



News from the Consulate

Fall Sister City Workshop and Luncheon

We at the Consulate General of Japan in San Francisco are happy to announce that our second Sister City Workshop and Luncheon will be held on Friday, September 27, 2013, from 11am to 2pm at the Consulate building.

This luncheon will be similar to the one we hosted earlier in March, with a presentation in the morning, followed by a catered lunch and then discussion time. However, this time, we have invited Mr. Rod McLeod to come as a guest speaker. Mr. McLeod is a former employee of the Consulate who moved into Public Relations work for corporate entities. We hope that he will be able to provide insights on effective PR techniques and tips on how to promote your organizations and events in your local communities.

If you were not able to attend our first luncheon in March, we do hope you will be able to join us this time. The Sister City Workshop and Luncheons are an excellent venue to meet people from other sister city organizations in Northern and Central California, exchange ideas, and learn how other programs work. We look forward to seeing you there!

News from the Sister Cities

Past Events

Cultural Exchange Changed Me

By Jean Gasperini, Cupertino-Toyokawa Sister Cities (edited for length)

Cultural exchange is what the Cupertino-Toyokawa Sister Cities organization is all about. In 2005, my daughter went on an exchange trip with 11 other kids from Cupertino to Toyokawa, Japan. A few months later we hosted the two girls whose families hosted my daughter. This experience inspired me to host two gentlemen from an adult delegation from Japan in 2009. After a rich experience, my husband and I again welcomed visitors from Japan into our home this summer. This time we hosted two women (pictured at right). We started out the week being very polite and formal with each other. Five days and several potlucks, a lot of driving, several breakfasts, and a lot of body language later, I found myself laughing in my kitchen with these two women as we designed and decorated a cake. It felt like we had been friends for years.



At the end of this lovely visit, I realized that I had been so lucky to learn that the simple things we did together made the visit memorable for our guests. Staying in our home, cooking together, visiting the store, and even petting my cat, seemed to elicit as much wonder and delight as visiting the redwoods and beautiful California beaches. Language and culture almost become irrelevant when you find ways that allow you to connect through shared experiences. My husband and I were tired, yet fulfilled after this week of hosting our visitors from Japan and look forward to our trip to Toyokawa with the Cupertino delegation in November.

Palo Alto Exchange to Tsuchiura

By Diana Nemet, Palo Alto-Tsuchiura Exchange Chaperone (edited for length)



We received a beautiful reception and were greeted by happily-reunited students and smiling families when we arrived earlier this month to Tsuchiura. Our Japanese hosts provided us with incredibly gracious hospitality--they opened their homes to our students, their hearts to us, and our eyes to the beautiful country and culture of Japan.

Our children lived with and learned from their host families. Our students have gained insight and knowledge from the Tsuchiura schools. And all of us have created memories and friendships that will last a lifetime.

We are so grateful for our sister-city relationship between the City of Palo Alto and the City of Tsuchiura and hope that this exchange program will continue to provide opportunities for both our children to learn and the partnership between our two communities to strengthen indefinitely.

Pictured at left: Palo Alto students in Asakusa, Tokyo

San Francisco Marathon Exchange

By Frank McAuley, South San Francisco Sister City Committee President



Kishiwada has invited a runner from South San Francisco to run the Senshu International Marathon in Japan for the past 20 years of our Sister City relationship. This year we have reciprocated. We asked Kishiwada to select a runner to run the San Francisco Marathon on June 16th. They selected Masatoshi Otsuka. While here, in addition to finishing the Marathon, he got a tour of South San Francisco, attended a Giants game, and toured Alcatraz. It was a fun filled experience for our Committee and volunteer interpreters. Masatoshi left on June 19th, exhausted from the whirl wind tour.

Pictured at left: Masatoshi Otsuka with his finisher's medal

Kawakami – Watsonville Student Exchange

By Braelen Addison, Kawakami-Watsonville Sister City Exchange Student (edited for length)

My experience as an exchange student with the Kawakami-Watsonville Sister City program was awesome, and there are too many different things for me to talk about to really sum it all up. My trip was incredible! I had so much fun traveling, staying with the host family, meeting so many other wonderful people, visiting the school, and much, much more. The greatest highlight was definitely staying with my host family. My favorite activity at the middle school was the sport clubs.

In the last couple of years, my appreciation for Japanese culture has grown a lot because my family has become more connected to the Japanese-American community in Watsonville. So many things interest me about Japan, and as a result of my trip, I now have an even greater respect for the culture. Kawakami has many things in common with Watsonville. I learned that both cities grow strawberries, and both are located in beautiful valleys populated with wonderful people. Watsonville and Kawakami have formed a very close relationship with each other over the years, and with each batch of students that we exchange, our friendship grows exponentially.



Oakland – Fukuoka 43rd Annual High School Exchange and APCC

Oakland-Fukuoka Sister City Association's (OFSCA) 43rd annual high school exchange took place in Fukuoka from June 27 – July 8, 2013. The eight students and one chaperone enjoyed home-stays, cultural activities, and sightseeing.

The four 5th grade ambassadors and chaperone on the Asian Pacific Children's Convention also returned in July after spending time in Fukuoka for two weeks, staying with host-families and meeting with other children from Pacific rim countries.

Above left: High school student exchange group

Above right: 5th grade ambassadors to the Asian Pacific Children's Convention

A Dream Fulfilled

By Hema Kundargi, Cupertino-Toyokawa Sister Cities (edited for length)

On Dec 19, 1978, Toyokawa Mayor Yamamoto took a step toward fulfilling his dreams of establishing a future of peaceful international understanding between Japan and the rest of the world when he and Cupertino City Councilman Dan O'Keefe began Cupertino and Toyokawa's sister city relationship. Ever since 1979, delegate exchanges between Cupertino and Toyokawa have taken place each fifth anniversary of the sister city relationship.

This July, my husband Kiran and I were fortunate enough to host Mayor Minoru Yamawaki and Mr. Shoji Sato at our house. To showcase our diversely rich neighborhood, Kiran and I hosted an international potluck dinner in honor of our guests. We were in for a big surprise as Shoji, with the assistance of Mayor Yamawaki, made a special Japanese dessert called *yomogi-shiratamaazuki* for all of us. As we all sat, laughed, talked, and connected with each other, it felt like a Thanksgiving table with one big family. Mayor Yamamoto would have been a very happy man to see that his dream of connecting people around the globe is fulfilled.



The finished *yomogi-shiratamaazuki* dessert.

Hercules Friendship Delegation

(Edited for length)

Eight members of the Hercules Friendship Delegation, headed by Lynn Fissell, President/Treasurer of the Hercules Sister City Association, left on July 24, 2013 for a visit to Hercules' sister city, Tsushima, Japan, located in Aichi Prefecture. This was the twelfth trip to Tsushima and the second without a representative from the City of Hercules staff and elected officials in the almost 32 year history of Hercules' affiliation with Tsushima. While in Tsushima, the Delegation members stayed with host families, viewed the 500-year old Tennoh Festival, and participated in a variety of



educational and cultural events planned for them. The Hercules students had several opportunities to give a speech in Japanese about themselves and utilize the many useful phrases and customs they had been taught. After their stay in Tsushima, the Delegation members were provided with tours of Kyoto, Okayama, Kurashiki, Hiroshima and Tokyo before returning to Hercules on August 6, 2013.

Akashi Sister City Visit

(Edited for length)

In celebration of its 45-year relationship with its Sister City Akashi, Japan, the Vallejo Sister City Association hosted a youth and delegate visit in early August. The 15-member youth group arrived on Tuesday, August 6 and stayed until Sunday, August 11. During their time in the Bay Area, the Akashi visitors toured Madonna Estate Vineyard in Napa, the California Maritime Academy, the Jelly Belly Factory in Fairfield, Solano Community College, and Six Flags Discovery Kingdom. As part of the festivities, the Sister City Peace Pole was dedicated at the Vallejo Waterfront with special participation of Kei Hagiwara of the SF Consulate and Brenda Brumfield, Northern California Coordinator for Sister Cities International. The youth delegates also participated in a tree dedication ceremony at Vallejo City Park. The Sister City Association hopes to continue our program's momentum by holding regular video conferences between Vallejo and Akashi, hosting sister school relationships, and more.



Shimonoseki – Pittsburg Student Exchange

By Kolette Simonton, Community Relations Manager, City of Pittsburg

The City of Pittsburg welcomed 8 junior high students from their Sister City Shimonoseki, Japan. Students stayed among 3 host families during their stay in our city. Students were given a tour of our city which included the Police Station, historical museum, and Pittsburg High School lead by students from the Leadership Class. Students also traveled to the State Capitol in Sacramento, Old Town Sacramento, the Golden Gate bridge, and, of course, spent time at Pier 39. The two cities celebrated 15 years as Sister Cities this year, and both look forward to continuing the relationship for many years to come.

Fairfield – Nirasaki Student Exchange

By Arletta Cortright, Fairfield Nirasaki Sister City Committee Chair

For the 26th year, the City of Fairfield's Sister City Program sent a group of high school students to our Sister City, Nirasaki, Japan. The five girls and one boy, along with their adult chaperone/advisor, stayed with host families in Nirasaki, Yamanashi Prefecture, for a three-week visit. The exchange group enjoyed a day trip to Tokyo, visited public schools in Nirasaki, and sampled the delicious peaches, grapes, and other fruit for which Yamanashi is renowned. One of the highlights of their stay was a three-night excursion via bullet train to Kyoto and Hiroshima. Several of the Fairfield students stayed with the families of students that their own families hosted during December, when Nirasaki's student group visited Fairfield. As always, the students loved their experience in Japan, especially the time they spent with their host families. Preparations have already begun for this year's December exchange, when six Nirasaki students will visit Fairfield during the holiday season.

Santa Clara – Izumo Student Exchange

By AJ Chahal, SCSCA Youth Commissioner

This summer from 1st July to 12th, AJ Chahal and Alison, students at Santa Clara High School visited Izumo, Japan through the Santa Clara Sister Cities exchange program. Raj Chahal, VP SCSCA also accompanied us as chaperon on this visit. On our trip, we stayed with our host families of Yui Sano and Chisato Kasuga and learned a lot about traditional and modern Japanese culture. We also attended High School at Izumo and interacted with Japanese students. Japanese people are very honest, hospitable and show great respect to their guests. During this visit we also visited the Izumo City center



and after meeting the Mayor we learned how their local government works. We also visited several museums and were lucky to attend some sessions of the Japanese American Grassroots Summit. Overall it was great learning experience and we would visit Japan again soon. We will make a presentation about our trip at Santa Clara City Hall in near future. We are thankful to our host families and to this exchange program of SCSCA for helping us with this great experience.

Funabashi Exchange Continues

By Joe Hudelson, Assistant Principal for Student Support, Moreau Catholic High School

This summer, students from Moreau Catholic High School continued a sister school tradition by visiting Funabashi Municipal High School in Japan—nicknamed Ichifuna. From July 19-July 29, seven of our students—Thomas Canchola, Chelsey Yu-Sze, Christine Marzan, Julie Sy, Luis Garcia, Diana Garcia, and Ginelle Luna, joined chaperones Mr. Rob Gatrell and Ms. Samantha Wainwright on a journey to the Tokyo suburb that included visits to Asakusa Marketplace, the new Tokyo Sky Tree, Tokyo Disney Sea, and the Medieval town of Boso No Mura in Narita. Our school next welcomes Ichifuna visitors Mr. Yoshi Kase and his student from August 14th-26th. The Moreau Catholic Community looks forward to a continued sister school relationship with Ichifuna, a connection that is now in its 22nd year.

South San Francisco Welcomes Kishiwada Students

By Nicole Corpuz, Sister Cities Youth Chapter, South San Francisco

Through the exchange program organized by the Rotary Club of South San Francisco, 20 delegates from Kishiwada, Japan arrived in San Francisco last Tuesday. The delegation consisted of 15 students and 5 chaperones with accommodations provided by host families from South City. Touring famous SF attractions, the students also visited City Hall and the Fire and Police Department of South San Francisco. After a day with the local high schools, a reception was held in honor of the Kishiwada delegation by the Sister Cities Committee where the



students and their host families enjoyed a nice dinner and entertainment from a local dance group and a jazz band. In return, the students shared a song and a brief calligraphy demonstration during the reception. Visiting Muir Woods and Point Reyes, the Kishiwada students spent a whole day with SSF high school students. After a week-long visit, the students left for Japan, thankful for the memories made in South San Francisco.



San Jose-Okayama Youth Ambassadors

The Youth Ambassador program of San Jose-Okayama Sister City Organization again sponsored a youth trip to Japan in June of this year. Starting with an orientation at the Japanese Consulate in San Francisco, twelve high school students from various schools in the South Bay area went to our Sister City of Okayama. Besides a memorable homestay time, the youth also attended a presentation of stem cell research at Okayama University, saw high tech plant growth research at a local firm, visited a practice session with team members from Nadeshiko Japan, the World Champion national women's soccer team.

We also visited the Hiroshima Peace Park and stopped in Hiroshima, Kyoto, Osaka and Tokyo while in Japan. The youth contributed essays about their feelings upon visiting the Peace Park and Museum. Their essays are available at our web site. We are currently planning another trip for June of 2014.

For more information, please see: www.sj-okayama.org

San Carlos – Omura Exchanges

By John Hoffmann, San Carlos Sister City Association

San Carlos just completed a two week homestay exchange for four high school age students from Omura, Nagasaki, Japan. There were two girls, Asahi Kuramoto and Mana Ueno, and two boys Yushiro Otsuka and Shotaro Mitsuiski. It was two weeks full of day activities such as Great America, a Christian church service, seeing the Redwoods, and overcoming the challenge of a climbing wall at Planet Granite. They spent a day with students at Stanford University and saw the sights of San Francisco, saw, did and ate things they never had before, and each of them said they would like to come back; one even asked how he might go to high school in the Bay Area.

Sausalito Sakaide Sister Cities - The Strongest Bond

(Edited for length)

The bond between the people of Sakaide and Sausalito is being recognized and celebrated through events both in Sakaide and in Sausalito this year. The City of Sakaide Sister City Program produced an impressive 25th Anniversary emblem with both the Seto O'Hashi (Seto Great Bridge) and the Golden Gate Bridge that was etched onto cookies, t-shirts, fabric badges, buttons, and more. Shortly after our return to Sausalito, Mayor Aya, City Council Chairman Omae, Sister City President Shintani, and Secretarial and Public Relations



Manager Suginozawa visited Sausalito with a Sakaide Citizens group to celebrate our Anniversary at two events.

On August 25th using photographs, artwork, videos, presentation boards and demonstrations, our seven student delegation presented to our community about their visit and experiences in Sakaide this year.

On Labor Day weekend our Sister City Program will have a food booth at the Sausalito Art Festival to raise funds for the visiting student delegation in 2014.

Future Events

Otsukimi Moon Viewing Festival in Oakland

Oakland-Fukuoka Sister City Association (OFSCA) will be hosting their annual Moon Viewing Festival – Otsukimi -- on Sunday, October 13, 2013 from 5:30-8:30 pm at Lakeside Park Garden Center near Lake Merritt in Oakland. The event is free and open to the public. The Golden State Bonsai Collection North will open the bonsai gardens for public viewing. In addition, there will be Bento Box dinners on a pre-paid basis and Japanese entertainment. The East Bay Astronomical Society will be setting up their telescopes for viewing of the moon and other celestial sites. Please visit www.oakland-fukuoka.org or email ofscsca1962@gmail.com for more information.

Kawakami Students Arrive in Watsonville

(Edited for length)

On Friday, September 6th, sixteen students from Kawakami Junior High School and two chaperones will arrive in Watsonville from Kawakami-mura in Nagano Prefecture. We hope that Mayor Fujiwara will also visit. Our sister city relationship is celebrating its 25th anniversary. Over the past 25 years, more than 800 students have participated in middle school/junior high student exchanges.

While in Watsonville, the students will stay in pairs in home stays. A beach party will be held at Sea Cliff State Park. The students will attend various schools with their host school buddies. The Kawakami students and their school buddies will have a field trip to the Monterey Bay Aquarium and Cannery Row. As usual, there will be a welcome dinner hosted by parents and a farewell barbecue cooked by Watsonville firemen. After their stay in Watsonville, they will fly to Los Angeles for sightseeing. We look forward to another successful visit.

37th Annual NORCAL Sister Cities Conference

The 37th Annual NORCAL Sister Cities Conference will be held Friday and Saturday, October 25-26, in Fairfield, and is co-sponsored by the Vallejo and Fairfield sister city organizations. There will be a reception on Friday night from 6 - 9 PM. On Saturday, there will be a conference from 9 AM to 3:30 PM. The events are open to all Northern California sister city organizations. For those interested, please email stevesanae@aol.com for more information.

Also, we would like to announce that the 2014 Sister Cities International Annual Conference will be held on July 31 in San Jose. We can provide more details closer to the date.

Fun Facts

Friendships Spanning the Seas

By Alysa Sakkas, Cupertino-Toyokawa Sister City Association

Virgil and Trish Klein hosted Isako and Tokuyoshi Imaizumi this year (pictured at right). These two couples met 25 years ago and have maintained their sister city relationship ever since. Reunions have occurred with the sister city visits that happen every five years and the couples have met outside of the official city exchange program, sharing family milestones including the Kleins traveling to Japan for a wedding. In the photograph, the couples are standing around a plaque commemorating one of the previous sister city anniversaries that is displayed at our city library.

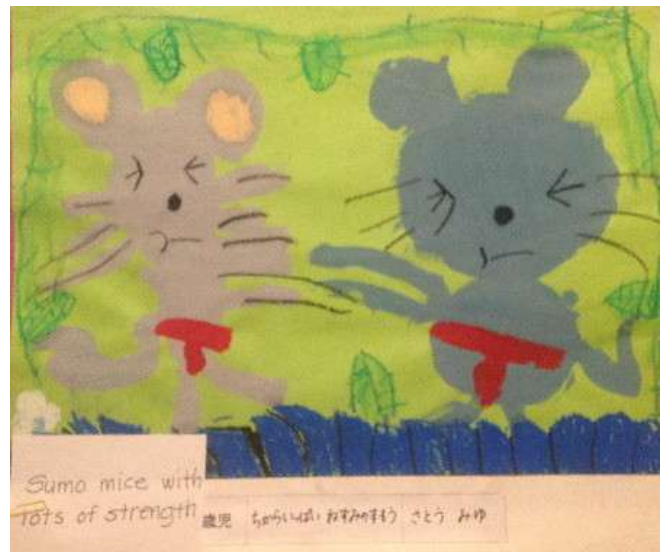


Japanese Garden in Oakland

The Oakland-Fukuoka Sister City Association (OFSCA) has been working on a Japanese garden within the Gardens at Lake Merritt in Oakland for over ten years. They installed a magnificent Torii Gate in 2002 for their 40th sister city anniversary. In August, 2012 for the 50th anniversary, OFSCA installed ten Japanese stone lanterns – one for each five years of the sister city relationship. The lantern is a replica of a Japanese lantern that resides in Kashii Shrine in Fukuoka. OFSCA holds quarterly work parties to maintain the garden and is seeking funding to complete the garden that includes the pond, waterfall, and Japanese maple and cherry tree grove and plantings.

Berkeley-Sakai Cultural Art Exchange

Although the longstanding Berkeley-Sakai Sister Cities Student Exchange Program has been on hiatus since 2007, the spirit of the program is currently kept alive through a cultural exchange of art and photography by Berkeley and Sakai City student artists. Students from Prospect Sierra School Kindergarten and from Berkeley High School share their creativity and skills, and view the work of student artists from Sakai City. Additionally, students of Berkeley High have uploaded photos to share with Sakai High School Photography Club Members. This year's theme is neighborhoods. You may view the student exchange online artwork galleries on the Berkeley-Sakai Sister City website at: <http://berkeley-sakai.org/>.



Event Calendar & Information

September

27 Sister City Workshop
28 9th Annual Vallejo Sister City
Association Dinner and Auction

October

13 Oakland *Otsukimi* Moon Viewing
Festival
25-26 37th Annual NORCAL Sister Cities
Conference



Fall/Winter Exchange Calendar

Sep 26 - Oct 2	Toyokawa to Cupertino
Oct 11 -18	Livermore to Yotsukaido
Dec 21 - Jan 11	Nirasaki to Fairfield

Sister City Information from the Consulate

- ❖ [Sister City List](#)
- ❖ [Sister City Photo Gallery](#)
- ❖ [Consulate Website](#)
- ❖ [Consulate Facebook](#)



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 for the November/December issue is **October 25th at 4 PM**. Please direct all submissions to:

katherine.andresen@sr.mofa.go.jp