

# Profile: Braedan De Lange



## Hometown:

Hastings/Wellington, New Zealand

## Program:

Work USA Plus

## Length of time spent overseas?

I spent 7 months living in New York city although I had intended to stay for a year.

## Tell us about where you lived and what you got up to in the USA?

I spent my time living in a neighborhood called Ridgewood which is split between the boroughs of Brooklyn and Queens in New York City. I found a job working for J.C. Penney a few blocks from Times Square with the Empire State building right outside of the front door. As well as living in New York City and experiencing all the wonders that that city has I also made several trips out side of the city including a trip by train to a small town in Michigan stopping in Albany and Saratoga Springs along the way. I also got to see Washington D.C. where I saw everything from the White House and the Lincoln Memorial to the Smithsonian museum of Natural History. Before leaving the USA I also went and had a tour of a small Amish community in Pennsylvania.

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

I think the main experience that I had that made an impact on me was the fact that in New York there is a chance to meet people from all over the world which opened my eyes to many different ideas, beliefs and cultures. A particular example of this was my landlord who lived downstairs who had immigrated to New York from the Ukraine. On many occasions we would stop and discuss the differences between NZ, USA and Ukraine. Also, he or his wife would often too bring up traditional Ukrainian meals and snacks for us and it must be said that it was quite delicious!

## Were there any times that were hard?

There were definitely times that were hard however they were definitely well and truly outnumbered by the good times!

## Must do's?

The list of must dos in New York is a list that could go on and on, but some of my favorite things there was definitely Central Park; I spent so much time there and still didn't see it all. Coming from NZ time Square is a must as well. There is also a little bakery down in SOHO that I would suggest any one in the city to go too called Babycakes. They make the most delicious cup cakes I've ever had and the amazing thing is they are Vegan! Once you bite into them you would not believe it, the only word that can be used is AMAZING!

There is so much more though that could be added; New York Pizza slices are something else that needs to be experienced; China Town is a fun place to explore as well.

## What kind of work have you done?

During my time in New York I worked for J.C. Penney, as a sales associate in the mens department.

## How did you find employment in the USA ?

I found that the best way for me to find employment in the USA was by using Craigslist and just get you CV to as many places as you can



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

Having only lived in New Zealand I found the size of the place the hardest thing to get used to both in the actual physical size as well as the number of people. It did take a while to get used to using the subway and there were many occasions in the first month or so where I would get of and be completely disorientated but fortunately the numbered streets solved this pretty quickly.

Has working in the USA benefited your career work experience?

I have just been through the Interview process again here in New Zealand and have found that one of the biggest assets I have is having spent time living in another country. It seems that the fact that I stepped out of my comfort zone and found job and a place to live in a completely different country seems to be something that is a positive attribute to employers.

What did you find valuable in going to USA with IEP?

As this was my first time traveling I found IEPs help to be very important for me right from the get go. This included arranging the visas and consulate interviews, to answering any questions that I had while I was over there.

What is your advice for someone who wants an American adventure?

The best advice I could give would be to just do it once you have committed to it you wont regret it!

Where to next?

Im working in Wellington at the moment and making the most of staying put for a while. Definitely putting money asside to start saving to travel a bit more hopfully; Asia, India, Europe ans I would love to return to the USA and see everyone I met there.

