

# The International Olympiads in Informatics

## As I Lived Them

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The 24<sup>th</sup> edition of the International Olympiads in Informatics (IOI) ended on 30<sup>th</sup> September. For the first time they were held in Italy; delegations from 86 different nations joined our country to take part in the competition, hosted in the Centro Fiere del Garda, in Montichiari (BS).

The organizer of the event, the Regional Education Authority for Lombardy (USR Lombardia), asked pupils who had a good knowledge of English and other particular skills to work as volunteers for the IOI. Some students from my school applied, but only three of them were chosen: Nina Zoe Russ, Monica Nozza and I.

We had a short training period in early September at the Garda Village in Sirmione (BS), where we were also hosted during the competition (from 23<sup>rd</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> September) with all the contestants, leaders and visitors coming from abroad.

Volunteers had different tasks: Monica, for example, worked at the infoPoint; instead Nina and I were guides, which meant we had to look after a delegation. Each delegation was made up of four students (under 20), two leaders/trainers and sometimes visitors (usually



relatives, friends or future contestants). Nina was the guide of Austria since she can speak German fluently, being half Austrian. As for me, I was the guide of the Luxembourgish team.

My delegation was made up of six people: three nineteen-year-old boys named Pol, Michel and Jeff, a fifteen-year-old boy whose name was Gilles, and two Computer Science teachers, Nino and Laurent. I had a really good time with them, and they were always kind to me; at first the contestants kept on speaking Luxembourgish, but then they understood I felt a bit uncomfortable and tried to speak English or French all the time.

One of the best moments spent together with my team was the last night. We were all sitting at a table and I was trying to teach them how to pronounce the word *conchiglia*, which is quite hard for them, then we all drew a shell on a piece of paper and that made us laugh a lot, so we decided to draw other things and we chose *dogs*. Our drawings were so funny that some of us even started crying with laughter: we just couldn't help laughing as our dogs were so weird!

I have really learned a lot of things from this experience. Now, for example, I can manage difficult situations without losing control. But the main way in which IOI has affected my life is that I met wonderful people, both Italian and foreign, so I had the chance to talk to them about several different topics and *love* broadened my views, discovering how things work outside Italy and also inside it. Experiences are the best teachers you can have.