

SISTER CITY EXCHANGE

On Wednesday 20 April I began an experience of a life time. I was accepted to go on a Sister City Exchange to Seattle, Washington, United States of America and that was the day it all began. After almost 22 hours on a plane I finally arrived in Seattle at 10.30pm on Wednesday 20 April. I was accompanied by 3 other students from 3 schools in Christchurch: Riccarton High School, Rangi Ruru School and Hillmorton High School. We all had mixed ideas about what it would be like, from "gangsters with guns" to "cheerleaders" and "jocks", but our first shock was that we were driving on the wrong side of the road and also driving in the passenger's seat. After that initial shock we were able to slowly comprehend the American lifestyle. University Preparatory was the High School that our host students went to and also where we were going to do our study. "Uni Prep", as it was known, was \$35,000 a year, so you can see that we were living in the upper class society of Seattle. Everyday was either spent sightseeing - from The Experience Music Project to watching an American baseball game in a corporate box or attending school with our host students. American life was so different from the New Zealand typical lifestyle. I am now able to see the different cultures that inhabit this world and also recognise how little I know about other countries and how little they know about us. This was triggered by the most memorable question asked "Do you ride whales?" and "What kind of water do you drink over there?" But these are the memories that make my exchange even more exciting. I know this has become such a cliché for all exchanges but you do make friends for life and it was a life- changing experience. If you ever get the chance, go for it and don't wait for it to happen. I would also like to say thank you to Mrs Clayton for all her help in getting me to do this exchange and making it possible for me to experience what I did.

Nga Whatuhuia Arahanga-Doyle 13OF



*Nga Whatuhuia and host sister,
Liz at the baseball in Seattle.*



Nga Whatuhuia with other NZ students at Seattle Zoo.