

# PHS Explorers

*We were soon to become friends for life!*



## **PANGAEA YOUNG EXPLORERS PROGRAMME – MEGAN DE VILLIERS**

Mike Horn, a world renowned explorer, has initiated the Young Explorers Programme. He invites the youth from all over the world to join his various expeditions on Pangaea, a 35 m sailboat. He believes that the future of the planet lies in our hands. The programme has three goals: TO EXPLORE the world's unique and remote places, TO LEARN about environmental challenges and TO ACT by participating in local environmental and social community projects.

Part of the selection process involves a 10 day selection camp at the Mike Horn Expedition Centre in Chateau d'Oex, Switzerland. I was invited here, as one of the 16 international candidates chosen for the Kamchatka Selection Camp. This was very exciting for me as I got to experience my first international flight on my own. I met the other participants from Australia, New Zealand, Peru, Argentina, USA, Spain, Germany, Malaysia, China, Switzerland and UK. We were soon to become friends for life!

Each day was filled with activities. We had to run or cycle up the mountain every morning before 7am. We had a full Mayo-Clinic Test done on our physical and mental capabilities. The sponsors Mercedes Benz taught us about Blue Efficiency technology and we got to drive one of the world's first F-Cell's. We learnt about the various ACT projects that the programme is involved in around the world. First aid, abseiling,

mountain rescue, map and GPS work was all covered. They also gave us lessons on photography, videography and journalism. One of the most incredible days that I spent was on Glacier 3000. Here we did snow measurements and a glacial crevasse rescue. There was snow, zero visibility and the temperature was -5°C! A day was spent learning to sail on Lac Lemman. Hanging on for dear life, we were assured that our boats would not capsize at the precarious angle!

The camp ended with the infamous "Raid". This is a gruelling 30 hour team race involving cycling, climbing, hiking, obstacles, flying fox, raft building and canoeing. Here we learnt the importance of team work and that you are only as fast as the slowest member. We were pushed to our limits and beyond.

This experience has changed my life in so many ways. It has improved my belief in myself and has introduced me to a new family, The Pangaea Family, and most of all it has shown me that the youth can make a difference.



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## **FSA EXCHANGE – MELANIE DAWES**

During the July holidays I was chosen by FSA Youth Exchange to go to Germany as an Exchange Student for four weeks. My host family have one daughter, Nelle, and live in Westoverledingen near the border of Holland. We were told that the whole idea of the exchange was to experience the culture and language of a German family and wouldn't suit students who wanted to use it as a base to travel. I was lucky to stay with a family who wanted me to experience as much as possible. I went by boat to an island called Langeoog where I went horse-riding on the beach, and to an amusement park "Heide Park" in Soltau. I was able to experience a Senior Dance, similar to our Matric Dance. I also went to a Miniature Wunderland in Hamburg which has the largest model railway in the world and went shopping in Groningen in Holland. At the end of my stay, I met up with the other exchange students for a four-day trip to Switzerland.



*Melanie and Nelle  
at the harbour in  
Hamburg*