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News from the Consulate

3/11 – 5 Years Later

Last month marked the fifth year anniversary of the devastating earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear disaster in Japan. March 11, 2011 is a day Japan definitely will not and cannot forget. Nearly 16,000 lives were lost, and whole cities were destroyed. Five years later, the Tohoku region still faces many issues stemming from that fateful day. Struggling local economies, an aging population, reconstructing schools and normalcy for children’s daily lives all make for a recovery that still has a long way to go.

But many who live on today remember the kindness and friendship shown to them in their time of need. Many cities in California held fundraisers or provided other support for their Japanese sister cities in the aftermath of the crisis. This is the power of sister city relationships. These enduring bonds between California and Japanese cities will continue to bring people closer together through the good times and the bad. Japan is still on its way to recovery, but it is always a fitting time to reflect on the overwhelmingly generous and compassionate responses from Japan’s sister cities in California during that difficult period.



Above: Napa Taiko performing at a fundraiser for their sister city Iwanuma (Photo credit: Brooke Ruth); Below: Cupertino-Toyokawa Sister Cities selling t-shirts to raise money for their Japanese sister city



News from the Sister Cities

Past Events

Oakland Fukuoka Sister City Association – Spring 2016 Update

By Rachel Perrin, Oakland Fukuoka Sister City Association (Edited for length)

OFSCA’s held its annual ANA spring exchange this March. Oakland sent student Max Adler to Fukuoka and received Fukuoka student Yoshinori Tsubosaka. Both students participated in cultural and civic activities while living with a host family and visiting local high schools. This summer, OFSCA will host six students from Japan from July 28-August 8. If you are interested in hosting an exchange student, please contact us at ofsc1962@gmail.com



Max Adler with his Japanese host family and exchange coordinator, David Smith

News from the Sister Cities

Past Events

Kawakami Watsonville Sister City Association – March 2016 Update

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

The Kawakami Watsonville Sister City Association (KWSCA) thanks those community members for their attendance and support at “Kawakami Night” at Miyuki Restaurant (Feb. 9) and the flapjack breakfast fundraiser at Applebee’s (Feb. 21). Miyuki’s was well-attended, and several of our Kawakami-bound individuals came and tried their first Japanese food! KWSCA thanks Janet Sakaguchi for hosting “Kawakami Night” at Miyuki Restaurant and Esther Ura for arranging the Applebee’s event once again. Our 16 students and their families sold a new record number of 370 flapjack breakfast tickets, and the walk-in guests pushed the ticket sales over 400! The restaurant tried a new method of serving, and we did not have enough adults to serve everybody efficiently, so we thank you for your patience. Our students will be headed for Kawakami, Nagano-ken in May.



Watsonville students in this year’s group traveling to Kawakami

San Jose-Okayama Sister Cities Update

By Kathy Sakamoto, President, San Jose-Okayama Sister Cities
(Edited for length)

Our new board started off with a bang in November 2015 when a delegation from Okayama City government, the Convention Center, and Okayama University arrived in San Jose for the opening ceremony and symposium of the Okayama University Silicon Valley Office (OUSVO). Prof. Mototaka Senda, PhD is the Director of the OUSVO and also a director of San Jose-Okayama Sister Cities.

The short 4-day visit included a wonderful and interesting symposium of Okayama University research efforts in collaboration and partnership with San Jose State University and an open house at the OUSVO in Fremont.

Presidents of both universities attended the events, as well as San Jose City Councilmember for District 3, Raul Peralez, in his first official welcome of a major event. Consul General Yamada, Deputy Consul General Watanabe, and many more from the Japanese Consulate in San Francisco were present during these events.

The involvement of the City of Okayama was very welcome, as we had not had an official delegation in some time. International Affairs Manager for the City of San Jose, Joe Hedges, arranged a number of meetings and tours for the city representatives that included a tour of the Japanese Friendship Garden in Kelly Park. The tour was led by a Parks & Recreation ranger who had actively cared for the Momotaro Statue in downtown San Jose, the koi, and the gardens themselves. It was truly a pleasure to see the excitement of our guests while walking among the carefully groomed pathways. It is a place that we will revisit in preparation for and during our 60th Anniversary celebrations in 2017.



The Okayama delegation visiting the koi pond at the Japanese Friendship Garden in Kelly Park

Of course, the meetings that were set up for our guests were also important and these included a meeting with Team San Jose (our Convention & Visitors Bureau), Matt Mahood, Executive Director of the San Jose Silicon Valley Chamber of Commerce (SJSVCC), and last but not least, San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo.

2017 marks the 60th year of the San Jose-Okayama sister city relationship, formed in 1957. Our new committee is working on Boy Scout and possibly Girl Scout exchanges, camping, and staff visits as a part of this celebration and as a part of an ongoing program. We hope to add to this artist exchanges, performances, university symposiums, high-tech visits and workshops, convention opportunities, tours on both sides of the Pacific, and much more.

Future Events

2016 Cupertino Cherry Blossom Festival New Attraction

By Alysa Sakkas, President, Cupertino Toyokawa Sister Cities Committee
(Edited for length)

Cupertino-Toyokawa Sister Cities, Inc. will sponsor the 33rd Annual Cherry Blossom Festival on Saturday and Sunday, April 23 and 24, 2016 at Cupertino's Memorial Park. This fun family festival honors Cupertino's sister city relationship with Toyokawa by sharing Japanese arts and culture with the entire community.

NEW FOR 2016: There will be a Japanese Heritage Arts and Crafts Area in the Cupertino Senior Center at Memorial Park. There are a limited number of spaces available indoor and on the patio. These spots are slightly smaller than our standard outdoor booths and will be reserved for Japanese-themed items, with indoor shelter available for delicate items. Vendor registrations are now being taken at: <https://www.festivalproductions2.com/>

For more information about this event, please visit www.cupertinotoyokawa.org.

Sausalito Sakaide Sister City Program Update

By EV Gilbreath & Dina Hatchuel, Sausalito Sakaide Sister City Program
(Edited for length)

We are now recruiting for host families in Marin County to host 13 student delegates from Sakaide for 10 days (July 28-August 7, 2016). Our Program Committee is busy with crafting the daily schedule of activities. Our theme continues to be: "Diversity: The Peoples of the Bay Area."



A Sakaide student delegate with her host family

"Come Fly with Us", our fundraiser for Sausalito Sister Cities Inc. (501c3) will take place on May 6 at Cavallo Point, Sausalito at 6:00 pm. It will be a classy event with great food and entertainment from around the world. Tickets may be purchased at: www.brownpapertickets.com/event/2493508

We are also hoping to launch a pilot 3-month fellowship in Sakaide this summer. A Marin County alumnus of our program will go to Sakaide to work on cultural exchange and diversity for preschool and elementary school students and adults, in cooperation with the Sakaide International Association, the City of Sakaide, and local schools.

For further information please contact: EV Gilbreath (415)332-2282 or Dina Hatchuel (415)383-6959 or (510) 697-0002.

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 and interesting. The deadline for the next issue is **May 4**. Please direct all submissions to: kevin.odonnell@sr.mofa.go.jp

Event Calendar

March

- 3/11 Berkeley-Sakai Sister City Association Annual Dinner Meeting
- 3/12 Palo Alto Welcome Party for Tsuchiura delegation
- 3/13 Sunnyvale Sister City Association Cherry Blossom Party
- 3/17-28 Sebastopol World Friends delegation travel to Takeo
- 3/18 San Bruno Welcome Dinner for Narita delegation
- 3/19 Livermore Welcome Dinner for Yotsukaido delegation

April

- 4/3 Santa Clara Welcome Event for Izumo delegation
- 4/23-24 33rd Annual Cupertino Cherry Blossom Festival
- 4/29-5/4 Sunnyvale hosts Iizuka delegation