

Marlborough College Article

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“Subject: Marlborough College Gap Year Opportunity”. As I glanced through an array of emails one January afternoon, this title immediately caught my eye. What a relief it was to receive a message that didn’t include “university” or “application” in the title. After completing the IB Diploma program in November 2015 at Waterford Kamhlaba United World College of Southern Africa (Waterford), internal assessments and extended essays were instantly replaced by college personal essays, SAT results, and supplementary application questions. My thoughts, as well as my *Yahoo!* inbox, were flooded with all things UNIVERSITY. The email I received about attending a school in a foreign country for a few weeks was exactly the breath of fresh air I had been yearning for. On that January afternoon, the idea of this unfamiliar “Marlborough College” dried my flood of thoughts, and simultaneously gave life to a truly special breed of excitement.

After a day and a half of traveling to the United Kingdom, I finally arrived on the morning of June 11th 2016.

“My name is Jacqueline, but you can call me Jacqui, I am 18 years old and I am from Malawi”. This phrase echoed in my mind throughout the car ride from London to Marlborough – I knew I’d have to repeat it frequently. I was dropped off at Morris House, and was greeted with a cheerful “You must be Jacqueline! The exchange student from Malawi”. What an amazing feeling it was to not have to utter my

practiced phrase upon my first encounter with a member of the Marlborough College community. I immediately felt at home.

Home. That is what Marlborough became to me by the end of my three week stay. Like a brother, my fellow exchange student, Elijah (Elias) Rodriguez from the United World College Red-Cross Nordic, was by my side throughout the experience. From attending three Pre-U classes with the lower sixes, to visiting Wales on a creative writing trip with the 100s, we were lucky enough to experience then discuss cultural differences with one another. Everything from Marlborough students not carrying backpacks to the lovely food in Norwood, were topics of discussion during our frequent meetings with Mr. Cockett who, without doubt, played the role of a father, and a mentor throughout our stay. During my first week, I even asked the librarian if I could bring a bag into the library because the absence of them gave me the impression that they were against school rules!

At the college, I was able to attend English, Spanish, and History classes during my first and final week. I was truly captivated by the intimacy of the classroom setting at Marlborough – something that I am not very familiar with. The number of pupils per class is significantly lower than Waterford, and I appreciated the engaging nature of the way classes were taught. Coming from an international school, I found the lack of diversity in the classroom and house setting quite strange at first. However, this was replaced by the understanding that each individual with whom I conversed, was very much not the same. In fact, my experience at Marlborough allowed me to see beyond cultural difference as the only difference that exists. I met people from different parts of the nation, with different backgrounds, stories to tell, and even different accents! Making friends, and living life as Marlburian was, undoubtedly, an eye-opening experience in this respect.

As a temporary member of the choir, a participant of the Buchanan Reading Prize, and a pupil on the Creative Writing trip, I was also able to explore and appreciate the more artistic sides of Marlborough College students, and of myself! I was particularly stunned by the angelic song of the choir, and by the beauty of Wales during the writing trip. I speak for both Elijah (Elias) and myself when I say that the 100s were a lovely group of students to spend time with, and our adventures with them were definitely one of the highlights of our whole visit.

By the end of my three week stay at Marlborough, the echoing phrase in my head had been slightly altered.

“My name is Jacqueline, but you can call me Jacqui, I am 18 years old and I am from Malawi, and from the places and people I have encountered throughout my life time”. I feel honored to say that Marlborough College has become one of those places, and the Marlburians have become some of those people.