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Reflection Paper

European Summer Study Program

One of my goals in life has been to have the opportunity to travel overseas. When looking at programs offered at Saint Mary's, I never thought I would have the privilege of being a part of one of them. However, this past summer my goal was accomplished. I was able to participate in the European Summer Study Program. We traveled to Paris, London, Scotland, and Dublin; it was the opportunity of a lifetime. I was able to make a dream come true with the help I received for paying for the trip. My financial needs are very tight, and the CWIL department, here at Saint Mary's, was very generous and offered me a grant to help finance my trip.

While I was abroad, I met several young women, whom I most likely would not have met if I hadn't gone on the trip. I had a different roommate in each city, which allowed me meet others within the group. Getting to know other girls was awesome because most of us shared a similar interest in wanting to visit the same place; therefore, I had several opportunities to visit different sites.

While in Paris, we visited the Eiffel Tower. When my mother was in high school, she traveled to Europe and had pictures of the Eiffel Tower. Ever since I had seen those pictures, I knew this was something I had always wanted to see. It was an amazing site which I will never forget.

London was wonderful. We had plenty of time to see different parts of the city while having time to relax and enjoy being in London. We were able to do more than I would have ever imagined while in London. For example, I took a tour cruise with my

business professor down the river in London, and saw the Globe Theatre, Charles Dickens house, the London Bridge, and Big Ben.

The most relaxing city we visited was Edinburgh, Scotland. The Edinburgh Castle was the only site we saw while in Scotland. It was very interesting to learn about the history of the castle while being inside of it at the same time. We stayed at a cozy Bed and Breakfast and I did not want to leave. I was able to catch up on sleep, reading, and homework before we left for Dublin.

Out of all places we visited, Dublin was my favorite. I wish we would have spent more than four days in there. The city was so lively and upbeat. It was not a huge city, but it was not very small either. We did not visit any big attractions while there, but we were able to sight see and shop on our own. I enjoyed the free time we had to ourselves; it was very enjoyable. I would love to go back to Ireland and travel to other sites outside of Dublin.

By participating in this trip, I was able to improve my independence skills and my self confidence. My independence skills were improved because I had to navigate myself and others through the cities in Europe. We were left on our own many times during the day to do our own thing; I was able to do it successfully. My self confidence and maturity level also increased from taking part in this trip. I am very close with my family, and I have never left them for more than a week on my own. I attend college in the same city that I live so my family is right around the corner if I need them. Gaining the confidence to go on the trip overseas by myself was a big step for me. I did get a little homesick while I was in Europe, but I made it through the entire month without them.

I am grateful for making the decision to go on the European Summer Study; I would not change my decision for anything. This trip was the chance of a lifetime and I want to thank CWIL for giving me the opportunity to go. Thank you for allowing me to achieve one of my goals by providing me with a grant through the CWIL office. I had a great experience and would love to go back and visit Europe again!