

Sightless Children Club Newsletter

Emily's Trip to France

Hello All! My name is Emily Pennington, and about a month and a half ago, my mom, Dee Ann, and I went on an unforgettable trip to Provence, a town in the southeastern part of France. I got to try new foods, learn about creating fragrances, explore some of the Alps, and so much more...

I guess I should back up a little; I mean, this is not an everyday occurrence. Anyway, I'll start at the very beginning. Back in April, my dad was casually browsing the web site of American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) as he often did, when he came across an entry form for a contest. Four blind/visually impaired teens between the ages of 14 and 16 could go to Provence, France. On a trip sponsored by a fast growing perfume company, L'Occitane. This was the only beauty company in the world who put Braille labels on their products, which our family found intriguing, since this is not yet a common practice. On this trip, the teens would participate in several workshops in which they would be taught about the different essential oils in aromatic plants that are used to create fragrances, as well as how to extract them and create said products. They would also be able to tour L'Occitane factory and create their own product in the laboratory! When I heard about the contest, I eagerly filled out and submitted the entry form.

I can't even begin to count the number of times the phone rang, and the entire Pennington household raced for it, listening to the telltale talking Caller ID, then subsiding, crestfallen, back into a sitting position upon realizing that it was some stupid telemarketer calling. At long last, on June 9, I received the much-anticipated call telling me I had been one of the four kids chosen to go. The whole house was ecstatic, especially my mom, since prior to winning, it had been decided that she would be the one accompanying me. Now that the anxiety of not knowing had passed, there came a different sort of anticipation; we began packing and counting down the days to July 26, when we would be leaving for a very memorable adventure.

After what seemed like an endless millennium of waiting, packing, and planning, we were on our way to New York. Once there, we met up with the rest of our group and boarded yet another plane to Nice, France. Now there is a six-hour time difference between France and the US, so when we landed in Nice, what felt like 2:00 AM our time was, in truth 8:00 AM France time. We basically slept-walked through Customs, so needless to say, we were delighted to get some shut-eye on the two-and-a-half hour drive from Nice to Provence, and even more thrilled to check into our hotel and literally sink into the down-filled bedspread on our hotel bed.

If I were given a limitless amount of space with which to create this synopsis, believe me, I'd have a novel on my hands, but this is a newsletter, not Bor-

ders Bookstore. Regardless, I have to tell you about some of the highlights of this trip. During the first couple of days, the other three kids and I participated in the above mentioned workshops, and we learned so much about the many uses of aromatic plants and their essential oils, we had a great instructor, too; her name was Tashka, she was an older French woman, and she did an amazing

job of making the learning experience hands-on since we obviously couldn't learn visually. I really enjoyed all of the things she taught us about different plants, how to distill essential oils, their uses, etc.

We also got to take a tour of the lavender fields, which was an incredible experience. There was row upon row, mile upon mile of lavender, and its scent was carried on the breeze as we were driving through the surrounding area. We explored an area of the Alps, observing the numerous aromatic plants growing in that area. It was the perfect scene for the front of a postcard.

On the last morning in France, our group took the much-awaited tour of the L'Occitane factory, after which we were led off to the laboratory, where the creation of our own shower gels began. I had so much fun measuring out the ingredients, mixing them, and watching my product-my very own product-take shape (and scent, for that matter). The next thing I knew I was holding my very own Cherry Blossom shower gel with a label on the bottle that said, among other things, "Created by Emily Pennington".

Needless to say. Mom and I were almost in ears when the whole thing was over. We'd had an amazing, once-in-a-lifetime experience, and had made a bunch of new friends in our little group. Afterwards, we spent a few days in New York and tool part in some TV and radio satellite interviews, in which we shared our experience. When I look back on it now, it seems so long ago; I keep having to watch the video and look at my shower gel bottle to make sure I wasn't having a wonderful, fragrant dream. But no matter how much time passes, I know I'll never forget it. I'm sure I speak for my mom and the others as well. Anyway, this is Emily Pennington, saying au revoir.



Emily walking through the fields of Lavender in France

Special points of interest:

- Next SCC Meeting will be held on :
- Monday October 20, 2008
- 10 Wilmington Place
- Dayton, Ohio 45420
- 7:00pm



Emily and essential oil teacher Toshka.



Emily and fellow student Brooke in the lab at the L'Occitane factory working on a shower gel product

IT'S ALMOST CHRISTMAS
&
SCC IS HAVING A PARTY

Where:

American Legion
5700 Kentshire Dr.
Kettering, OH 45440
December 7, 2008
1:00-4:00 p.m.

Activities:

Buffet
Games
Crafts
Christmas Karaoke
Santa Clause

Special Speaker to be announced
at a later date

Blind child and parents only.

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RSVP

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Must be in by October 20

Blind child and parents only.

Name: _____

Number of Adults: _____

Number of Children: _____

WISH LIST

(Gifts for Children 18 & younger)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.