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Fall Break - New York City

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### **Fall Break in The Big Apple**

Going to New York City for Fall Break this year was an amazing decision. Not only did I make a lot of new friends, but I also got to visit one of the world's most popular and loved cities. Now I understand what all the hype is about. New York City is one of those places that has something for everyone, which I found out through visiting every part of the city and through endless wandering during free time. I am extremely grateful to the Honors Program to have been able to experience this trip. This essay will reflect on my experiences there and how I see it as a very impactful experience for me.

When I first found out about the New York City trip that the Honors Program hosted every year, I was thrilled. I knew that I would definitely want to go on this trip at some point during the four years at NC State. It finally happened now in my junior year since it was the perfect timing. My roommate and best friend who is also in the Honors Program also suddenly wanted to go with me which made the decision even easier. This taught me to keep dreaming because it can always come true if you work hard enough. I had the dream to go on this trip and finally I was able to go. Next to that, I also learned that I am more independent than I thought. While I was on the trip, even though I had my roommate with me and we made a lot of friends, I still suddenly had to take care of myself in an unknown city. I was often the navigator of the group and the planner since others were indecisive and I knew how to make the days best for everyone. This really taught me about my independence and that I am able to lead a group of people.

Through this lesson, it also showed me how others enjoy having someone in the group to sort of lead the rest. This trip also taught me about how capable I am to meet unknown people and become friends with them so quickly and easily. These are all very valuable lessons to have learned on a short trip.

When I first heard about this trip, I could hardly imagine I would make such an amazing group of friends. I thought I would just go with my roommate and that we wouldn't feel the need to socialize with others since we had each other. However, that assumption was proven wrong. We ended up getting a group of seven girls together that we went everywhere with. We even still all talk now that we are back at school. This definitely was a pleasant surprise. Therefore, this trip was different from what I expected; it was even more amazing. Because of the people I met, I was able to enjoy this trip even more and explore places in New York that I have always wanted to see or hadn't even heard of before. I really got a great impression of New York City which has made me even more intrigued to possibly live there one day. I would not change this trip at all since it was so perfect and I met amazing people, saw beautiful places, ate delicious food, and learned a lot about myself and others.

This trip consisted of many memorable moments. My favorite moment was definitely going to The Metropolitan Museum of Art. I have been doing art my entire life and had years of art history classes, so actually seeing the art of painters I have learned so much about and have admired for years was an extraordinary experience. I have never teared up in a museum before I went here. I was most excited to see the painter Paul Gauguin since his art is not displayed in any other museum I have ever been to and he is one of my favorite artists. When I saw his paintings on the wall, a wave of

emotions flushed over me. I also enjoyed seeing all the Dutch paintings since I am Dutch and I love seeing how valued their art is in other countries as well. Another very memorable moment was meeting some of my favorite actors. On the first night of the trip, my friends and I went to a theatre where Romeo and Juliet was playing and we waited outside for the actors and actresses to come out. We waited in a large group of people and managed to get to the front where I met Kit Connor and Rachel Zegler. This was a very cool moment since they actually waved to me and I got their autographs. This is something that New York symbolizes to me so it was very amazing to have experienced this. Next to that, I also just loved visiting all the sites in the city and trying new foods in ChinaTown and Little Italy. The Broadway Shows we went to were also so extraordinary and I feel very fortunate that I was able to go to three shows in those days. This trip was truly amazing and I loved every second of it. However, there was a slight setback. I got a pretty bad migraine on the last day which made it difficult for me to walk through the busy streets and be social with the friends I had made. This was a difficult moment since I did not want to ruin everyone's experience and since I didn't know the girls that well, I did not want to be a bother. However, I managed by trying to take care of myself while letting others just go on with their days and then at the end of the day, one of my friends took me back to the hotel to rest. Luckily nobody seemed to blame me for slightly sidetracking their plans, so that was very sweet. Overall, this trip was great and even that hard day with the migraine makes the trip more memorable.

Going to New York City with a whole group of people that I did not know really helped me gain more confidence in my communication skills and taught me many valuable lessons. I have never been the most outgoing, friend-making person, so this

trip was slightly nerve racking to go on since I did not think I would make many friends and therefore the trip would be less fun. However, this trip completely proved me wrong and it showed me that I do have great communication skills and that I am capable of connecting with new people easily. This really helped me gain more confidence with others which will be so beneficial for my future. I think this confidence that I have gained will help me be better at making connections with people in my academic and professional career, which will help me prosper more in those fields. Communication is one of the most important aspects of a career, so I am glad to have gained more confidence with that. The fact that this trip showed me my capability to make new friends easily really helped me with a study abroad decision for next summer. I wasn't sure if I should go on a ten week trip this summer because I wouldn't know anybody. However, now that I went on this New York trip, I feel more confident to go on this other trip in the summer because I know I will be able to make new friends on that trip too.

All in all, the Honors Program New York City trip is an amazing and memorable experience that I will remember for the rest of my life. I made new friends that I hope to see more throughout the rest of my time at NC State, I learned more about myself, and I got to know a beautiful city that has such a great culture and atmosphere. I will forever remember this trip and will continue looking back to all the pictures I made. This trip was very important for me and my future and also was just so much fun to experience.