

Japanese exchange students get a taste of American life

Written by Darci Tomky



□□ Holyoke's three Japanese exchange students recently had the

opportunity to spend time at the Phillips County Fair and even got to

help decorate the Challengers 4-H Club parade float. 4-H members

and exchange students are pictured from left, front row, Saki Tanabe,

Jessica Owens, Morganne Kumm, Rintaro Syoda, Tristan Sullivan

and Drew Stewart; second row, Anna Jelden and Brenna Sullivan;

and back row, Molly Brandt, Megan Colglazier, Ella Stewart, Takuya Kato

and Luke Stewart.□□—Enterprise photo

□ Although it may be a challenge at times, everyone can agree it's been fun having Japanese exchange students in Holyoke this summer. The three young people arrived July 23, just in time

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for the Phillips County Fair, and they will leave three weeks later on Aug. 18.

□ Around 40 exchange students were placed in Colorado through CSU Extension and the 4-H program. Some are participants in Labo, the Japanese version of 4-H, while others are part of LEX/Hippo Family Club and the Institute for Language Experience, Experiment and Exchange.

□ 13-year-old Saki Tanabe came from Tokyo, Japan to spend her three-week home stay with Dennis and Linda Jelden and their two daughters Anna and Emily.

□ From Nagoya, Japan, 12-year-old Takuya Kato is staying with Troy and Mardi Stewart and their kids Ella, Luke and Drew.

□ Jeff, Olga, Tristan and Brenna Sullivan are hosting Rintaro Syoda, a 14-year-old from Chiba, Japan.

□ After being completely immersed in the American culture and language, one of the biggest challenges for the exchange students and their hosts is finding ways to communicate. Whether using electronic translators or sign language, both the students and the families have learned much about language in the past couple weeks.

□ Troy Stewart was especially interested in the Japanese language, and he explained written Japanese words are called hiragana, foreign words are katakana, and Chinese characters are kanji.

□ For Linda Jelden, whose family's heritage is Japanese, spending time with Tanabe has been fun because it brings back some of the Japanese language Linda already knew. Tanabe has also been teaching the Jelden girls some Japanese phrases.

□ Another big change for Syoda, Kato and Tanabe is the food. They all like American cuisine,

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especially pizza, cheeseburgers and sandwiches.

□ Kato prepared a Japanese meal for the Stewarts including soup, rice balls, red beans and rice, stir fry and umebashi, and of course, they all had to eat with chop sticks.

□ The three Japanese kids all mentioned how American houses differ from those in Japan. Their Japanese families normally live in big apartment buildings that sit close together.

□ All three of the home stay families are involved with the Challengers 4-H Club, so the Japanese exchange students got a first-hand look at the Phillips County Fair. They got to help with things like decorating the float, and Tanabe even entered origami in the open class competition while Syoda won prizes from the carnival games.

□ Other activities they may have experienced here include swimming, fishing, watching movies, going to the lake, shooting rockets and playing the Wii. A favorite seems to be a visit to the Rocky Mountains.

□ One of Tanabe's best memories was taking time to gaze at the bright stars in Holyoke's night sky, something she can't see in Tokyo.

□ Even if cultural differences separate the Japanese exchange students from their host families, all three seem to fit right in with their home stay brothers and sisters. They have played soccer and baseball as well as other games, both American and Japanese.

□ Tanabe, Syoda and Kato have gotten a great taste of American life during their three-week stay in Holyoke, and they have surely given their host families a Japanese experience they won't soon forget.