

PRESS RELEASE

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PARK CITY STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAM HOSTS STUDENT GROUP FROM COURCHEVEL, FRANCE

Student-exchange program celebrating 30th anniversary

August 6, 2015—PARK CITY, UT—The Park City Student Exchange Program welcomed a cohort of students from Park City’s sister city, Courchevel, France, over the past two weeks. All told, nineteen high school students and three chaperones spent one week in southern Utah and two weeks in Park City. Park City Municipal Corporation salutes the efforts of the planning committee, School District, and parents and teachers for their role in planning this year’s exchange.

The student-exchange program is the cornerstone of the Park City-Courchevel sister city relationship, which was rekindled in January 2015 after a five-year break (the student exchange program has been continuously running since the cities first became aligned in 1984).

The program is composed of reciprocal exchanges every two years. In February, a group of Park City high school students travel to Courchevel, which is located in the French Alps and part of the Les Trois Vallées ski area (the largest interconnected ski area in the world). The American students are matched with French students with similar interests and graciously hosted by their families for a full French-immersion experience. For example, students who are on their respective ski teams may be paired together, as well as those with specific music, culinary, and educational interests.

“It is so gratifying to watch both the French and American students go through this program,” said Tina Quayle, a member of the volunteer student exchange committee with John and Sue Gleason, Jack Kelley, Bernard Rizzotto, and Katie Kelley. “More than once, I have seen a student’s life change during the course of the two-week exchange, and sometimes these formative relationships can last a lifetime and include siblings and parents.”

The French cohort arrived in Park City July 24 and ~~will complete~~completed their trip Thursday. ~~Since their arrival,~~During the trip, the students ~~have~~ lived with Park City families and experienced many of the wonderful things our community offers: the Kimball Arts Festival, outdoor music concerts, hiking, boating, rock climbing, country line-dancing, demolition derby, the Flying Aces at the Utah Olympic Park, and a welcoming ceremony with the City Council.

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To be eligible for the program, Park City students must be enrolled in French studies at the High School. The district's dual-immersion program, which the school district launched five years ago, will make the program all the more important (as well as competitive) when the current dual-immersion students are old enough to participate in four or five years and reinforces the practical and real-life application of the exchange program for our students and our community.

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"Although this exchange is structured as an intensive immersion program—rather than a summer vacation—the students, of course, end up having the time of their lives," said Quayle. "Activities from the trip this past February included French classes, skiing and snowmobiling, ice climbing, and a trip to Chamonix in the French Alps."

"Our Sister Cities relationship is one of the most important ways in which we can bridge cultural divides, and help us realize we have more commonalities than differences," said Jack Thomas, Mayor of Park City. "The student exchange program is the most tangible and vibrant component of the sister city program. We are so pleased to open our hearts and our homes to these students, especially after the community leaders of Courchevel requested we rekindle our 30-year relationship this past January. We are also very thankful to Tina Quayle and her committee, the School District, and the many other community members who make this program possible."

~~Additional information about the Sister Cities program can be found on their website:
<http://www.sister-cities.org/>~~

Additional information about the Park City Student Courchevel Exchange can be found on their website: www.pcsce.com.

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