

Incheon Nat'l Univ. offers shelter for displaced scouts

BY LEE TAE-HEE

Looking back at the World Scout Jamboree fiasco, Incheon National University says help from its faculty and students allowed them to accommodate the scouts successfully and bid farewell to them with good memories.

"It was tiring to go from Saemangeum to Incheon by bus, and all the Italian scouts were touched by the welcoming of the university," Anna Serrao, an Italian scout who stayed at the university, said.

Serrao was one of the Italian scouts who participated in the Jamboree, a global event that brought scouts from 158 countries to the campground in Saemangeum in Buan County, North Jeolla.

Although the event was to run at the campsite between Aug. 1 and 12, scouts had to pull out early due to health concerns as many fell ill with heat exhaustion, as well as Typhoon Khanun that swept through Korea.

With more than 40,000 scouts needing shelter until they leave Korea, many companies and universities rushed to offer their dormitories to the participants.

Incheon National University was also one of them, offering its dorm to scouts from Italy.

The dorm's staff quickly prepared the rooms for scouts, cleaning the building and planning in which rooms the 558 Italian scouts will use.

"Getting the dorms ready wasn't easy from start to end, but everyone — including the university president, staff and city officials — all tried their best so that the Jamboree scouts won't have to go through any inconveniences," Lee Jeong-su, an employee at the dorm, said. "We were happy that the scouts could bring back positive memories of our university."

"We gifted them a map of our campus in hopes that they remember our school, and we hope they take back fond memories."

A bus that was supposed to go to a different accommodation, also in Incheon, arrived at the university by accident, but the school was quick to help them find their destination.

Students at the university pitched in to help.

"The scouts arrived looking tired, and I was honored to have been able to help them get around the university dorm and with translation so that they won't have to deal with an additional language barrier," Wut Yee Lwin, a graduate student at the university, said.



Italian scouts who stayed at Incheon National University's dormitory pose for a photo on the school's campus.



From left: Italian scouts arrive at Incheon National University on Aug. 8; Italian scouts dine in Incheon National University's dining hall; Sawoorabi, Incheon National University's Taekwondo club, performs on stage with the Italian scouts.

Incheon National University's co-op in charge of running the school's dining halls prepared meals for the scouts.

"Preparing meals for the participants in a short period of time and having to take into consideration different diets of people from eating cultures

different from Korea was difficult," Park Chang-hun, head of the co-op, said. "But we tried our best to pay close attention to the menus and food

hygiene so that the participants don't go through any inconveniences until they leave the school."

The school wasn't the only one

rushing to help the scouts. Officials from the Incheon Metropolitan City Government, nearby fire stations and public health centers were dispatched to the university to assist the scouts in case of emergency.

Special performances were organized by the university's office of international affairs to allow the scouts to enjoy their stay.

Students from Ssawoorabi, the university's Taekwondo club, and dance club I.U.D.C. each performed on stage. Soprano Hong Ah-reum also performed on stage.

"We were able to quickly create new events based on experience participating in programs with international students," Sung Jee-hee, assistant director of the university's office of international affairs, said. "It was tiring, but we were able to get so much energy from the participants' enthusiastic reactions."

Scouts were later split into teams to tour Incheon. They also toured the headquarters of Celltrion and Samsung Biologics, both based in Yeosu District, where the university is located.

Unexpected weather was another hurdle for the university, with Typhoon Khanun hitting the greater Seoul area on Aug. 10 and 11.

With outdoor activities put to a halt, the university allowed participants to use the university's facilities, such as the gymnasium, classrooms and ping pong room during the period.

"We were really grateful for Incheon and Incheon National University's warm welcome," Filippo Borghi, another Italian scout, said. "We were able to comfortably enjoy our stay because the university was really considerate about accommodations and showing us around."

The Italian scouts were scheduled to stay at Incheon National University's dorms until the morning of Aug. 12, but their stay was extended one day due to requests of the scouts.

"We did our best as a national university to give them a positive image about our university and Korea, providing clean and safe accommodations," Yoon Byoung-jo, professor of urban engineering at the university and head of the university dorm, said. "We hope all the participants went back to their home country with good memories."

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