



Journey for a Lifetime

Germany & Poland, April 2013

Snapshot & Diary of the Journey for a Lifetime of Madison, Julie, Renee & Emily



Arriving in Berlin, Germany



Outside the Reichstag



The Moving Holocaust Museum



The Incredible Berliner Dom



The Remains of the Berlin Wall



Berlin Art!



Waiting for our train to Poland



Wrapping the children's presents



The beautiful Old Town of Warsaw



On the road to visit 16 children



Mateusz (Burkitt's lymphoma)



A Dartboard for a wish



Jan (brain tumor)



Przemek (leukemia)



Renee & Przemek - dance routine



Maja (MSUD)



Kuba (muscular dystrophy)



Don't drop it!



Arek (bone cancer)



Children at the Wroclaw hospital



Dawid (aplastic anemia)



Paulina (cervical cancer)



Dinner with Paulina



Dominik (pelvis tumor)



Klaudia (sarcoma)



Maciek (testicular cancer)



Weronika (retinoblastoma)



Patryk (optic nerve tumor)



The cutest boy ever



Wiktoria (brain tumor)



So Happy



Aleksandra (brain tumor)



Agnieszka (leukemia)



Emily, Renee, Ms. Alexandra Bugailiskis, Canadian Ambassador to Poland, Madison & Julia

***"Tell Me and I'll Forget : Show Me and I May Remember
Involve Me and I'll Understand"***

Chinese Proverb

Days 1 & 2

On our first day in Berlin we went to the hotel to leave our bags and then we walked to the famous Reichstag and Brandenburg Gate and ate our lunch outside on a park bench. We then paid an emotional visit to the Holocaust Museum and its amazing memorial and then changed tempo and toured the incredible Berliner Dom where we climbed to the top for a spectacular view of this great city. Our day ended with a walk along the riverbank to an Italian restaurant for supper and then back to the hotel for a good night's sleep.

Day 3

After an early breakfast we went for an invited tour of the Reichstag and were able to walk up inside the glass dome to the very top. Lunch followed in the shopping centre at Potsdammer Platz and then we walked to Check Point Charlie and saw the famous Berlin wall and went inside the museum of Nazi terror. It was beautiful sunny day and so we walked through an outdoor market and then strolled along the river to the restaurant near our hotel.

Day 4 & 5

We arrived by train from Berlin and first went to the Warsaw Uprising & WWII Museum and then for a beautiful walk of the Old Town. The next morning we went to the Foundation's office to wrap the presents and afterwards went for a walk to the Old Town for lunch (Polish traditional food...!!!) and then to the Canadian Embassy. We had a tour of the Embassy and a great meeting with the Canadian Ambassador (she is from the Maritimes - her parents were from Cape Breton and PEI and her kids go to Dalhousie!). Then we went for delicious pizza and... to the shopping mall!

Day 6

This morning we drove from Warsaw to Łódź and went to the hotel to pick up a big bean bag for Mateusz that had been delivered there for us and then we went to his house. Mateusz suffers from Leukemia and Burkitt's Lymphoma 4th stage. Mateusz wished for a dart board and he was so happy with his wish. We also gave him a T-shirt of his favorite soccer player (a Polish player who plays in a German team). We had great fun with Mateusz and his little brother playing darts, singing and being together. His mom made us a lovely lunch (cabbage rolls) and cake. It was fantastic. Then we visited 10 year old Janek who suffers from a brain tumor. He's had the tumor removed twice, but since then he has been partly paralyzed. Janek was asleep when we got there and his mom told us the whole story and how proud she was of Janek - he is a very smart 9-year old. He is interested in history and politics. He knows the **thousand year history of Łódź** intimately and he won first place in a knowledge competition. Janek's mom woke him up and he was so tired and didn't feel well at all. We thought we would only stay for 5 minutes with him but when he saw his gifts his eyes lit up and he was so happy – he wanted to play with everything. Janek got a movie camera, a cell phone and few quiz sets (about Poland, Europe and Africa). He was so happy. Janek cannot walk, talk or speak properly, but he is trying and he was very thankful for his gifts. We met two amazing boys today and in the evening we had supper in a very exclusive restaurant - Polka - and it was great and sooo much.

Day 7

Today was a very loong but truly inspirational day. We started off by packing the presents that were delivered to the hotel for us (TV and computer). We had 4 wishes to make **and a long drive from Łódź to Wrocław. First we met** 10 year old Przemek who fights against leukemia. After a very long treatment he is at home now recovering. His wish was to have a professional digital camera and he loved it. He took photos of us and then we played his Xbox that he got from the Foundation for Christmas. Next it was on to see 9 year old Maja who suffers from maple disease. Her brain is partly damaged and she cannot walk or talk properly. She loved her dolls and all the other presents we took her - especially shoes. She said that she doesn't want to take them off. We played for a long time together. Our third visit was with 17 year old Kuba suffering from muscular dystrophy. He was happy to have his new desktop computer. Kuba is amazing. He paints with his mouth and painted the **MOST WONDERFUL PICTURES** we have ever seen. He painted scenes, views, flowers and storks with hope for spring (beautiful). He hopes to become an artist one day (he painted 7 pictures and he has to paint 15 to become an official artist). He also loves history. The last visit of the day was to see 18-year old Arek who struggles against bone cancer. He has had many surgeries (his leg has been amputated a few times, higher and higher) and he has been fighting this cancer for nearly 6 years. He loved his big TV, DVD player and films.

Day 8

We started off by visiting Maciek's mom in hospital. 4 year old Maciek is in intensive care after a bone marrow transplant. He loves LEGO and fairy tales so we had it all for him. Maciek is very, very sick. She wanted us to see Maciek and we did... then she showed us his photos of when he was feeling better. Maciek has been fighting against leukemia for over 2.5 years. It was a very emotional visit..

Then we went to the hospital - the cardiology ward and took many presents for the ward and the children. We met many amazing boys and girls. They loved playing and talking with us. We also visited many little children (babies) in the ward. We delivered blankets, games, art and drawing articles, chairs and soft toys. They loved everything. Next, after lunch (pizza) we went to visit Dawid who is 11 and suffers from aplastic anemia and he loved the laptop we brought him. Our last wish was great - **17 year old Paulina arrived in Wrocław from her home town of Wałbrzych to meet with us. She came with her sister to the restaurant that was in the beautiful Old Town square.** She didn't know anything - it was all a big surprise to her - and we gave her an I-pad. Paulina, who suffers from cervical cancer, really loved her gift and spending time with us. We set it up for her and played and talked together. She knew some English which was great. The food there was fantastic and really fancy. It was a great day today.

Day 9

We did 4 wishes today..Dominik 12, has been sick for 6 years but he was so happy to get his Xbox. Klaudia 12, has cancer and we gave her some reggae clothes and a tablet. Maciek, 18 has testicular cancer and his wish was a laptop. We very impressed with Maciek in so many ways. Weronika, 10 has retinoblastoma and she lives in very poor conditions. She loved her roller skates and Monster High stuff. Sorry for the brief report today – it's been a long day and we're all very tired.

Day 10

Today we found out a lot about life and about ourselves and we were privileged to witness children and families with great courage...We started off with Patryk who is almost 8 and we visited him at his rehabilitation centre where he has been staying with his mom for 3 weeks. Patryk has a brain tumor that is located in his eye nerves and in the cord. He was treated for eye problems for a couple of years. Due to the tumor pressing he is also growing too fast (he looks 12). Patryk was amazed with all the presents, he was screaming with joy and was more than happy. He loved all the Lego sets and his new PSP as well as a book and wallpaper with dinosaurs and a Lego board game. He wanted to put one of his Lego planes together with us – he was so grateful for us visiting him and giving him his gifts. He showed the girls around and held Madison's hand :) and after his mom sent us a text from Patryk saying that the presents were awesome and that the girls were gorgeous! Our second wish was with Wiktoria who is 7 and she has a brain tumor that has spread and grown so fast and huge. Wiktoria was the sweetest girl ever. She was so happy with her gifts – toys and accessories with Monster High, Hannah Montana, Pet Shop and a camera with accessories. She also got bedding with princesses. She loved everything. We all drew pictures for her and she loved them. We played. We took lots of photos. The third wish was Ola - she is 11 years old who is also fighting against a brain tumor. She was diagnosed 3 years ago and finished her treatment in June - but in January this year it came back. Ola is beautiful and so very sick. She was very weak and could barely move. She loved her TV, bean bag for her room, games and puzzle. We put the puzzle with Monster High together. It was a very nice visit. It was a wonderful day - full of learning about so many things and so many mixed emotions.

Day 11

We made our last wish come true today... Agnieszka who is 13 with leukemia is very sick and so we went to visit her in hospital and only one of us could go in to see her... and it was Julie's turn. Agnieszka got the laptop she wished for and she was very happy. Ania and the others went to visit some of the other children in the hospital, including Wiktor who got a Lego set from us. In the **afternoon we paid a respectful visit to death camp in Chełmno. This was the 1st camp where Jews were murdered by Germans in Poland in gas chambers. During 1941 – 1943 almost 200,000 people were murdered and only 5 people survived the camp.** We arrived back in Warsaw early evening from our amazing journey for a lifetime and went for delicious traditional pierogies.

Days 12 & 13

Our long journey home took us via Frankfurt, New York & Toronto – we were so happy to see our families but will never forget the wonderful families we were blessed to meet in Poland.

Coalition for Kids International
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