

Hi Megan

It has been 4 months since I last wrote to you about Ollerup. And I can tell you my time here has seriously been some of the best times of my life and I cannot believe the amount of knowledge I am gaining from being here, sometimes its hard to remember everything! I don't even know where to begin...

Well we finished E16 and have started F17 a couple of weeks ago, the holidays were only a couple of weeks but it was so nice to get back to Ollerup and get back into training and seeing everyone again. Last time I wrote to you I mentioned coaching kids, I am still continuing with that so far this semester and its incredible how much teaching you can do with so little of the technical parts of the Danish language. We can give feedback on the basics like straight legs or stay tight etc etc but coaching in a place where the language is not your native has really given me an insight to how far body language goes and how important it is to be actively engaged with the kids. Speaking of the language, even though in the first semester we weren't surrounded by that much Danish because the main language spoken at Ollerup was english its amazing how much we picked up. The internationals are really starting to get into it a little more and even though we can't speak too much, we can understand most things, so the Danes don't have their secret code talks anymore.. haha But this semester, definitely the first week I would say was quite hard for all of the internationals unfortunately. With nearly 200 Danes to 25 internationals we are very outnumbered and there wasn't that much English being spoken anywhere. A lot of the messages and information about staff etc was all in Danish which is good for us to sit and listen to to understand but at the same time all of the internationals felt a little like guests in our own home you could say. Now that a couple weeks has been and we have started to mix and mingle with all the newbies a lot of the Danes are helpful and we are meeting new lifelong friends and messages are said in both languages so we don't miss anything important! I am very excited to see what this semester holds.

December 18th here at Ollerup was a very sad day, where we had to say farewell to all of those who were not coming back for F17. I really didn't expect to be so so close with everyone here and we were really one big family, I can't even describe the bond E16 shares with each other and I cannot wait to have that same bond with F17. It was very hard to say goodbye to some people, but I know that I have really made lifelong friends here and will definitely see a lot of them again in the near and distant future. I spent the 2 week Christmas holiday break in Copenhagen with one of my good friends from the first semester so I got a very traditional Danish christmas! It really didn't feel like Christmas because it was so cold! But Denmark has some typical european beautiful winter christmas traditions, I was blown away by everything; singing and dancing around the christmas tree, dressing up for a nice dinner, and celebrating on Christmas eve! The family I stayed with I really cannot thank enough, they gave me so many opportunities and I was so thankful to have spent the holidays with them, I even got to take a day trip to Sweden!! It was incredible to share stories about our traditions and culture, and they couldn't get enough of the Cookie Time Salted Caramel cookies!

Unfortunately last semester, about 4 months ago while tumbling I hurt my ankle pretty bad.. I was on crutches for a week as couldn't put any weight on it at all for about 6 days and I cannot begin to describe how swollen and bruised it got. I tried to stay off it for as long as I could to heal but with the spring centre only a few minutes walk away from your room its very hard to stay away. I was out of any tumbling for about 2 months before I really got back

into anything serious, after a month I could start jumping on the big tramps as they were soft but I have only just started tumbling on air tracks and floor this semester. I still have some trouble with it, it swells a little every now and then and I have lost most flexibility in it but am excited to get back into it all this semester. I can rest it when I get back to New Zealand!!

In the Autumn semester I chose the Tumbling X line, which was great starter into the whole Danish Tumbling/Gymnastics world. We did a lot of technical stations and I have learnt a whole new way of tumbling, the mechanics behind it all and how to get the most out of what you do. We did everything from forwards and backwards tumbling, big trampolines, some trampet every now and then, even a little acro also. Its a very broad line that there are no boundaries. I really enjoyed Tumbling X last semester, but this semester I have decided to try Power Tumbling. We worked with Power Tumbling every now and then last semester and I enjoyed the style of coaching and I have never done anything like it before so thought I would try something new. We have had a week of training this semester so far and I have definitely made the right choice, I am loving it so far and it is very exciting to try something new and different. Since I started here in August I have developed so much in my physical abilities and also my mental state when it comes to trying new skills and going for things. My initial goals last semester were to get double front, double back and control in twisting. I can tell you that I needed new goals within the first few weeks because I went far and beyond my initial goals, especially in the forwards jumps off the big tramps. The motivation from everyone is incredible and as soon as you set your mind to something its really amazing what you can achieve. I am now doing skills like full in half straight and double rudi out in all positions, I still can't wrap my head around that I am actually in Denmark doing these skills, it still feel like a bit of a dream. I am looking forward to working on backwards this semester and am excited to see what skills I have at the end of Power Tumbling.

NGO and Intercultural studies classes has opened my mind up to many different countries and cultures. We heard about NGO's from a number of different countries and it was interesting to hear the similarities and differences between them. This semester we go deeper into NGO's so I am really looking forward to that and learning more about the topic. The teachers are really great here and I think the general atmosphere I am going to miss so much at the end of all this. The next 6 1/2 months are going to go by so fast and this semester is jam packed with so much. But I am really looking forward to coming home to New Zealand and bringing back everything I have learnt here!

If there is anything specific you want me to mention or talk about Ollerup please let me know, I would be happy to talk about anything. Because there is too much to write about I wouldn't be able to get through everything. The teachers are amazing, the people are amazing, the facilities are amazing. All I can say to anyone coming to Ollerup in the future is that they are going to have some of the best times of their life here, and remember to keep an open mind to the differences in culture and don't be scared to just go for it and make the most of every opportunity here. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity and no one wants to ever leave this place! It is Hyggeligt as the Danes would call it!

I hope you are having a great new year so far! Talk soon!!

Kind Regards  
Brianna