

Ryland Hender
Grade Four, Honorable Mention
Janet Prassl, Teacher

Dear Charlotte and Emerson,

I am stoked that you will be coming to spend some of your summer vacation with me! You will be amazed by the vast variety of activities, especially outdoor, we can do and experience together in my area of Hunterdon County, NJ. There are too many things to list in this letter and it is always fun to have a few unexpected surprises!

To give you an idea of just how peaceful it is around my house at nighttime, close your eyes and envision this: At night, with the bedroom windows slightly ajar, you can hear the soft chirping of crickets and the croaking of frogs. And if you are lucky, you might even hear the howling of coyotes. If you take a minute and sit on the rocking chairs on our front porch and look up into the darkness of the night sky, you can play “connect the dots” with the stars to form constellations and win the game! My favorite constellation to look for is Orion, the hunter. While stargazing, we might even see a few shooting stars to make a wish on. One thing we will definitely do is pitch a tent and camp out alongside the Raritan River. We will roast marshmallows over a campfire and catch fireflies in the dark with jars. If you want, you can use the jars full of fireflies as a lantern to watch the calm ripples of the river. Hot air balloons often take off and land where I live, so if we get up early enough, we can look up in the sky for hot air balloons. They come in many designs like flames on the sides or maybe even a rainbow of colors. Sometimes, the hot air balloon pilot is nice enough and invites you to help stomp out the air in the envelope, the part where the air is held in. Stomping out the air from the balloon is fun because it feels like you are jumping on clouds, high up in the sky.

Where you live, in Chicago, it is a lot different than where I live in Franklin Township, New Jersey. You have become accustomed to a faster pace of life, more populated areas, and a lot more traffic! I think you will like and enjoy the quietness of the countryside and being able to take a break from the loud noise and crowds of people.

I am so excited about your arrival that I have already started counting down the days until you land in New Jersey!

Sincerely,
Ryland