



North of Panama, South of Paradise

By Meghan Rothermel and Haylea Erickson

This April vacation marked the language department's first ever trip to Costa Rica. Twenty students attended the trip, which was headed by Spanish teachers Kara Jacobs, Leanne Velez, and Kristen Shea.

Hayley Hawksley, a junior, was eagerly awaiting the trip. "I'm nervous about remembering my Spanish," Hawksley confessed.

Before going, Jacobs said she was hoping that the students would be able to take a lot of things from the trip. "I'm hoping that they'll be able to use their Spanish with native speakers in real situations like shopping, eating, and traveling," she said. Jacobs also hoped that the students took a good look at the cultural differences, as well as the landscape.

They went to two volcanoes, hot springs, a national forest, the Pacific Ocean, and suspended bridges in the trees, and also went kayaking. They also visited an elementary school. Junior Ally Swett was especially looking forward to that visit. "It should be cool to be able to talk to the kids in their own native language," she said.

It was Jacobs who originally came up with the idea of taking the trip to Costa Rica. She says that taking trips is a common thing among other schools.

Jacobs chose Costa Rica as the destination in part because she had been there before and thoroughly enjoyed it. Also, she wanted to take the students to a country that speaks Spanish, and she said that the Spanish which Costa Rica speaks is fairly easy to understand. Another incentive, Jacobs said, is that Costa Rica is safe and easy to get around. It is also not as expensive as going to Europe.

The tour was led by EF Tours. EF matches schools that are touring at the same time. Kingswood met up with ten students from a middle school in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Jacobs is hoping that there will be more trips like this one for the Spanish department every other year from now on.