

I'm happy to share my views on my son's experience with the Rassias Spanish Language Summer Program. In a word, it was fantastic. From the initial interview and discussion with Bill Miles, my son, Luc, felt that the trip was going to be a very secure and supportive experience. The personal attention paid to Luc as an individual was reassuring and provided the support and framework for an excursion that would prove to be a liberating and mind-opening educational adventure.

The communication and planning by Bill and the team was thorough and professional. We always felt that the Rassias team had a wealth of experience not only in arranging student travel programs but also that they had personal connections with the sites and contacts in the Spanish locales they were to visit. At the drop-off at the airport, the chaperones were well-organized, warm, easy-going, and friendly. I think both parents and students immediately felt as though the trip was starting off on the right foot. It seems critical at this age to set the right tone of respect, independence, and support.

The Rassias language study techniques are well known and have a world-wide reputation of effective, engaging classroom lessons and they were a great catalyst in the development of Luc's Spanish competency. Luc already had been doing very well in Spanish honors classes at his school and consequently had fairly advanced grammatical skills and vocabulary. But as we all know, learning a language in the classroom can be quite different from speaking and conversing with native speakers in a real life situation. The Rassias techniques were the perfect method for loosening up the students in terms of language skills as well as engaging them socially by building bonds and relations within the group. Luc made great strides in his conversational Spanish skills. He mentioned the great feeling he had when, one day half way through the trip, he realized that he was no longer translating in his head, but was simply listening and speaking directly in Spanish.

Luc's experience during the home stay was particularly rich. His hosts were warm and supportive but not at all over-bearing. The hosts were Professors at the University in Gijon and the home was clean, comfortable, and inviting. Luc really enjoyed the great food that the hosts prepared. He was granted independence and encouraged to use the local transit system to move about town freely.

Luc is not an extrovert in any sense, but he was able to make strong social connections with his fellow travelers and had a great time meeting his friends in town independently each night and visiting the various shops and sights of the city. The sense of self-reliance and independence that he gained is one of the benefits that I most highly value from this great opportunity. I think Luc

sees himself and the world in a different way, which is the most I think one can hope for.

I hope this helps as you make your decision for your son. As you can tell, I recommend the Program with great enthusiasm and no reservations.