

## Daily Updates from Martine

Sent: Mon Jul 09 12:21:41 2007  
Subject: Arrival in France

Bonjour

We have arrived to Paris without incident, great flight and all the boys. managed to get some sleep....except Alex....no sickness!!!

On our Way to Etretat.....

Martine

Sent: Tue Jul 10 20:27:40 2007  
Subject: Update on the 10th from France

Hello everyone.

It has been very busy few days. We are now in Caen at the Kanter tavern for our dinner. The boys are learning about the taste of milk and water in France and being good sport about it. They were sad to leave Etretat as they were mesmerized by the view of the cliffs. Their expressions were priceless as they walked up the stairs and saw what laid in front of them. Needless to say that countless pictures were taken so much so that Austin and Micah now have to buy batteries. We have discovered in the long drive from Paris that Eitan and Wesley can lead a sing along in a van for well over an hour going from ACDC to Elmos songs. We also now know that Stefan can sleep a lot through just about anything and that Adam has enough stories to entertain a crowd for 2 days now. That drive would not have worked so well without our expert co pilotes Austin in van 2 and Tyler/Mathew in van 1. Mark is the perfect poster child for the "Are we there yet" commercial. Micah, Stefan, Alex, Lucas and .Matthew Mitchell und

We also know that Aidan would like to be woken up at 7 to be ready for 8:30 to have his shower. The children were very interested in the story of Guillaume the Conqueror and the life of monks and D-day at the Abbey of men. Aidan was glued to the guide and Matthew Mitchell could be an architect based on his answer of the questions of the guide. Marc-Andre has a question for everything relating to war and Austin would rather die than be a monk (poor and no contact with his family). On the way the boys were very impressed with the bridge of Normandy but none more than Lucas who was looking for the perfect pictures. Great friendship has been formed like Mark and Stefan and Wesley and Micah.

Overall a wonderful beginning, very busy. Please remember that the boys will have little time to write individually and will take turn. A bientot Martine

Sent: Fri Jul 13 08:39:42 2007  
Subject: France update

Hello everyone,

Almost all of you should have received a message from your child by now. It is a very time consuming process as we are using one blackberry for all of us. They are also quite concerned about loosing their free time or participation in a group soccer game. Please do not expect frequent individual update. Our day on the D-day beaches was great although we have been plagued by intermittent showers. The boys were commenting on how much more they now knew about the war and its meaning and how they did not learn it from books but by being there. They are getting very close as a group organizing big soccer games in the evening where everyone participates. We are now in Brittany where apparently the sun has been shining for days. They can hardly wait for the beach day tomorrow and looking forward to doing their laundry!!!!

A bientot  
Martine

Sent: Fri Jul 13 12:16:49 2007  
Subject: Update from France

Wow the beach is wonderful, it will be hard to pull the kids away for our visit of Dinan late afternoon. The boys are really working well as a group learning to adapt, compromise, interact with different personality. This may be the greatest thing they take away from this trip. The counselors are thoroughly enjoying these great kids. Some are obviously less accustomed to groups and to this pace so this day is great for them. They are finding that we are maintaining a fast pace to see everything but of course when asked, don't want to skip anything. They are also having such a great time with their new friends that they would love to have more play time. Some have organized a big beach volleyball tournament while others are building massive sand structure and covering each other with mountains of sand. I will let you guess who' who. Looking forward to the fireworks tonight!!!!!! A bientot, Martine

Sent: Jul 14  
Subject: Update from France

Bonjour

Well, the least I can say is that the French can do fireworks!!!! Last night in Dinan was amazing as Aidan said that it was better than anything he has seen.in Canada and a wholw 20 minutes but tonight....Wow!!!! There were things we had never seen before, even Mark who even knows the names of the different ones. That was GREAT!!!!!! This morning we left Brittany in the rain and 20C weather and after a 3 hours drive arrived in Amboise to 30C and great big sun. We wished for better weather and now we got it. We tried to go to the public pool only to be told that boys must wear speedo for hygiene reasons!!!! The boys were not impressed!!!! So we improvised games in a great big park... Tomorrow it is off to the castles!!!!!! A bientot Martine

Sent: Jul 15  
Subject: Update from France

Bonjour a tous,

Castle country is great!!! Our guide at Chambord was great, Austin exclaimed: It was SO interesting and that resume everyone's thought. The boys were tired today though as the villagers celebrated well into the night doing "queue, leu, leu" right under our windows and small fireworks at 1:30. It was hard to pay attention but the famous escalier avec 2 volees was enough. And then of course the guide talked about Francois 1 and his lion, monkeys, parrots etc.....well!!!! Off to a fancy 3 courses lunch with lots of food but apparently the bread is irresistible and by the time the omelette arrived, they were all full.....oops we still have room for the mousse chocolat for dessert, imagine that!!!! Off to Clos Luce and Leonardo da Vinci. All were fascinated with his philosophical thoughts spread through the castle and the machines but none more than Tyler.... They all ordered their own "glace et boisson" in town after with great confidence!!!!. The huge park near the auberge has been great.....games of octopus seem to never end which gives me time to send this email watching them!!!! Somehow they are not tired anymore!! Our official composers have invented a song/rap for our presentation tomorrow night about who we are and where we went with our show leader Melissa. Apparently it is soooooo cool! They will sing it for me tomorrow and we will try to tape them on the small stage tomorrow. Now, in answer to questions from parents you are welcome to send emails to kids as often as you would like and I will make sure that they read it on a timely fashion on the blackberry, I don't mind at all but do not expect a reply quickly or at all. Some kids like to read them but just don't like to spend the time answering. A bientot Martine

Sent: Jul 16  
Subject: Update from France

It was a long day and it is late so it will be a short one tonight. The kids loved the 2 castles today but CAN NOT wait to go to Paris. They did a GREAT job performing their very cool song tonight and we taped it. It will be in the slide show. They then signed each other's t-shirts and it was a zoo in the hallway. You can barely see the white on the back of the shirts anymore. We also took pictures with the van as we will have to bring them back tomorrow. The boys are ready to walk after climbing Mont St-Michel!!!!

BTW, I don't want to disappoint you but the laundry was rather easy on these boys. The lady at the pressing offered to do it for them only asking that the boys put the clothes in the washing machines. When ask to put his socks on the right side, Wesley exclaimed "What is the point" which summed up everyone's puzzled face!!! A bientot Martine

Sent: Jul 17  
Subject: Update from France

Hello everyone

We conquered the stairs today!!!! After leaving our luggage at the MIJE, we walked to the Notre-Dame cathedral, a short walk from our hotel. We were able to visit the inside of the cathedral and then skipped to the front of the line with our reservation to climb the towers. The boys were very happy with themselves as the line was VERY long. We climbed to what we thought was the top and took countless pictures of the gargoyles and of the view of the Eiffel tower. We pointed the Arc the triomphe and they were a bit worried about how far it was!!!! We then continued on to see the bell which was very impressive. Then as they thought we were done, we pointed the way to the other tower to continue our climb. On we went to the top! Wow the view was something else, well worth the effort. The way down was much easier. We walked to the Tuileries passing in front of the Louvre. We have moved that visit to tomorrow on their request. At the Tuileries we had a glace and chased ducks. The kids were already tire A bientot Martine

Sent: Jul 18  
Subject: Update from france

Hummm, just back from Berthillon which ended up being only a few minutes away from our hotel. I had pink grapefruit cone and Arshia rhubarb and white chocolate and Melissa mango and melon....just samples of the flavors!!!!!! A few kids chose not to come as they did not want to walk anymore but really missed out!! We were treated on the bridge by a great saxophone player!!!! This morning was a very tough wake up call, but they were excited to take the RER and get to Versailles. We were lucky again to have a guided tour by Versailles staff as we were whisked through passages, anti chamber and rooms not normally open to the public. We got to go up in the chapel and sit on the bench where the musician and chorists sit during concerts and masses. Also the gallerie des glaces was reopened and gorgeous!!!! I was most impressed with the gardens of The queen but the boys were most impressed with the toilet where they went against the wall and it was a hole in the floor!!!! They had to go several times!!!! Had  
A small group is now off to the place de la cathedral to see the Eiffel tower light up at 11:00 on Lukas request and then it is up bright and early again tomorrow for the metro and the Eiffel tower. Salut, Martine

Sent: Jul 19  
Subject: Update from France

Today bright and early we were off to the Eiffel tower by subway. We arrived shortly after it opened and found no line ups at the stairs option. Wonder why? A few kids: Mathew, Tyler, Eitan, Alex, Wesley and Lucas asked if they could run the stairs. I said yes smiling but they were the one smiling when I got to the first floor well after them!! A large group of kids decided to join them for the flight between the first and second floor. In all we climbed 700 stairs!!!!!! The elevator to the top was barely a few minutes but the view was fantastic. There was already a lot. Of people at the top but we were able to get a good view and a good picture of the group. Back down and off to the bateau-mouche cruise for a well deserved rest. The boys loved seeing the sights from the water, particularly the statue of Liberty. We then walked on the Alexander III bridge and on to the Invalides after lunch. The guide was great and very knowledgeable. We saw the ancestor of the gun and the canon and saw lots of armor Don't forget to pick up your child at Terminal 3 at 2:20. We will hope that all our luggage make it this time!!! Martine

Sent: Jul 20  
Subject: Update from France

Bonjour, we are at the airport, passed security very quickly (nothing like a bunch of kids to get service). I wanted to let you know that we are planning on a short ceremony with the parents after we exit the luggage area. Can you please plan to give us 15 minutes or so before you leave with my kids....oops your kids. Martine