Hi everyone,

it is more than half-time now! I have about 8 weeks left here in the USA!

In Atlanta, it usually gets really hot in July and August. Having this in mind, we planned some trips to survive the heat in Atlanta!

4th of July, it was Independence Day in the US, which is one of the most important public holidays here. Since it was a Wednesday in 2018, we took Thursday and Friday off to go to Florida. Our first destination: The Okefenokee Swamps. This is a National State Park that is famous for alligators and about four hours away from Atlanta. Taking a boat tour through the swamps, I really hoped that I get the chance to see at least one alligator. I was at first a bit disappointed when our guide told us that the most likely time when seeing an alligator is during night and in spring and fall. Well, we were there at noon in midsummer :D But suddenly, I discovered one of the beatiful animals sleeping in the swamps, it was a baby alligator! I was really happy. When later strolling thorugh the park, I saw a bigger alligaor again. Seeing these alligators in the swamps, free off any zoos and cages, made my day!

Afterwards, we continued our roadtrip to Jacksonville. There, we had a great Airbnb next to the river. From there, we wathced the Independence Day firework. Besides, we made a few day trips to the most beautiful beaches in Florida. Pure white sand, clear sea water, ... Great!

When back in Atlanta, we participated in a so-called Night Nation Run. It was a pure Party Run where there was a Live DJ Stage after the Finish line. It was a fun event but also a weird experience of a run :D

We spent the next weekend in Atlanta. One day, we drove to the so-called Chattanooga River for rafting. This was so much fun. We got a few instructions of our great guide Jackson on how to use the paddles and control the boat in the wild water. Afterwards, we started our two-hour trip. At first, everyone was a bit scared of Jackson’s stories and warnings but already after 10 minutes we felt so comfortable that our guide intentionally lost the control of our boat so that we fell into the water.
The weekend afterwards, we started our trip to **Nashville (Tennessee) = Home of Country Music.** What we didn’t know before was that Nashville is also famous for bachelor’s parties. There is one famous street („The Broadway”) where there’s a bunch of bars and restaurants. On the ground floor there are mostly musicians playing country music while on the rooftops there are modern DJs playing charts. Of course, we have also tried the whole thing: Enjoying lunchtime on the rooftop and dancing to country music at night. Great experience. What I also tried the first time (and what is on every Bucket List when in America and especially when in Nashville) is typical Mac ‘n’ Cheese with Nashville fried chicken: You have to try it but it is enough one time :D

On our way home, we made a stop in Lynchberg (Tennessee) since there is the original **Jack Daniels Distillery.** There, we took part in a guided tour through the whole Jack Daniels premises. It is very astonishing that all Jack Daniels Whiskey is only produced in Lynchberg, this small little town in Tennessee. The picture shows ‘the real Jack Daniel’, me and our guide.

In July, we also had our **company’s annual summer event** which took place at Foxhall Resort in Douglasville. It was a different experience to the company events I know from Germany. On the one hand, everybody could bring their family. On the other hand, I guess only a third of all employees took part. During the day, we had a wide offer of activities like archery, kayaking, mountain biking, playing ball games, riding ATVs or simply relaxing at the pool. It was a fun event but for me, the team concept was missing since almost everybody did the activities with their small group or with their family and on top, only part of the employees joined the event. But this is also a new experience that has shown me another difference between the American and the German culture.

In July, we also attended the **BB&T Open (ATP Tennis Tournament in Atlanta)** since I am a big Tennis fan. It was my first professional Tennis Tournament and I have to admit I loved it, this won’t be my last Tennis Tournament 😊

I am already looking forward to the next exciting trips and events that we have planned!