

Waterloo Girl Scout Katie Albert Travels to Patagonia on a Girl Scout destination

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GLEN CARBON – Girl Scout Katie Albert from Waterloo has a goal – to visit all 7 continents before she graduates high school. To date, she has been to 4. On her most recent adventure, she used her time off from school during winter break to travel far south to Patagonia on a Girl Scout *destination*, which is what the organization calls its

travel opportunities designed to help girls ages 11-17 see the world, meet diverse people and learn about different cultures and ideas.



Albert's adventure this winter, "Patagonia: Adventure at the Bottom of the World," started with nearly a full day of traveling that ultimately landed her and seven other girls in Punta Arenas, Chile, the southernmost continental city of the Americas, and a port city on the Strait of Magellan. The next morning, the girls traveled to Pali-Aike National Park to trek approximately 7 miles through untouched Patagonian landscape. The second morning also consisted of a hike along the coastline, this time to Cabo San Isidro, the southernmost lighthouse in the world. Instead of hiking that afternoon, the girls took a zodiac boat ride part way back and then paddled by kayak the last 4 miles down the Strait of Magellan. Albert's kayak partner was Alejandro, a native Chilean who quickly discovered Albert knew Spanish. "It was an amazing feeling – I was actually kayaking in the Strait of Magellan at the bottom of the world, with the Andes in the background, speaking Spanish with a native Chilean, while Chilean black dolphins were jumping and swimming alongside," said Albert.

The following morning the girls visited Magdalena Island, a Magellanic penguin colony. Albert and the other teens were able to walk on a path where they were surrounded by

hundreds of penguins and their babies. Next, they boated to Isle Marta to see sea lions. After arriving back at Punta Arenas, the girls took a horseback ride through meadows, forest, wetlands and beaches. That evening was capped by fireworks at midnight to celebrate the New Year.



The next morning, the girls made their way across the Chilean countryside to Puerto Natales. A glacier cruise took them to the Balmaceda Glacier. There, Albert and her fellow adventurers hiked to see the famous Serrano Glacier in Bernardo O'Higgins National Park. Albert was even able to scoop up one of the mini icebergs that littered the lake next to the mountains. Following the cruise, the girls stopped at a sheep station for a traditional Patagonian barbecue before returning to Punta Arenas.

On the last day of her trip, Albert was able to visit the famous Memorial of Ferdinand Magellan. Legend says that if you kiss the toe of the monument, you will have good luck and will someday return to Punta Arenas. Albert happily kissed the toe!

"In my travels so far, this was the first time I visited a country in which English was not the main language and I was able to talk to the locals in Spanish and be understood. This *destination* was a total immersion into another culture and one I will

treasure forever,” said Albert. Albert’s adventures will continue this summer when gets to cross her fifth continent off her list; she will visit China on another Girl Scout *destination*.

Through Girl Scout *destinations*, girls can learn so much. With the budgeting and fund-raising necessary to take an extensive trip and the responsibility required to follow travel plans and itineraries, girls must be confident, reliable and independent. While working together with girls from around the world and exploring new cultures and global issues, girls get the knowledge and awareness to turn that positive energy outward. Girls like Katie Albert are definitely going places – not just literally, but as much needed world citizens and leaders of the future.



For more information about Girl Scout *destinations* travel opportunities, please contact Program Manager Julie Fox at 800.345.6858, ext. 1119 or e-mail jfox@gsofsi.org.

The Girl Scout Mission is: ***Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence and character who make the world a better place.*** Today’s Girl Scouts not only enjoy camping and crafts, but they also explore math and science and learn about diversity, good citizenship, leadership and teamwork. Girl Scouting is the place where girls experience the fun, friendship and power of girls working together.

Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois serves 14,000 girls and 4,800 adult volunteers in more than 40 counties in southern Illinois. Girl Scouting has inspired more than 50 million

girls and women since its founding in 1912. Girl Scouting is focused on providing a premier Girl Scout Leadership Experience for girls in the 21st century, while ensuring the traditions and values that have been core to Girl Scouting since its beginning remain strong and relevant.

Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois is a not-for-profit organization supported by various United Ways throughout the region. Girl Scouts is a Proud Partner of United Way.

