

Hi, my name is Jan Bongwald and I had the pleasure to attend Whakatane High School for more than a year as an international exchange student, and it was an amazing and incomparable experience. In the last year, I did not only improve my English quite a lot, I also got involved with a new, unique culture, rowed successfully at different national competitions and last of all, I got to know a whole bunch of special people, many of them became good friends and a few I can now call my second family.

Whakatane High School was from the start on a place where I always enjoyed to be, because I felt welcomed by teachers, staff and students which helped me to integrate into my new environment. Many of my unforgettable memories were made here at this school. Either at athletics or swimming sports day, one of the trips I did with my classes or the international's group or just all the great games of P's and A's and some good banter during Interval or lunch break in the Art room, all of those moments made my time here special and I am happy to look back at them.

One of my favourite parts of my exchange was for sure all the time I dedicated for my rowing career. Early mornings, hot afternoons and uncountable ups and downs were only one part of my journey to represent Whakatane High School at the Maadi Cup, the national secondary schools rowing championships in Twizel. The hard work eventually paid off with a silver medal in the U18 coxed quadruple scull that I competed in with the legendary Jenkins-Brothers...Lenny, Elliott and Finn, coached by Whakatane High Alumni Matt Hill and Graham Watt.

All in all I have to say, my time here was absolutely amazing and I want to thank everyone who made my time here so special, especially Lena and Karl, the Jenkins Family and the internationals department.
Kia Whakatane Ahau!









