

# Profile: Sarah Lee Ryan

## Hometown:

Hamilton, New Zealand

## Program:

Work Canada Job Fair

## Length of time spent overseas?

6 months

## Tell us where you lived and what you got up to in Canada?

I lived in Russell, Manitoba at the ski hill Asessippi – it is just that - a hill. Manitoba is super flat, as far as the eye can see. And the temperatures are like nothing I have ever experienced in my life. During mid winter temperatures would drop to minus 40!!!! A wee bit of a climate change to New Zealand winters. But Russell offers things that other places around Canada couldn't. I snowboarded almost every day, if it was quiet at work my boss let me go out for an hour or so and snowboard. I went ice fishing and ate the most amazing fish I have ever had in my life - while getting drunk in a little temporary shack on the middle of a frozen lake. I also went snowmobiling and rode in a yellow school bus to work every day and night.

## Type of job?

Bartender.

## What are some of the experiences that you had which made an impact on you?

The experiences that made the biggest impact on me were the smallest things that I didn't realise at the time were having such a huge impact. The friendships I made with the Russell locals had the biggest impact. Russell is a small town where everyone knows everyone and it's not hard to make friendships that last a lifetime. Unlike the larger resorts where you hang out with hundreds of people everyday and most of them are Kiwis or Aussies, in Russell there are only about 45 of you and the rest are Canadians. Christmas, New Years and Valentines Day - the days that were the hardest to be away from home. The locals all came together to make us feel welcome, and always had a spare hug or two.



## What is something unexpected/different/strange about Canada compared with other places you have lived?

They don't have reduced cream to make onion soup dip!! The hardest thing to get used to in Russell was the temperature, you literally could not go outside without being bundled up or you would get frost bite. It made going to the supermarket so hard! There were days that the wind-chill would be -50 and the ski hill couldn't open.

## Do you have any advice for someone who wants a Canadian adventure?

My biggest piece of advice that I learned was; go to Canada with no expectations, open your mind to new experiences, leave your New Zealand life at home, don't skype every two minutes, meet the locals and have some fun! The reason you travel is to soak everything up. I left early because I had a boyfriend at home. Now I wish I never had, and someone had told me at the time that this was going to be one of those life changing experiences that you can't go back and re-do - especially now because me and the boy have broken up and you can only apply for one working holiday program visa for Canada.



WORKING ADVENTURES WORLDWIDE

Did you have a good experience going on Work Canada Job Fair with IEP and did you feel supported by them?

I did have a good experience; they were very supportive and helped out a lot. We were the first group to go to Russell, so there were a few hiccups along the way. But IEP was very understanding and has worked together with Asessippi to make it the real "Canadian" experience for travellers.

Your Top 3 memories?

- 1) Ice Fishing in Manitoba.
- 2) Snow Boarding in Fernie.
- 3) Walking home at night in fresh snow.

Did you have a good experience going on Work Canada with IEP/SWAP and did you feel supported by them?

I think overall in hindsight yes I did feel supported by them.

Must do's in Canada?

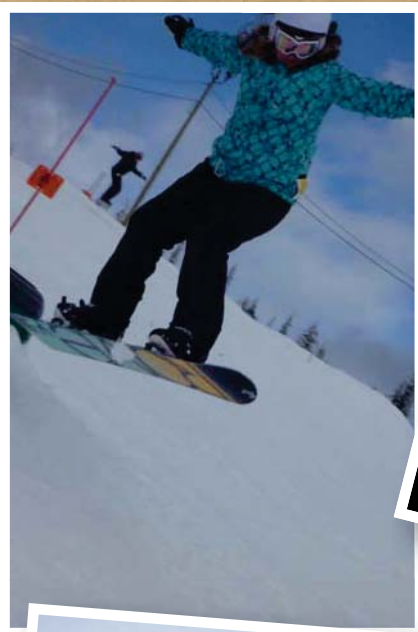
- Visit Whistler!!! The sheer size of it will blow your mind.
- Drink paralyzers - spiced rum milk and coke. They sound gross but they warm you up like nothing else.
- Go Dog Sledding and Snowmobiling - worth every cent.
- Go to Edmonton Mall - it has a rollercoaster inside the mall.
- Go to Banff, there is wildlife everywhere. You can't get much closer to Moose and Deer than you can in Banff.
- Learn how to say 'eh' at the end of every sentence.
- Go Ice-skating on Lake Louise.

What did you find valuable in going to Canada on an IEP program?

The support when you arrive in Vancouver, that first day is scary, but IEP sets everything up for you!

What next or where to next for you?

More travel!! I am going to get my dive license and do another ski season in Europe hopefully, and fingers crossed find a job that involves travel on the way.



WORKING ADVENTURES WORLDWIDE