

A letter from an aupair to her replacement!

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From: marissa kotze

Sent: 27 October 2003 03:43 AM

To:

Subject: From the 'nanny'

Hi Janelle!

I am Marissa, Sandra and Sonja's current nanny. I am also from South Africa, Pretoria and I was so happy to finally go through a good application! We went through a couple, but they were really awful. I went through your app. and you seem great! Sandra called me from Argentina today, very excited and asked me to go through your file.

We were getting worried there for a while because I'm leaving on the 12th of January and I will need to cross over with the new aupair for at least a week.

I know that you've probably read their family file already, but I think I can add a couple things from my point of view.

This has been such an incredible experience for me. I have met so many wonderful people this year and have been to so many exciting events. Sandra is the chairman of a very prestige show called the Pebble Beach Concours de Elegance. It is one of the worlds best car shows because of the judges, the location, the excellent cars ect. Because of her job she meets and is friends with a lot of important people and even celebrities. We live in Carmel, which is probably one of America's most 'posh' neighbourhoods. It is so safe here. There is no streetlights, no bars in front of the windows, no alarms no nothing - I don't even know how the house key looks!!!! Sonja goes to a very good private school about 15mins. drive from our house. She's a very smart girl and really enjoys her school. She spends 2 days a week with her dad when Sandra is up in San Fransisco (which is only 2hours' drive from Carmel!!) We occasionally go up to the city and spend the weekend at their apartment which is always fun!! I love San Fransisco. Those two days that Sonja's at her dad's I am off and home alone. Sandra and Sonja has a couple great family friends. I help them out with their kids a lot and they always treat you like family. We have a cute little house with a beautiful garden. We have 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, a beautiful kitchen, dining area and living room. We also have a guesthouse on our property were one of Sandra's friends are staying at at the moment. The house is located close to the freeway, but close enough to the heart of Carmel. The beach is about a 10min. walk from our house, which is great!!! This whole coast area is so beautiful with the ocean right next to you were ever you drive on the freeway!

Before I came to America I prepared myself for a year long vacation. This is not a vacation I learned sooner than later. You work alot. You sometimes work long

exhausting hours. You have to be willing to sacrifice a lot of yourself, a lot of your personal space and a lot of your emotions!! BUT! the reward is totally worth it. Sandra's family and the other families that I've met are like family . I have had horrible days and I've had brilliant days. I've worked myself sick for weeks and there were weeks were I didn't work at all! I've been homesick and then times were I wish I didn't have to go back! It all weighs itself out. You just have to make it work for you. And I would do it all over again in a heart beat!

A lot of people tell me how brave I am to be in a foreign country on my own. Now I look back and I really am proud of myself. At the time it didnt seem that big, but once you're here you start to realize how alone you really are. It is a scary feeling but also a very good feeling. As the year goes on you start to realize how responsible you've become, how independant you've become and how mature your getting. It really is a great feeling. Luckily for me I have 2 South African friends that are also au pairs. One in Virginia and one in Pensylvania - both on the East Coast of America. We talk alot on the phone and it makes the homesickness a little bit better. Overall the homesickness was really not a big issue for me. I truly miss all of my friends and family, but I think I was so determined to make this year a success that I didnt even give homesickness a change to get hold of me! My mom visited me in July for my birthday which was amazing. It was so exciting to show her around and to see her. My one friend from Pensylvania is coming to visit me this Saterdag for a week long - I haven't seen her in a year. But life as a nanny can get boring and lonesome, but this was really a year were I learned a lot about myself and realising that being alone is sometimes a good thing.

It is really important for me to know that Sandra and Sonja's getting a good new au pair. It sounds funny, but I am so worried about that. It's only because I love Sonja and Sandra so much and I know how much they rely on the nanny. I went through your file and I really felt good about it. I dont know if you've talked to Sandra yet or what, but I hope that you will end up here in this family! If not, have a fantastic year in America. It is such a wonderful country and to be a nanny and go see everything with the families were so amazing! I'm thankful for it every day!! Best of luck to you Janelle!

Marissa