

PROMYS

Early in 2014, I heard about an opportunity being offered by the Clay Mathematics Institute for twelve students from across Europe to participate in the Program in Mathematics for Young Scientists (PROMYS), a six week programme run at the University of Boston for high schoolers with a passion for mathematics. The application process required me to complete a set of ten maths problems (which was fun), and writing a personal statement (which was less so). Still, I managed to get my application in on the morning of the deadline, not really thinking I had a chance, but then after a month or so wait and a telephone interview with a European alumnus of the programme I found out that I had gotten a place.

I spent six weeks at the university with Europeans and American students. Contrary to the format of many mathematics programmes, the focus at PROMYS is not on being taught material, but on allowing students to discover ideas for themselves. We had an hour lecture on number theory every morning, which served not to introduce new material, but to review what we had done for ourselves in problem sets over the past few days. Indeed, prior to arrival all of us were sent 'problem set 0' to complete, so that we would have something to talk about in lecture for the first few days.

Over the course of the six weeks we progressed from humble beginnings towards far more significant ideas that most of had not before been exposed to. By the end of the programme, I had learnt a significant amount, and had matured as a mathematician. The community at PROMYS was supportive and friendly, and the opportunity to have a free six week long holiday in Boston was pretty great also. After leaving our peers in the states, me and the other European students travelled to Oxford for a week long course on Topology and Metric spaces put on by the Clay Mathematics Institute.

I am extremely grateful to the Clay Mathematics Institute and PROMYS programme for making my summer both one of the most fun and productive I have ever had, and would recommend to anybody interested in mathematics that they should attempt to get involved in the programme. There were talks of starting up another version of PROMYS run at Oxford for European students, and if such a thing is established then it would be a great opportunity for any aspiring mathematicians.

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