

## **THREE MONTHS IN FINLAND – Carla, Mar and Blai in Loimaa**

Our high school gave us the possibility to spend 3 months in a foreign country (Finland) to improve our English level and to know a new educational system and a new culture. After a selection 3 of us were chosen (Blai, Mar and Carla) and left Igualada on August the 27th.

When we first arrived, everything was new for us, and very different to what we were used to see. We noticed that Finns are very closed people but pretty welcoming as well. The school seemed to us very modern and advanced, and there were many surprising things such as the use of iPads and computers in lots of lessons, the way to teach and the respect that students have toward school material. With the time we got used to have lunch at 12 a.m. (at this time we usually have a break in our school, and we don't have lunch until 3 p.m) and we learnt some Finnish habits.

During the first month we went to the "On-arrival trainings", to learn what to do in case of risk situations, how to overcome homesickness and many facts about Finnish culture.

October and November were full of things. The first of them was the Comenius week, which happened from 6th to 12th October. Exchange students from 4 different countries came to Loimaan Lukio as a part of a Comenius Program in which their high



schools are involved. We went to meetings in which each country explained things about themselves, we participated in all the activities and we visited with them some interesting places.

After that, Carla's parents came to Finland, we went to Helsinki and visited other important cities in Southern Finland such as Lappeenranta, Jyväskylä and Tampere. In the following week we were visited by Anna and Abel, teachers from our high school. We could talk with them about our feelings, explain them the differences we found between the two scholar systems and spend a great time with them.



November came rather fast and we realized that it was our last month here and that we had to profit it. In the first weekend Mar's parents arrived to visit us and we spent 3 days in Helsinki.

Then, in the week when teachers were laid off, we travelled to Lapland and stayed there during a week. We saw a huge amount of things such as Santa Claus' Village, Ranua Zoo, the Arctic Ocean in Norway, Haparanda in Sweden and we had the chance to see northern lights and wild reindeer.

Now, two days before leaving, we can say that it has been an enriching experience



which has given us the chance to meet new friends, experience new feelings and to understand the differences and similarities between both cultures.