

A great day in Seattle April 2nd 2016

Visiting the Longest Floating Bridge in the World

By Santoshi, Grade 5

My Saturday morning started out like any other Saturday would: Going to the art class. When I came home at 10:45 AM, I was surprised to hear about a very special occasion right here in Seattle from my dad. Overcome by curiosity and interest, I enquired what was going on. He said, "If you go, you'll see!" I quickly raced to get ready, changed into some awesome clothes, got my pink glasses and put on my sneakers. And from here, follow me into this spectacular journey across this spectacular new SR 520 floating bridge!

On our way to the Bellevue Transit Center, my mom told me that today, April 2nd 2016, was the grand opening of the longest floating bridge in the world: Approximately 2.95 miles! She also said that there was a person from *Guinness Book of World Records* coming to certify this bridge officially as the longest floating bridge in the world. I was so excited for the event! After a long wait, we finally got on to the bus for the adventure! Even though I missed the morning inauguration to see and meet the governor, I was still excited for my walk across the bridge. And, judging from the number of people in the line, it was delightful to see everyone wanting to participate in this great occasion.

When the bus dropped us off at Medina, I couldn't believe my eyes! The new bridge on Lake Washington, it was so beautiful! I started running and stopped at the first booth I saw. It was to collect your passport for collecting stamps at different rest stops. Looks like if you had two or more stamps, you were eligible to enter the Delta Air Lines ticket giveaway contest. I decided to collect all those stamps and just save them as a good memory of my bridge walk.

I, my mom and my dad walked on the bridge until I spotted the first rest stop. We got our passports stamped and listened to the man explain about the engineering and design of the bridge. Apparently, 2,624 bolts, each between 16-20 feet and weighing over 200 lbs, hold the pontoons together. Isn't that amazing? I also took a ride on the big Broom Hilda truck and had fun driving & talking like a maintenance captain. It was so great to hear about how superb the maintenance plan for the bridge is in place.

We stopped at the bridge operations and I quickly got my passport stamped. The bridge operations team had built a Lego model of the bridge with all the little toys that looked really cute and played for a while there. I was shocked to hear that lake levels change about 2 feet twice a year! I also collected a coloring book on *The Amazing Sprinklerman!*, a box of crayons and a *The Amazing Sprinklerman* sticker. A man explained that the bridge was on steel tension cables and all about how the bridge floats and the bridge technology.

The next stop was ecology and environment. Got my passport stamped there too! I was fascinated with this bridge and really was excited to hear that the builders did major modifications to let the fish pass through easily. I saw the cutest little robot fish swimming through the model in there! I also loved the pink necklace I got there and some games. What I was most fascinated about, though, was the materials the constructors used. After I collected my passport stamp, I got to be a staff on duty myself! I posed as a construction person wearing the vest and helmet, learned about the 250-foot crane that helped construct the east approach and **772** columns that support this bridge. It was too awesome! I loved the tub full of water. Based on the sunny day, it was very tempting to jump in, but I left the option for the construction materials to enjoy. I also took deep interest in what went on below the surface after getting my passport stamped. The time capsule was also really fun, where I imagined being under water. Our last stop was STEM and careers. I played a lot of STEM games related to probability and topology. I solved a maze in less than a minute. Best of all, I got all my 6 stamps.

We decided to go back to catch the shuttle before 5:00 PM. On our way back, we took a picture of me holding a sign that said, 'Longest floating bridge in the world!' I also heard some music right there at Movin 92.5 and started dancing to the tunes. I even collected a healthy food recipe book that my mom was interested in looking at. Just at the exit, there were these strands of plastic that said, "Grand opening April 2, 2016 at the world's longest floating bridge." Since they were exactly like it, I was tempted to try it on like my Taekwondo belt.

Despite all these fun activities, I loved the falafel and French fries on the bridge. I will never forget the day of the grand opening of the longest floating bridge in the world. And, whenever I pass this new SR 520, the 2nd of April will always pop in my mind. Thanks to all the people who worked to make this day come alive.