

## **Simran Sadler, Waitaki Girls' High School**

"My name is Simran Sadler. I am 15 years old and I live in Oamaru, New Zealand. I was recently offered the opportunity to apply for an NZIIU Scholarship to go to Germany for 3 months by Language Perfect, after I had gained over 3000 points in the World Championships. To be quite honest with you, I was shocked! I mean a 15 year old girl who comes from a small town in New Zealand that isn't most commonly known was chosen to apply for a Scholarship along with 14 other students. I sent in my Initial application to NZIIU and a week later I started filling out the full application. It was a long process, but in the end I managed to finish it and send it in on time! After sending in my application I was contacted by Mari Gordon about our Skype interview. I had never been interviewed before and so I was beyond nervous. However, the time flew past and I had a great support crew- my mother and my German Teacher. After answering all the questions time flew past and before I knew it nearly 3 hours had passed! But I was feeling grateful after that. After all the that stressful time consumed on answering questions the time had come to wait for the answer. To be honest, I didn't think I would get 1st, 2nd or 3rd even though we tried our best. I had a great support crew of amazing family and friends and my amazing German teacher! As the date came to check the results, I was shaking and didn't really want to open the email. I sat with my mum as I opened the email and I was SHOCKED! I screamed and then started crying as I didn't believe it that I had been granted the 1st prize scholarship!

After I found out, my mum and I read the email over and over again, I then decided to ring my German teacher and tell her first and she was just as surprised as I was! I messaged all my friends and they were so excited and proud of my achievements.

I was honored to be nominated to apply for the scholarship but actually being granted first prize is a huge achievement to me as I come from a small town in New Zealand nobody really gets something as extraordinary as this. Ever since I was little I have always loved to travel, try new foods, new cultures, traditions and clothes. I've always wanted to try and learn many languages because you can speak to a range of different people. The fact that I will be spending 3 months will help me increase my knowledge of the German culture and tradition, and it will also help me increase my vocabulary and make friends and meet new people. It will also help with my independence and confidence.

It's still quite a big thing to think that I actually have been granted this opportunity, I am honoured to be apart of the exchange programme and hopefully will be a great ambassador for the exchange programme. I am very nervous but thank you so much Language Perfect and NZIIU for this amazing opportunity."

- Simran Sadler

## **Kathy Hastie, St. Paul's Collegiate School**

"I'm so excited to have received this scholarship – I can't believe I'm finally going to Spain! Thanks so much to NZIIU for granting me this incredible opportunity, and to everyone else who has helped me along the way, especially my wonderful parents <3. I remember waking up one morning just like any other day, noticing that I had received an email on my phone. Little did I know that this one email would end up opening the door for me to be able to change my life forever. Seeing that I had been randomly selected as one of fifteen people out of thousands to apply for this scholarship was just so unexpected; so unbelievable. It actually took me a little while to process what had happened. For the longest time I have dreamed of travelling, and for the past year or so I have spent my time scheming every possible way of somehow getting myself to Spain one day, so I just couldn't fathom how perfect this experience would be for me. I had to apply.

The next few weeks were quite stressful trying to complete all the lengthy applications during my benchmark exams and a football tournament week, but thanks to a little leniency from NZIIU I managed to get it in on time. A few days later I was contacted to schedule an interview over skype, which ended up being close to 4 hours! – but it did not feel that long at all and was actually extremely helpful in assessing whether this exchange would be right for me. Mari Gordon was so lovely and really put me at ease about all my concerns :)

Later that week I found out I had been granted one of the \$4000 Scholarships!! I am so honoured to have been chosen as a representative for both NZIIU and New Zealand, and will try my very best not to let them down. I've been practising my Spanish every chance I get, but I know nothing will compare to spending a whole three months fully immersed in the language and culture.

It is literally mind-boggling to think that I'll be on the other side of the world in just over a month's time, celebrating a winter Christmas with a family I have never met before. If it weren't for this scholarship, I'd probably just spend my holidays sitting at home doing nothing much at all...

Thank you so much for this opportunity and please don't ever stop giving out these scholarships!"

- Kathy Hastie