

Teens take lessons from trip

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A group of local high school students returned from an international community aid project with a greater appreciation for life in Canada. The teenagers, members of St. Edmund Campion Secondary School's social justice club, recently went to Nicaragua to work on a rural development project and live with residents in a needy community. They spent six days in Santa Julia building a drainage system to divert rainy season flood waters away from the local school. Students helped dig up the dirt road directly in front of the school house, create ditches and pour concrete to create a path to divert flood waters to a nearby valley.

Students were touched by the hospitality and generosity of hosts who had very little material wealth by North American standards.

"Seeing how happy everyone was with how little they had made me realize what true appreciation and happiness really is," said Grade 11 Student Alexandria Truax.

Even though conditions were unfamiliar and sometimes crude, local residents made the young visitors feel at home, according to Grade 12 Student David Del Grosso. The group quickly made emotional and lasting ties with the Central American community.

"We complain about how hard our lives are, but we as Canadians really don't know what hard is," remarked Jaydon Case, a Grade 12 student.

This is the fourth year members of the high school club have travelled to Nicaragua. The outreach program is coordinated by an non-profit organization called Casa Canadiense (Canada House).

Each year, a primarily new group of senior students pay for their own road trip flight and meals to participate in a community development project.



Rural development. Evan Rose, Grade 11, and David Del Grosso, Grade 12, are members of St. Edmund Campion Secondary School's social justice club. They and other students recently went to Nicaragua to work on a rural development project and live with residents in a needy community. *Submitted photo*