

To Cleveland Hungarian Development Panel,

Thanks very much for granting me the Modern Hungary Summer Course Scholarship. It was an extraordinary experience. I was immersed in the Hungarian culture which was what I was looking forward to. The history lessons were awesome and literature lessons were very interesting. The teachers were both very enthusiastic and transmitted their Love for the Hungarian Culture. As my grandfather was Major Commander of the Royal Hungarian gendarmerie during Adm. Horthy 's regime, it was important for me to understand why my family left Hungary after World War II. The rest of the family, Great grandparents and aunts and uncles stayed under the Communist Regime. Understanding how hard were those times, How they Lived during communism, listening all this from teachers who had lived all this at that time, was very moving for me. I was amazed to see that I understood when friends were speaking Magyar. Words, songs, rhymes popped out from my childhood Memories. My grandmother used to speak to me in her Mother tongue, but I haven't heard the language for 40 years... and this Summer it was there, coming forward from the back of my mind. My listening and understanding was much better than my speaking. All this was seen just by being among Hungarians, I did not attend language lessons. I am more than thankful for granting me this unforgettable experience. It was very healing to embrace my roots, to understand my identity. I feel "proud" of being Magyar and I Hope I will transmit this love to my daughters and future generations.

Yours sincerely,

María Magdolna Besenyi