for tourists. And the beaches in Singapore, we have quite a lot of those, so it's good for the American and for the European, you know. And the nightlife is also quite good, like we have shops, and restaurants, bars and clubs and things like that. There is a lot of things you can do.

What do you like in Singapore the most?

It's the fact that we are a small country and an island also. People get more often the opportunity to travel and to meet people from different countries, because we are often immigrants and a lot of people are coming for work. And I like the mix of the different races like we have Chinese, Indians, Malay and like some half European-half Asian, so it's like a very mixed kind of culture. They are all different colours and speak different languages... Yeah that's what I really like about it.

It must be good. So I suppose the people there are quite tolerant.

Yeah, but maybe like 40 years ago there were more fights, but now it is better.

Did you make good friends here?

Yeah, the university students are very nice, they took me out for lunch or to Budapest or to Balaton, or to watch movies. They made me feel very welcome, so I think I really made good friends, and then even the students here like you are and students from other classes, they took me out to Balaton also, and the teachers... I really, really appreciate everything they've done, like even if they can't speak English, like I sit next to Kiss Zoltán and he can't speak English, but he always has the dictionary with him, the Hungarian-English, and every time he is translating and teaching me things. So that's really kind and I really feel welcome and appreciate all the teachers.

Will you keep in touch with somebody?

Yeah I think so, mainly on Facebook, or e-mail or something. Well the teachers don't have Facebook, so mainly with e-mails and I took some photos, so once I get back I will upload them and send them over.

If you had a chance, would you come back?

Yeah, definitely. Next time when I come back I will bring my family. I showed them all the photos and they were like 'WOW', it's so nice, so maybe next year or the year after we come to Budapest and we spend a couple of days in Veszprém.

Well that's nice. We hope we will see you again. Thank you very much and have a safe journey back.