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The YMCA Hiroshima-Honolulu Exchange Program

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Roxanne Yamashiro
 Reader Submitted

For the past 49 years the YMCA of Honolulu and the Hiroshima YMCA have participated in an annual international student exchange program that focuses on world peace. Alternating hosting duties, this year the YMCA of Honolulu welcomed eight students, ages 13-17, from Hiroshima, Japan from July 26 to August 7, 2009.

These students joined their Honolulu counterparts in a variety of cultural activities with tours of Hawaii Plantation Village and Polynesian Cultural Center. YMCA Camp Erdman played host as students engaged in team building exercises on the Odyssey, a high ropes course. All these activities are aimed at building bonds between the young students from both countries.

Honolulu's bonds with Hiroshima dates back to 1959 when the two were established as sister cities. Strengthening these ties and celebrating 50 years of sisterhood, YMCA Hiroshima participants met with Mayor Mufi Hannemann at Honolulu Hale.

ADVERTISEMENT Aside from a home stay experience, these Hiroshima youth and the Hawaii participants stayed for two nights at the Ohana Waikiki East, generously donated by David Carey, president and CEO of Outrigger Enterprises.

Larry Bush, President and CEO of the YMCA of Honolulu said, "The generous aloha provided to



Students tackle the building exercise.

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these students by our local businesses and staff exemplifies the spirit of international cooperation that the Hiroshima-Honolulu YMCA Exchange Program was established to create."



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