

*In this blog, Kiara looks back at her time in Cambridge on our 2015 summer program:*

Spending three weeks living in Cambridge with Reach was undoubtedly one of the most incredible experiences I've ever had, and one that even months on I'm still reeling from.

First and foremost, Cambridge is an unbelievably beautiful historical city. One of my favourite parts of the program was being given plenty of time to explore the cobblestone alleyways and bustling streets alike. Almost every day we were given free time to spend in town, and not only was this a great way to independently delve into the feel of the city, but it was also a heap of fun to spend lunch breaks out with friends, afternoons milling through antique bookshops or the marketplace, and nights enjoying a walk around the calm streets.

Studying at Reach was also a great chance to gain experience in a subject that interests you, or one that you might consider taking further at university. For me, being a part of the Law course was a chance to gain a basic knowledge in several fields of the law. At school it can be difficult to work out what university study is like, or what might interest you – at Reach, you get a snapshot of that experience. Studying Law reassured me that legal studies was something I want to pursue, and allowed me to return home with greater certainty about what I want to study in the future. ✖

On a less serious note, weekends at Reach are dedicated to excursions and activities, which are undoubtedly one of the most fun parts of the program. The sunny coast of Brighton, the birthplace of Shakespeare in Stratford-upon-Avon and the Big Smoke itself, London, are just a few of the amazing daytrips I got the chance to attend. But my favourite activity took place in Cambridge itself – punting down the River Cam. Despite some initial fears about falling off the back of the punt, this was a hilarious and memorable experience, attempting to navigate the water traffic whilst avoiding trees, bridges and nearby punters! I can't think of a better way to spend a few hours than punting up and down the river with friends, taking in the stunning college scenery.

✖ Last but certainly not least, I came away from Reach knowing dozens of new people from all over the world. Classmates, roommates and college residents in Cambridge have turned into amazing friends even after the program has finished. There has never been an easier time to keep in touch with people from every corner of the globe, and I know that I personally have adored getting to know so many new and diverse people from backgrounds and countries so different to

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my own. Though I miss all of my 'Cambridge friends' (a phrase used near-daily!) so much, I've reaped the rewards of having met and spent time with them, and know that the bonds made during the summer will last for many years to come.

I would encourage anyone considering attending a Reach program to seize the opportunity. Why spend a summer sitting at home when you can travel, study what you love, meet new people and experience the most incredible kind of independence imaginable? Not a day has gone by where I haven't missed Cambridge and the people I met there, and I know that we all went home with memories and experiences to last a lifetime.

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