

Dear Rotary Family,

My goodness it's incredible how time flies! We are almost at the end of our first term and the assessments are looming. My first few months here have been more than I could have dreamed. I am so fortunate to have not only landed in the perfect program for me future career goals, but also surrounded by people who embody the purest forms of kindness and altruistic ambition. I don't even know where to start this recap!

I am so very grateful for it all – the coursework that I hoped to be engaged in, the professors and mentors who take the time to shepherd me, the space to explore new interests and hobbies. London very much feels like home now. The routines have been established, the favourite cafes have been pinned down, the gym routine refined, and the community expanding! The long hours of lectures, seminars and reading have been spotted with day trips to explore England, long walks around the city, pastry tastings at the local markets, and hosting friends over for special holidays. My flatmate and I hosted Diwali and Thanksgiving this year! The house very much feels like a home when you get to feed people you love.

Outside of school, I have been taking boxing and dance classes! Friends, it is so hard and so much fun! It's quite funny because as someone who has been powerlifting for almost a decade, I walked into the boxing lessons thinking it would be 'no big deal' – boy, was I wrong. It has been an incredible and wanted challenge. How fortunate I am to get the opportunity to push myself in new ways!

Now we are settling into the English winter. The skies become darker earlier and the days grow wetter – my little African heart is taking it's time to adjust. But London really does dress up for Christmas so the lights, special markets, and warm beverages do wonders to make the weather manageable.

I am so grateful for all that I have been able to see and do, yet I know there is so much more to explore! My Rotary family, I could not possibly thank you enough. I know this year isn't even half way over but even now it has been an unparalleled experience. There are seemingly small moments gathered over the past 10 weeks that I am still working to properly digest – passing conversations, small segments of readings, mini revelations on long walks through a bustling city, brief spaces of self-reflection. I suppose this is as crucial a part of this experience as the degree program. Thanks to your support, kindness, and guidance – I am finding room to become a fuller version of myself. Please know that I fully intend to use all that I have gathered (hard skills in course work, and soft ones in fringes of time around) to be a more competent servant leader. Thank you for making this dream a reality.

With warmth,
Aanchal

PS. Photos below!



One of my favourite reading spots (weather permitting!) – It's an old church that suffered bombing during the world war. Now it's a public garden!



London exploring with a friend from school who I know I will be keeping for life.



My goodness, I am so grateful to be here every day!



A few scenes from the Diwali + birthday celebrations at my flat. Having only spent a few weeks in London at the time, I am beyond grateful to have been able to celebrate such a special holiday (and my birthday!) with so many new friends!



A day trip to Bath with school friends during reading week.



Traditional afternoon tea with more people I love!



Scenes from Thanksgiving! Neither I nor my flatmate had ever hosted a Thanksgiving meal before and I am so proud that we were able to pull it off – even with a nonfunctioning kitchen sink (we washed our dishes in the bathtub!). It was a lovely evening.

