

St Margaret's



GLOBAL

2018
2020

EXCHANGE PROGRAM



A local school with a global outlook



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From the Principal

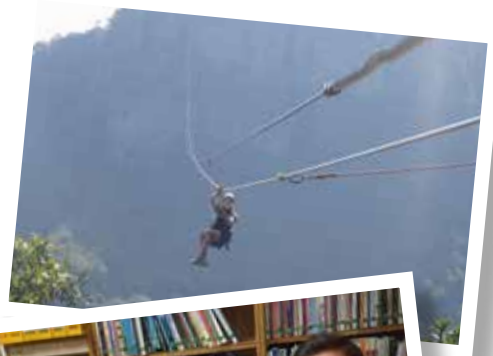
I am delighted to invite our secondary students to explore the opportunity to participate in the **St Margaret's Global Exchange Program**. This exciting program will afford many girls the chance to study abroad in one of our sister schools in South Africa, New Zealand, Germany, Japan, Canada and the United States of America, as well as the rewarding experience of hosting a student from overseas.

The Exchange Program is an integral part of the School's Goal – *Broadening Horizons*, which forms part of the **St Margaret's Anglican Girls School Strategic Plan**. A local school with a global outlook, St Margaret's invites students to contribute to the wider community, explore opportunities and develop a deep understanding of their responsibilities within local, national and international contexts. Our Global Exchange Program aims to strengthen the international focus of school activities and provide opportunities for overseas, rural and city students to experience the cultural, geographic and economic diversity that is a unique strength of Australia. We aim to be the undisputed leader in offering international exchange.

The St Margaret's Anglican Girls School Global Exchange Program provides exceptional opportunities for students to participate in the global community within the context of school and family life. I hope that as you read this brochure and talk to former students who have enjoyed the program, you will come to share their feeling about the unique opportunities this program offers. I look forward to hearing of the adventures and achievements of St Margaret's students gaining an educational experience abroad.

Yours sincerely

Ros Curtis
Principal



Broadening Horizons

Broadening Horizons

The St Margaret's Exchange Program aims to:

1. Support the school's goal of *Empowering Young Women* by encouraging students to develop resilience, a positive outlook and a sense of responsibility. The Exchange Program assists the development of confident, capable and compassionate young women who contribute successfully to the global community.
2. Support the Christian ethos of the school and seek to facilitate students' knowledge from a global perspective to promote an appreciation, a tolerance and an understanding of the diversity of people and culture.
3. Support the school's goal of *Academic Success* through a personalised learning approach which provides opportunities for students to participate in educational environments that require self-paced and independent learning.
4. Support the integration of technology as a tool for learning and communication as student's access online learning materials to study from abroad.
5. Supports the holistic nature of education as students participate across the breadth and depth of academic and extra-curricular activities. This encourages students to learn to adapt to new environments with different expectations, thus promoting personal growth and the qualities of becoming ambassadors for their family, school and country.
6. Promote in students an inquiring mind and an appreciation of the diversity of learning by providing students with relevant and authentic experiences in the context of the globalisation of education.



Selection Criteria

Selection criteria and process for exchange selection

1. Students are selected for the Exchange Program on the basis of how they reflect and embody the core values of St Margaret's, their academic standing, personal motivation and participation in school activities.
2. Students selected must demonstrate initiative, strong communication skills, social maturity and resilience.
3. Students must complete the Cultural intelligence (CQ) test as a requirement of exchange selection.
4. Students are selected on their suitability as an ambassador for St Margaret's Anglican Girls School and their ability to adapt and function independently in new environments.

Process

Exchange Information Evening

Students and their families interested in applying for the Exchange Program attend an Information Evening held mid-June in Term 2.

Exchange Applications

Year 9 students will be invited to apply for the Exchange Program. Application Forms are available at the Information Evening, and from then onwards, from school reception, with applications closing in late July. Students are strongly encouraged to be open to all exchange destinations; however, they must indicate in their applications the destinations they do not prefer to travel to and give explanations..

Exchange Interviews

All applicants are interviewed and each interview consists of the applicant being asked several questions by the panel, and each applicant also provides a two-minute power-point presentation which is played at the interview. Interviews are held with the Deputy Principal, Dean of Students, and the Coordinator of the Global Exchange Program; students are advised of the outcome of this interview by email in the last week of Term 3.

St Margaret's Host Families

Students will either board or be hosted by a school-approved host family during their exchange experience. It is a requirement of all St Margaret's parents who will host exchange students to obtain a Volunteer Blue Card. This includes other siblings and occupants of the home aged 18 years and over. St Margaret's covers the cost of the Blue Card application and retains a copy of the certification on file. Our exchange schools have similar checks which their host parents must also complete. Your entire family has the opportunity to share in the exchange experience when hosting a student.

Communication with Schools, Exchange Partners and Host Families

Once the exchange allocations are complete, students and their families are encouraged to begin communication with their overseas exchange partners and host families. The Coordinator of the Exchange Program at St Margaret's provides continual communication and information to all parties throughout the experience, and shares updates from our students travelling on exchange, with the school community.

Summary

St Margaret's students and their exchange partners learn as much from their journey as from their destination, and evolve as contributors to the global community through celebrating differences and accepting and conquering the challenges and amazing opportunities offered to them through the exchange experience.



Partner Exchange

St Margaret's Anglican Girls School Partner Exchange Schools:

Emma Willard School, Troy, New York, USA

Emma Willard is a day and boarding school for girls which was founded in 1814, and has 350 students, two thirds of whom are boarders. The campus boasts stunning gothic buildings and a cosmopolitan collegiate community. The culture for students at Emma is affirming and aspirational, global and intimate, joy-filled and girl-centric. Education is moulded to the individual talents, drive and focus of each girl, whilst encompassing the health and wellness of mind and body. The school is located in Albany, New York State, and is a two and a half hour train ride from New York City along the Hudson River.

Emma Willard students come to St Margaret's in Term 3 and St Margaret's students fly from Brisbane to Los Angeles, then on to New York for their exchange at Emma Willard in Term 4.

St Anne's Diocesan College, Hilton, South Africa

St Anne's is an independent girls' boarding school situated in Hilton, KwaZulu-Natal. Hilton is adjacent to the capital of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, a city an hour's drive from Durban.

Founded in 1877, St Anne's has a long tradition of providing quality education for girls. It is predominantly a boarding school with approximately 420 girls from Grades 8 - 12 (ages 13 to 18). Around 60% of the girls are from KwaZulu-Natal, with the remaining 40% coming from neighbouring provinces, surrounding countries and other parts of the world. Eighty-five per cent of girls board at St Anne's in a stable, caring and homely environment, and a wide range of co-curricular activities are offered to meet each girl's interest and passion.

St Margaret's fly Brisbane-Johannesburg (may need to go via Sydney or Perth) and onto Pietermaritzburg. This exchange is offered in Terms 2, 3 and 4.

Nga Tawa Diocesan School, Marton, New Zealand

Nga Tawa is a boutique girls' boarding school in rural Rangitikei close to two small cities: Palmerston North and Whanganui. Marton is the actual location of the school and is a two hour drive from Wellington. Founded in 1891, Nga Tawa is renowned for its high academic achievement, onsite Equestrian Academy and performing and visual arts programs. Students are provided with wide ranging opportunities to grow and learn through peer partnership programs, interactive learning, outdoor education and community participation.

The school provides a small, caring and inclusive community of 290 students. Nga Tawa girls benefit from a culturally diverse student population and the staff is committed to meeting the educational, social and pastoral needs of all students.

St Margaret's students fly from Brisbane to Wellington for their exchange experience at Nga Tawa two weeks into Term 2, and the Nga Tawa students come to St Margaret's two weeks into Term 3.

St Margaret's College, Christchurch, New Zealand (Rowing Exchange)

St Margaret's College was founded in 1910 and is an independent day and boarding school for girls, situated in Merivale, Christchurch. The school has 750 students in Years 1-13, and offers a wide range of academic choices, and sporting and cultural opportunities. This is a rowing exchange, whereby two St Margaret's AGS girls spend Term 1 in Christchurch for their rowing season which culminates in the Maadi Cup at the end of their season, and two St Margaret's College students are hosted in Brisbane in Term 3, to participate in our rowing season.

St Margaret's AGS students fly direct from Brisbane to Christchurch for their exchange in Term 1 and St Margaret's College students come to Brisbane in Term 3.



Schools

Konan Girls High School, Kobe, Japan

Konan was established in 1920 and incorporates the junior and senior schools. Their focus is to encourage intelligent and independent young women to have dignity and to prepare them for life in a very positive manner. The Konan school motto reads: Be pure, be just, be gentle and be strong. The list of extra-curricular activities and clubs on offer is extensive, from table tennis and Japanese archery to calligraphy and broadcasting.

St Margaret's students fly to Osaka for their exchange, as Konan is a thirty minute car journey from Osaka. Konan students come to St Margaret's on exchange in Term 3, and St Margaret's girls go to Japan in Term 4.

Ursulinenschule Hersel, Bornheim, Germany

Ursulinenschule was established in 1852, and is a school for girls with 350 students on campus. The school offers an encompassing curriculum and choice of subjects, including a fine arts program, and the extra-curricular choices are choir, orchestra, theatre, running, soccer, lifeguards etc. The language program includes German, Latin, French, Spanish and English. Ursulinenschule School has been involved in exchange programs for almost 25 years.

The students from Ursulinenschule come to St Margaret's in Term 3, and St Margaret's students go to Germany in Term 4 and fly from Brisbane to Dusseldorf and then travel by road for 90 minutes to Ursulinenschule for their exchange.



Partner Exchange

Pensionnat du Saint-Nom-de-Marie, Montreal, Canada

Pensionnat du Saint-Nom-de-Marie is a boarding school that found its roots in the love and desire of Eulalie Durocher to work for the Christian education of young people. It was at the foot of Mount Royal, on former agricultural estates of the municipality of Outremont, that the boarding school was erected between 1903 and 1905. The school offers a stimulating learning environment on a magnificent site.

It is the educational aim of the Pensionnat du Saint-Nom-de-Marie to help students develop their personal and social possibilities to the fullest, to become a woman involved in the groups in which they work. The school aims to give young girls a high standard of training. The success of the Holy Name of Mary is rooted in an educational relationship between master and pupil, a relationship of respect, listening and sound discipline. The all-girls' school has over 1150 students; the language of instruction is French.

The history of the boarding school is, first and foremost, of a group of women of faith – the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary (PSNM) – who have given their lives to ensure the wellbeing of young girls and prepare them for their role in a society that never ceases to evolve.

The SNJM Congregation made it a point of honour to always maintain high standards in teaching. Science, literature, languages and physical education have always been the focus of attention. Musical training given to students also contributes to the rich tradition of boarding school, which has shared its premises with the Vincent d'Indy School of Music since 1981. The Marie-Stéphane concert hall recalls the remarkable contribution of certain nuns.

In Term 1, students from Pensionnat du Saint-Nom-de-Marie come to St Margaret's and St Margaret's students go to Montreal in Term 2.

Crofton House School, Vancouver, BC, Canada

Since 1898, Crofton House School has built a solid reputation as a progressive and inspiring learning environment for young women and has become the leading independent girls' day school in British Columbia. Their school founder, Dr. Jessie Gordon, was an educational pioneer with a dream. She envisioned an all-girls' school where young women would have dynamic and stimulating surroundings in which to learn and build a solid foundation to meet life's challenges.

Dr. Gordon's vision is still vital today, as generations of young women continue to excel through the support of a close-knit school community that unites students, faculty and parents. At the heart of their curriculum is a philosophy that combines the traditional Crofton House values of courage, creativity and citizenship with modern learning methods.

Students are engaged in their education through first-class teaching facilities and resources, our ten-acre wooded campus, cutting-edge technology, and a professional faculty that is committed to helping every girl achieve her full potential.

Students from Crofton House come to St Margaret's in Term 1, and St Margaret's students go to Canada in Term 2.



Schools

Shawnigan Lake School, Vancouver Island, BC, Canada

Shawnigan was founded in 1916 as a boys' school, in a then-secluded rainforest on Vancouver Island. In 1988 the school became co-educational and currently boasts a population of 480 students. Four hundred and twenty of the students are boarders, making Shawnigan the largest boarding community in Canada. Nine boarding residences dot the 380 acre rural campus, five houses for boys and four for girls. There is a full athletics and sporting program on offer to students, as well as a fine arts program and a leadership values-based program.

St Margaret's students go to Shawnigan Lake in Term 2 and their partners come to St Margaret's in Term 3. The most convenient flight path is: Brisbane /Sydney /Vancouver /Vancouver Island..

St Mary's Diocesan School for Girls, Kloof, South Africa

St Mary's was founded in 1906 and is an independent Christian Girls' school incorporating the junior and senior schools from Grade R to Matric. The school is day and boarding school of about 965 students, offering boarding from Grade 8.

The school's motto is 'The curiosity to think, the character to thrive' and their approach is for students to have an all-round education underpinned by the principles of Emotional Intelligence and a Growth Mindset. Their teaching philosophy is to equip students with skills for the 21st Century including offering an extensive music and sports program nurturing participating in the classroom, on the field, the stage and in the community, and encouraging students to embrace their successes and failures to grow in character and confidence.

St Mary's students travel to St Margaret's in Term 3 and St Margaret's students travel to St Mary's in Term 4. St Margaret's students fly to Durban and then travel for about 30 minutes by road to St Mary's in Kloof.



South Africa

St Anne's Diocesan College, Hilton, South Africa

We all thoroughly enjoyed our 8 weeks in South Africa. South Africa was an amazing opportunity, and an unforgettable experience which we will treasure for years. We encourage girls to apply for any exchange as we found that we gained personal values and a new outlook on the world. We were lucky enough to have the opportunity to do many amazing activities, including shark cage diving, zip lining and staying at a game park for three days.

Exchange also provided us with a platform to create new friendships as well as becoming more independent. Adjusting to a new school environment faced us with new challenges which we didn't usually face in our day to day lives in Australia. This was a learning curve and was sometimes difficult to overcome but we learnt to lean on each other for support which only strengthened our friendship further.

There are obvious cultural differences between Australia and South Africa which encouraged us to look out for the wider population and help in any way possible. We had the chance to aid in educating the wider disadvantaged community by teaching children English and lightening up their days with fun games and activities.

We would like to thank Ms Curtis, Ms Gorrie, Ms Fryer (South African exchange coordinator) and especially Ms Achari, for selecting us for this extraordinary experience.

By Rose Biddulph, Georgie Marshall and Zoe Miles, Term 4 2017



St Anne's Diocesan College, Hilton, South Africa

We three girls travelled to South Africa for school exchange filled with nerves and excitement, we left our families and travelled half way across the world to Pietermaritzburg in South Africa. So far, we have been had an amazing time at St Anne's Diocesan College, a predominantly boarding school in Hilton, KwaZulu-Natal. After a long flight, we arrived at the school and were greeted by many excited faces. The first days were challenging, settling into a brand-new school in a foreign country. Also, as none of us board at St Margaret's, getting into the swing of boarding here was tricky however, with the guidance and support of lovely girls and staff, we have settled in seamlessly.

During the week, we have been enjoyed participating in the sports offered such as tennis and 'Fitness is Fun'. It has been interesting to see how their classes vary from ours at home and to try new subjects that we don't do at St Margaret's. We have also enjoyed our new uniforms of short blue dresses and Mary-jane shoes, a big change from our uniforms at home.

In our second week, we ventured to Hilton College, one of the private boy's schools in Hilton, to go on a mini safari on their nature reserve. We went with their exchange boys from India and Sydney, and we all had a great time seeing animals that most of us had never seen before. That week was 'Social Awareness Week' at the school where the week was dedicated to social issues such as gender inequality and racism.

This week really opened our eyes to major issues that South Africa faces and also helped up to understand issues relevant to Australia. The next week, along with the rest of St Anne's, we attended the big rugby game against the two private boy's schools, Hilton College and Michaelhouse. The day was very exciting and spirited and was followed by a big celebration that night. In our fourth week, the three of us along with our exchange partners, attended an exchange dinner hosted by St Anne's with the exchange boys and their partners from Hilton College and Michaelhouse. It was great to meet students from every corner of the world, including Ireland, India, Canada and Australia and hear about their experiences in South Africa.

We are all very excited for our upcoming weeks here as we have half-term approaching where we will all be going on our separate ways for a few days. Mackenzie will be going to a nature reserve, Bianca will be going to Cape Town and Indigo will be travelling to Johannesburg. After half-term, we have many adventures coming up including staying at Nambiti Game Reserve for three nights where we will be going on safari, shark-cage diving, hot air ballooning and zip lining.

So far, this trip has been an incredible experience and we cannot wait to see what else South Africa has to offer for the rest of our stay. We are all looking forward to sharing our life in Brisbane with our partners from South Africa.

By Bianca Licina, Indigo Hill and Mackenzie O'Brien, Term 2 2018



New Zealand

Nga Tawa Diocesan School, Marton, New Zealand

All we have to say is how much of an amazing time we have so far! We have gone far and wide through New Zealand (even though there isn't much land to cross). In the first week in Nga Tawa, Marton, even with a few tears in the first couple days, we managed to settle down into the little school very quickly, with the help from all the lovely students, staff and exchange families. When just settling down, we had to quickly pack up for the weekend and head off to Adelaide's (Margot's exchange partner) gorgeous dairy farm in Taranaki. With very limited knowledge of milking cows, Margot and I managed to get the hang of it – although coming across a large amount of cow dung. We followed up that day with early rises and a quick kayak on their lake, finishing off the weekend with a big sleep. The following weekend, we spent at Napier, which is north-east from Palmerston North, where we watch Ashley's mum, Alison, run a half marathon. All throughout school and the weekends we have come to have grown closer to everyone we have met. Time is going so quickly! We are having a great time! Everyone is so lovely, and very welcoming to us in the new school! The change in size is very drastic and a little weird to be honest, but it's a great experience.

By Margot Behrend and Lily-Kate Charles



St Margaret's College, Christchurch, New Zealand

We were lucky enough to spend 12 weeks at St Margaret's College in Christchurch, New Zealand. Since this was primarily a rowing exchange, we spent our first week on a rowing camp in Twizel where we spent most of our time at Lake Ruataniwha. Compared to our Brissy River, it was like rowing on glass. When we got back to Christchurch we were overwhelmed at how quickly everyone welcomed us and soon we got into the rhythm of being SMC girl's. Athletics days, pastoral care days, excursions to beaches, a quick trip to Queenstown, numerous Macca's visits, and of course LOTS of rowing: there was so much to do to keep us occupied. Our exchange was such an eye-opening experience. Both of us being day girls in Brisbane, we were able to get a taste of boarding life and we gained a newfound love for home-cooked meals. Being away from home was tough at first but we opened our arms to this experience and honestly gained so much from it. We are so thankful for being given this wonderful opportunity and would recommend this exchange to anyone who is considering applying.

By Izzy Cox and Lily Devereaux, Term 1, 2017

We are two Year 10 students who participated in the St Margaret's College rowing exchange over in Christchurch New Zealand in term one of this year. Liv and I had the most amazing time being a part of the rowing team at the school. We got to participate in many regattas all over the South Island including the Maadi Cup which was the big competition that we had been training for right at the end of our time there.

We got to participate in the Maadi Cup which is a national rowing competition that included every rowing school and rowing club in New Zealand. Maadi is the largest sporting event in the southern hemisphere so the fact we got to experience that with all the girls we had met over on exchange was pretty memorable. Margot and I were both boarders in New Zealand so it was good to experience seeing's Margot and I are both day girls here in Brisbane. The major difference between the New Zealand St Margaret's and our St Margaret's was the school grounds. Most of the buildings were very new and updated. This is due to the 2011 earthquakes that destroyed 90% of the school. The rowing and school community were very welcoming and gave me a home away from home.

We had so many fun times over in NZ on exchange and we both feel extremely privileged that we could be a part of this exchange programme. Of course, this wouldn't have been possible without Ms Curtis, Ms Gorrey, Ms Townsend and Ms Achari. Thank you all so much for making this exchange possible, we are so grateful that we had the opportunity to take part in this life changing adventure, it was a very special experience.

By Margot Lisle and Olivia Magnay, Term 1 2018



Canada

Shawnigan Lake School, British Columbia, Canada

Before being given the privilege of going on exchange to Shawnigan Lake School during term two in 2018, I had never stepped foot in another school, let alone a boarding house with sixty other girls. If I didn't say that I found this a massive change to begin with, I would be lying. Nonetheless, it was one I quickly settled into and grew to love over my ten weeks attending the school. Unlike St Margaret's, 95% of the school population are boarders and every day student is still allocated a bed. There are nine separate boarding houses. The boys are split into Duxbury, Lake's, Lonsdale's and Ripley's and the girls are Groves', Kaye's, Renfrew and Strathcona. I was placed into Groves' and despite my personal bias, it is definitely the best out of the nine.

As a day student I was slightly apprehensive about transitioning into boarding life but the acceptance and sense of community within the house was astounding and allowed me to settle in seamlessly. Each girl is placed into a sister group with girls across the grades in the house and this is used to allocate chores and acts as a closer, tight-knit support group. They are always there for each other and willing to give and share whatever is needed to help another house member. I found this particularly helpful in my first weeks when I still didn't know where I was meant to be and when. This welcoming and friendly attitude can be found across the school which meant I found my feet quite quickly once I got my head around the busy day to day schedule. While studying at Shawnigan I participated in French, Sports Science and Woodwork as well as English, Accelerated Maths, Science and Social Studies. Unlike St Margaret's, English is split into three different courses (creative writing, spoken language and literature) which all focus on different aspects of the subject. I chose spoken language as my focus and found the class very rewarding as I was able to gain more knowledge on the structure and delivery of speeches and debates.

On top of everyday classes, afterschool on a Monday and Wednesday afternoon there is a compulsory fine art period where students participate in activities such as pottery, search and rescue, sewing, photography, studio art and figure skating. During this time, I tried my hand at a few options including baking, sculpture and photography, before I settled on woodwork. This was interesting and not something I would normally do, but it was an enjoyable challenge. It also allowed me to be more ambitious in the projects I chose to construct in my elective class as I had these extra times to complete a set of four shelves and a bench for my room. On a Tuesday and Thursday afternoon students either train or play competitive sport. I participated in soccer despite completely lacking any form of skills. I found that doing a team sport was extremely beneficial as it allowed me to connect with many girls across the grades and houses in the school. As it was competitive soccer season, I was also able to compete in three different tournaments around British Columbia. This meant I visited Vancouver, Surrey and Victoria. I also competed in the school's field hockey Spring League which played once or twice a week in Duncan. Being a mixed team, this broadened my friendships further as I got to know some of the boys around the school.

Despite our busy schedules there was still plenty of downtime to relax and take part in extra events around the school. On my second night at Shawnigan was the annual Spring Fling dance. This event is a highlight in the social calendar and enjoyed by everyone. One thing I didn't know was that it is tradition for the girls to ask out their dates. Somehow my roommate managed to convince me it would be a great idea to ask one of the boys who didn't have a date to go, despite the fact I had only been at the school for 24 hours. Let's just say holding a massive cardboard sign in front of a group of thirty strangers that



read: "You don't know me, but will you be the vegemite to my toast @ Spring Fling?" is a memory I'm not likely to forget. During my time at the school I was also invited to the Dean's Dinner which is a special formal dinner for students who obtain a high level of effort in their extra and co-curricular activities and celebrates their achievement. As it was coming into spring while I was there, the weather started to warm up which meant in the afternoon and on weekends the docks were always busy with people tanning and swimming in the lake as well as the rowers who were training for their regattas and national championships. Like many other schools, Shawnigan hosts an annual regatta and on fourth weekend I was able to work as a volunteer. I was put in charge of organizing all the medal and trophy presentations as well as helping the headmaster present them to the athletes. This allowed me to explore even more of the school's amazing campus as it was held in a different part of the lake I hadn't visited.

I can definitely say that during my time of Shawnigan I got my fitness up quite quickly trekking across the school from one class to the other. The boarding houses surround the campus in an arc with the main academic buildings on the inside. At the centre is the gorgeous chapel where I spent every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday morning. During the week this time is used as more of an assembly with the headmaster addressing you on Tuesday and the Rev on Thursday. Saturday however, is an official service and you are required to be in your formal uniforms or number one's as they are more commonly called. This entails a long sleeved white button up shirt, tie, kilt, and blazer as well as grey knee-high socks and closed in black shoes – sadly Birkenstocks and socks are not welcome on Saturdays much to everyone's dismay.

Overall my time at Shawnigan was absolutely amazing and one I will never forget. I have made so many memories and life-long friends who will always have a place in my heart. The whole exchange process allows you to grow in ways you don't even realise before coming into it. I can definitely say I have become far more independent, proactive, aware and grateful for what I have and the opportunities I have been given. I would strongly encourage as many people to apply for this unforgettable experience and to put Shawnigan in your top four places because it is truly an incredible place.

By Sophie Gerlach-Zuch



Crofton House School, Vancouver, Canada

Over the last two months, we've had the incredible opportunity to attend Crofton House school in Vancouver, Canada. The experience has been full of fun, excitement and countless life lessons along the way. Located in the beautiful neighbourhood of Kerrisdale, just 15 minutes from downtown Vancouver, Crofton House boasts incredible facilities, teaching staff and lovely, intelligent students. We've had the chance to get to know many of the girls during classes (including English, Social studies, PE, French, Science, Drama and Film) as well as choir, band (for Sophia) and rowing (for Olivia).

Over the multiple weekends during our stay, we were lucky enough to have been shown around Vancouver by our host families. From the forests, beaches and wildlife to exploring, Granville Island, Steveston, Downtown Van and Whistler, it's safe to say we've had a wonderfully authentic and well-rounded tour of a city we came to call home for seven and a half weeks.

Of course, whilst it will be sad to leave the Crofton Community and say goodbye to our exchange partners, Sara and Natasha, we both can't wait to be back home in Australia and at St Margaret's. Thank you Ms Achari and the rest of the leadership team for your countless efforts coordinating and making this exchange possible.

By Sophia Colledge and Olivia Garland



Canada

Pensionnat du Saint-Nom-de-Marie, Montreal, Canada

Being the first girls to participate in the Exchange to Montreal we both felt extremely lucky and grateful! Not knowing what to expect it was a little daunting however, after meeting our exchange partners and having them spend Term 1 with us we both couldn't wait for the incredible opportunity to travel and explore their city! Their time here with us in term 1 was very rewarding and no doubt we had some of the best times of our lives! We loved exploring the outdoors with them on the weekends and travelling to beaches, islands and even Canberra. After hosting our partners, it was now our turn to travel to their city! From when we first arrived we felt right at home and the atmosphere was amazing. Everyone was so friendly and we couldn't wait to meet all the girls! The biggest change for us both was the language. Here, in Montreal they spoken language is French. As we are both French students at home and plan on continuing French this gave us a unique opportunity to improve our skills through an immersion. Over the 6 weeks here so far we can both say that we have rapidly improved our understanding and we can now follow along with almost all conversation. Luckily, if we were every lost everyone here speaks and understands English perfectly so many of the girls chatted to us and got to know us in English. However, they all wanted to help us improve so everyone tries to speak to us in French as much as they can. Our host families are both incredibly kind and welcoming and we instantly felt right at home. Most conversations at home are in French and it was surprising how quickly this helped us improve! They have both taken us out to explore their city and we have all become very close. At the beginning of our exchange the snow was still all on the ground and we could walk to school with the snow falling – something we definitely can't experience in Brisbane! One-day school was even cancelled from an ice storm!

During the cold weather we could explore from a different point of view. All the lakes were frozen and the mountains were snow-capped. We were both lucky enough to visit our exchange partners Cabins which are situated out in the wilderness. We were treated with lots of beautiful hikes and unforgettable views. We also got to know the animals here when we visited the Ecomuseum as well as seeing many deer's, racoons and squirrels in the wild! A dinner up the tallest building in Montreal with a 360-degree view was also a wonderful treat! Catching the subway as well as multiple trips downtown have also been very fun. We will also both be lucky enough to travel to Quebec City and even New York with our exchange partners during the long weekend! The school environment here is very friendly and welcoming and we have made so many friendships that will last a lifetime. The uniform is very different as well as the fact that we keep the same class and classroom for each subject. We have 10 minutes between each class where we can go and chat to friends and during lunch times we are allowed to leave the school campus and go have lunch at a café or even go home for lunch. So far, our time here in Montreal has been one of the best experiences of our lives and we are so grateful for this unique opportunity! The memories that we have made and will continue to make here will last a lifetime and we cannot wait to continue to explore the state during our last three weeks.

By Emily Pitt and Margot Davis



USA

Emma Willard School, Troy, New York, USA

Matilda: We were fortunate enough to travel to New York state and spend 8 wonderful weeks at Emma Willard. Emma Willard is an all-girls school from year 9 to year 12 or as they may say freshmen to senior in the town of Troy. The majority of Emma Willard girls are boarders, which I was able to experience and being a day girl here at St Margaret's it was a big change but loved every minute of minute.

Charlotte: Emma Willard offered many off-campus opportunities for both day girls and borders. Such as trips to the mall, town festivals, ziplining and haunted houses every weekend meaning we never ran out of things to do. We were also able to do so many fun activities with our exchange partners including going to even more haunted houses, a great way to bond on your first weekend and attempting to make then paylova. We were both able to experience an American Halloween or "Emmaween" which included a costume parade, trick or treating and even a haunted house run by the seniors. We were both also able to experience thanksgiving which meant even more eating. Both of us went with my exchange partner to Washington D.C. and even got the once in a lifetime opportunity to have a tour of the white house.

Matilda: Some of the major differences we saw in Emma Willard was that the dining hall was open to everyone. There was the no uniform, which made getting ready for school that touch harder. As well as how big the campus was. The school had one gym, two pools one being abandoned, three fields, tennis courts, a bowling alley, two indoor courts and forest behind the school called the back forty. Having separate buildings for every subject made the commute to each class very difficult, especially when you needed a key-card to get into the buildings. My first week of school was spent outside waiting for someone to open the doors. And their subject list was extensive, they had classes ranging from weaving, neuroscience, dancing to an English class dedicated to Shakespeare. We were both able to take experimental history which meant we had an excursion every two weeks. However, there were many similarities that Emma Willard and St Margaret's have in common, such as the 8:20-3:20 day except for Wednesdays which started later and ended earlier, and that everyone was so very welcoming and friendly.

Charlotte: Fun fact was that the school chapel was actually made to hide the underground gym and swimming because at the time women were unable to do sport. The atmosphere of the school is so unique every aspect. I could join both the swim team and the indoor track team, they were both so fun and both teams welcomed me with open arms. Each morning when we had morning reports everyone applauded at the date and our jetlagged selves were very shocked at this. But we really got to see the Emma Willard spirt with the induction of the new principal Miss Rowe which was a once in a lifetime opportunity, the night was filled with dancing, laughs and food trucks. We were also there for the school talent show and we may or may not have given our version of men and work.

Matilda: We honestly had the time of our lives it's so crazy how fast it all flew by but I am sure I can speak for both of us when I say we will never forget the people we met and the amazing things we did. We would like to thank Ms Achari, Ms Gorrie, Ms Townsend and Ms Curtis for this great opportunity and for making our experience on exchange unforgettable and encourage any girls who are on the fence about exchange to sign up because we guarantee you won't regret it.

By Matilda Palmer and Charlotte Wala



Japan

Konan Girls High School, Kobe, Japan

As you can probably imagine Japan is a lot different to Australia. It's so cold here for a Queenslander, and the weather hasn't been too great and I'm starting to miss 32 degree heat. We've had monsoons and earthquakes (in Okinawa) but nothing to worry about.

The first week for me was difficult because my Japanese was terrible and I was pretty much mute for the first couple of days. I felt sorry for my host family because all I said was Hai (yes) to everything. But saying yes to everything was actually good because in the first week I had a lot of food I usually wouldn't eat which was a surprise. I'm living in Kobe, a town about an hours' train ride from Osaka. Probably the thing that is most different at Konan is that we don't have morning tea only lunch, so Claire and I are starving by the time lunch comes around. We also have indoor and outdoor shoes and sliding doors.

I went to Kyoto and saw a Gold Palace which was absolutely beautiful. I have also been to Osaka and Nara, where I was attacked by a deer! Japan has been so eye-opening. I think the whole aura of being in a country like Japan is just awesome. We've just passed the half way mark; it's going by so quickly, and I have barely done any shopping!

By Jadalyn DeBusch



Germany

Ursulinenschule Hersel, Bornheim, Germany

In Term 4 of 2017 we were lucky enough to go on exchange to Germany. We had so many amazing experiences and learnt so much about the rich history of a culture that is so incredibly different to our own. We attended Ursulinenschule for 8 weeks and had 2 weeks off for the autumn holidays. Within our first month we had already seen more castles than we can count on our fingers, filled up my camera roll with photos and of course, eaten more German sausages than we ever thought humanly possible.

A huge difference between Australia and Germany is the size of the country. It was mind blowing to drive to The Netherlands for afternoon tea before returning home. During the autumn holidays, three of us travelled to Berlin. Rosie stayed in a small city in the Netherlands and Gabriel was lucky enough to go on a cruise with her exchange family to many countries surrounding Germany.

We were also lucky enough to have the exchange coordinator, Frau Temming, take us on a weekend trip to Paris! We saw so many incredible sights during the trip but the definite highlights for were going up the Eiffel Tower, eating macaroons while walking through the city and shopping in Lafayette.

Ursulinenschule is very different to St Margaret's. They do not have a school uniform, so we had to choose what to wear every day! We also had very different timetables because the amount of time at school varied each day for individual students. This means our day lengths could end at 11:30 or 4:30 depending on our class choices. The best difference for us was being allowed to leave the school during spares and lunch breaks. The bakery down the road was where you could find us all.

Some of us did not know any German before we left on exchange but through listening to and speaking with our exchange families, taking part in lots of different classes and possibly most importantly, ordering an incredible amount of sweets and pastries from the endless supply of local bakeries, we were able to experience incredible improvements in our German skills.

This was an amazing and unforgettable experience and we are so grateful that we were given this opportunity. It has been a huge learning experience for all of us and we really hope you consider applying for the exchange program when you are in year nine so that you can have these great experiences too.

By Amira Ryan, Gabrielle McGann, Bridie Hunter, Rosie Alexander and Bella Donaldson





Australia

Exchange Experience at St Margaret's:

Exchange has been an inexplicable experience. Words cannot describe how amazing our time has been. From weekends at the beach to numerous adventures with each other and our exchange partners; it has all been worthwhile. The St Margaret's community has not only welcomed us into their family but also into their grade 10 cohort. The exchange programme together with St Margaret's has helped us become strong, independent women and we cannot be more grateful for that. We'd like to give a special thanks to our exchange co-ordinator, Ms Achari, along with our partners for this experience. It wouldn't have been the same without them.

By Gugu, Roxy, Phathi, Andrea, Sam and Jacqui, St Anne's, South Africa

Sydney Excursion

Exchange was an incredibly eye-opening experience that created so many opportunities. It encouraged us to try so many new things and involve ourselves in the everyday life of a Maggie's girl. We have made many special memories with the place, the girls and our host families, who have been so welcoming and have taken us to amazing places. Ms Achari took us on a trip to Sydney where we visited tourist attractions such as the Opera House, Sydney Aquarium, Wildlife and Madam Tussaud's at Darling Harbour, skywalk on the Sydney Eye, jet boating, and a harbour cruise of Vivid Sydney. We enjoyed our stay in the middle of the busy city and we will never forget the memories we made. Exchange was challenging at times, but overall, a highly rewarding experience that helped us grow and flourish into the confident, independent people that we want to be.

By Jessica, Natasha and Frances, St Anne's, South Africa



Testimonials

Both our family and our daughter benefitted from this program. It was a positive experience all round, and created opportunities for our daughter in language, personal development, and pushing her boundaries. St Margaret's and the host school, Pensionnat du Saint-Nom-de-Marie in Montreal were well prepared and the exchange went very smoothly. We feel very lucky to have been a part of the program and to have made new friends in a beautiful city.

Chris and Charlotte Davis, parents of Margot, St Margaret's

An international exchange was a fabulous experience for my daughter. She gained independence and self-confidence through learning how to navigate her way in an unfamiliar place and has developed her social skills by learning how to interact with another family within another community. Living like a local in a foreign country offers insights that are never available to a tourist. As an added bonus, she now has a richer appreciation of her own culture and history by having learned first-hand about another.

Germany provided a wonderfully opportunity for my daughter to be immersed in European culture. Her exchange helped to accelerate her learning of a foreign language and her knowledge of European history has been enriched.

Our whole family benefited from my daughter's exchange. By having a German girl live with us and share her experiences we learned a lot about her opinions of world events and about life in her home town. We also thoroughly enjoyed seeing our own city through the eyes of a foreign student.

Dr Delyse Ryan, parent of Amira, St Margaret's

Both our daughters have benefited from their exchange experiences in South Africa. It pushed them outside their comfort zone and exposed them to new experiences outside of the family environment. It taught them to problem solve independently, to develop new friendships, and adapt to a new environment and culture. To have an extra child in our home for a term had its challenges but overall was a rewarding experience from which we have all benefited and would happily do again. We are still in contact with our exchange girls and their families, and hope our paths will cross sometime in the future.

Jill & Thomas Biddulph, parents of Harriet and Rose, St Margaret's

Our daughter was successful in her Exchange application and was partnered with Crofton House School in Vancouver. In Term 1 2018 we welcomed Sara into our household for 8 weeks, and Sophia has recently returned from her 8 weeks in Canada. Naturally, the dynamics of our household changed as soon as an extra person arrived – we were able to rearrange our spare room (including a drum kit) into the garage, move a vehicle onto the street, and create a lovely and “proper” spare bedroom for our Exchange student. Throughout the term, we were fortunate that all three students in our household generally went to school for similar activities in the morning. Each day the kitchen became a scene of “make-your-own-lunchbox” – something unfamiliar to our visitor as her school has lunch provided each day.

Most weekends included at least one day of “tourist activity”, however that included visits to Southbank and shopping in the City. Hosting a student before our own daughter went away was simply lucky, as we were more understanding of family dynamics and challenges for our daughter when she was in Canada. The most important thing is not to turn your own family life upside down to accommodate or to entertain. The whole point is to be as real as possible. That being said, we did get out more with our visitor, and we enjoyed being active as a family. We were able to visit Stradbroke Island, Surfers Paradise and Mt Coot-tha. Lone Pine was a highlight, and a place not to overlook for being a very Australian experience.

Sophia's 8 weeks in Canada allowed her the chance to participate in another school's academics and extra-curricular activities. She was able to enjoy different subjects and teaching styles. Her partner, being a competitive gymnast, was absent training for many hours a week. This was a situation that could have been problematic, but I'm proud to say that Sophia revelled in the independence and responsibility of creating her own outings and activities. Her host family took her to the snow for a few hours (her first time ever), local tourist attractions, and a weekend to Seattle.

The Exchange experience was transformative. Our daughter has returned with a changed appreciation for her home, her St Margaret's friends and her opportunities. It has opened her eyes to the adventure that life can be, entertaining the idea of future studies and employment overseas. Our household went from 5 people to 3 very quickly, and our younger daughter also revelled in her own opportunity to spend time as an only child. She, too, grew up overnight. Our thanks to the school and to Angelin Achari for her constant assistance throughout the whole process.

Rev Nicki and Richard Colledge, parents of Sophia, St Margaret's







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