



News from the Consulate

2014 Sister Cities International Annual Conference

The 58th Sister Cities International (SCI) Annual Conference was held in San Jose from July 31st – August 2nd. Consul General Watanabe participated in two panel discussions and talked about the importance of Sister City exchanges and the role of the Consulate in Sister City activities.

Consul General Watanabe also attended the opening ceremony on August 1st and made a speech. The Consul General reported that Japan has over 1,600 sister and friendship city relationships around the world; among the 440 located in the United States, the state of California has the most at 99 cities. He also heavily emphasized how valuable people-to-people exchanges are, especially youth exchanges, in this diverse and globalized world.



Consul General Watanabe speaks at the Opening Ceremony

News from the Sister Cities

Past Events



Students and their chaperone posing in front of Kinkakuji Temple in Kyoto

2014 Fairfield to Nirasaki Student Exchange

By Kelley Cortright, Fairfield-Nirasaki Sister City Program

Six Fairfield high school students and one adult chaperone visited Nirasaki, Yamanashi again this year for three weeks in July. They stayed with host families, allowing them to experience Japanese home life first-hand. Highlights of the trip included local school visits, peach picking, and Fuji-Q Highland amusement park, as well as a three-day excursion to Hiroshima, Kyoto, and Nara.

This is the 27th year of the student exchange between Nirasaki and Fairfield. The two cities have a very active exchange program, and student groups visit Japan and America every year in July and December, respectively.

Past Events

Making Connections, Part I

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



Mayeda, in the middle, posing with Yukio Tabuchi's paintings

Ten years ago, Phyllis Nagamine and I took over the Watsonville-Kawakami Sister City effort. I have witnessed the effect of visits upon more than a hundred children from our area. However, in the past two years I have experienced my family history in a way that was made possible by my ties to sister city organizations.

This began several years ago when my children went away to college. With the now vacant bedrooms, we started hosting adults from Kawakami-mura. These included chaperones, their travel guides, and a contingent from the Kawakami-mura International Friendship Committee. One of the chaperones, a science teacher, asked about the butterfly books that we had on our coffee table. My maternal grandmother had a brother named Yukio Tabuchi. He published many books about butterflies he studied on expeditions through the Japanese Alps in Nagano Prefecture. He would send these books and his large watercolor butterfly paintings to my grandmother. Since I was a biology major and a science teacher, many of the books and a couple of paintings were passed down to me. The Kawakami-mura science teacher informed me that there was a natural history museum dedicated to Yukio Tabuchi (my great-uncle). He said that it was in Nagano Prefecture, about an hour from Kawakami. I told him that whenever I went to Kawakami-mura, I would like to visit.

In 2013, I finally decided to make a trip to Kawakami-mura. I contacted a member of the Kawakami-mura Friendship Committee to ask her about visiting the museum. She contacted the museum, which in turn contacted a man named Hotake, the surviving offspring of Yukio Tabuchi. Apparently Yukio, being a mountain climber, named his children after famous mountain peaks. Since I found out that he lived in the outskirts of Tokyo and did not speak English, our travel agent said that he could arrange for a guide and interpreter for the day. We met our guide at our Tokyo hotel and she helped us navigate through several train transfers and led us to a restaurant where we would meet and dine with my relative. We enjoyed our meeting and felt a real connection to my family's past. A couple of days later, after we joined the Watsonville students, some of our Kawakami friends in Kawakami drove us to the museum in Azumino City. The museum director met us and gave us a tour. Apparently, Hotake phoned him and ask that we receive the VIP treatment. I mentioned to the director that my relatives and I had several paintings of Tabuchi's. He was surprised and asked that I send him electronic photos of the paintings. Later, when we returned to California, we received a framed photo of one of Yukio Tabuchi's photos as it appeared on the cover of a photographic magazine.

(to be continued in Issue 12)

2014 HSCA 4th of July Float

By Lynn Fissell, Hercules Sister City Association



Hercules Youth Ambassadors Alex Cassell, Alyanna Paulino, and Ernestina Hsieh rode in a decorated truck during the Hercules 4th of July parade. This was a great opportunity to celebrate America's birthday and to bring attention to the affiliation between Hercules and Tsushima with a banner and by waving U.S. and Japanese flags.

SCSCA Update

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



The Santa Clara Sister Cities Association (SCSCA) was happy to send several board members, as well as members from our Youth Commission, to attend the Sister Cities International Conference in San Jose. Several of us got to meet Consul General Masato Watanabe and Consul Kei Hagiwara at the conference (picture above). One of the highlights of the conference was hearing Consul General Watanabe speak at one of the breakout sessions regarding the importance of sister city relationships for their respective country's bilateral ties with the United States, and will discuss opportunities for stronger, more impactful sister city relationships for the future. Consul General also mentioned how this newsletter helps keep the NorCal Sister Cities informed.

SCSCA has been invited to Izumo, Japan, for a 30th Anniversary celebration to commemorate the IAEI union between Izumo and Santa Clara and also celebrate the Izumo-Santa Clara student exchange programs. The celebration will take place on Sunday, October 19, 2014. Santa Clara is planning to send a delegation made up of SCSCA board members, City Council members, and Cultural Commission members. We hope to have pictures to share for the next issue of the newsletter.

Finally, on the weekend of September 13-14, we managed a booth at the annual Art & Wine Festival in Santa Clara and sampled sandwiches which we sold with our students to raise money for Sister Cities events. Also, on Sunday, October 12, we will be hosting our annual chicken BBQ, one of our biggest fundraisers for SCSCA. The event will be at the Elks Lodge in Santa Clara starting at 1 PM.

Sakaide Students Visit Sausalito

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

Two chaperones and 11 student delegates aged 15-16 years old from the City of Sakaide visited Sausalito for 10 days this summer (July 24th –Aug 3rd). They sent us paintings made by children in their elementary schools and calligraphy, which we displayed in our Council Chambers. The theme of the program was “The Peoples of Sausalito and the San Francisco Bay Area.” We aimed to provide a balanced program with educational opportunities, socializing, and many new experiences through a variety of activities including art projects, pizza making, kayaking, bowling, hiking, various museum and nature tours, visits to the Sausalito police and fire departments, and much more.



Our delegation visited the Sausalito House Boat Community and learned about the history of Marin City. The Japanese American Historical Society hosted a walking tour of Japantown. We visited the Mexican, Native American, and Contemporary Jewish Museums, as well as the Martin Luther King fountain in San Francisco. Sausalito's Rotary Club hosted our Japanese guests to a luncheon at the Sausalito Yacht Club. Each delegate stayed with a host family with whom strong bonds were forged and Sausalito's previous delegates to Sakaide participated as Associate Day Captains helping with daily activities. At our farewell party, we had the privilege of watching a wonderful musical theater performance by our delegation, choreographed by Doree Clark from Stage Dor.

It was a very rich and intense few days with tears on all sides at departure time. Our Sausalito Sakaide Sister City page on Facebook says it all with pictures and comments from both Sausalito and Sakaide participants. You can also view a video here of our activities together: <http://youtu.be/tqMkHuLCWio>

Past Events

Sebastopol World Friends Wins Award from Sister Cities International

By Meg Mizutani, Sebastopol World Friends (Edited for length)



Photo credit: Kimberli Brady & Jim Watkins, Sister Cities International

Sebastopol World Friends (SWF) received 2014 Best Overall Program Award from Sister Cities International. It is in recognition of demonstrating outstanding accomplishments in 2013 in advancing the goals and mission of the sister cities movement in the category of population less than 25,000. Representatives from SWF attended a special ceremony on August 2 to receive the award during Sister Cities International's Annual Conference in San Jose.

Since its foundation in 1985, SWF has been active with its two sister cities, Chyhyryn in Ukraine, and Takeo in Japan. SWF's goal is to work toward "World Peace, One Friend at a Time" by bringing sister city citizens together through youth and adult citizens home stay exchange programs. Hundreds of Sebastopol youth and adult citizens have participated in the program as grass-root diplomacy ambassadors.

In 2011, SWF was awarded an exchange funding by the Japan Foundation's Center for Global Partnership through the Sister Cities International as one of the five U.S. cities. With this funding, it developed a new program with Takeo, Japan, focusing on sustainable development.

Patrick Slayter, Sebastopol Vice Mayor and SWF's City Council liaison, states, "With Sebastopol's 30-year relationship with Takeo, there are now second generation participants. To me, this is a great showing of the strength and value of the programs. The great number of travelers who have made this life-changing and mind-opening trip carry the experience throughout their lives, drawing on the lessons learned."

To find out more about an upcoming Takeo exchange group for middle school students, contact takeo@sebastopolwf.org.

Event Calendar

September

- 9/13-14 Santa Clara Art & Wine Festival
- 9/15 Berkeley-Sakai Farewell Party
- 9/27 10th Annual Vallejo Sister City Association Dinner and Auction
- 9/28 Japan Tsuchiura Festival in Palo Alto

October

- 10/2 Concord-Kitakami 40th Sister City Anniversary Banquet
- 10/4 Santa Cruz-Shingu 25th Sister City Anniversary Celebration
- 10/5 Oakland Otsukimi Moon Viewing Festival
- 10/12 SCSCA Annual Chicken BBQ
- 10/19 30th Anniversary of Santa Clara-Izumo Relationship

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 and interesting.

The deadline is **October 20th**. Please direct all submissions to:

kevin.odonnell@sr.mofa.go.jp