

Youth Exchange Hits the Slopes Beach!

“What’s with the Beach?” you ask. You were no doubt expecting to read about our Youth Exchange program’s long-held annual tradition of Sierra Tahoe snow and Alpine skiing. But due to the sorrowful lack of that fluffy white stuff, we engaged our flexibility and hit the BEACH instead! Yes, you read that right. At the end of January we packed up all of our Youth Exchange students and headed to Santa Cruz and Monterey!

The students were able to play at Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk’s arcade and do a round of miniature golf, enjoy soccer on the beach, earn a strike or two during midnight bowling and do a little shopping at the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk. The kids gave high marks for what they see as a “real” California experience by getting the chance to surf the waves in Santa Cruz. Still more high marks were given for the opportunity to tour and see up close and personal the jelly fish, otters, penguins and other amazing sea life at the Monterey Bay Aquarium. And what a great time they had attending a very early morning meeting of the Monterey Cannery Row Rotary Club.

What made this trip truly A-M-A-Z-I-N-G is the collaboration between Rotary clubs. We had just THREE weeks from the time we cancelled the snow trip to leave for the surf trip. In that short time, we were able to work with the Santa Cruz Rotary Club and the Monterey Cannery Row Rotary Club to create a fabulous California experience for our students. The two Rotary clubs gifted the arcade, miniature golf, bowling and aquarium to our group! In turn we showed up and the students sang for their breakfast during one of the club’s meetings!

We were astonished at these two clubs’ generosity, which are not even in our District. The Monterey Cannery Row Rotary Club members expressed a great deal of delight to be able to meet and hear our students perform, and extended an invitation to our group to come back. We have made lifelong friends and have started a new yearly tradition!

We learned that just by asking, we could stretch our dollars and give the students so much more. Do you have something to offer the District 5160 Youth Exchange Program? Let us know!!!

