

COLUMBIA CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL



Student Ambassador

Columbia Central High School Junior Dona Barski participated this past summer in a program offered through the *People To People Student Ambassador Program*. This opportunity can bridge cultural and political borders through exchange, making the world a better place for future generations. Through the program the student ambassador develops self-awareness, a sense of belonging, and a greater awareness of their significance in the global community. High school teacher/counselor, Ms. Katherine Albertson inquired if any student's were interested in participating. Dona Barski acknowledged and then pursued the application process to become part of the delegation going to China. Dona's father, Mr. John Barski had visited China in the past and was very enthused about this opportunity for his daughter. As a fundraiser, to cover the cost of the trip, Dona and her dad collected metal scrap. Together they picked up, cleaned and turned in the metal. Her dad kept track of the volume of weight collected and it totaled 32 tons! It was a lot of work for them, but clearly a bonding experience as they prepared for Dona's China adventure. Dona had never been on an airplane before, but she started out with a flight from Detroit to Los Angeles for five hours where her group met up with another group of students from the west coast and then the delegation of thirty took a flight from Los Angeles to Hong Kong lasting fourteen hours and the last leg was a flight from Hong Kong to Beijing for another three hours. Quite the introduction to air transportation!! Dona's dad had given her a card to open on the airplane and she shared a portion of the message, "...to have fun and remember he loved her at least 32 tons!" Dona smiled broadly as she relayed this special communication. Once she arrived in China she was so excited to be able to have this cultural experience and learn some history of the country from their tour guide, "Jack". She marveled at her opportunity to walk on a portion of the Great Wall of China, the architecture in the older part of the country, an overnight visit with four other students in a farming village where she truly felt she received an authentic flavor of the life of a Chinese family. "The food was the best, at that home", states Dona. Along with other experiences, Dona met some local young people while visiting a vocational school. She discovered over in China the students attend specific specialized vocational schools throughout their life, which propel them into their chosen field. Their group was able to communicate somewhat with these students through their tour guide. They asked the Chinese students questions, and answered many questions in return. Dona returned to Brooklyn and shared her stories and pictures. She especially liked the chance to compare her experience with her dad and find out what changes were made over the years in China. Back at Columbia Central High School, Dona is on her own course of becoming a Veterinarian (large and small animals). She plans on attending Michigan State University for her studies, and currently is raising goats. She has nine goats and has recently obtained her first milking doe, and is learning about that process. Dona said her goats are her priority right now; she loves learning about them and is so looking forward to her career choice. What a wonderful experience this must have been for this young ambassador, and Columbia School District is very proud of her representation.



Shared Experiences from my China Trip

By Junior, Dona Barski

I am from a small town where I live on a farm, raise goats and I go to a small school. What a change it was for me to go to the most populated country in the world. China was amazing. I went for a total of 17 days, enjoying both city and country life. The people really are interested in you as you walk the streets in cities where a lot of teenage Americans never get a chance to see. Teens our age walked up using their best English to ask us questions. Everyone was helpful whether or not they knew English, and we tried to obey their customs as much as possible. Sightseeing was extraordinary. There were many things we didn't have time to see, but what we did see will be with me forever. We walked on the great wall in Beijing. We went to schools and businesses. In Xian (Shaan) we saw the terracotta warriors and walked on the ancient Xian city wall. In Shanghai, we went on a boat tour of the Bund, and went to a silk factory. We stayed in a small farming village called Sujo, where I was more at home. From there we went to Hong Kong. Hong Kong was a totally different story. The free market and no tax, allow anything to be bought at any price. Teens try to emulate the American fads. People talk to you just because you are American. Walking down the street looks like the LA strip - full of laughter and motion. This is just a little of what I saw in China. I don't know that I would go back, but the trip was definitely worth it.

Key Club Helps Sponsor Relay For Life Event



Columbia Central High School Key Club participated with the Brooklyn Kiwanis and the American Cancer Society in a Relay For Life event during Breast Cancer Awareness Month. A gentle walk in the wooded area around Michigan International Speedway cemented the club's commitment to this annual project. Members of the Key Club felt some success this year considering it marked their initial involvement with this activity, but they knew they could improve on participation in future years. Overall they felt it was a good experience to be involved with and the event had personal meaning for some of the students who had lost loved ones to cancer. Students from the middle school who had participated in the Builders Club orga-

nized this Key Club at the high school. The club emphasizes leadership through citizenship. There are approximately 30 students currently involved with Nicole Bontrager serving as President, Katie McKomas as Vice President, Jennifer Andonian as Secretary and Janessa Hutson as Treasurer. Ms. Robin Davis, from Columbia Central High School, serves as teacher advisor and Ms. Maureen Radzikowski from Brooklyn Kiwanis volunteers to mentor the students. One of the goals for the Key Club is to refinish the stage in the Columbia Performing Arts Center, which benefits the school as well as the community. The club meets every Thursday after school and certainly welcome new student members.