



St Stithians Girls College – Johannesburg, South Africa Andrea Naday '15

St. Stithians is a 5-campus school, located in the hub of Johannesburg, SA. There is one school for junior prep (boys and girls grades 0-2), two schools for the boys prep and girls prep (grades 3-7), and two colleges (boys grades 8-12 and one for the girls). There is a 3 km ring-road around the school that connects all schools to each other. They have many facilities within the school for sports, music and theatre. There are 2-4 football fields, 2-4 cricket fields, an aquatics centre with three pools and diving boards, six indoor squash courts, 2-4 tennis courts and several different gyms in the school, Mears Hall for theatre and a music room. How crazy is that!

On my first day of school, I was a bit nervous. I had only met a couple of people and had no idea what to expect. I'm also used to a coed school and didn't know how the girls would act. I walked in with my exchange Carmen, and we said hi to a couple of people. We hugged everybody we saw that morning and it became part of our daily routine. I made tons of friendships that will last a lifetime, memories that I'll never forget and moments I have cherished. For example, they had the inter-house aquatics, where I failed at waterpolo but had a great time cheering the swimmers on with my adoptive house, Cambourne.

At the girls' college, school starts at 7:30 am and ends at 2:50 pm. We have two breaks to eat and relax. There are six classes per day, and we get to choose three. I chose history, drama and physics. History was by far the best. The teacher was really funny. We had media Friday and we played a lot of group games to discuss a variety of topics. The other classes I took were AP Math and English. I couldn't understand one word of Afrikaans, so I went to the library. After school I would either have squash practice, a squash match or photography. One of the pictures we took was of a water balloon popping. The shape of the balloon was there, but all you saw was the water. It dropped almost instantly, and splashed all over my socks. Another interesting coincidence that happened that day was me meeting up with an exchange student from Saints that came to LCC two years ago. He was wearing a burgundy LCC shirt, and I recognized him instantly. We talked for a bit and I told him all about what had happened in the past two years. The last thing I remember him saying was "I never thought I would see you here in South Africa!" It truly is a small world.

One of my favourite school trips was the Junior African Round Square Conference. There were a total of 106 delegates coming from South Africa, Kenya and even Zimbabwe. Carmen was a Baraza leader and I was put as a delegate. I met a lot of people who all shared a common interest in the Canadian who everyone called "Canada". One

presentation we saw was all about taking the opportunities given to us. The presenter would hold out a chocolate marshmallow egg, and wait for someone to take it. Another time, she picked a volunteer whose birthday it was. She had to reach into a shell. She had no idea what was inside, but found a little bit of Play-Dough. The presenter asked her if there was anything else inside several times. She responded no, and was told to pick someone from the audience to check. The girl she picked found 50 rand in the back, but gave it to the birthday girl. The lesson the presenter wanted us to learn was to always dig deeper. I also had an amazing time at Camp Discovery. We went on game drives, had Baraza meetings to discuss what we had learned, and learned a really cool dance. I still talk to some of the people I met on the conference! I wish I could go back!

I couldn't have asked for a better exchange at an amazing school. An opportunity presented itself to me, and I took hold of it. I made great memories, friends and learned a lot along the way. This has been a life-altering experience and I am already planning my next trip to South Africa.