

## My life on the Green Island

Hey Guys,

Last time I had the pleasure to tell you about my life in Bordeaux (France). This time it's all about the Green Island – Ireland. Since my arrival in January, I've been living in a town named Ballincollig outside of Cork. There, I stay with my lovely host mother Carmel, her brother Greg and their dog named Buddy. The word Grand is one of the first of those many Irish words that I've learned during my stay. It's the way to express something cool, super or wonderful.

Do you like dogs? Grand! Irish people are crazy about them;) Together with my two other colleagues from the KV+ Noelia and Nils, I have the luck to work at the Irish Guide Dog for the Blind center in Ballincollig. IGDB is the country's charity which exists for over 45 years! The aim is to create a significant change in the life of vision impaired people and families of children with autism. Therefore, the company works with a community of breeders, puppy raisers, home socializers, temporary boarders, trainers, staff, volunteers and supporters to change as many lives as possible. Already on the first day, I was impressed by the passion and joy from these people who work there. Everyone is friendly and open so it's easy to get in touch with the staff and to learn about their habits and culture. On St. Patrick's Day, we had a ceremony in the main hall. On the right-hand side, you see a photo of us three Erasmus students.



Beside from work, I also visit school once a week in order to get ready for the English exam. The school is in the city, which means I get to see a lot from Cork just by travelling to school. We were always lucky to have good teachers and thanks to their good teaching skills some lessons went by faster than you would think. But you also need to work and study on your own at home because a few hours a week aren't enough to cover all your knowledge and training.

During my free time, I like to train in the local gym Anytime Fitness in Ballincollig, to go out in the park for a run or to meet new people. Occasionally, we go out together and this enables me to connect with other people as well. With some of them I got very close and it's always nice to have a little chat during a short break in the gym or on the street. During the weekends I often go on trips to discover new places and to attend different events.



Sometimes it can be a bit hard to get somewhere, as the public transport system isn't that great like we're used to in Switzerland. Many people told me, ideally you should have a car to discover Ireland because many national parks or other attractions are only reachable by car. Nevertheless, by bus or train you can still reach a lot of destinations.

It's been almost one year since I left Switzerland to live this unique adventure. A lot has changed during that time, not only for me. Many things were different than from what I had expected. Some were positive, some were negative. It is difficult to answer the question, if I would do this gap year again as I don't know, what would have happened if I had decided against it. But there is one thing I know for sure; I certainly don't regret to have taken this decision. This time allowed me to grow and to get a new perspective about life and the privilege we enjoy growing up and living in Switzerland.

