

NYSF Australia 2011 - NYSF

Fri, 2011-01-14 00:00 -- Dominic Tremblay



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It's the last day of NYSF ? tomorrow we all travel home. It's been an unforgettable three weeks. I'm not looking forward to going back to the routine of regular life!

Over the course of our time at NYSF, we got to visit some amazing labs. Being international students, the Canadians were in a privileged position, because instead of going on lab visits associated with a particular ?interest group,? we could mix and match visits, joining different interest groups on a day-to-day basis. I got to extract and profile DNA at a biochemical lab, measure levels of gamma radiation at a particle accelerator, see dangerously powerful lasers, design and build a water filter and a solar cooker with a volunteer from Engineers Without Borders, discuss the origins of the universe with theoretical physics at the Mt. Stromlo Observatory, talk by video-link to a scientist at CERN about the Large Hadron Collider, see a massively parallel supercomputer, and learn about the exciting future in microbiology at the John Curtis School Medical Building. Talk about variety!

On top of all of that, we had four debates: about the future of energy, about the ethical implications of advances in genetic engineering, about whether or not the entire world population should become vegetarian, and finally, about whether or not males are becoming obsolete in our society. The catch for the last debate: all the guys had to argue that they were in fact unnecessary, whereas the girls had to argue the contrary!

We heard talks from incredible scientists and engineers, speaking about what they do and how they got to where they are now. We had discussions about university ? how to apply, what the options are, what to expect ? from our amazing Staffies, who have just been through the whole process. We even gave a few presentations ourselves. Each NYSFer had to prepare a five-minute talk about something that interests them related to science, and each had to give a three-minute talk made up on the spot based on a given prompt. Mine was ?Canada: myth or fact??. I chose to argue that Canada couldn't possibly exist! Finally, the three Canadians got to give a brief presentation about our country, which involved some patriotic Molson Canadian commercials, a rendition of the music video Canadian, Please [2], and an introduction to Canadian slang.

In between all the labs, debates, and discussions, we went to barbeques and picnics, held a trivia night, and even had time for a science-themed disco (our floor group dressed up as a lithium atom, with each person as a separate subatomic particle).

The NYSF has been absolutely incredible. The opportunities and experiences it has provided have been invaluable, but more important than that are the friends I have made there. Before bed, our floor group became accustomed to talk about particle physics. I don't think this would be possible anywhere else.

This experience has been so enjoyable and so illuminating for me. As I look back on everything I've been through in the past three weeks, and as I prepare to leave Australia and return home, one thing is very clear to me: I will be back, and hopefully soon.

Source URL: <https://tc.youthscience.ca/blog/nysf-australia-2011-nysf>

Links

[1] <https://tc.youthscience.ca/sites/default/files/Bio-med-LabA.jpg>

[2] <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mWQf13B8epw>