

A Tale of Montreal

By Chloe Lizotte

I can still remember the day when I learned that our French class would be the first seventh grade class to be able to travel to Montreal for three days. I was starry-eyed and excited as high expectations whirled around in my head. And now, after the trip is over, it all feels like a dream. The trip raised the bar miles above where I had set it. Thousands of memories have made a home in my mind, there to stay for the rest of my life.

There was never a dull moment while we were in Montreal. There was always something for us to do, whether it was going to places like Notre-Dame Basilica and the Underground City or having a tour of the city on the “moach,” which was our name for the motor coach bus we rode around in during our stay. The one activity that stood out the most for me was the “18th century adventure” we embarked on the first night we were there. We visited an actual 18th century fort where we were transported back to the 1700s for a couple hours. We had to solve out the mystery of the mysterious man in black who was running around in the shadows while trudging through a dark forest in the freezing Canada cold. We were all transformed into French soldiers in training who were posing as Swedish slaves immediately upon arrival at the fort. When the climatic shots at the end of it all were ringing out, I was filled with the type of fear you get when you go into a haunted house at a theme park – you’re afraid, but the adrenaline rushing through your body makes the experience exciting and all the more fun. The actors did a great job of making you feel like you’re actually living in the time period that the adventure takes place in, and I could see history come alive more than the textbooks in school ever did for me. Trekking through the woods on that cold night is something I’ll remember for a long time.

When we arrived in Montreal on the moach, the difference that was most apparent to me was how much French I saw in the city. All of the signs were written in French and everyone I ran into spoke fluent French – I couldn’t hear any English being used on the sidewalks apart from the other kids from Concord, leading their own conversations a few feet away from me. At first, I thought the language barrier would be the hardest part about the trip, but I found myself relying on the French I learned in school and was able to pick up a few more words. I don’t think I would have learned as much if the people didn’t speak quite as much French – the amount they spoke was the perfect amount for me to learn from. Montreal is one of the best places to go if you want to expand your French vocabulary.

And now for the part of my somewhat lengthy article that most other students dread having to write – the part about how my “window onto the world” is changing. Whenever it’s announced that we have to write about this in class, everyone groans. So I’m going to be brave and talk about my “window” without complaining. In Montreal, I was exposed to a new culture. I learned from the experience that not every country speaks in the same tongue, but you don’t have to whine about not knowing what the people are saying. You can try and learn some new words or phrases to use while you’re there. That knowledge makes the difference and immerses you even more in the culture. The little cultural differences between nations are what make our world so special – different areas on the same blue and green sphere can be polar opposites, and I’m not just talking about the north and south poles. The different languages, cuisines, and fashions all over the planet define who we are. I had heard people say this before I went to Montreal, but I never really experienced it. And now I



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can say firsthand that my window onto the world has broadened its view on cultural differences and I’ve realized how vital they are to making our world interesting.

At the top of the world’s tallest inclined tower, rising 574 feet above its home city, Montreal, I looked down to see the small buildings below, their dwarfish heights trumped by the mammoth structure I was standing in. I had to be on top of the world. I peered out at the breathtaking skyline, and I realized that I didn’t see buildings that were new to my eyes. I saw all the memories of the trip that had occurred throughout the city, the memories that I would hold with me for years and years afterward, warm and familiar. I knew that the Montreal trip was the best school trip I had ever been on and it was utterly unforgettable. I thought to myself, *Nothing is going to beat this.* And now I’m positive that I was right.