

RIPTIDE

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Beloved Japan trip cancelled

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Many rumors have spread through the Vashon High School campus about the possibility of the Japanese class not travelling to Japan this year. The rumor is true and has made many students angry. In the past years, the students taking Japanese classes 3 and 4 traveled to Japan every other year. On intervening years, students from our sister school in Himeji, Japan, traveled to the Vashon Island. This year, however, there will be no trip.

“The Japanese trip won’t be happening this year. Principal Hanson and I have talked about it and we made the decision that if we have a first year teacher on a provisional contract that is a replacement for a past teacher. It would be very inappropriate to assign someone that enormous responsibility,” said Michael Soltman the Superintendent of the Vashon Island School District.

Many students are wondering what happened to teacher Maren Williams this year and why she isn’t teaching.

“She requested a one year leave and we are anticipating her to come back,” said Soltman.

“We haven’t talked about it, but I would assume that there won’t be a trip this year and we will probably have one next year, but there will be one in 2014. This has been the tradition since I have gotten here. I personally think that this is a very aggressive schedule. If there was an experienced teacher that maybe had some travel experience I would be open to that option,” said Soltman. “I regret that the students will not be able to experience such a great trip.”



COURTESY PHOTO

Left to Right: Aiden Morrison, Chrissy Swope and Rebecca Snyder went on the Japan trip that takes place every other year, such as this trip in 2010.

This is very discouraging for a teacher to be hired for only one year and have little to no input.

“I have basically no power in the situation. But, the Japan trip may happen, pending community action,” said Japanese teacher Emmanuel Ergas. “I am trying to not consider that I am only hired for one year and to not think about that while teaching. But it is very frustrating that the district does treat me differently because of this.”

Many students disagree with the Superintendent and Principal’s decision to cancel the trip. “I am natively Japanese and the main reason for taking Japanese was so that I could finally be able to travel to Japan,” said Senior Tazi Flory. “It sucks because we have been studying Japanese for almost four years and after all that time and practice we still won’t be able to travel to Japan.”

Currently the trip is cancelled, but there is a possibility for the trip to happen only if major changes occur.

“The Japanese club will continue to fund raise for the trip. The main thing that we are trying to do is convince the

Superintendent that cancelling the trip is not the right thing to do,” said Co-President of the Japanese Club, Zauxie Sackman. “We are trying to change his decision, by writing letters to him and forming a petition against his decision. We really need to have more upper-classmen support if we want the trip to happen.”

Soltman offered some hope. “If there was an experienced teacher that maybe had some travel experience I would be open to that option,” said Soltman. “Many students do not realize that the Spanish class doesn’t [take a trip] and I think that the Japan trip is something we will probably want to review with her when she gets back next year and see how she feels about that.”

The members of Japanese Club are not accepting this defeat. Last week the club sponsored a week long bake sale that raised a lot of money that will help to fund the trip.

“We believe that the Japan trip will be happening, even if the club has to organize the trip itself,” said the Co-President, Lauren Houston.



PIRATE MADDI GROEN
COMPETES AT STATE FOR
CROSS COUNTRY. SEE PAGE 15



NOTICE THE TEACHERS
WEARING TIARAS? FIND OUT
THE OCCASION. SEE PAGE 5



ISLAND COFFEE PUT TO THE
TEST. WHICH WAS BEST? SEE
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Challenge Day returns

kaitlyndavies

staff reporter

Last year 86 students and teachers gathered in the school gym for Challenge Day, not knowing what to expect. At first, it was all about playing games and getting to know each other, but as the day went on, it gradually got more, and more serious topics.

“Challenge Day went really well. When it first started out we were playing games and having fun, and later you just heard everyone’s stories and got to know them a lot better,” said junior Maddy Royal

Rumor is that it’s like group therapy, but it really isn’t. Yes, participants share problems, but they aren’t trying to tell anyone what to do about it, like a therapist

would. They just sit back and listen to each other. When people tell their story, it’s not like they are telling everyone in the school, everyone there gets into small groups and everyone shares something that has happened in their life and everyone gives each other support. It’s a great way for people to realize that everyone has problems and everyone is going through something. It helps students gain an understanding about what their classmates, and even teachers, are going through.

“I think people realized that they aren’t alone in the world with the problems they have, and I think a lot of the kids looked at the teachers in a different light, like they were actual people,” said Principal Susan Hanson, who attended last year’s Challenge Day.

This year Challenge Day will be held at our school again and will go for two days, so that everyone has a chance to participate. It is open to all high school students and teachers. Everyone is encouraged to go, but they don’t have to. For those interested in attending Challenge Day, the sign up sheet is in the office and here is no fee for participating.

“If the whole school participated, then I think everyone would be affected in a positive way,” said junior Becky Pirruccio, “and they would learn to respect everyone.”

Challenge Day is totally confidential and no information will be shared with other people. No one will be judged for what you say.

“It’s a fun, safe, and confidential place for everyone,” said Hanson.

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