

Tento rozhovor s naším asistentem pro výuku anglického jazyka, Hunterem Mackem, připravili a realizovali pod vedením Mgr. L. Caltý žáci třídy IT2: Tomáš Procházka, Radim Vopava a Michal Zdeněk.

### **1. What has brought you to the Czech republic?**

I am here on a U.S. Fulbright program. I was thinking about it in 2020 and I was pretty interested in going to almost any country in the world as a teaching assistant, so students could get better at English conversations and I could learn about the Czech culture, because in America they don't teach us anything about the Czech Republic. I love history and learning more about things. I wanted to learn more about modern history here. They teach us only one thing, which is that in 1989 revolutions happened and communism ended, so I've wanted to learn more about life here and how a new generation, like you, and an old generation, like your parents and grandparents, look like. I've wanted to get a different perspective of what was then and what is now.

### **2. Do you like it here and why?**

Yeah, I do so far. I'm enjoying being here. Everybody in this school has been really welcoming and nice to me, especially the staff. Me, as a person who was flying thousands miles to a country I'd never been before, I was a little nervous, trying to figure out how I can communicate with people who may not understand everything I'm saying. I've had so much support so far. People have really been nice to me. So far so good.

I really love nature and being outside, and in America it's kind of difficult to find that space where there's nothing. Here, you are more appreciative of nature, especially in this small country, so I really appreciate it, so I think I like it so far. And the beer is really good too.

### **3. Why did you choose COPka?**

I actually have a technical background, I am not a teacher, I studied Electrical Engineering. The program (Fulbright – English Teaching Assistant) places you to a school that fits with your skills. I also played American football at college. I was on a championship team, so they placed me to a school that has both a sports and technical program, so it was kind of a perfect fit.

### **4. Where did you study?**

Virginia State University.

### **5. What is your favourite movie?**

I've watched like Narcos, I've watched so many things on Netflix. To the point where I don't have anything else to watch. I don't know if I have a favourite but Breaking Bad, Stranger Things...Anything you name, I have probably watched it.

### **6. What kind of music do you listen to?**

The kind of music you're listening to. I listen to all kinds of music. You know, I grew up listening to R&B. I love, you know, Classic Rock, like Nirvana, Red Hot Chili Peppers. You know, Aerosmith, a lot of Classic Rock. Maybe not metal or anything like that. But I listen to hip hop, rap. Or you listen to a little bit of country every now and then, like I grew up listening to like Johnny Cash. I love listening to music. I love listening to new music. You know, I'm always open to hearing different kinds of music. I was even listening to a little bit of Czech rap.

## **7. What is better here, in the Czech Republic, and what is better in the U.S.?**

Let's start with "What is better here?" I think that people, once they get to know you, are like very genuinely kind. In America, it's a just courtesy to be polite to a stranger you don't know, but it's not always authentic, but I think people are the opposite here, people are like "I don't care," but once they get to know you, they're really kind, they will help you.

The other thing is high schools, especially this school, the funding comes from the state. In America, it's not like that. Funding does come from each state, but it's mostly based on property tax. If you live somewhere poor in a small house, your school has less resources than a school for people who have bigger houses, so that creates disparities, you have less access to education, less access to college and you have people, who have more money and they live well, so they can go to a school that has better resources etc.

But I would say that beer here is so much better than American beer. America has a lot of different types of cultures and different types of food. I think here it's much less than in America.

I think, maybe, health-care system is better here because in America, you have to pay for everything. Every time I was at a doctor's office, even with insurance, I had to pay \$40, every time, no matter what. Even if it was like I have a flu, I needed a cold medicine, no matter what - \$40, because it's commercialised. Health insurance is commercialised.

I guess in terms of what's better in America, we have faster access to resources. We have Amazon, you can order food and groceries, all the stores are right behind the corner. Everybody has a car, everybody drives. People don't walk as much to places.

Another thing that is better here is that people here are more conscious of the environment. People tend to their gardens, they save rainwater, I've never seen that in America. People are conscious of how much water they use, how much electricity they use etc. I would say in America, because it's so plentiful, we are a little more wasteful of those things – leave the light on, have the water running... Going back to gardens, if people in America have gardens, they pay someone to take care of it. The time and care that people here take, it's a piece of art, I love walking around and seeing what people do to their homes, people have bushes, flowers...

**8. Did you try to learn something from Czech language?**

It is kind of interesting but let's say it's very difficult to learn Czech. It is probably better and easier when you learn something in English but I have to know some basic phrases like "Dobrý den," "Děkuji," "Prosím," "Na shledanou." These are the phrases that allow me to buy things, say goodbye to people, say hello to them. In terms of the language - I don't know if I'll try to learn, I don't know how well it would go. It is very different from English. I thought naively that when I knew I would go to the country near Germany, I expected it would be similar to German, I thought that the language would be similar to English because German is similar, but in the end I found out that the Czech Republic is more Slavic and more similar to Russia in terms of language.

**9. Is there anything else you would like to visit in the Czech Republic?**

When I first got here, we went to Valtice, Mikulov, Brno. We went to the hill in Mikulov and saw the castle, and drank some wine. We saw the chateau in Valtice, Brno was really amazing, it's a small city, but it still has that kind of city vibe. I also saw the chateau in Liblice.

Actually I haven't gotten a chance to visit Prague yet. So I would love to go to Prague and see the city, because from what I've heard most people speak English there. I'd also like to go to Olomouc. This experience of being here, I would love to travel as much as possible.

**10. What do you wish to see in Europe?**

I am not in Europe for the first time. I have been to England before but I have never been to continental Europe. I want to visit as much of Europe as possible in the future. I would love to visit France, Italy, Vienna in Austria, Poland and the Scandinavian countries as well. Part of the program (Fulbright – English Teaching Assistant) is going to different countries.