

2014年9月，我开启了我的留学之路。

这个想法萌生时我已经高二毕业。怀着对加拿大麦吉尔大学世界第一医学院的憧憬，我与父母商量后决定出国留学。为有时间适应当地环境，我们选择了读加拿大的高中，两年后再考大学。选学校时再三思考，最终选择了一所名为 *Pretty River Academy* 的学校。看中这个学校是因为它不在大城市，而在一个名叫 *Collingwood* 的小镇上；且学校里本地学生居多。学校的建筑风格清新简单，比起那些古典古老的老学校更吸引我。

在准备阶段的时候我收到了寄宿家庭的来信。我得知我将会寄宿在学校的一位老师家。他教数学和科学，在中国天津教过国际学生，边教书边周游了大半个世界后带着家庭来到加拿大定居。我与我的父母都对这个家庭的印象很好，这让他们的担忧减少了，而我也对未来更有信心。

不知不觉现在已经过去一年了，但当时在机场与住家爸爸和其他同学见面的场景依然历历在目。在那之前，我曾经深刻地感到过对未知的恐惧，所幸，因为周围同学老师的帮助，这种感觉在之后的时光里再也没有出现过。对于我而言，这一年发生了很多事情，我适应了加拿大环境与英语教学，变得更加自立及自律，也渐渐感觉到将自己的未来把握在手中的自豪感。根据住家爸爸和老师们的意见，我的英语也有了明显的进步。回首这一年，仔细想来，课堂并不是最重要的。让我学习许多，有更多感触的是学校组织的许多课外活动。

第一个让我感触很深的活动是在一个叫 *Kichi* 的小岛上的野营。这一次，我体会到了中国学生和加拿大学生的不同——面对野外和许多运动，他们比我们更有经验，也更热爱。我没有划过独木舟，也没有扎过帐篷，面对这些体力活的时候感到十分茫然，许多时候显得非常笨拙。但是，只要我们积极参与到这些活动里，他们也非常的欢迎和热情。野营的某一个晚上，在靠近大湖的几块巨大的石头堆成的岛上，在那里当志愿者的哥哥姐姐升起了篝火，大家围着篝火又蹦又跳，唱着加拿大人最熟悉的歌谣，好不热闹。当夜渐深，篝火也逐渐熄灭，大家便躺下来，凝视着夜空里的银河。那是我人生中第一次看见银河和漫天的星星。在中国的城市里，夜里能看见几颗已能让我高兴很久。而另一天，当我们划了半天的独木舟到这个小岛的另一端时，我坐在树林里休息，而他们早已经换好泳衣，到湖里游泳、嬉戏去了。大家一直很有活力地蹦跳到夜晚，中国学生们都准备在帐篷里休息的时候，加拿大的学生们或者聚在湖边的木凳上聊天，或者并排躺在木桌上，望着挤满星星的夜空。那一刻，我真心感觉加拿大的孩子们是多么的幸福，从小便能看见如此真实的自然。

另一个让我印象非常深刻的是学校美术老师组织的参观安大略省美术馆活动。为了前往这个美术馆，我们要在路上花费几个小时，并且还要舍弃掉一天正常的课时。可是，为了真正领会艺术，培养学生们对艺术的喜爱，学校付出了这些花费。在美术馆那天，我们看了我们美术老师最喜欢的艺术家的画展，虽然我们一开始认为这些画作像儿童随笔一画的奇怪画符，但后来了解了其中的背景，也突然明白了这些绘画的深意。有时候让成人像个孩子一样画画反而是最难的。除此之外，我们也看了加拿大出名的、课上必讲的 *group of seven* 艺术家们的风景画实体。看到一幅画的实体时，我们可以看到书上看不出的绘画痕迹和心思。回到学校时，想起这些还觉得意犹未尽。

学校还有许多其他活动，在此就不一一细数了。生动的课堂，精彩的活动，还有大大小小的论文、任务、考试；乐于助人的老师，欢乐的同学，温暖热闹的住家，组成了我在加拿大美好的第一年留学生活。但是，最重要的是，这一年里，离开父母与祖国的我开始独立思考自己的人生，渐渐学会如何生活、如何学习，并且乐观、踏实地朝自己的未来走去。

In September, 2014, I started my first year in Canada.

I already finished my second year in a Chinese high school when I had the idea to study abroad. With a dream to study medicine in the best medical school in the world at McGill University, Canada. My parents and I decided to begin with a Canadian high school, which would give me some time to adapt to the local environment and different study modes. After few rounds of investigating and thinking, we chose a school named Pretty River Academy. It locates in a small city called Collingwood, which is under a 2 hour drive from Toronto. Most of the students in the school are from the surrounding area. These are the reasons we chose the school. Moreover, for myself, I prefer a new and small school more than those old, classic ones.

During the holiday before the first school year, I received a letter from my home-stay family. Then I knew I will stay with the family of a teacher working at this school. He teaches math and science. He began his first teaching year in an international high school in Tianjin, China. He traveled over half of the world and finally chose to live in Canada with his family. Both my parents and I were very satisfied with the family, which lessened their worries and gained my confidence about my future.

Now that a year has flown away, I still remember the first time I met my home-stay father and other international students at the airport. Before that moment, I was sometimes nervous by the unknown of my future. Luckily, with the help of teachers and students, I never felt that again after my arrival in Canada. For me, it was a meaningful school year. Eventually, I adapted to the environment and life, becoming more independent and autonomic, gaining the pride of controlling my own future. According to my home-stay father and other teachers, my English was well improved as well. The school also met our various requirements, such as adding the AP courses we needed. When thinking about my first school year in Canada, I realized that the daily courses I took were not the most important. I learned more from the activities organized by the school.

The first activity I joined was a three days camping on an island named Kitchi. From the activity, I realized the differences between us Chinese students and Canadian students. When talking about nature and sports, they are more experienced and passionate. I did not know how to paddle a canoe, nor did I know how to build a tent. I was clumsy and confused when in complete nature environment. However, I was very welcomed when I tried to learn and join. The Canadian students were very helpful. At a night during the camping, we were guided by volunteers to a rock island by the lake. A bonfire was lit and all of us danced by it. We were singing the folk songs Canadians are most familiar with, everyone was filled with happiness. As the night became darker, the bonfire died slowly, then we lie down on the smooth surface of the rock and looked into the starry sky. It was the first time that I saw the Milky Way and a sky full of stars. I used to be very satisfied with just a few stars in the sky of my hometown, China. On another day, we finished our canoe trip from one end of

the island to another, I was tired and took a rest under a tree, while the Canadian students were swimming or playing by the lake excitedly. When I was getting ready to rest in the tent, they were still talking in groups on benches on the beach, or lying on a wooden table to observe the starry sky. I thought, how lucky and fulfilled they are since they can get in touch with such a real nature all the time!

Another activity that I had a deep impression was our trip to Art Gallery of Ontario organized by our art teacher. Although we had to spend few hours on the road, it was a significant chance for us to comprehend art more and cultivate our passion towards art. On that day, we visited the art show of one of our art teacher's favorite artist. At first, I could not understand the value of a messy painting as if painted by a 5 years old child, however, as I read more about the background and paid more attention to the details, I found more amazement. Sometimes it is the hardest for an adult to paint like a child. Besides, we saw the real paintings of the famous Group of Seven. I learned more in the real paintings than the pictures on textbooks. Through observing the strokes I realized the reason they became the classic. I am still longing for the next visit to the gallery.

There are more than I could describe. Interesting classes, wonderful activities, various kinds of assignments and exams; warm-hearted teachers, energetic classmates and a warm and lively home-stay family made up my first spectacular school year in Canada. Among these, the most important part is, I begin to think about my life independently, knowing how to learn and how to live, steadily walking towards my goal and my desired future.