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News from the Consulate

New Deputy Consul General Arrives

After more than three years posted at the Consulate, Deputy Consul General Nobuhiro Watanabe left our office in May. He was very involved in the sister city aspect of his job, and truly believes in the power that people-to-people connections hold in global movements and international relations. Succeeding him (and already off to a running start with sister city activities) is our new Deputy Consul General, Shoichi Nagayoshi, a career diplomat originally from Kagoshima Prefecture. His previous foreign postings have included Ghana, New York, and Malaysia. Immediately prior to his posting to our office, he served as Senior Deputy Director for Conventional Arms in the Foreign Affairs Ministry, where he was responsible for multilateral frameworks such as the Arms Trade Treaty. Other positions he has held in Tokyo include Deputy Director for International Nuclear Cooperation and Principal Deputy Director for Maritime Security. He has studied at the London School of Economics and the University of Sheffield, England.



News from the Sister Cities

Past Events

Livermore-Yotsukaido Update

By Keith Jess, President, Livermore Yotsukaido Sister City Organization
(Edited for length)

In March, the Livermore Yotsukaido Sister City Organization hosted their guests from Japan. During their one-week visit, guests were treated to a tour of AT&T Park. There were a total of 44 visitors from Yotsukaido: 20 students, 5 chaperones, and 19 delegates. They enjoyed staying with their host families and taking in the sights around Livermore. Students attended school for two days with their hosts, and the chaperones and delegates enjoyed shopping, wine tasting, and Umi-GO go-kart racing in the meantime. All had a great visit, and we cannot wait for the next one!



The Yotsukaido delegation posing for a group photo in front of AT&T Park in San Francisco

Past Events

30th Anniversary of the Santa Clara-Izumo Sister City Relationship

By Kathy Watanabe, Past President, Santa Clara Sister Cities Association
(Edited for length)

On March 28, the delegation from Izumo arrived in Santa Clara to celebrate our 30th anniversary together as sister cities. This year a total of 29 people took part in the delegation, including 20 middle school students, 4 high school students, and 5 chaperones. It was the largest delegation Santa Clara has ever received. The students spent the first two days visiting San Francisco and Monterey before meeting their host families at a wonderful welcome BBQ hosted by longtime sister cities supporters Shannon and Gary Potts.

The students spent their Santa Clara Day visiting the local middle school and high school as well as the Santa Clara Fire and Police Departments. They had the chance to eat lunch in the City of Santa Clara Council Chambers and spend time with Mayor Lisa Gillmor and Councilwoman Debi Davis.

The host families took the students to a variety of places including Santa Cruz beach, the redwood forest, and the Google campus (where they were able to find their Izumo homes on Google Maps!). And finally, no visit to Santa Clara would be complete without a fun day at Great America Amusement Park!

The trip ended with a wonderful potluck celebration that also included another sister city delegation from Coimbra, Portugal. The Izumo students sang "Tomorrow" from Annie and received gifts from the Mayor of Santa Clara. As always, we look forward to meeting new Izumo friends again next spring!



The Izumo delegation visiting Great America Amusement Park

Santa Cruz Students Visit Shingu

By Gayle McCallum, Chair, Santa Cruz Sister Cities Shingu Subcommittee
(Edited for length)

Our sister city relationship with Shingu, Japan has been going strong for 40 years, and it has allowed hundreds of Santa Cruz young people to travel to Japan to stay with families and participate in cultural exchange. It has also allowed Santa Cruz families to host Japanese young people, giving them an opportunity to experience American life. The program is a vibrant example of cultural friendship and exchange.



Santa Cruz students enjoying a river tour

The Santa Cruz students, who range from 8th to 10th grade, visit Shingu for approximately 10 days, learn about Japanese culture, and visit this beautiful area in Wakayama Prefecture to see temples, shrines, rivers, mountains, and the sea. Shingu is a small Japanese city, so they also are given a rare window into local culture and family life. In the weeks before they go, they take five classes to learn Japanese and cultural norms.



The Santa Cruz delegation walking the streets of Osaka

Young people who have gone to Shingu on the sister city exchange program have later gone on to become English teachers in Japan on the JET Program, as well as continue the friendships they forged with the Japanese families that they lived with for years after.

Past Events

Miasa-Omachi Students Visit Mendocino

By Carolyn Latkin, Treasurer, Mendocino Sister Cities Association
(Edited for length)

In May, the Mendocino Sister Cities Association celebrated the 25th consecutive year of hosting a group of students from Miasa-Omachi. Our guests arrived on May 13, the home-stay hosts and their guests were paired up, and sent home for a good night's sleep. On Saturday morning the hosts brought their guests to the Mendocino Volunteer Fire Department for activities at the firehouse including the ever-popular fire hose demonstration. After some rides on the fire engines the group walked to Mendocino High School where they enjoyed a spirited lacrosse game and American treats like hot dogs and hamburgers. Sunday was a free day when our guests and hosts enjoyed a variety of activities including an afternoon barbecue on Big River Beach with their host families.

Monday began early at the Mendocino K-8 School at 8 a.m. with a school-wide assembly. There was a performance by the K-8 chorus, and the Miasa students gave a song and dance presentation and a thundering Taiko performance! There was a presentation of gifts from MSCA to the Omachi City Council and Miasa-Omachi SCA, as well as gifts to MSCA from the Miasa-Omachi SCA. Tuesday began with a traditional gathering at the Peace Plaque on the Mendocino Headlands. The group then enjoyed rock climbing at the Mendocino Community School before spending the afternoon in smaller groups shopping, visiting the Ford House and Kelley House, and enjoying ice cream at Harvest at Mendosa's. Our visitors packed up and left for Japan on May 19, after a very full itinerary and plenty of new experiences.

Whenever Mendocino students and adults have visited Miasa-Omachi, we have been welcomed as if we were honored members of their community. Our organization always tries to provide our Miasa-Omachi guests at least a small portion of the hospitality they provide us. Hopefully this spirit of cooperative exchange between our two communities will deepen and grow for many, many years to come. MSCA thanks everyone in both Mendocino and Miasa-Omachi who helped make this exchange possible, especially the home-stay families who made our guests feel so much at home.



Miasa-Omachi students delivering an impressive taiko performance on the Kelley House lawn

Fairfield Dedicates Friendship Bridge to Sister City Nirasaki

By Arletta Cortright, Chair, Fairfield-Nirasaki Sister City Committee
(Edited for length)

On May 18, we hosted a ceremony to dedicate the Fairfield–Nirasaki Sister City Friendship Bridge over Civic Center Lake. Nirasaki Mayor Hisao Naito led a delegation to Fairfield to attend this ceremony and celebrate 45 years as sister cities! A plaque was also unveiled on the bridge recognizing the outstanding service and contributions made by our wonderful longtime volunteers Elbert and Kieko Whitaker.



Left to right: Mayor Price, Elbert Whitaker, Kieko Whitaker, Mayor Naito, and Deputy Consul General Nagayoshi, at the bridge dedication ceremony

South San Francisco Sister Cities Update

By Frank McAuley, President, South San Francisco Sister Cities Committee
(Edited for length)

17 students from South San Francisco arrived in our sister city Kishiwada on May 31 and spent one week with host families, interacting with students of their age, and attending school. This exchange is organized by the Rotary Club of South San Francisco. The South San Francisco Sister Cities Committee also visited Kumeda Temple in Kishiwada. Back in October, a group of 20 spent 10 days touring Japan, but the highlight was visiting our sister city and participating in their famous Danjiri Festival.



Kishiwada's Danjiri Festival in full swing

Future Events

Oakland-Fukuoka Student Exchanges

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

The Oakland-Fukuoka Sister City Association (OFSCA) will participate in the Asian Pacific Children's Convention for the 28th year in 2016. Four 5th grade students will represent Oakland at the grassroots intercultural exchange program in Fukuoka this summer. In preparation for their trip, they have been learning about Japan and even participated in this year's Northern California Cherry Blossom Festival Parade in San Francisco's Japantown.

This summer, OFSCA will host 6 high school students from Japan and are still actively looking for host families. If you are interested in hosting a student from July 29 through August 8, please contact us at ofscsca1962@gmail.com. No prior experience with Japan or hosting is needed. Thank you for your support!



OFSCA marching in the Northern California Cherry Blossom Festival in San Francisco's Japantown

Hercules Sister City Association Update

By Lynn Fissell, President/Treasurer, Hercules Sister City Association
(Edited for length)

The Hercules Sister City Association is currently working on securing host families for 12 visitors from Tsushima that will arrive in early August. We will also have a booth at the Hercules 4th of July event. The Tsushima Friendship Delegation is scheduled to visit Hercules from August 1-5.

Cupertino Toyokawa Sister Cities Update

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

Here is a photo of the students in our 2016 Cupertino delegation, who will be traveling to Toyokawa at the end of June!



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 **July 22**. Please direct all submissions to: kevin.odonnell@sr.mofa.go.jp

Event Calendar

May

- 5/6 Sausalito Sister Cities Come Fly With Us Reception
- 5/13-19 Miasa-Omachi delegation visits Mendocino
- 5/18 Fairfield-Nirasaki Sister City Friendship Bridge Dedication Ceremony
- 5/31 South San Francisco delegation arrives in Kishiwada

June

- 6/15 Santa Cruz students visit the Consulate
- 6/16 San Francisco-Osaka Sister City Association Annual General Meeting
- 6/28 Cupertino delegation leaves for Toyokawa