

Sophia Randall  
Grade Four, First Place and Grand Prize Winner  
Tracy Strysky, Teacher

Dear Evan and Michael,

I cannot wait for you to visit me this summer! New Jersey has so many beautiful places to visit, but I know we are going to make our best memories right here, where I call “home” in Franklin Township. We live in a rural area, which means country rather than city, with lots of open space and farmland. We don’t have tall buildings, there are more stop signs than traffic lights, and we live farther apart from each other because our community is not densely populated. As you arrive in town, you’ll pass by acres of beautiful orchards, rustling cornfields, deep green grassy fields, and lots of working farms with barns and animals. If you happen to get behind a slow moving tractor moving about on the road, just put down your window and take it all in!

Since you will be here in the summer, there will be many things we can do outdoors. We can take long nature walks following along the beautifully carved paths of our many creeks and streams, search for a fishing hole, or just dip our toes in the crystal clear water to cool off! If after all this we’re hungry, we can visit one of our local farm stands to pick up fresh fruit, vegetables, honey, and homemade pies. I can personally tell you that there is nothing like picking your own big red juicy strawberries from the field, perfectly sweet and kissed by the warmth of the sun. Farm fresh is the best, and we love to support our local farmers!

Before I start to wrap up this letter, I can’t forget to mention our summer nights! For active nights, we might find an antique car show, agricultural fair or music festival to join in some community fun with our neighborhood friends and family. For calmer nights, we’ll enjoy marshmallows fireside, watch fireflies dance around the yard, and listen to the grasshoppers and cicadas sing their summer songs. All you need to do is “look up” to really appreciate being in a rural area. With no bright lights or tall buildings to block our view, above our heads we’ll see millions of stars twinkle against a sky of deep sapphire blue. You might even see your own shooting star here in Franklin Township – let’s make a wish come true!

I’m sure this will be a summer you won’t forget.

Sincerely,  
Your Cousin Sophia