



Perris Press Release

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Exchange Students Tour Enchanted Heights Sewer Project

A pair of foreign-exchange students from China recently toured the City's Enchanted Heights neighborhood to learn how Perris officials worked with Eastern Municipal Water District and Riverside County to bring a new sewer system to the disadvantaged community.

The Chinese students spent about three weeks in Southern California learning about American culture and visiting places like Disneyland, Universal Studios, the Getty Museum, UCLA and several shopping malls.

But when they had the chance to visit the economically disadvantaged community on Perris' western boundary, they jumped at it. Xie Chi, 21, and Yang Yanming, 20, attend Shanghai Normal University, an institution that trains teachers. Xie is studying horticulture; Yanming is an English major.

Perris Mayor Daryl Busch and City Council members Joanne Evans and Mark Yarbrough took the students through Enchanted Heights, where a \$15-million sewer system is being installed to replace leaking septic tanks.

The City officials visited Enchanted Heights to see first-hand the progress of construction—which is slated for completion in about a year—and to chat with residents and answer questions about the project and address any possible concerns.

The public outreach campaign to Enchanted Heights residents lasted more than a year proved a major reason for the success of the Enchanted Heights sewer project, which has won acclaim at the regional, state and even national level.

Yanming and Xie said that after all their sight-seeing, they wanted to see government in action.

"We want to learn about as many aspects of American life as possible during our visit," Yang said. "It is obvious after watching the community interact with the City officials, the people think this is a very important project. Perris will be a better and stronger community with the sewer system in place."

Xie said she was impressed by how Perris officials worked with Enchanted Heights residents to make the sewer system a reality. She said people, politicians and City administrators to help residents of the community "make a better life."

"They were like a team," she said.

The mayor and council members explained the history of the project, how the City partnered with four other regional and state entities to obtain the needed funding and how construction on the project is ahead of schedule and progressing rapidly. Evidence of ongoing construction was plentiful; the group passed several large bulldozers, trenchers and graders en route to the community meeting, held in the front yard of one of the residents.

The students took pictures of the ongoing construction and listened as residents spoke about how the new system will improve their lives and those of their children.

Outdated septic tanks overflowed, spilling untreated sewage and posing potential health risks. Residents like Mary Toriz praised the City for bringing the project to Enchanted Heights, keeping residents informed about its progress and continuing to visit the neighborhood as construction continues.

"This project will help the people of Enchanted Heights enjoy better lives," Toriz said. "We are grateful." Mayor Busch said community outreach and education helped bring new sewers to Enchanted Heights.

"It's really important that people know what's going on," he said. "Our staff and our partners put this project together and community outreach moved it along."

He said he was pleased to show off Enchanted Heights to the international visitors.

"We are glad to share what we've done here," Busch said. "We are eager to show it off to visitors from any part of the world."



Perris Mayor Daryl Busch explains the Enchanted Heights sewer project to Chinese exchange students Xie Chi and Yang Yanming who visited Perris to learn about the collaborative effort to improve the lives of residents in the disadvantaged community.



Perris City Councilman Mark Yarbrough and City Councilwoman Joanne Evans explain the need for the new sewers with foreign-exchange students Xie Chi and Yang Yanming.