



Aapo Eerola '18

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Aloha. My name is Aapo. I am 18 years old and I am from Tampere, Finland. I have spent the last two years of my life with amazing friends in the most beautiful place in the world. Attending HPA has been one of the best decisions of my life and I never regret it. I've been able to make friends from 25 different countries. HPA has given me the opportunity to experience many new and different cultures while at the same time to explore a tropical island in the middle of the Pacific Ocean.

My family gave my sister the opportunity to take a year of school abroad. I started to think straight away that I want to do it too. It was 2015 when I started to process my applications to a school located on opposite side of the world. Finally, in 2016 I received a letter from the school, I got accepted! It was the best feeling ever: being able to explore another country and live there for a year. At the same time, I was kind of worried because my English level wasn't the best and I knew that I wasn't able to see my friends and family for a year.

I clearly remember the first moments I stepped onto the HPA campus. Straight away, I felt welcomed and I knew that this is gonna be one of the best choices I ever made. I made plenty of friends on the first day. The HPA community is something special because you are always surrounded by good friends, teachers, and dorm parents. I think the best thing about HPA's community is that everybody is super friendly to you and there is always something going on. The biggest challenge that I was faced with was

the language barrier. Being in the place where everybody is speaking another language and all the academics are also in a different language was a really hard situation in the beginning but I got used to that surprisingly fast and also I felt how my English had improved day by day.

I had a couple of reasons why I chose HPA. The first reason was that I could explore, improve my English and academic level. HPA has given me a great opportunity to work on both of them. There are many choices for what you want to study and there is always a challenge. The second reason I came here was so that I could improve my swimming. HPA has a great athletic program that gives you many different opportunities to choose from. I've been swimming whole my time at HPA but I know that HPA has great teams in other sports such as cross country, track, and soccer. Also, if you are not really into sports you have a chance to join an amazing outdoor program where you get to go all around the island to explore hidden waterfalls, snorkeling into caves and cliff jumping.

Overall, HPA has been a great experience. I have been able to make a lot of new friendships with many people all around the world. Having a chance to live in paradise is something that everyone should do at least once in their life. If you have the opportunity to go and explore the world, I just have to support that, and coming to HPA will be a decision that you will always be glad that you made.

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