

Tania Calvao Celebrates the J-1 AND J-2 Experience

November, 2008



Contrary to the visa title, the J-1 Exchange Visitor Program isn't all about the J1, but the J2s, too!

The Exchange Visitor Program is pleased to announce Tania Alves Calvao AND her son, Olivio, as November's Exchange Visitors of the Month. Each month, we select an exchange visitor who has made an effort to get involved in his/her community and explore American Culture.

Tania Calvao of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, is a J-1 Exchange Visitor training and living in Houston, Texas. Both Tania and her son, Olivio, 10, were excited by Houston's excellent school systems, nice parks and green areas and the variety of cultural events-theaters, museums, ballet and orchestra-as well as sporting events like watching the Houston Astros (baseball), The Rockets (basketball) and the Dynamos (soccer).

But what makes Houston and Calvao's J-1 experience even better is that she is sharing this experience with her son, Olivio. According to Calvao, Olivio's teachers were extremely patient and helpful. Calvao also reported on the rewards of Olivio joining the soccer league and getting involved with other sports.

"Coming here with Olivio has only made my experience even richer," Calvao said. "We live in a very nice neighborhood and we are involved in the school, neighborhood and sports activities. Olivio joined the soccer league and his team just won the championship! He is an excellent soccer player and I guess it helped the others in his team by teaching them about Brazilian soccer and sharing some tips with them."

"We also joined the Catholic Church in our neighborhood," Calvao continued. "Our transition here has been a smooth one. We participated actively in these different environments and were able to make friends and establish our life routine. Last August, we had his birthday party in a bowling place and invited all his friends from school, baseball and soccer. He was very happy."

Calvao also takes advantage of every opportunity to share her Brazilian culture with friends and coworkers. She has exchanged books and gifts from Brazil and even hosted a party at her house with

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typical Brazilian foods. When she's not chatting up Brazil at her training site, she experiences Houston at the rodeo or travels around the U.S.

"Our best experience was in New Mexico for Christmas last year," Calvao said. "For the first time in his life, Olivio had a chance to see snow and go skiing. We had a great time and it was the first 'White Christmas' of his life."

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