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Lublin

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International Relations

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Lublin's Partner and Friend Cities

<https://lublin.eu/en/lublin/international-relations/lublins-partner-cities/erie,9107,w.html>



Name: **Partnership agreement**

Signing a contract: **26.04.1999**

Population: **Population: 108,000**

"Erie in my eyes"

September 2002 became a milestone in my life. Thanks to the partnership between the two cities, Lublin and Erie, I received a scholarship from Mercyhurst College in Erie, Pennsylvania. The decision to go there was very difficult. I had to leave Lublin which

I loved, the university which had given me not only theoretical knowledge, but also an opportunity to meet ambitious people involved in various activities and individuals of extraordinary character who became my friends. But I decided to accept the scholarship because, as many friends had told me, it was a chance that would not happen again!

I had had no preconceptions about Erie before I arrived there. I did not expect to a country flowing with milk and honey, although this is how everybody portrays America. The only thing I knew about Erie was what I had read on the city's website. Embarking on the plane, I was setting off for an unknown land. What I will never forget from the first days in Erie

is the fact that I found the cityscape almost identical to that of Lublin. The same trees, weather and the same fields outside the city. Only the streets of Erie were much broader than in Lublin. My first impression was that Erie was really a sister, almost twin city

of Lublin. Soon I found out, however, that the two cities did have a lot in common, but were also very different. Erie is slightly smaller and younger than Lublin, but like Lublin it lies

on water. Lublin's Zemborzyce Reservoir can hardly be compared to the huge lake which bears the same name as the city in Pennsylvania. The residents' favourite recreation area in summer is the Presque Peninsula which extends seven miles into the lake. The golden beaches are frequented not only by Erie residents, but also by people who live two hours' drive away in Cleveland or Buffalo. Those who come to rest on the lake can visit a great attraction - a reconstructed ship and museum Brig Niagara which took part in the Battle

of Erie Lake with the Canadians in 1812. It soon occurred to me during the academic year that State Street was the favourite place of young people. This broad street in the centre does not resemble the pedestrian precinct in Lublin at all. One will not find there any old historic buildings whose cellars could house pubs or bars. Neither has Erie 70,000 students like Lublin who could sit in those pubs. But Erie's bars, such as Fat Boys, Calimari's or Plymouth, attract students not only from Mercyhurst, but also Edinboro,

or Gannon University which is only a stone's throw from State Street. Live music, good food or imported beers at substantially reduced prices are what these places boast and why they attract crowds of young and interesting people. Unfortunately, I could not find

the Lublin-made beer Perła anywhere which was a great pity. Erie has also something

to offer for art, theatre and music lovers. One of the places where you can see performances is the Mary D'Angelo Performing Arts Center. This 3.5 million-dollar building attracts spectators both with its splendour, and its repertoire.

To me it is a place of great value because it is a part of Mercyhurst. The Center is one of my school's many prides which is why it often produces performances or concerts on a large scale. Students and Erie residents always turn up.

For the 2004/2005 academic year the Center has already planned concerts of the Irish group Altan, Japanese drummers Yamato, or the world-famous jazz orchestra from Cleveland. Such tasty cultural morsels are not rare at Mercyhurst.

What else can I say about Erie - certainly much more. Someone once told me Erie is a picture of what America really is with all its pluses and minuses. Erie is a good place to learn something new about this country. You will not find there any ideally beautiful people that appear in „Bay Watch”, or imposing skyscrapers like those in New York. But you will meet some extremely kind, simple and, importantly, normal people who are like us - they listen to the same music, watch the same films or enjoy the same gossip from the big world. They are always willing to help and

admire us, Poles at Mercyhurst, greatly for our courage and desire to study in such a distant country. What I find very nice and surprising among both students at Mercyhurst, and residents of Erie, is that every other person takes pride in Polish roots. It is so nice to hear an American say: "I'm also Polish, my grandmother spoke Polish". In such moments I am unbelievably proud of who I am, where I come from and where my home is. Although the USA is a land of many Poles' dreams, Poland and Lublin will always remain special places with their unique spirit and climate. I can hardly describe my American friends' admiration for Lublin when they browse through albums about my city. This is when I feel just a little I'm back in Lublin, though there is an ocean between us.

Katarzyna Tarczyńska, Mercyhurst College scholar from Lublin

Useful address:

The City of Erie
626 State St. - Room 502
Erie, PA. 16501-1128
tel.: 001 814-870-1201
<http://www.cityoferiepa.com>



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