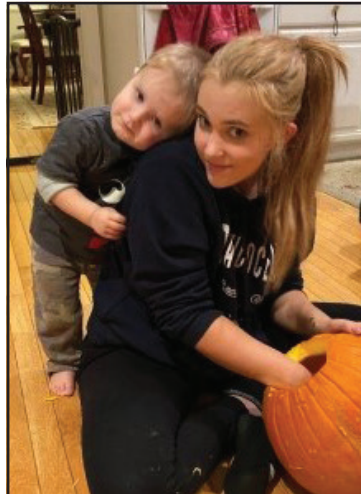


## 2023 EurAupair Au Pair Of The Year Winner

By Au Pair Michell Lourens, South Africa with the Lassiter Family in New Hope, PA

“One of my favorite movie quotes is “Happiness is inside of all of us, sometimes, you just need someone to help you find it.” That is truly how I can describe my journey with my host family. I am deeply humbled and extremely grateful to be nominated as Au Pair of the Year! I have always known that I wanted to help kids with difficulties in communicating and the Lassiter-McDonagh’s (my Family) has helped me strive towards that goal. If it’s not shadowing in the community on how to positively impact autism kids or being able to participate in intense



training for selective mutism, they are always there, willing to help!

I am extremely grateful for the knowledge I am acquiring every single day by being part of this incredible family and seeing that every day, we as a family are striving to help each other. My host mom describes us as a pit-crew, “In NASCAR when a race car needs to be fixed, its tires replaced, or its gas refilled, the pit crew makes all those adjustments while the race is still going on. This helps the driver finish in the best way

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### About Us...

EurAupair Intercultural Child Care Programs is a non-profit, public benefit organization designated by the U.S. Department of State to conduct the Au Pair cultural exchange program under the Fulbright Hays Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961 and is intended “to promote mutual understanding between the people of the United States and other countries by means of educational and cultural exchanges”.

### Would You Like to Contribute?

If you would like to contribute to the EurAupair Gazette, please email [info@euraupair.com](mailto:info@euraupair.com). We would love to hear from our Host Families, Au Pairs, Community Counselors, Area Coordinators and Partners.



**EurAupair Intercultural Child Care Programs**  
 250 North Coast Highway  
 Laguna Beach, CA 92651 USA  
 Tel: 949/494-5500  
 E-mail: [info@euraupair.com](mailto:info@euraupair.com)  
 Web: [www.euraupair.com](http://www.euraupair.com)

## An Experience That Has Changed My Life

By Au Pair María Victoria Sandia from Venezuela in Spring Lake, MI



I have a bachelor’s degree in mass communication. So, I decided to come to America to improve my language skills and become bilingual. As a professional in communications with a specialization in journalism, having a second language is a competitive skill.

I called my 2 1/2 years the big adventure. Adventure is a word that involves a lot. It’s the sequence of exciting and tense actions. Everything can happen. But at the end of my path I learned a lot. I learned how to say no and what my limits are, I had a lot of fun. I truly had a ton of really unique experiences full of love, specially from my host kids. Today I am a totally different human.

I took care of 4 kids, by that time they were 9 months old, 4 years old, 6 years old and 10 years old. I really love to make breakfast for them, pick them up and drop

them off to school and extra school activities. I also really enjoy having them during the Covid lock down. I enjoyed doing homework with them. Being an Au Pair in Michigan is amazing; you have the opportunity to do a lot of things during every season. It’s really hard to tell what season was my favorite with them. Because all of them were my favorites. Winter because we could go sledding, build snowmen, do a snow war, enjoy the snow storms, build snow sculptures, or make snow angels. Spring because we found bird nests and we really enjoy seeing blue jay eggs or making crafty bird feeders. Summer because we could go for really long hikes, play in the playgrounds, go to the museum, to the splash pad, play with the neighbors, do races, ride bikes, paint faces, jump the rope, skateboarding, roller skating, fishing and catching worms. And finally fall because we could play with the leaves.

You know the phrase “patience is a virtue” well you will have the opportunity to learn that. This experience in my life showed me a

lot about patience and resilience. Discipline and constancy. All of those wise values are my life stones to build the base of my adulthood. And also to believe in the process of life. Also, understand that we are not perfect, that we can make mistakes and learn from them. And to understand that nothing is personal. Why am I saying this? Because the adventure of being an Au Pair includes sometimes ups and downs. I remember myself crying many nights because I really missed my friends and family so much. But I got this! I made it and all those feelings are completely normal. And is way better when you let them be and follow the flow. Homesickness is completely normal.

Hey Au Pair that you are reading this article: you got this! You are not alone! And once you are an Au Pair, you always are an Au Pair. The way that you will see the world after this wonderful experience will be tremendously full of caring, kindness, gratitude and resilience. Don’t give up and always focus on your personal goals.

# EurAupair Photos

## Monthly Activities



*Ice Skating at a Winter Festival in Philadelphia and the Au Pairs made s'mores*



*Indiana fall festival!  
Left to Right: Loana Rojas Calderon (Argentina); Laura Rong Mello (Brazil);  
Louane Ferreira (France); Marlene Alberti (Germany).*



*Apple Hill Orchard in Morganton, WV for our cultural meeting in October.  
Left Paola from Mexico, right Maria from Spain.*



*Fujiyama for some Hibachi with CC Henriette Burger*



*Three Cedars Farm in Northville, MI (pumpkin patch, Halloween store, cider etc.)  
From left to the right Sharon (Argentina); Daniela (Mexico); Ruth (Brazil);  
Anacarla (Venezuela); Bea (Spain); Jennifer (Brazil)*



*November event at the botanical gardens  
in Atlanta, GA for the garden lights*

# EurAupair Photos

## Monthly Activities



CC Gisella and her au pairs Ana from Mexico and Fai from Thailand after Yoga Class in Laurel Township, NJ



CC Ana Preston at Great Falls, VA, from the left: Valerie from South Africa, Anna from Hungary, Lilou from France, Niza from Mexico, Mod from Thailand, Andrea and Laura from Venezuela and Maria from Spain



At Hurts Donuts in Denver, CO, from the left: Lucia from Argentina, CC Henriette, Juliana from Argentina and Nopparat from Thailand



Au pair Leslie from Mexico, Iyares from Thailand, their CC Annie, au pair Kaylin from South Afrika, Rattanaporn from Thailand and Angie from Colombia on a trip to Hammond's Candy Factory in Denver, CO.



Secret Santa and s'mores (first time for Johana) in Atlanta, GA! Liebe's family was kind enough to host!



Lake Hollywood Park in Los Angeles, CA: Sofia from Colombia, Eugenia, Yamile and Agustina from Argentina, CC Jessica and CC Gisella, Rocio from Spain, Karla from Dominican Republic, Mayulie from Thailand and Adriana from Mexico

## 2023 EurAupair Au Pair Of The Year Winner

...Continued from front page

possible". Exactly as described above, as a family we are a pit-crew, when things are on rocky services, we work together to feel human and to find our bearings again, by making adjustments while life continues on. Supporting every step of the way. I am privileged to be part of this pit-

crew. We are reinventing ways every day to support the boys' journey in overcoming selective mutism.

Being part of the Lassiter-McDonagh family has been an incredible journey, from Halloween pumpkin carving to seeing baby turtles rescued on the beach. I will not trade a day for anything! Reading my nomination letter and hearing all the beautiful things said made my heart melt. The relationships built

here is forever- the words my host mom used on our first interview was "I want to have a relationship where I will be part of your wedding, I want to be there!" And that's the reason I signed up for this program, to build long lasting relationships like this one. This Au Pair program has given me the opportunity to become a better me and to be able to say wow! "I have made a difference today!" 1 page is too little to describe this

entire journey. I have been blessed beyond measure!

Thank you for reading my letter and experiencing this journey with me. I have made so many memories that I will cherish forever! Thank you EurAupair for this program! "The journey between what you once were and who you are now becoming is where the dance of life really takes place." – Barbara De Angelis."

# Superhero Au Pair Michéll Saves The Day Every Day!

By Lassiter Family, New Hope, PA

Maya Angelou once said, "I think a hero is any person really intent on making this a better place for all people." A hero is truly the best way to describe the abilities (superpowers) of Michéll and the Au Pair program to positively influence our family and community. Michéll, a native of South Africa, has embraced American culture, become an integral member of our family, and volunteers and shadows in the local community working to support kids with Autism and selective mutism, all of which is why we feel she would be a perfect candidate for Au Pair of the Year Award. Michéll is truly a superhero, supporting our family like a team member and a role model for our kids and our family. She has our back every day and often volunteers to help us in her off hours when we have long and hectic days coordinating three active kids. We first discovered Michéll had superpowers when Ethan and Aidan, our two older sons, needed support to overcome selective mutism and work on their brave voices. Selective mutism is an anxiety disorder whereby a child is unable to speak in

select social settings.

Michéll was able to use her talents of working with children and the skills she has acquired by the volunteering and shadowing she does with local occupational therapists to understand the unique situations of working with children with selective mutism. With these skills Michéll learned on her own, she was able to bring back critical knowledge to support Ethan and

just think kids with selective mutism are shy but if proper steps are taken and awareness is given, children with selective mutism can speak in public situations.

Without a single hesitation, Michéll rose up to the challenge to learn the techniques needed to encourage brave voices and be able to support the teachers behind the scenes to coach them on how to keep communication open with



Ethan and Aidan. Michéll was able to communicate her observations with the therapists and teachers and help us coordinate a 'pit crew' for Ethan and Aidan so we can come up with best practices of working with Ethan and Aidan to overcome selective mutism across all 29 different teachers, speech therapists and professionals we work with each week.

Aidan overcome their challenges.

With every person we meet, Ethan and Aidan need a proper warm up strategy or they can become completely non-verbal in public situations and shut down to avoid the situation. Many teachers and community members usually

Thanks to Michéll's efforts, Ethan and Aidan talk to all of their teachers and participate verbally in all their classes with their peers. Michéll also participated in research studies and worked with the top professors at La Salle and Florida International University and was never afraid to ask questions to

better understand and share with professors some of her techniques to eliminate communication barriers.

During the short time, Michéll has embraced the American cultural exchange and with our family she has completed a 30-mile bike ride, skied down a mountain, did scuba diving and also visited numerous National Parks with our family. She is now a key part of our family peloton and teaches our kids to be active every day and work on their brave voices! Michéll is family and our gratitude can't be expressed enough with this letter as she has had a positive impact in our lives and shown us that superheroes really



do exist. Michéll will always have our back at the end of the day even with a hectic crazy life. We believe that Michéll deserves this award because of her dedication to excellence and being an active role model to our children and making our family a little bit better each day. Thank you for reading about our family's superhero letter of candidacy for Au Pair of the Year Award.

## Recipe Corner

Tortillas de Patata from Au Pair Rebeca Guirao, Spain

### Ingredients:

- 5 small sized potatoes
- 1 medium sized onion
- 6 eggs

### Directions:

1. Wash, peel and dice the potatoes so all the pieces are the same approximate size. Then, add salt and cut the onion in julienne strips.
2. Heat olive oil in a pan. When it is hot, add the potatoes and the

onion and cook on a low heat covering the pan. Stir them so that they don't stick.

3. Meanwhile, beat the eggs in a big bowl and add salt.

4. When the potatoes are soft, add them with the onion to the big bowl, draining the oil, and mix everything.

5. Take another pan and add 3 tablespoons of olive oil. When the

oil is hot, add the mixture of the bowl to the pan.

6. Cook it on a low heat covering the pan.

7. When you see that the eggs are cooked, flip the tortilla using a plate. Wait until the other side is cooked.

8. You can flip it as many times as you need.

9. READY TO EAT! In Spain, we usually serve the "tortilla" with some bread with oil and tomato spread on top, some cheese and cold cuts.

