

Northern and Central California Sister Cities Newsletter

The Consulate General of Japan in San Francisco

January/February 2014, Issue 7

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News from the Consulate

Holiday Greetings from Consul General Masato Watanabe

Happy Holidays from the Consulate General of Japan in San Francisco!



My name is Masato Watanabe and I am honored to be in San Francisco serving as the new Consul General. I arrived in this beautiful city in early November and am excited to continue the Consulate's mission of fostering close relations between California and Japan.

I have worked for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for over 20 years, specializing in economic cooperation and regional affairs within Russia and Eastern Europe. Most recently, I served as Vice President of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) that assists developing countries with nation building, economic and social development, and poverty eradication. Over my career, I have been stationed in Jakarta, Vienna, and Moscow.

I am especially excited to be working with the sister city organizations of Northern and Central California because I believe people to people exchanges are some of the most valuable experiences that preserve working relationships between countries. California and Japan currently have 99 sister city relationships, but it is our goal in the near future to increase that number to 100.

I hope under my tenure we can grow these relationships to promote the exchange of our peoples and mutual understanding. I commend all of you for your hard work in keeping these communities alive and cannot wait to meet and work with you in the coming year!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M. Watanabe".

Masato Watanabe

News from the Sister Cities

Past Events

Sunnyvale Ready for Sister City Partnership

By Mark Kato, Sunnyvale Sister City Association President

The City of Sunnyvale signed a Friendly Exchange Relations Agreement with the City of Iizuka, Japan on the evening of November 26th. This signing followed a unanimous vote by Sunnyvale's City Council and Mayor Tony Spitaleri in favor of the agreement.

(Continued on page 2)



Before the agreement was signed

Other Past Events

(Continued from page 1 "Sunnyvale Ready for SC Partnership")

Before the vote, Consul General Masato Watanabe of the Consulate General of Japan in San Francisco, Mayor Morichika Saito of Iizuka, and Sunnyvale Sister City Association Co-founder Mike Michitaka had the opportunity to talk to council members about how this agreement will affect positive change for young people in both of these innovative, tech-focused cities. Mayor Saito brought this agreement back to Iizuka where he hopes to get approval from Iizuka's City Council in December.

Mayor Spitaleri and Mayor Saito dined with Consul General Watanabe at his home before the meeting and got the chance to know each other better. The Sunnyvale Sister City Association has many plans for the youth in Sunnyvale and Iizuka and has already started to collaborate with the Iizuka Friendship Network.

Our Trip to Toyokawa

By Steve and Terri Sulgit, 2013 Cupertino-Toyokawa Delegation
(edited for length)

On November 7th, my wife and I embarked on a journey to Toyokawa. As members of the City of Cupertino – Toyokawa Sister City Program, we had watched as the program sent student delegations each year. We heard many wonderful stories about the students' adventures in Toyokawa, their interaction with the host families, and the indelible mark it left on them as they learned, experienced, and contributed to their visit in a new country. As members of the 35th year delegation, my wife and I looked forward to the same.

We were met at the Nagoya Airport by representatives of the Toyokawa Program, and then traveled to Toyokawa City Hall to meet our host family. Imagine our surprise to see many of their program members waiting for us with welcoming signs and banners.

We met up with Naomi Satake and her husband Hiroyuki. Naomi stayed at our home when she came to visit in September with representatives from the City of Toyokawa who visited our fair city. The weekend brought a wonderful and exciting visit to a nearby village as they celebrated an annual event, and then a visit to the B-1 Food Grand Prix, a celebration of the many different foods and cooking styles of Japan.

50th Anniversary Artist Exchange

By Rachel Peters, Oakland-Fukuoka Sister City Association (edited for length)

During the 2012 celebration of the 50th anniversary of Oakland and Fukuoka as sister cities, both cities participated in an artist exchange. This was a unique opportunity for artists representing their cities to experience and explore the art and culture of the sister city through creating workshops and participating in a traveling art exhibit.

The project was managed by Eric Murphy and supported by various volunteers and sponsors, including the Oakland Fukuoka Sister City Association, City of Fukuoka, City of Oakland, Oakland Asian Cultural Center, and California Capital and Investment Group.

On August 17-18, 2012, Hiroko To, a photographer from Fukuoka, led workshops at the Oakland Asian Cultural Center for students of Oakland International High School and Skyline High School. Students learned theories of abstract photography and created hundreds of colorful abstract images, which have been arranged to create a photo-mosaic of Oakland's symbolic oak tree.

The finished artwork was given to the City of Oakland, and has recently been installed at Oakland City Hall. Additionally, Oakland artist, James Gayles, whose focus is on graphic art and illustration, collaborated with Penny Harncharnvej and students from Fukuoka, and their artwork is installed at the Rainbow Plaza in Fukuoka.



The artwork from the exchange

We look forward to traveling to this wonderful and warm country again. We could not have had a better visit, learned more in one week, or done more in that week, without the kindness of our host family, the Satakes. Japan is much more than just a place to visit. It is a destination, a culture of history, warmth, and friendship, and we will return.

(Continued on Page 3)

Other Past Events

(Continued from page 2 "Our Trip to Toyokawa")



The Sulgits with their hosts

Fairfield Welcomes Nirasaki Students

By Arletta Cortright, Fairfield-Nirasaki Sister City Committee Chairperson

The City of Fairfield's Sister City Program hosted six students and their chaperone from Nirasaki, Japan. The six girls, ages 14–16, stayed with host families in Fairfield from December 21, 2013 to January 12, 2014, celebrating the 26th year of the annual student exchange.

The students visited San Francisco, UC Berkeley, and Monterey, and were also given a private tour of the State Capitol during a day in Sacramento. They received State Assembly and Senate certificates of recognition from Assemblyman Jim Frazier. The final week of their trip included visits to several public schools in Fairfield, where the students were able to experience school life in California through classroom visits and club meetings.

Call for Submissions



Have a story, opinion, or event you'd like to share? Submit it for the next issue of the newsletter! The input from your organizations is what makes the newsletter informative.

The deadline is **February 28th**. Please direct all submissions to:

katherine.andresen@sr.mofa.go.jp

Future Events

Sister Cities International 2014 Annual Conference

By Consulate General of Japan in San Francisco

Sister Cities International will be hosting its 58th Annual Conference from July 31 to August 2, 2014 at the Fairmont San Jose Hotel in San Jose, CA. This will be a great opportunity to meet with fellow sister city advocates and learn about how you can further develop your sister city relations. For more information, please see the Sister Cities International website (<http://sistercitiesconference.org/>).

Fundraisers for Student Exchanges

By Robb Mayeda, Kawakami-Watsonville Sister City Association President
(Edited for length)

The eight Watsonville schools have selected their representatives for the spring 2014 student exchange to Kawakami Junior High School (Kawakami-mura, Nagano-ken). Fifteen students, grades 6-8, are now preparing for the trip. They have already held two fundraisers, first a flapjack breakfast at Watsonville's Applebees where students presold tickets and parents served customers and bussed tables. The second was a benefit dinner at Imura's restaurant (also in Watsonville). A percentage of the dinner proceeds go to the Kawakami-Watsonville Sister City Association. Both were very well attended. More fundraisers are planned for February through April.

Prepping for Sausalito Sister City Program

By Evelyn Gilbreath, Sausalito-Sakaide
Sister City Program Committee Co-Chair (Edited for length)

Our Sister City program is gearing up for our delegation of teenagers from Sakaide. We will place 12-14 delegates in host family homes around Sausalito from July 24th to August 3rd, 2014. We will also host a member of the Sakaide City staff over the holidays.

We are planning two fundraisers in the spring of 2014. Memory books of our visit to Sakaide this past summer were recently exchanged that share our experiences from the 25th Anniversary in 2013. Contact egilbreath@comcast.net for more information.

Event Calendar

January

- 1/9 Takko-machi students farewell party
- 1/26 OFSCA Annual New Year's Dinner