

Promoting Friendship and Celebrating 30 Years of Women in Rotary

District 5280 warmly welcomed two distinguished Rotarian women from D2620 recently as this year's Friendship Exchange participants. Their visit has further strengthened our personal friendships and District to District relations. It also reminded us all the importance of the Third of the Four Way Test: Will it build good friendship and better understanding?

Mrs. Satomi Omata, the current Executive Aid of D2620, and Ms. Keiko Sato, 2012-18 D2620 GSE Chair, arrived on March 6 and spent three full days in LA area hosted by Jewel Price of Glendale Sunrise. First it sounded a bit crazy for them to come for such a short time, but the quality time they had has made it all worthwhile. They look forward to reciprocating the hospitality when Jewel goes to Japan soon.

This year's Friendship Exchange has provided Jewel to further cultivate personal friendship but also offered many opportunities for her club members and other Rotarians in Glendale Noon and the Rotary Club of Little Tokyo for cultural exchanges. Furthermore, it has given chances for a former Friendship Exchange participant and GSE alumni to come back to Rotary.

Sharon Townsend of Glendale Sunrise hosted a cordial and lovely welcome reception for Satomi and Keiko who got to meet more than two dozen Rotarians, including the District International Chair, Wilson Benitez, and his wife Amanda and District Governor Designate Guity Javad. The D2620 Rotarian ladies introduced their Japanese gift-giving tradition to all the guests. It included the most popular Japanese Yoku Moku cookies and chocolates with Japanese delicacy to all the Glendale Sunrise Rotarians. They also presented their District pins especially made for this year's Governor, Mr. Yoshitaka Hoshino, with Mt. Fuji and lilies, the Flower of Otsuki, the city the Governor is from. They were happy to experience an American home party. The Japanese live in much smaller homes, and do not open their homes for big parties.

During the three-day Friendship Exchange, Jewel and her Rotarian friends took them to Getty Museum, Magic Castle, The Americana at Brand shopping center, Simon Norton Museum, and Huntington Library. Satomi and Keiko were the guests of honor at Glendale Sunrise Rotary meeting where President Peggy Smith greeted them with the most beautiful pink rose bouquets and enough time for them to introduce their District.

It often takes time to foster truly strong friendship. This year's exchange with D2620 was the fourth time since 2012: GSE in 2012, Friendship Exchange in 2013 and 2015. Over the past seven years, more than a dozen Rotarians and young professionals from our District visited D2620. Through these exchanges, I am proud to say that the friendship between the two Districts has become solid under the support by PDGs Lew Bertrand and D J Sun and DG Joe Vasquez.

During the visit, Satomi and Keiko also had the opportunity to meet again our former GSE team member to D2620, Alen Andriassian, who recently commented on his Facebook page:

“So honored to be reunited with my Japanese family from my Rotary International Group Study Exchange in 2012. You have all transformed my life and have a special place in my heart. Thank you to Glendale Sunshine Rotary and a special thank you to [Jewel D'aloia Price](#) [Sato Keiko](#) Makiko Nakasome Satomi Omata.”

Satomi and Keiko were also able to re-connect with Armen Khalafyan and Elizabeth Manasserian of Glendale Noon, who visited D2620 as a Friendship Exchange participant and a guest of Kofu Rotary Club in D2620 respectively. All brought lots of gifts to give to each other, a Japanese and Armenian way. Satomi and Keiko came here with suitcases full of gifts and went home with equally full suitcases!

When you make good friends with someone, you are most likely not to wage war again her/him.





