



## **United Space School - Hermine Bourdon**

- Elaine      Back in our June programme I spoke to Hermine Bourdon who was off to spend July in a very exciting place - the United Space School in Houston.
- So Hermine what was your first impression when you arrived?
- Hermine    So first I was very nervous like to leave my parents and go in America it's very far and so when we landed there were already like that people who were organising it very well so there were the two main teachers who were here to get us. So we went in a van and we went to a house which is the house of one of the house families our house mum and she's called like mummy by everybody because she really takes care of all the students. We are in a room and so where there were a lot of other people, yeah, from the Space School who have just come here, uh, and who are waiting for their house families to get them. This time I was really nervous because like everybody was, lots of people were already there and speaking and getting altogether in English and I wasn't very well I was like speaking English the first time and I am really shy so I didn't know what to say. So first I was really nervous and so then we went to our house families and I was with my room mate and we are only two so it was much better and I could speak to her and we already became friends and our house family was very nice.
- Elaine      So how many students were there and where were they from?
- Hermine    So we are forty-eight there were people mostly from America, so Canada, United States, Central America, so Mexico and Costa Rica and South America, so also Bolivia, Colombia, Chile, Argentina and then from Europe, so we had Wales, Scotland, England, Ireland, Isle of Man too and France and Italy and Germany too then New Zealand and Australia.
- Elaine      So you..., I understand from what you were saying earlier that you were divided into teams?
- Hermine    Yeah, so before coming we had work to do and then we had interviews to determine in which teams we will go. So first we had to ask for one team and so I had asked for a green team and blue team which was like a house of the astronauts in habitat and blue team it was like exploration, so that's what interested me the most but there were a lot other people who had applied for green team. But finally I was selected for green team so that was very well and yes there were 5 teams. Green team was habitat, yellow team was

mission controls, um, red team they were constructing the rocket and how they would get from Earth orbit to Mars orbit then, uh, maroon team was like the landing from Mars orbit to surface of Mars and then blue team, exploration of Mars.

Elaine So what would you do on a typical day? How would that work out?

Hermine And so we would wake up like.. sol would wake up a six because I have a lot of... I need a lot of time to get ready and then we would leave at seven-thirty because the day began at seven-forty-five, so it is.., it's early but it was OK. We had like break-out rooms it was called and we would go there, work together so we had computers and everything. Then we had a lot of speakers coming to tell us about what we had to do. People who were involved in space and everything and then we would... the day would finish at five pm and we often had afterwards like activities so we went to the pool or..

Elaine Now were there any language problems?

Hermine At the beginning, for me, there was great problems because I hadn't spoken English during the holidays before I came so it was a little weird for me to have to speak English like all the time and then it was becoming easier and easier and then it was not a problem any more.

Elaine So what did you have to prepare as a final presentation?

Hermine Um, so the final presentation was about our trip to Mars so all the teams had to prepare one part and so would present everything to everybody and then we would answer questions from the teachers and then we had to prepare a song, the yellow team did 'Do you want to build a snowman' from Frozen, they put 'Do you want to build a space ship' and it was funny because there was a Mexican boy and a Russian boy who were doing like dance and it was really funny so yes everyone was making funny things in the songs so it was really good.

Elaine So what would you say, what would you say was your most memorable impression of this whole experience?

Hermine Oh that's hard because what I liked most was getting with other people from all these countries and seeing that we were so different but we are so similar too.

Elaine Well it's been absolutely fascinating. We were thinking about you and it's good to see that you are safely back down to earth. Very firmly now back at school with your studies which I believe you are specialising in maths.

Hermine Yes, but then I want to study Medicine as well.

Elaine      Very best of luck and I'm absolutely certain that this experience will be very valuable in contributing to your future career. Thank you.

Hermine    Thank you.