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CIEE STUDY CENTER at UPPSALA UNIVERSITY, SWEDEN

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Newsletter No. 24

December 20, 2012

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**Dear Study Abroad Advisors,**

I am both very happy and sad to be sending you my last newsletter for the fall semester. Time has really flown by, I feel that only yesterday I was picking up the students at the arrivals halls in Arlanda to welcome them to their semester in Uppsala. At the end of last week I said goodbye to my first student. Although I am a bit sad to say goodbye to everyone I am very happy for all of them as I know that they made the most out of their semester and time here in Uppsala and seemed to have enjoyed it to the fullest. All of the students took advantage of seeing many parts of what Sweden has to offer as well as traveling and discovering new countries and cultures in Europe. I can see how much all the students have grown over the semester and how far they have come from their first day. I know that the students will take all of their experiences at Uppsala and apply them to the future and think back about their semester abroad in Sweden.

Since I wrote my last newsletter the season has changed, winter has officially arrived in Uppsala. Staring out my window and looking at all the snow on the ground and the snow in the trees, it truly looks like a winter wonderland here. The cold crisp air serves as a reminder that winter is here to stay for the next few months. When it starts to snow, it seems as if we are sitting inside a giant snow globe. Uppsala has done a wonderful job of decorating the city with Christmas lights and decorations throughout the city. Now that the days are so short, with the sun starting to set before three o'clock, it feels cozy and inviting to walk along the streets and see the lights brighten up the city and getting everyone into the holiday spirit.



Left to right around the table: Brandon Stewart, Chelsea Timmer, Lars Fransson, Christopher Dupuis, Sean Bentley, Thea Kindschuh, Samantha Rupp, Rachel Novacek, Marit Swanson, Ayriel Ash, Nola Dixon, Katie Fleckenstein, Benjamin Chalmers, Ian Karlsson. We are planning our up and coming trip to Kiruna over a fika.

As I mentioned in the previous newsletter, we had an up and coming trip to the north of Sweden, so off to Kiruna we went. The second weekend of November we flew over to Kiruna for our weekend excursion! Kiruna is the northernmost city in Sweden and is located in the province of Lapland, about 145 miles north of the Arctic Circle. Kiruna's main industry is mining iron ore and the majority of the population there is employed or has been employed at one time by LKAB, the mining company situated in the heart of the city. They are actually going to be moving the entire city three kilometres to the east very soon and city planning is in the works as to how they will move the city to its new location. They will be moving the city in order to mine more iron ore, as it is the biggest and most important industry up there. We were supposed to take a three hour tour of the mine, which also included the opportunity to go quite far down into the mine, but our tour was unfortunately cancelled due to our tour guide being ill. It was a bit of a disappointment to all of us as I think we were all hoping to check out both the caves and the mine and learn more about the history of it. Hopefully next time I take students up there, we will have the chance to check it out!

The province of Lapland is home to both Santa Claus as well as the Sami people, which are the indigenous people to the region. The Sami's retain their own language and their main livelihood to this day is semi-nomadic reindeer herding. Another very interesting and exciting fact about Lapland is the Ice Hotel! The Ice Hotel is located about an hour outside of Kiruna and it built from scratch every year from the snow and ice. Traveling to Kiruna in November meant that we were coming in the off season so the Ice Hotel was still under construction and only opened up two days ago. So once again we missed out on this opportunity but nonetheless we had a fantastic time in Kiruna!

We arrived in Kiruna early afternoon after our flight from Stockholm. It was good to arrive early so that we could check in to the hotel and have the opportunity to walk around a bit before it got too dark. Being so far up north, meant that the sun set very early in the day and right now they are experiencing nearly 24 hours of darkness! Much to our surprise, we found that most restaurants and stores were closed between 13:00-16:00, a lot like Southern Europe. It was a bit strange as the rest of Sweden stays open all afternoon, so that was one major difference we noticed straight away. Since our tour had been cancelled we decided to spend our free afternoon and explore the city together and find a place to grab some lunch.

This proved to be harder than expected as many places were closed! We chose to break up a bit so everyone could find something they wanted and we decided to meet up for dinner. Before dinner, we all met and walked towards some of the hills in Kiruna hoping to see the northern lights, but yet again we were not so lucky! The sky was just not clear enough to see the lights on Friday but we gave it our best shot. Afterwards we headed down for a nice cozy buffet dinner in the Scandic Hotel's restaurant. Besides serving up a variety of delicious food, we were fortunate enough to enjoy live music! It only enhanced our experience to have the opportunity to talk and eat while listening to great music all at the same time.

Saturday everyone had free time to do what they wanted in Kiruna. Some of us walked around, others went cross-country skiing, while the guys found an indoor gym to play soccer at all afternoon. Saturday evening we had all booked a northern lights dogsledding tour. We were very fortunate to all be given places because it was the first run of the season. Due to our large size, we had to split up into two groups. The first group was off late afternoon while the others went out for dinner, and then once we got back they left and we enjoyed an early dinner! I think I can speak for everyone when I say that this was the highlight of the trip. It was so exciting to be pulled on a dogsled through the forest and over a frozen lake by twenty huskies!

Halfway through the tour we stopped and took a break so the dogs could rest and we could enjoy a fika (coffee break) with coffee, a sandwich, and some cookies. There was a large tepee waiting for us in the middle of the forest, where our guide proceeded to light a fire and boil coffee and water in very old-fashioned pots for us. It was a wonderful experience to sit around and talk as well as hear stories from our guide about living in Kiruna and the business of dogsledding. It felt authentic and like a once in a lifetime chance to have the opportunity to learn about the way of life and culture in Lapland. It was a great way to get a better understanding of the people who call Kiruna their home. After our fika, we were off once again to complete our dogsledding tour! We were hoping to see the northern lights again on this dogsledding adventure, but once again it was not meant to be but we still all had an amazing time!



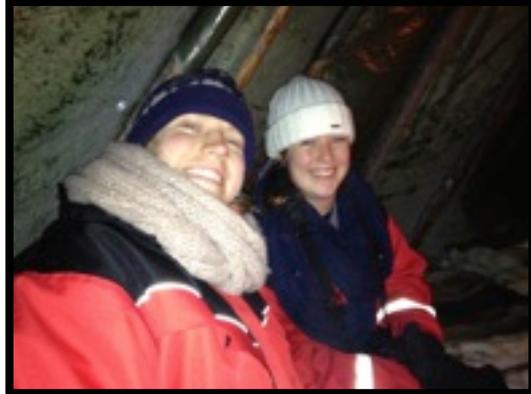
Off to Dogsled: Rachel Novacek, Marit Swanson, Katie Fleckenstein, Ayriel Ash, Magnolia Dixon, Samantha Rupp



Marit Swanson, Magnolia Dixon, Ayriel Ash



Samantha Rupp, Katie Fleckenstein, Rachel Novacek



Tepee and fika time: Rachel Novacek, Samantha Rupp, Kat Fleckenstein, Magnolia Dixon, Marit Swanson, Ayriel Ash



Front to back: Ayriel Ash, Magnolia Dixon, Marit Swanson / Sean Bentley, Chelsea Trimmer, Thea Kindschuh, Christopher Dupuis



Benjamin Chalmers & Christopher Dupuis enjoying dinner before dogsledding. Ayriel Ash, Samantha Rupp, Katie Fleckenstein, Rachel Novacek, Magnolia Dixon and Marit Swanson having breakfast and coffee.

Sunday brought a very calm and peaceful day to Kiruna as not so much is open on Sundays especially during the off season, even our hotel was closed for the afternoon forcing us to leave for several hours. After breakfast we all discussed about how we should spend our last day in Kiruna. Since our options were limited, we decided to go to a small ski hotel/resort where some of the students had previously gone cross-country skiing on Saturday. Some students were up for skiing again while the rest of us were happy to lounge and enjoy the big plush chairs the resort had to offer, free coffee included. Besides cross-country skiing, we enjoyed playing cards for hours and just sitting around and talking over several cups of coffee. They had the most amazing soft and plush couches, which were perfect for spending a lazy afternoon together. The hotel/resort also had these long soft lounge chairs, for those of us who wanted to really relax and be cozy.



Ian Karlsson & Brandon Stewart having a fika.



Christopher Dupuis & Benjamin Chalmers lounging.



Game of cards, left to right: Samantha Rupp, Chelsea Trimmer, Rachel Novacek and Sean Bentley

After spending and enjoying our relaxing afternoon hanging out in the ski resort we decided to go out for a group dinner at a local pizza place that Thea Kindschuh found for us. The pizza was great and it was a fantastic way to end the weekend in Kiruna before going back to our hotel and waiting for our taxi to pick us up and take us to the airport. Below are some pictures of the students as we waited for our taxi at the hotel. We had some time so some people read, others played cards, listened to music or just sat around and talked. We arrived home late on Sunday after a fun filled weekend in Kiruna!



Pizza time! Ian Karlsson, Benjamin Chalmers, Sean Bentley  
Fleckensteing, Rachel Novacek

Ayriel Ash, Marit Swanson, Thea Kindschuh, Katie



Christopher Dupuis, Brandon Stewart, Chelsea Trimmer, Magnolia Dixon



Christopher Dupuis, Katie Fleckenstein, Samantha Rupp, Thea Kindschuh, Chelsea Trimmer



Sean Bentley, Marit Swanson, Ayriel Ash



Ian Karlsson, Brandon Stewart, Magnolia Dixon

For our last day trip, I was looking to do something different and a bit special, something the students would remember. One of my favourite places to visit here is the Stockholm Archipelago. Unfortunately, winter is not the season to be out in the archipelago, it is mostly summer and a bit of spring. I decided to have a look and see what tours were available during the holiday season and I was fortunate enough to find a day tour out to the island of Utö. Utö is a larger island located in the southernmost part of the Stockholm archipelago. It was a special day trip that was only running three weekends before Christmas as it was a combination of a traditional julbord ("Christmas table") and we would get to spend a few hours on the island of Utö, which has a small Christmas market each year. This to me was the perfect combination as it was something different than doing the traditional julbord at a restaurant. By combining the boat tour with the julbord, the students had a chance to experience both the traditional julbord and a Christmas market out in the archipelago.

We all met early on a Sunday morning in Stockholm and departed at 10:00. Once we were seated at our given tables, we were served coffee and enjoyed a buffet breakfast on board. We were very fortunate to have had clear blue skies as we headed towards Utö, giving us the opportunity to see all the little islands in the archipelago along the way. It was a beautiful morning for a boat trip. We arrived in Utö about three hours later and had the next few hours to walk around the island and visit the small Christmas market and other little shops around the island. Although it was not a very large market, it was still very cute and had a nice Christmas feel. It was exciting to see what little Christmas items were being sold in the archipelago. A few of us found gifts for family and friends before we had to be back on the boat.

Once we were back on the boat, we once again went to our tables where we were served little mugs of glögg (mulled wine) as we waited for our turn to go down to the julbord on the deck below. The julbord was not only big but had a very diverse selection of traditional Swedish Christmas food (mostly sill and fish) as well as the typical cheeses you find during Christmas time. The boat also had an American theme, meaning they also added a few American dishes (which maybe they thought to be typical around the holidays) such as barbeque wings and sweet potato pie. Once we had all stuffed ourselves with the julbord's main course, we headed down for dessert. Waiting for us along a long table, were several little desserts to choose from, making you feel less guilty for trying each and every one of them. Our tour ended early evening and then the students were off to the train station to head back to Uppsala.



Ayriel Ash, Katie Fleckenstein, Magnolia Dixon, Marit Swanson



Sean Bentley, Brandon Stewart, Benjamin Chalmers, Ian Karlsson, Christopher Dupuis Katie Fleckenstein, Ayriel Ash, Marit Swanson, Magnolia Dixon, Chelsea Trimmer, Samantha Rupp



Chelsea Trimmer, Magnolia Dixon, Ayriel Ash, Samantha Rupp, Katie Fleckenstein, Benjamin Chalmers, Brandon Stewart, Sean Bentley, Ian Karlsson, Christopher Dupuis



Sean Bentley





Chelsea Trimmer, Samantha Rupp

This Monday we had our goodbye fika and I got us a cake, pastries, cookies and coffee as a way to say thank you for a wonderful semester and say goodbye to all of the students. It was our final student meeting where all of us would be together enjoying cups of coffee over decadent Swedish desserts. It was so nice to hear the things they loved most about the program and Sweden and their excitement about their up and coming European travels before they are off to start their spring semester at home. I have to say for it being my first semester here at CIEE and Uppsala University, I could not have asked for a better group of students! They were such a great group and I really enjoyed getting to know each and every one of them during our excursions and meetings that we had often. I will also miss all the times the students came by my office to talk or ask questions or even just needed a place to print papers. I wish all of them the best of luck in their spring semesters and I hope they enjoyed the fall semester just as much as I did! I am looking forward to welcoming the new group of students mid-January and also welcoming back Chelsea Trimmer, Christopher Dupuis and Sean Bentley for their second semester at Uppsala University. Once again, thank you all for a wonderful fall semester!



Our Christmas princessstårta (princess cake).



Ayriel Ash, Katie Fleckenstein, Chelsea Trimmer, Magnolia Dixon, Benjamin Chalmers, Ian Karlsson, Marit Swanson, Rachel Novacek, Thea Kindschuh, Christopher Dupuis, Sean Bentley

Please contact me if you would like more information about Uppsala or our program, [TKlundt@cīee.org](mailto:TKlundt@cīee.org). Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year as well as safe travels!

Talia Klundt  
Resident Director, Uppsala