



The Consulate General of Japan in San Francisco

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News from the Consulate

Emperor’s Birthday Reception Features Familiar Sister City Friends

On December 6, 2016, the Consul General of Japan in San Francisco Jun Yamada hosted an annual reception in honor of the Emperor’s Birthday at his official residence. In attendance were many familiar faces from the various California-Japan sister city relationships in our jurisdiction. In his remarks, Consul General Yamada highlighted the importance of these relationships, describing them as “wonderful bonds of friendship...unique to this corner of the world.” Finishing off the evening’s program was a toast delivered by Mayor of Sausalito Jill James Hoffman, whose sister city program won Sister Cities International’s Best Overall Program Award for 2016. Thank you to all of our sister city friends who attended and helped celebrate one of Japan’s most important national holidays!



Clockwise from left: Mayor Hoffman raises her glass for a toast; Consul General Yamada delivers welcome remarks; an ensemble of CA-Japan sister city affiliates

News from the Sister Cities

Past Events

Fairfield-Nirasaki

45 Years of Fruitful Exchange

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

This year, the Cities of Fairfield and Nirasaki are celebrating 45 years of friendship. In October, a delegation from Fairfield traveled to Nirasaki for a 4-day visit, following Nirasaki’s visit to Fairfield in May. The delegation was greeted by Mayor Hisao Naito at a welcome dinner, which was followed by three days of local tours and events. During the visit, the delegation participated in the dedication of the new Sister City Concourse and Youth Center in Nirasaki’s Community Center. At Nirasaki’s annual founding celebration, delegation members walked through the streets, very moved by the many members of the public who waved U.S. flags and greeted them. Fairfield is now preparing to greet Nirasaki’s student delegation, who will be arriving for their annual three-week visit to Fairfield.



Dedication ceremony for the new sister city concourse

Past Events

Watsonville-Kawakami

Watsonville-Kawakami Fall Update

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

Eighteen Kawakami Junior High School students concluded their California trip here in Watsonville on September 11. The group, consisting of eight boys and eight girls, were chaperoned by Mr. Nakajima from the village business office, Mr. Kitazawa, school administrator, and Junko Suzuki, travel guide.

Shortly after the Kawakami students' arrival, Itaru Nitao and Adult School Assistant Principal Todd Livingstone led the group on a tour of City Hall, the library, fire department, and police department. Police Chief David Honda greeted the students and gave them a brief history of Nikkei immigration to California. The welcome dinner was held at the Watsonville Buddhist Temple and was attended by a large group that included Dr. Michelle Rodriguez (the new Pajaro Valley Unified School District Superintendent), Watsonville Mayor Felipe Hernandez, and former mayors Nancy Bilicich and Lowell Hurst.

On Wednesday, the students attended PVUSD schools. Mr. Murry Scheckman, a retired PVUSD assistant superintendent, was the first chaperone of our sister city student exchange in 1994, and toured the chaperones around the district. After the school visits, Mas and Marcia Hashimoto took the chaperones on a tour of the Monterey Peninsula, including the 17-Mile Drive. On Thursday, all the Kawakami students and their host students attended a welcome assembly hosted by Dr. Rosa Hernandez Principal of Lakeview Middle School. Dr. Hernandez was one of the chaperones in the May exchange to Kawakami. After the assembly, the student group boarded a school bus for a field trip to the Monterey Bay Aquarium. The student teams participated in a two-hour scavenger hunt, where I was assisted by my cousin Douglas Shinoda, an aquarium volunteer guide. After the hunt, the students shopped on Cannery Row.

On Friday, my other cousin, Mike Shinoda, took the chaperones to meet Serafin Ruiz, who led them on a tour of lettuce and artichoke harvesting. The students then had a field trip to the Santa Cruz County Ag History Museum. After the museum the group ate lunch at Cassidy's, courtesy of Esther Ura. On Saturday, KWSCA hosted a beach party at Seacliff State Beach, where the students enjoyed a picnic and barbecue. After the beach party, many of the students continued on with their hosts to the Santa Cruz Boardwalk or Capitola Mall.

Sunday morning the group gathered for hugs, tears, and photos before a charter bus took the Kawakami group to the airport. KWSCA would like to thank the following:

hosts Mas & Marcia Hashimoto, Akira & Hide Nagamine, Patty, Ben, Isamu & Kiiko Akiyama, and Phyllis Nagamine; interpreters Itaru Nitao, Takashi & Kitty Mizuno; the Watsonville Buddhist Temple; and the support from Esther Ura, Jennifer Gavin, and Mich & Sus Matano.



Kawakami and Watsonville students at Seacliff State Beach

Lost in Translation

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

To commemorate the 25th anniversary of Watsonville's sister city relationship with Kawakami-mura, Dorothy Mayeda created and pieced together a friendship quilt, titled "Friends Across the Ocean." The center blocks featured a design pattern called ocean waves. We sent the quilt to Kawakami with the chaperones who stayed with us in September 2013. We told the chaperones that this was a gift from KWSCA to the Kawakami Friendship Committee (our counterpart organization). When Dorothy and I visited Kawakami-mura the following spring, the quilt was not to be found. It had been lost.

Fast forward to 2016. Members of the Kawakami-mura Friendship Committee renewed the search for the quilt. Many of the friendship committee members are quilters too so they were determined to find it. In fact ten of the members visited Watsonville in 2008 and attended the Pajaro Valley Quilt Show with Dorothy. Around early October, we received word from Mariko Endo that the quilt was found and is now displayed in the village library along with information detailing its creation!



*"Friends Across the Ocean"
quilt on the wall of the
Kawakami-mura library*

Bakersfield-Wakayama Sister Cities Celebrate 55th Anniversary

By Susan Stone, Wakayama Co-Chair, Bakersfield Sister City Project Corporation
(Edited for length)

In celebration of 55 years of sister city friendship and good will between Wakayama and Bakersfield, the Honorable Masahiro Obana, Mayor of Wakayama, led a delegation of 12 city council members and staff on an official visit to Bakersfield from October 26-28. While the visit was quite short, the delegation was able to participate in a number of activities.

The delegation arrived Wednesday evening in time for a Welcome Dinner hosted by the Bakersfield Sister City Wakayama Committee and a relaxing evening sharing memories with old friends and getting acquainted with new ones.

The next day, Thursday, was an especially busy one. After a brief visit to City Hall, where the delegation met with Mayor Harvey L. Hall and Bakersfield City Council Members Chris Parlier and Jacquie Sullivan, everyone moved a few blocks away to the Sister City Gardens at Mill Creek. Mayors Hall and Obana, Mr. John Hefner, BSCPC President, and Mr. Masato Toda, Vice Chair of the Wakayama City Council, all spoke on the enduring relationship between the two cities and participated in a cherry tree-planting ceremony. The ceremony was hosted by Ms. Dianne Hoover, Director of Bakersfield City Recreation & Parks. The ceremony culminated in the unveiling of a bronze plaque commemorating the 55th anniversary of this relationship and the 300th anniversary of the inauguration of Yoshimune Tokugawa as Shogun of Japan.



The Wakayama Delegation with Mayor Hall and Councilman Parlier in the Bakersfield City Council Chamber

Lunch was also an opportunity for the Wakayama delegation to learn about one of Bakersfield’s most successful charitable activities. The luncheon was held in one of the private dining rooms at the Guild House, a restaurant managed and staffed entirely by members of the Child Guidance Guild, with all profits going to the Henrietta Weill Memorial Child Guidance Clinic, a non-profit mental health agency for children and families.

After lunch, the delegation and their hosts visited Murray Family Farms, where Vickie and Steve Murray gave the group a tour of their farm and store, and discussed products that Bakersfield exports to other nations, including Japan. Mr. Murray is the current President of the Greater Bakersfield Chamber of Commerce, and he also arranged for members of the delegation to attend and host a table to display Wakayama products at the Bakersfield Business Expo, which took place at the Rabobank Convention Center.



At the plaque unveiling; from left to right: Mayor Obana, Vice Chairman Toda, Council Members Sullivan & Parlier, Mayor Hall

The evening concluded with a 55th Anniversary Celebration & Dinner at the Petroleum Club of Bakersfield, where the delegation was entertained by members of the Bakersfield High School Chamber Singers, directed by Mr. Christopher Borges.

The next morning, the delegation visited Rosewood Retirement Community, where they enjoyed a tour of the facility and a delicious gourmet lunch, hosted by Mrs. Twilla Klassen and Mr. David Urner, founding members of Bakersfield Sister Cities. The visit concluded with a shopping trip to Costco before the delegation departed for LAX to catch their flight to Richmond, British Columbia—Wakayama’s Canadian sister city!

Visit our Facebook page for more photos from this visit:
<https://www.facebook.com/Bakersfield-Sister-City-Project-Corporation-168391733233922/>



Signpost showing the distance from Bakersfield to Wakayama located at the entrance to the Sister City Gardens

Past Events

Sausalito-Sakaide

Sausalito Launches Fellowship Program

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

This year our Sausalito Sister City program embarked on a pilot Fellowship Program with our sister city, Sakaide. This program was conceived of and funded by the International Sakaide Sister Cities Association and will continue every other year if both cities agree on its future design. The goals of this Fellowship program are to expose the citizens of Sakaide to the advantages of diversity and global exchange, as well as increase English language skills and cultural awareness. Our selected Fellow was a past delegate of our student exchange program. She lived in Sakaide for 3 months this past summer, teaching English classes to children in public kindergartens and preschools. She also taught English classes for citizens through a "Sister City Café" twice a week for citizens who wish to engage in a cultural exchange. She kept a travel blog which is available on our website: www.sausalitosistercities.org.

In the summer, we hosted 13 Japanese students and two chaperones for 10 days. Each student was paired with a host family in Marin County. Our program was packed with exciting, entertaining, and educational activities exploring diversity in the Bay Area. We visited a variety of multicultural neighborhoods in San Francisco, such as Japantown, the Mission District, and Chinatown. We visited religious venues, ethnic art museums, and exposed the delegates to the many diverse cuisines within our area.

In September, we hosted Sakaide Mayor Hiroshi Aya for the Sausalito Arts Festival. We also sponsored an artist from Sakaide, Mr. Yuji Sato, who impressed us with his beautiful and stylish take on the Japanese lantern.

As we move into 2017 (our 29th year) we are beginning to recruit student delegates to go to Sakaide, Japan in July 2017. Our application form is on our website www.sausalitosistercities.org.



The 2016 Sakaide delegation in Sausalito

Santa Cruz Hosts Shingu Visitors

By Andrea Rosenfeld, Member, Santa Cruz Sister Cities Shingu Subcommittee (Edited for length)

From September 29-October 5, Santa Cruz hosted a delegation of 11 business leaders from their sister city, Shingu, Wakayama. This visit coincided with festivities celebrating the 50th anniversary of Santa Cruz's participation in the Sister Cities program, as well as the 150th anniversary of the incorporation of the City of Santa Cruz on October 1st. Over the six-day visit, the delegation participated in a full itinerary intended to introduce them to different aspects of Santa Cruz, including tourism, economic development, downtown promotion, and city government and culture. The group was primarily composed of leadership and members of the Shingu Downtown Association and Shingu Sister Cities Committee, and was hosted by Santa Cruz families and the Santa Cruz Sister Cities Shingu Subcommittee, chaired by Gayle McCallum. Celebrations for the 150th anniversary of Santa Cruz had the delegates enjoying VIP access to festivities, including official acknowledgment on the event stage where Shingu Sister City Chair Taku Iwasawa shared a letter from Mayor Taoka of Shingu.



The Shingu delegation enjoying Santa Cruz's 150th anniversary festivities

The delegates expressed much gratitude and satisfaction with the experience, and look forward to reciprocating the hospitality for a visiting adult delegation from Santa Cruz planned for October 2017.



Santa Cruz Mayor Cynthia Mathews having a sit-down with the Shingu delegation

Past Events

Cupertino-Toyokawa

**Do You Know the Way
To Cupertino's Sister Cities?**

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

Last month, Cupertino honored its four sister cities in a dedication ceremony that unveiled a new sign post at its Torre Avenue Civic Center. The directions and distances to the city's four sister cities are displayed; Cupertino in Italy, Toyokawa in Japan, Hsinchu in Taiwan, and Bhubanewar in India.

On hand for the ceremony were Shoichi Nagayoshi, Deputy Consul General of Japan and Satoshi Higo, Vice Consul for Intergovernmental Affairs at the Consulate General of Japan in San Francisco, Lorenzo Ortona, Consul General of Italy in San Francisco, and Joseph Ma, Director General of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in San Francisco.

Mayor Chang, city council members, and the presidents and other representatives from all four of Cupertino's sister city associations attended along with many Cupertino residents.

Adding to the festivities, the ceremony was held coincident with the visit of 16 student delegates along with their three chaperones from Toyokawa, Japan. They were received by the Cupertino Toyokawa Sister Cities Committee for a week long cultural exchange program, spending time at Hyde Middle school, visiting local sites, and enjoying time with their host families.



*Toyokawa delegation in front of the new sign post with dignitaries and other sister city affiliates after the ceremony
Photo credit: Susan Satya*

**Takko-machi Junior High Students
Visit Gilroy**

By Hugh Smith, President, Gilroy Sister Cities Association (Edited for length)

Each year Gilroy Sister Cities Association is privileged to host junior high students from our sister city Takko-machi, and this year we had a large group of 10 students and their four chaperones spend five active days with us. The students spent a busy day in San Francisco before arriving in Gilroy on October 27, where they were introduced to their host families for their stay.



Takko-machi delegation in front of Sunrise Fire Station in Gilroy

Their schedule included half-day visits to four Gilroy schools and tours of a Gilroy fire station, the Gilroy police station, Gilroy City Hall, and a meeting with Gilroy Mayor Perry Woodward. The students were very excited to be visiting America and Gilroy and enjoyed being entertained by their host families. But they were also involved in ongoing classwork they were required to participate in as part of the learning experience that is a large part of their trip. The students conducted cultural exchanges with Gilroy students in calligraphy, origami, and other pursuits.



Takko-machi delegation after a meeting with then Gilroy mayor Perry Woodward

Another one of the high points of the week they spent here was Halloween, which gave the students the opportunity to experience pumpkin carving and "trick-or-treating." These events are not common to Takko-machi, and the students all enjoyed the activities their host families provided. The students left for home early on Tuesday morning, November 1, having spent a memorable time in Gilroy. We miss them already and hope to someday see them all again in Gilroy!

Past Events

San Carlos-Omura

2016 San Carlos–Omura Student Exchange

By Ed Sanders, President, San Carlos Sister City Association (Edited for length)

San Carlos Student exchanges with Omura, Nagasaki-ken have taken place annually since 2013. During July 9-23 this year, four high school students from the San Carlos area participated in homestays in Omura. And during August 1-13, as a mutual exchange, four host brothers/sisters from Omura homestay here, each at their respective host family's home. Omura is a castle town with 1,000 years of history.

On weekdays during their homestay in Omura, the San Carlos students, guided by Omura city staff, visited many cultural and natural landmarks in Omura and neighboring cities. They also enjoyed visiting local schools and interacting with students. Their landmark visits included: Omura City Hall, Samurai House District, Kuroki Gorge, Kotohira Sky Park, Nagasaki Peace Park, hot springs, and other historical places with four century-old Portuguese and Dutch cultural influences. On weekends, the San Carlos students spent time bonding with their host families by going out together. In their homestay reports, one San Carlos student even expressed a desire to become a foreign diplomat stationed in Japan!



A visit to a school in Omura

On August 1, four Omura students arrived at SFO, greeted by their American host siblings and parents. The highlights of their homestay included a Welcome BBQ, a courtesy visit to meet with the San Carlos Mayor, and outings to San Francisco, Big Basin Redwoods State Park, Santa Cruz Boardwalk, Computer History Museum, and Great America. The host families provided a “home-y” atmosphere and conducted well-coordinated activities where the Omura students were able to experience the



A visit to San Carlos City Hall

American way of life and improve their English. Above all, the San Carlos and Omura students were able to further nurture their brand-new friendships that had begun in Japan. One Omura student wrote in her homestay report that she and her host sister promised to meet again in Japan for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. San Carlos and Omura plan to conduct a similar exchange next year.

Call for Submissions



Have a story 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 **January 23**. Please direct all submissions to: kevin.odonnell@sr.mofa.go.jp in Word document format as an attachment. Pictures can be either pasted in the Word document or attached separately.

Event Calendar

November

11/5 Sebastopol World Friends Annual Friendship Dinner

December

12/11 Santa Clara Sister City Association Holiday Potluck

12/13 Oakland-Fukuoka Sister City Association Annual Holiday Party

12/14 Matsuyama-Sacramento Sister City Corp. Annual Holiday Dinner

January

1/11 Gilroy reception

1/29 Oakland Fukuoka Sister City Association New Year's Dinner

February
