

My Life in Hong Kong

4E Barbara Do Nascimento Carlos

AFS Exchange Student From Brazil

大家好！我是來自巴西的孫嘉淇。

My name is Barbara and I am from Natal - the capital of Rio Grande do Norte (a northeastern state in Brazil). I am 18 years old and I came to Hong Kong in order to spend my gap year.

Back in Natal, I studied at the Federal Institute of Education, Science and Technology. Before I came to Hong Kong, I attended my last year in building construction.

My routine in Brazil was quite mild. I used to go to school every day from 7:00am to 12 noon. I worked in the engineering field as an intern and I had the night reserved to spend time with my family or chill out with friends.

So far, my life in Brazil had nothing out of the ordinary. Until one day in mid-2011, I applied for a once-in-a-lifetime experience: join the AFS exchange program. This decision was indeed a turning point in my life.

Although Hong Kong was not the first destination for my exchange year, I have no regret of coming to this "Fragrant Harbour".



My host family and a former exchange student from Hong Kong to Brazil went to pick me up at the airport.

I arrived at Hong Kong on 24th August, 2012.

By living 10 months in Hong Kong through the AFS exchange program, I have gained more life experience. I have become more mature and I also have faced numerous moments which have contributed to my personal growth.

I am also lucky that I have the opportunity to learn a lot about a completely different culture and to recognize and appreciate the merits of my own one.

Since I am an exchange student in Hong Kong, I have definitely put myself in an Asian student's shoes.



My 4E classmates, Miss Po and I after the Music Contest

I'm so glad that I stepped out from my comfort zone in Brazil. Otherwise...

How would I be able to meet an amazing host family?

How would I meet friends from all over the world if I haven't had come to Asia's World City?

How would I like HK's cuisine if I have never tasted good Dim Sum?

How would I receive any red packets if I haven't had gone to mainland China to celebrate Lunar New Year with my host family?

How would I be able to speak Cantonese in a such short period of time if I haven't had the necessity to learn?

How would I know what it means to seize the day if I have never seen the time running so fast?

How would I know the world if I have never been an exchange student?



Celebrating my host father birthday



Boat trip with some AFS students



我真的不想離開我在香港的家人，朋友和同學。但是，我又可以做什麼呢？

Undoubtedly, saying good bye to my host family and friends will be even harder than when I did the same 10 months ago in Brazil.

"Whoever said that childhood is the best time of our lives was never an exchange student ! "