

Olivia French
Grade Four, Second Place
Tracy Strysky, Teacher

Dear Carleigh,

I am so excited to see you this summer! I want to tell you what it will be like when you visit me for a few weeks. I live in a rural area and there is a lot to do and see and places to go. There are places for play and fun, places to learn about history or nature, and places to shop or try new things. There are plenty of pretty views so you'll want to take pictures.

In Frenchtown, nearby, there's a roller rink and bowling, plus a street with shops and places to eat near the water. In Flemington, there's Shields Gymnastics gym, there's a hiking trail and field and playground at Mine Brook Park. Nearby is our church, and mini golf, too. There's also a 160 year old rail in Liberty Village to take Black River and Western (53 years) train rides on and there's a Paint Party Studio near an historic famous courthouse where the terrible Lindbergh trial happened in 1934. In our own yard we have enough lawn to fly kites, play all kinds of games and swim in our pool. Sometimes we can see hot air balloons fly over from spring through the fall, and fireworks shows from our yard on the Fourth of July, but every night in the summer is a mini fireworks show with lightning bugs - fireflies! We roast s'mores sometimes at the outdoor fireplace, which I will show you how to be careful about fire safety when we do that.

Spruce Run and Round Valley are beautiful parks, with trails, mountains and water areas to go to. There are also animal wildlife preserves and arboretums, plus animal shelters to all visit. There are bears, fox, red squirrels, eagles, hawks, of course deer, turtles, raccoons, possums, snakes, frogs, toads, bunnies, chipmunks, groundhogs, purple birds, cardinals, goldfinch (our state bird), hummingbirds, many butterflies, including monarchs, that we see here. Last year we had twelve chrysalis right outside our back door! We were so excited to learn Monarch migration, growth stages and life cycle. They are beautiful! There is also a trail close to our home that we can walk or bike on to get into Clinton.

Main Street Clinton is fun and famous for its historic Red Mill and water wheel. We can take a picture of it from the bridge like everyone does. The river below has ducks, geese, turtles, and fish and sometimes snakes. We can take a tour of the Mill and Village that dates back to 1810. There's also an Art Museum at the bridge, too. The shops and places to eat on Main Street are great. Just Chill, JJ Scoops, Clinton Book Shop, and the new candy store are my favorites. Back in 1891 there was a terrible fire that destroyed the original Main Street so what's there now is an update from the rebuild in 1892. There's also the library a short walk away and a playground there, too.

At the end of the summer, there's the 4H Fair in Ringoes to look forward to. There are goats, sheep, cows, horses, dogs, honey bees, llamas, alpacas, all kinds of birds, reptiles, rabbits to see and learn about. There's also contests for vegetable and fruit growing, baking, quilting. There are pig races, crafts to make, robots from robotics club that drive around, games to play, and rides to ride. Of course, there's always plenty of treats to eat like kettlecorn, pizza, Kona Ice, special ice cream from the dairy cow tent. In the stage tent there's always music or shows or demonstrations. I learn a lot and have a good time.

If we take a drive we can see some Revolutionary War places like Washington Crossing State Park, Lake Solitude, or some historic homes or meeting places like the ones on Quakertown Road near my school.

Cannot wait to see you! I hope you will have fun with me seeing all these cool places and doing all these things.

Love,
Cousin Olivia