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Hews Media Group-Community News Investigation

HMG-CN Article Results in \$104,000 Fine for Commerce Councilwoman Tina Baca Del Rio

Baca Del Rio violated the Political Reform Act; the fine amount is a record for a local elected official.

HMG-CN Staff Report

A HMG-CN expose on Commerce Mayor pro tem Tina Baca Del Rio, exclusively published in May of 2015, has resulted in California's Fair Political Practices Commission levying a record \$104,000 fine on the embattled politician.

Baca Del Rio's penalty is \$64,000 more than the \$40,000 fine levied in 2011 on former L.A. Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and is the largest ever against a

local official.

HMG-CN Publisher Brian Hews, author of the expose commented, "I am glad the truth finally came out on Baca Del Rio's Political Reform Act violations. Ever since we published the article, she denied everything and proceeded to brand HMG-CN as 'liars and yellow journalists' during every council meeting."

The number of violations exactly coincided with the number of violations outlined in the May article by HMG-CN.

This is the second time Baca Del Rio has violated campaign finance laws, she was fined \$26,000 for campaign finance irregularities in 2011.

In April 2011, Baca Del Rio and her campaign committee, Friends of Tina Baca Del Rio, was charged with seven counts of violating campaign finance laws that occurred between 2007 and 2009.

Baca Del Rio was recalled from the Commerce City Council in November of 2008, but was

surprisingly re-elected in 2009.

Many residents cited the heavy financial support from Commerce based businesses Justman Packaging and Steve Craig, the owner of Citadel Outlets and Craig Realty Group, as reasons she won back the council seat.

They also tell HMG-CN that Craig helped Baca Del Rio pay the \$26,000 fine by holding a fundraiser for her.

Four of the violations were

See **BACA DEL RIO** page 12



Commerce Councilwoman Tina Baca Del Rio was fined \$104,000 by the Fair Political Practices Commission. In 2011 she was fined \$26,000.

Artesia Continues Consideration of Multi-Level Downtown Parking Structure

By Tammye McDuff

The Artesia City Council, concerned about parking in Downtown Artesia after renovations are complete, took under renewed consideration the six to seven level paid parking structure that will be located on Corby. Downtown business owners voiced their parking concerns at Monday's Council meeting but were willing to work with the Council on the future of the structure.

The project, which consists of three phases, is currently underway and runs from 183rd Street to 188th Street on Pioneer.

See **ARTESIA** page 12

Relay for Life/Bellflower Raises Over \$101,000



The city of Bellflower held their annual walk on Saturday, July 9 at Bellflower High School. Over 220 participants joined in 21 teams to raise over \$101,000. Photos courtesy of Chad Robinson of Clickit Digital Media. See story page 6.

Two Former Cerritos College Athletes are Heading to the Olympics

By Tammye McDuff

Two former student track and field athletes from Cerritos Community College are on their way to Rio de Janeiro. On the women's side, discus thrower Whitney Ashley won the US championship, while 200 meter sprinter Ameer Webb took third place to advance.

A two-time state champion for the Cerritos Falcons (2008-09), Ashley defeated the rest of the competition at the US Olympic Trials in Eugene, OR with a throw of 204 feet 2 inches, which came on her fifth throw. Ashley won the state title in the discus as a freshman and went on to transfer to San Diego State University.

See **OLYMPICS** page 13

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GAHR HIGH JUNIOR'S NON-PROFIT 'PROJECT A' RAISING FUNDS TO HELP THOSE IN NEED

By Edward Kang

Growing up, there is a sense of helplessness in most students when looking out into the adult world. They see the injustices of poverty, famine, and lack of opportunity in developing countries. They want to help, yet students, given their age, are inhibited from being able to provide meaningful support. Though many do volunteer for causes of their choosing, the age factor becomes a problem. It is only a minority that finds the motivation to exceed conventional expectations in high school and directly help those afflicted by misfortune.

Gahr High School junior Anna Park, founder and president of her own nonprofit organization Project A, is part of this minority. Project A stands for giving aid, assistance, and assurance.

"High school is just there to provide us with an education to get into college, and college is for us to gain knowledge for us to apply in the work force. Why should we have to wait until we grow up to do what we wanted?" Park said.

Project A gives students the ability to find a cause they feel strongly about, create an entirely new project to help the cause, and gather support from the surrounding high schools and communities to fund it.

Ultimately, Park wants to promote individual growth through direct involvement with mission sites.

"Project A comes in to help [students] grow their ideas into a reality. Hopefully, feeling the joy from seeing what devoting priceless time can do for the community will change students' lives by motivating



Left to right: Joshua Han, Brandon Choi, Christen Capobianco, Matthew Gardner, Anna Park, Anna Shim. Photo from Project A Facebook page. Used with permission.

them to continue giving back in the future."

The organization is entirely student run and over the past year, using the power of social media and word of mouth, has expanded from just the surrounding high schools (Gahr, Whitney, Cerritos) to Crescenta Valley, Fullerton, Glendale, Cypress, and Buena Park.

Moreover, Project A has teamed up with the Playdough company and high school clubs such as Red Cross and Key

Club to fundraise and spread awareness for its projects.

"It's pretty crazy to see how quickly people responded to my idea, especially because the majority of them were so eager to join."

In just one year, Project A has already managed to raise over \$2,300 of a \$10,000 goal for its "SOS Initiative," a project funding the construction of a cement-block school in the Tiogala Village of Mali. The initiative was started in order to provide the approximately two hundred students in the village a better future.

Additionally, Project A is currently planning a direct mission trip to the City of Angels Orphanage in Tijuana, Mexico for its "COM Project" to provide supplies such as toiletries, school supplies, socks, and toys, as well as direct fun activities for the children living there.

In the near future, Park hopes to further expand her organization throughout the rest of Southern California and finish her existing projects. She does not want any student to feel restricted by his or her age from giving aid, assistance, and assurance to those in need. The world is a scary place, and Park strives to play her part in making it a little better.

Project A:
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New Principal Appointments in ABC Unified School District

Staff Report

Dr. Mary Sieu, Superintendent of ABC Unified School announced the following new principal appointments and assignments beginning in the 2016-17 school year:

**John Briquetelet-
Whitney High School**

John Briquetelet has been chosen as the Principal of Whitney High School in Cerritos. Mr. Briquetelet has been a site administrator for the past 14 years. He served as a principal at both Loara High School in Anaheim Union High School District and El Modena High School in Orange Unified. Mr. Briquetelet will ensure the continued success of all students and staff at the #1 high school in California.



John Briquetelet

**Crechena Wise-
Gahr High School**

Crechena Wise has been selected as the Principal of Gahr High School in Cerritos. Ms. Wise has been an administrator in ABC for the past 10 years. She has served as the Principal of Tetzlaff Accelerated Learning Academy as well as the assistant principal at Ross Academy. Ms. Wise looks forward to building teams of educational leaders and maximizing student achievement at Gahr. Ms. Wise is currently a doctoral candidate at USC.

**Frances Delaney-Barron-
Elliott Elementary School**

Frances Delaney-Brown is the new Principal at Elliott Elementary School in the City of Artesia. For the past 13 years, she has taken on leadership roles at the elementary school level. Most recently, Ms. Delaney-Brown has filled in as Interim Principal at Elliott and Niemes Elementary Schools. Her goal is to support students, teachers, and staff and to create an environment in which all students achieve.



Frances Delaney-Barron

**Alejandro Gutierrez-
Ferguson Elementary School**

Alejandro Gutierrez will serve as the new Principal at Ferguson Elementary School in Hawaiian Gardens. Mr. Gutierrez has had a ten-year career in administration in the Los Angeles Unified School District. He served as an Assistant Principal, Instructional Specialist, and Coordinator at various elementary schools in LAUSD. Mr. Gutierrez endeavors to work with the Ferguson stakeholders to provide a rich learning environment for all students.

Principals with New Assignments

Principals with new assignments effective this fall include the following:

Kester Song-Tetzlaff Accelerated Learning Academy

Kester Song has been named the Principal of Tetzlaff Accelerated Learning Academy. Mr. Song has served as the Carmenita Middle School Principal for the past 5 years. He was also an assistant principal for 3 years at Artesia

Health Fair and 50th Anniversary Celebration



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COMMENTARY 'POKÉMON GO' CRAZE CREATES CONCERNS

By Tammye McDuff

I will admit the older I get the less I know about the various types of electronic games. This past week I was standing outside talking with my neighbor, when I noticed her eldest daughter, walking back and forth on the sidewalk, staring at her phone. The young girl was not paying attention to where she was going and stepped off the curb, bumping into a parked car. When asked what she was doing, she replied 'catching Pokémon'.

USA Today released an article July

11th explaining the game,

"The Pokémon Company launched Pokémon Go, a game for iPhones and Android smartphones featuring the classic video game franchise where players catch and train special creatures called Pokémon. What makes the game special is its use of augmented reality, where Pokémon will appear as if they've been spotted in the real world. The game presents a map powered by GPS, using real-world locations to spot Pokémon and collect items. When you find one, the game opens up your smartphone's camera, giving you a view of Pokémon in the real world. Once you spot them, you flick a Poké Ball toward the creature to capture it."

The element of the game sees users putting a 'lure' in a certain area; this causes Pokémon to appear in that position, attracting gamers. Concerned

over children's safety one experiment, had a gamer post a lure to see how many people turned up. Within minutes, several children had arrived at the chosen spot - most without adults - ignoring the 'stranger danger' radar. Many parents are concerned that the game could be used by pedophiles for nefarious purposes.

Today the Downey Police Department issued a press release on the dangers of the new 'Pokémon Go' phone application, "Parents and children should make sure they are aware of their surroundings, especially at night and in areas that may be unfamiliar."

It was reported by KTLA5 that activities related to Pokémon Go have prompted law enforcement agencies to issue warnings about the increasingly popular smartphone game. Many agencies have noticed a rise in trespassing because of the reality app, which has reportedly been downloaded over a million times since its release Thursday, July 7th.

The Gochland County Sheriff's

Office in Virginia noted that deputies have located a number of people going to businesses, churches and government buildings when they are closed to look for Pokémon characters. The Wyoming, Minnesota Police Department issued a similar warning about trespassing on private property while playing the game. Other agencies warned about the dangers of driving and playing Pokémon Go.

The Washington State Department of Transportation issued a similar message to drivers, telling them not to use the app while they are headed somewhere in their vehicles.

One of the most serious incidents related to the game occurred in the St. Louis area last weekend, where four teens have been accused in multiple armed robberies in which they allegedly used Pokémon Go to target their victims. The agency cautioned players in a Facebook post on Sunday to be careful when sharing their location with strangers through the app.

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La Mirada High School Athlete Recognized by City Council



The La Mirada City Council recognized Samantha Huerta from La Mirada High School's Track and Field Team for her accomplishments. Huerta graduated from LM High School last month. During her high school years she set school and Suburban League records in the 800 meter and 1600 meter events.

HAWAIIAN GARDENS FREE SUMMER FOOD PROGRAM

The City of Hawaiian Gardens is participating in the USDA's Summer Food Services Program.

This program is designed to provide healthy, delicious meals for children under the age of 18.

The program runs through August 24, 2016.

Registration is NOT required; children are encouraged to participate at their nearest location. Lunch times are 12:00 pm – 1:30 pm at the following

sites*:

- Furgeson Elementary
- Melbourne Elementary
- Hawaiian Elementary
- Lee Ware Park
- C. Robert Lee Activity Center
- Fedde Middle School
- Hawaiian Gardens Apartments

*Subject to change without notice
For additional information on this program, please visit www.hgcity.org or call (562) 420-2641, Ext. 229.

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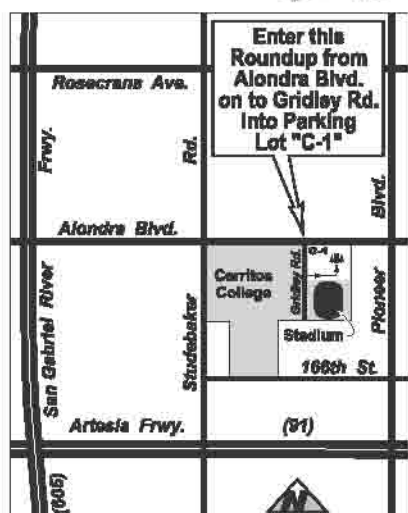
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La Mirada Aquabelles Synchronized Swimming Team



The La Mirada Aquabelles at the Aquatic Center. The Aquabelles have become one of the most renowned teams in the nation, attracting athletes from all over Southern California.

By Tammye McDuff

Synchronized swimming is a hybrid form of swimming, dance and gymnastics, consisting of swimmers [either solos, duets, trios, combos, or teams] performing a coordinated routine of elaborate moves in the water, accompanied by music. Synchronized swimming demands advanced water skills and requires great strength, endurance, flexibility, grace, artistry and precise timing, as well as exceptional breath control when upside down underwater.

The La Mirada Aquabelles have become one of the most renowned teams in the nation, attracting athletes from all over Southern California. Head Coach Hiea-Yoon Kang noted that several of her team members come from Torrance, Marina Del Ray and Irvine to practice every day.

Coach Kang swam for Ohio State University on their synchronized swim team. Realizing that she really loved the teaching aspect, Kang formed the Aquabelles in 2006 in Long Beach, and then moved the team to La Mirada's Regional Aquatic Center. Kang was named USA JR Worlds Coach in 2013 and 2014. Through Kang's vision and her team's hard work, the Aquabelles have become recognized nationally and abroad.

No sooner has the team returned from New York, representing the local region at the Junior Olympics, but they are headed to the "America Open" July 14-16. The

girls have won Gold medals in the Solo and Figure categories, taken the Silver medal in the Team Routine Category and two of the athletes have qualified for the US National Team. The Aquabelles will be competing in the JR Duet and the SR Duet event. This is their last stop before the Olympics.

It all started in 1907, when Australian born Annette Kellerman, performing in a glass tank, attracted national attention at the New York Hippodrome as the first underwater ballerina. The sport gained a popular following in 1940, when U.S. freestyle champion and Olympic contender Esther Williams, popularized water ballet with her performances in several MGM movies.

The La Mirada Aquabelles have earned the reputation of being a highly competitive club with emphasis on excellence, grace, and discipline. Kang has created outstanding synchronized swimmers while instilling in them qualities of confidence, perseverance and a strong appreciation of teamwork. Many graduating athletes have been sought out by Stanford, Ohio State and Wheaton College.

Aquabelles are offering a "Mermaid" beginner session in August, with a 'try for free' day August 1st, where all ages are welcome. If you would like more information please contact the La Mirada Regional Aquatic Center or visit <http://www.lamiradaaquabelles.com>.

La Mirada Measure I Improvements Continue

The City continues to make progress towards neighborhood infrastructure improvements through use of voter-approved Measure I funds.

"With the successful completion of the first and second phases, we are moving forward with the design and construction of the third and fourth phases," says Public Works Director Mark Stowell.

Construction of the third phase is expected to begin later this summer.

This phase includes the area south of Rosecrans Avenue and east of La Mirada Boulevard and Dalmatian Avenue to the City limits.

The work will include new street pavement, replacement of damaged curb, gutter and sidewalk, new curb access ramps and installation of a new storm drain within Lofthill Drive.

Residents in the area will receive advance notice of construction activities.

For more information on Measure I-funded neighborhood improvements, contact the Public Works Department at (562) 902-2385.

Hawaiian Gardens Summer Food Service Program

The City of Hawaiian Gardens will participate in the United States Department of Agriculture's Summer Food Services Program. This program is designed to provide healthy, delicious meals for children under the age of 18.

The Summer Food Service Program will begin on June 20, 2016 and ends on August 24, 2016. Registration is NOT required; children are encouraged to

participate at their nearest location.

12:00 pm – 1:30 pm at the following Lunch Sites:

- Furgeson Elementary
- Melbourne Elementary
- Hawaiian Elementary
- Lee Ware Park
- C. Robert Lee Activity Center
- Fedde Middle School
- Hawaiian Gardens Apartments
- *Subject to change without notice

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the California Department of Education Nutrition Services Division (NSD) prohibit discrimination in all their programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, or disability. For additional information on this program, please visit www.hgcity.org or call (562) 420-2641, Ext. 229.

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- Bingo Games at 5pm (Gymnasium)
- Hikari Taiko Performance (Outdoors)
- Ondo Dancing (Outdoors)

Sun, July 24 2-8pm

- Kelsey Kwong-Singer (Gymnasium)
- Hawaiian Delites (Outdoors)
- Na Wa a 'O Kamaki (Ukulele Group)
- Gakuen Students (Outdoors)
- Kamaki and Friends (Gymnasium)
- Na Wahine 'O Kawena (Gymnasium)
- Judo Demonstration (Judo Dojo)
- Karaoke Performance (Outdoors)
- Bingo Games at 5pm (Gymnasium)
- Hikari Taiko Performance (Outdoors)
- Ondo Dancing (Outdoors)
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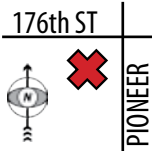
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Stan Winters, R.Ph

Relay for Life-Bellflower Raises \$101,000

By Tammye McDuff

The American Cancer Society Relay for Life movement is the world's largest and most impactful fundraising event to end cancer. It unites communities across the globe to celebrate people who have battled cancer, remember loved ones lost, and take action to finish the fight once and for all. With the support of thousands of volunteers, the American Cancer Society is helping to save more than 500 lives every day.

The city of Bellflower held their annual walk on Saturday, July 9th at Bellflower High School. Over 220 participants joined in 21 teams to raise over \$101,000.

The morning began with the annual Schnabegger Family Pancake Breakfast. It was a great \$5 deal for a stack of homemade pancakes, coffee and orange juice. Opening ceremonies began at 9:00 am followed by the Survivor and Caregiver laps around the stadium.

This year the city opened a special Kids Camp that included a bounce house, crafts, jump ropes, Frisbee golf, and races. But games were not just limited to the little ones. Games for the entire family ran throughout the day, raising even more money. Each game had an entry fee of \$5 and was well worth it, starting with an ice



The All-American Girls Professional Baseball League Team walks in the Relay for Life event last Saturday July 9 at Bellflower High School. Photos courtesy of Chad Robinson of Clickit Digital Media.

cream social at mid morning, a shaving cream and Cheetos® contest at noon, followed by a lemon squirt competition and a sock-it-to-me match in the evening.

U-Jam Fitness held three stretching exercise sessions and to keep everyone's spirits highly motivated, attendees were entertained with performances by the Mahana Polynesian dance troupe.

A moment of silence was held during the candlelight Luminaria Ceremony where loved ones who have been lost to cancer were remembered. As the stadium seats were lined with candles that spelled

out 'Cure' and 'Believe', those who are currently battling cancer and those who have fought the disease were supported. "This is a powerful part of the event because it provides an opportunity for people to work through grief and find hope," said Committee member and past Chairperson Robin Snow, "We would love to see more people involved and support such a wonderful program, we want to eliminate cancer." This year the Snow family walked as part of the Hollywood Sports team.

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ABC EDUCATION FOUNDATION SUMMER ENRICHMENT PROGRAM



The ABCEF launched an exciting summer enrichment program at Tetzlaff Accelerated Learning Academy located at 12351 Del Amo Blvd, Cerritos. All courses are taught by dedicated ABC Unified School District teachers. These courses provide the opportunity for students in grades 6-9 to explore other interests and passions they may not have time for during the regular school year. The first course, Video Production, got off to a successful start. Children in the picture above are seen participating in the program. Other programs are Jazz Ensemble (July 18-August 4), Color Guard & Dance (July 18-August 4), and Success Camp (August 4-5). Parents may register their children for these engaging courses online at summer.abcedfoundation.org.

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Downey Space Center Hosts Ringling Brothers

By Tammye McDuff

The Columbia Memorial Space Center [CMSC] was host to the media preview and the North American debut of Ringling Bros. & Barnum and Bailey's 'Out Of this World' performance this past Tuesday

Downey Mayor Pro Tem Fernando Vasquez and CMSC Executive Director, Ben Dickow welcomed kids and adults to the official premiere, "This is a historical day for our town today," said Vasquez, "and not just because the clowns are in the house!" Vasquez went on to say that the circus is what the American dream is all about, "What started with seven brothers hundreds of years ago, has transformed into a company that has revolutionized what the circus is all about."

Featuring the new Simet Astronaut Wheel, this three story rotating steel wheel is the first ever gravity defying space walk acrobatic performance in the world. The structure is a rotating wheel, where performers dressed in space suits execute death defying balancing acts, with bars, chairs and bicycles. This sneak peek of the new Ringling Bros. space-themed production, is the first national tour since the elephants' transition to Florida earlier this year

More than 150 young space enthusiasts were on hand to participate in STEM activities and rocket launches. The world premier of Ringling Bros.' space-themed odyssey 'Out Of This World' blasted off, Tuesday, July 12th. Vasquez presented Iverson with an official recognition to proclaiming July 12th as "Ringling Bros. Science of the Circus STEM Appreciation Day".



The new Simet Astronaut Wheel is a three story rotating steel wheel and is the first ever gravity defying space walk acrobatic performance in the world. Photo by Tammye McDuff.

Hosted by Ringmaster Johnathan Lee Iverson the event showcased the remarkable "astronaut spacewalk" performance in its entirety along with other Ringling Bros. performances by clowns, contortionists, and unicyclists. Kids were lead through hands-on, space-themed activities such as launching water rockets, wearing astronaut suits, meeting leaders in the space community and experiencing weightlessness in the zero-gravity gyroscope, bringing an imaginative spin on how STEM has transformed performing arts.

The new production will blast off on an intergalactic adventure for space age family fun as the ultimate circus experience launches into the future. Audiences will take the helm to join the Circus Space Fleet on a heroic quest of good versus evil that let imaginations run wild with unexpected surprises and thrills. Through

the lens of a magic telescope, Out Of This World transports the entire family on an unforgettable journey as the circus star seekers battle to bring the most spectacular and talented performers back to Earth after years in outer space.

Other acts include Heilongjiang Provincial Acrobatic Troupe, showcasing the mastery of Chinese acrobats; Thrill skaters will introduce a new type of ice skating combing lyrical figure skating with energetic freestyle tricks and stunts and clown entertainer Davis climbs a 47 foot pole to complete a handstand five stories above the audience as he sways and tumbles around with a surprise ending.

You can see the performance beginning July 14th to 19th at the Staples Center in Los Angeles; Citizens Business Bank Arena in Ontario, July 22nd to 26th and at the Honda Center in Anaheim, July 29th through August 7th.

PRINCIPALS

Continued from page 3

High School.

Linda Dohm-Aloha Elementary School

Linda Dohm will be the Principal at Aloha Elementary School in Hawaiian Gardens. She has served the last 8 years as the Principal of Willow Elementary School and prior to that the Principal of Furguson Elementary School.

Eveline Huh-

Willow Elementary School

Eveline Huh will be the Principal of Willow Elementary School in Lakewood. She has dedicated the last 7 years as the Principal of Palms Elementary School.

Mayra Lozano-

Hawaiian Elementary School

Mayra Lozano will move to Hawaiian Elementary School in Hawaiian Gardens. Ms. Lozano served as the Principal of Furguson Elementary School for the past 8 years. Prior to Ms. Lozano's assignment as Principal she was a teacher at Furguson for 10 years.

Julie Yabumoto-

Palms Elementary School

Julie Yabumoto will be the Principal of Palms Elementary School in Lakewood. Ms. Yabumoto served as Principal of Aloha Elementary School for 10 years.



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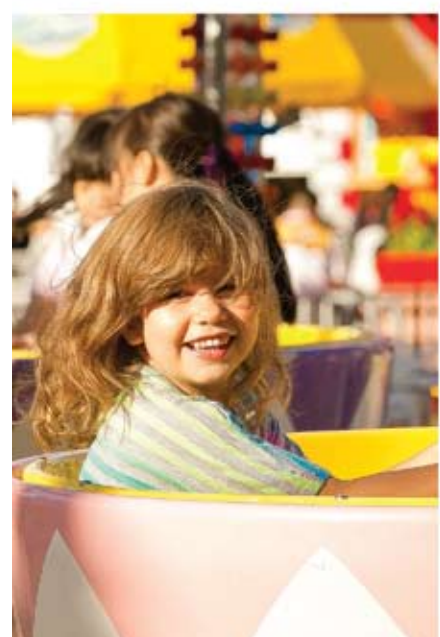
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ABC Students Return From Exchange Program To Japan



Thanking the Rotary Club of Cerritos-Artesia for helping to sponsor their trip to Japan were (l-r) TOP: Whitney High teacher Eilene Oyama and students Argie Melo, Cheryl Maemallabo and Sheena Oguri, and BOTTOM: Students Daniel Lin, Aaron Hai and Delvin Sauw.

By Larry Caballero

Six ABC Unified School District students were guests of the Rotary Club of Cerritos-Artesia July 11 to share their personal stories and experiences when they returned from a ten-day excursion to Kakamigahara in Gifu, Japan, where they stayed with host families to attend school and to learn more about Japanese culture and lifestyles.

ABC International Coordinator Stacey Hamagiwa supervises the student exchange program, and the Rotary Club of Cerritos-Artesia sponsors the program with student scholarships.

“We are very pleased to have been a part of this program for more than 20 years,” said Rotary President Sug Kitahara, “and we always look forward to welcoming them back at our Rotary meeting to hear first hand how the trip

changed their lives.”

ABC superintendent Dr. Mary Sieu, ABC School Board President Olympia Chen, and numerous ABC administrators also attended the meeting to hear from each of the students and to see a PowerPoint presentation of their journey.

Sieu said that the school district established a relationship with Kakamigahara, Japan in 2001 where their middle school students attend ABC schools and ABC high school students attend a Japanese school.

The students attend Japanese honor classes at Artesia and Whitney High School. Artesia High student Argie Melo said, “For me, it was a dream come true.” The other students agreed and hope to someday return, and maybe also bring their families so they can also experience such a unique culture.



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