

Austrian visitors get a look at life in Canada

Natasha Wiens - staff reporter

It is a dream of many teenagers to go to a foreign country, and that is exactly what happened for 26 Austrian students from Landstrasser Secondary in Vienna.

Riverside welcomed the students with special greetings, formal gatherings, banners hung in the school and information on the school's web site.

The Viennese students were impressed with many aspects of Canadian culture. "I like the nature and that the people are so friendly," said Austrian Carina Schubert.

"The big malls and the sea are what I like," said Kiti Wolf.

While the Austrians were here in Canada, they did a lot of things with and without their hosts which included hiking, nature walks, a trip to Seattle, canoeing, a trip to the aquarium and of course, a lot of shopping.

"The canoeing tour was the best," said Schubert, "because we got lost."

The students and staff from Landstrasser Secondary decided to return to British Columbia and Riverside because of the experiences enjoyed by previous groups from Landstrasser. Their itinerary here and the atmosphere created by their hosts were the deciding factors.

"The teachers were nicer [on this trip] and all my friends came here," said Schubert.

"[On] the U.S.A. trip they were on the bus the whole time," Wolf said.

There were some things about Canada that Riverside's foreign guests noticed were different in Austria. For one thing, the drinking age is different here. In Canada, it is legal to drink alcohol at 19 but in Austria, one can buy a drink at the age of 16.

In Austria, the minimum age for obtaining a driver's license is 18.

It was also noticed that the cars are much bigger here in Canada where gas prices are still relatively cheap and the streets in most cities



Brian Kenny/Riverside

Riverside students and their Austrian visitors from sister school Landstrasser Secondary in Vienna enjoyed hiking at Golden Ears Provincial Park.

and towns are wider.

There were no shortages of opportunities to buy souvenirs. "Yes, I would come back to Canada again and do some more shopping,"

Schubert said. "Maybe to go up to Whistler as well because we didn't do that."

"I would come in the summer and go to the beach more," said

Wolf.

Twenty five Riverside students will be visiting Vienna to stay with their new friends in March of 2007