

Butler University Exchange Program

In Semester 2, 2008, the Faculty hosted three students from Butler University studying Early and Middle Childhood Education: **Keddy Binder, Missy Bittles and Casey Adams**. Butler University is an independent, coeducational, liberal arts and sciences university founded in 1855 in Indianapolis. Poppy caught up with the three students on 23 September.



What attracted you to study in Australia and at the University of Tasmania?

Keddy: I want to teach internationally, so gaining experience teaching in a different country as a student is a good opportunity. The program came up through Butler – it is our University's first overseas partnership.

Casey: I wanted to travel and learn about different places.

Missy: I was keen to visit Australia!

What have you enjoyed most?

The greatest part of our experience has been adjusting to a different culture – it was hard at first. You have to learn quickly to fend for yourself; you have to grow up quickly.

What were the biggest cultural differences?

Casey: The way you hold your fork and your knife! It isn't the big things but the little things that are different, like the words and the way you get around. At first glance, everything seems to be the same. That is what made it hard at first. It was deceptive because Australia seemed similar but is quite different to our home country.

Keddy: I like the way Professional Experience is set up here. You get a lot of experience in first and second and third year – and not just in final year.

What are your professional goals?

Missy: I want to teach overseas and do primary counselling.

Keddy: I want to teach overseas and go back to school overseas and get a degree in secondary teaching or social work.

Casey: I want to go back to school and get reading specialist degree (Masters).

What experiences do you think you have had here that will help you in your professional life back home?

Missy: I feel like we are now capable of handling almost anything in a professional setting. We have all had prac experiences that were more challenging than at home because we didn't have our support networks.

Keddy: I have had to learn to rely on myself.

Casey: I am now a lot more independent – I was very much a homebody before but this experience has changed that.

Missy: The experience we have had here teaches you a lot about yourself, that you might not have known otherwise.

Keddy: It is the greatest experience you could have at our age, so if you have the opportunity, you should go for it!

Any advice to other students coming from Butler?

Keddy: Have faith in yourself – don't be afraid to take any opportunity. Don't hold back.

Missy: Don't be afraid to reach out in terms of getting support and assistance from people in Australia who can help you.

Casey: Try vegemite!

Has there been enough support offered to you here?

Casey, Missy, Keddy: Yes.

Other comments

Casey, Missy, Keddy: Thank you for the experience. We appreciate all the support as well as the opportunity to be here. Everyone has been very flexible.