



Sará Gebauerová '19, Prague, Czech Republic

“At VES I found out what I am capable of.”

The choice to attend boarding school can be a daunting one—particularly when that choice means traveling to a new country to do so. What will this new community be like? What will you learn? What new challenges will you face? After returning to Prague following her year studying in the United States, Sará looks back at her experiences at VES.

VES Became My Second Home

Though initially nervous about going to boarding school, Sará quickly found that there was nothing to worry about. Friendly faces and open arms—of both faculty and students—welcomed her from the moment she stepped onto campus.

“When I first came to VES, I was little bit scared—unsure and even worried about how I would make it, but I was welcomed with open arms. Everyone was so friendly, nice, kind and interested in me. I also could

not asked for better dorm parents. They were willing to help me with school work or just hang out with me. It was really different to live on campus than at home, but everyone did their best to make me feel comfortable, and VES became my second home.”

On Academics and Hands-on Learning

Learning in a new style, in a second language can always be an adjustment, but through engaging projects and activities and support from faculty and peers, Sará’s time at VES was a powerful learning experience.

“The teachers are so helpful. We had so much fun in class and my classmates also supported me. It is amazing how each class is so different. I got to experience many different ways to learn information and to apply that learning in new and relevant ways.”



On Time Spent Outside the Classroom

Prior to VES, Sará had not participated in the athletic offerings available at VES. Her school peers recommended she try field hockey—a predominantly male sport in Europe, but very popular for girls in the United States. Field hockey coach Elizabeth Blaum invited Sará to come to practice just to see if it would be a good fit.

“All the girls were so kind and nice to me, even though I did not know how to play field hockey at all. After each practice I felt improvement and I even got to the point where I felt comfortable playing in games, which were an amazing part of the field hockey season. I got to know all the girls well and we became a great team. I made a lot of incredible memories.”

On Becoming a Confident, Independent Young Adult

Reflecting back on her time at VES, Sará realized that she was able to achieve more than she ever imagined.

“Because I felt really supported by all the people around me, I became much more confident. I had never lived without my parents and suddenly I had to live alone. I had to solve all my problems and needs. I was unsure at first, but I did it. I learned how to communicate with other people and how to get what I need. I found out what I am capable of.”

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