

Northern and Central California Sister Cities Newsletter

The Consulate General of Japan in San Francisco

January/February 2015, Issue 13

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News from the Consulate

Holiday Greetings from Consul General Masato Watanabe



Happy New Year! I hope all of you had the chance to enjoy the holiday cheer over the winter holidays with your loved ones.

This past November marked my first calendar year of being in San Francisco, and I have thoroughly enjoyed myself. I had the opportunity and pleasure of visiting various California cities who have Japanese sister cities, and witnessed their amazing, enduring friendships that are demonstrated regularly, especially at the grassroots level.

California and Japan recently established their 100th sister/friendship city relationship, a symbolic milestone that showcases the depth of our connection in this special year of 2015. It is an honor to work with the sister city organizations of Northern and Central California because I believe people to people exchanges are the basis of friendly bilateral relations.

I hope that we can continue to help each other grow and enhance these relationships to promote mutual understanding through the exchange of our peoples, our languages, and our cultures. I commend all of you for your hard work in keeping these communities alive and I am looking forward to collaborating with you further in the coming year!

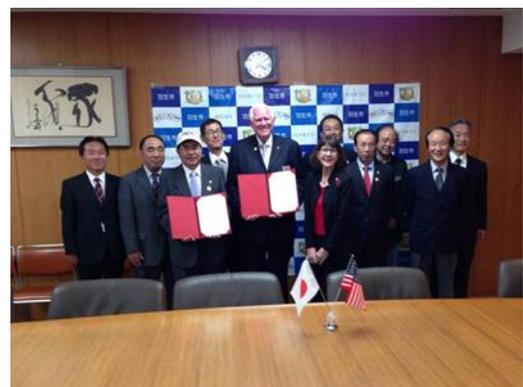
Sincerely,



Masato Watanabe

100th Sister/Friendship City Established between California and Japan

On November 9th, a friendship city agreement was signed between the cities of Millbrae, CA, and Hanyu, Japan. Vice Mayor Robert Gottschalk and Mayor Komei Kawata signed on behalf of their respective cities. Vice Mayor Gottschalk and Ms. Kathleen Kimura traveled to Hanyu to celebrate the 60th anniversary of their incorporation as a city, which took place the day before the agreement was signed. This friendship city relationship marks the 100th between Californian and Japanese cities and 62nd in the Northern and Central California region. We will be holding a ceremony to commemorate this historic achievement in the near future, so please stay tuned!



Hanyu Mayor Kawata (left), Millbrae Vice Mayor Gottschalk (center), and Ms. Kathleen Kimura (right), with other Hanyu representatives after the signing of the agreement

News from the Sister Cities

Past Events

Sausalito Sakaide Sister City Update

By Dina Hatchuel, Sausalito Sakaide Sister Cities (Edited for length)



Display at Sausalito's City Hall to promote the Sister City's Program to citizens and city hall visitors

In December, each of our local 2014 host families created a page of photos, memories, and holiday greetings for their host student. These were bound together into "Holiday Booklets" and sent to those student delegates who visited Sakaide in 2014. This is just one of the many ways we encourage host families and delegates to stay in touch.

We also had the Nakanishi family visit from the City of Sakaide who hosted a Sausalito student back in 2009. They stayed with the family of the student who they hosted from that time. It was a very exciting reunion and a great opportunity for the student's family to reciprocate the hospitality of the Nakanishi family.

Excerpts from Matsuyama-Sacramento Sister City Corporation Newsletter

By Ralph Sugimoto, Sacramento-Matsuyama Sister City Corporation
(Edited for length)

Here is a quick review of the Matsuyama-Sacramento Sister City Corporation (MSSCC)'s recent activities:

MSSCC's annual membership meeting was held back in June at our usual venue Mana's Japanese Restaurant, where six of our board members were re-elected to another term. The last week of July saw a delegation of 16 students and four adult leaders visit Sacramento from Matsuyama Junior High School as a

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(continued from previous column) part of our annual program. The students had a chance to stay at both the CSU Sacramento dorms, as well as with host families, who have been incredibly supportive of this program for many years. The students enjoyed touring Sacramento and even visited the State Fair.



In August, Sacramento Boy Scout Troop 50 hosted a sayonara pool party at Lakeside Club House in Elk Grove for five visiting scouts, led by Matsuyama Troop 34 district chair Takashi Matsui. They were here for two weeks and they had the chance to meet the families and friends of our local scouts, who will be traveling to Matsuyama in 2015. The scout exchange between our two cities is the oldest and most successful program since the inception of our sister city relationship.

In mid-September, four students from Nitta High School in Matsuyama and five students from Ehime University High School visited Sacramento to take part in the International Day of Peace event held at the World Peace Rose Garden at the State Capitol on September 21st. This group was led by our old friend Professor Susumu Oshihara, and high school teachers Mr. Akinori Inada (calligraphy instructor at Nitta High) and Mr. Ryoichi Kurosaki (classical Japanese instruments instructor at Ehime High). The students gave additional performances at C.K. McClatchy and John F. Kennedy High Schools.

More recently, our annual holiday dinner was held on December 10th at (you guessed it) Mana's Japanese Restaurant, where we played bingo for prizes. We are now planning our next trip to Japan, tentatively set for October 2015. I would like to thank everyone for their support. Peace to all, and please have a wonderful holiday season and a prosperous 2015!



Former Sacramento Mayor Anne Rudin speaking at the Holiday Dinner

Sausalito Sakaide Immersion Program

By Dina Hatchuel, Sausalito Sakaide Sister Cities (Edited for length)

In January, our Sausalito Sakaide Sister City program begins recruitment for our next student delegation to Sakaide. We will take about 10 Marin County students (ages 15-17) to Sakaide at the end of July 2015 for a 10-day total immersion program. Joining the student delegation will be Sausalito Mayor Tom Theodores, his wife, Tricia Smith, two chaperones, one young adult associate chaperone, and a Board member. Our trip to Sakaide always corresponds with a local colorful festival called the Sakaide Summer Matsuri. Each year, as many as 12 teams carry massive taikodai (huge portable shrines) around town and then compete to see who can give the most "courageous" display of strength when they all gather to hoist their shrines in the Sakaide Station Plaza. Our entire delegation joins local teenagers and their families to march with the drummers.

Throughout the year we will be raising funds via special events such as our Full Moon Blossom Festival May 9, 2015, so as to be able to provide scholarships for student delegates needing financial assistance. For information on our program, please contact our co-chairs at: dinahatchuel@htaconsulting.com or egilbreath@comcast.net.



Sakaide Summer Matsuri

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 **February 20th**. Please direct all submissions to: kevin.odonnell@sr.mofa.go.jp

Sunnyvale/Iizuka Students Exchange 2015 Information Session

By Nina Wong-Dobkin, Sunnyvale Sister City Association (Edited for length)

The Sunnyvale Sister City Association (SSCA) held an informational meeting on December 8 at the Sunnyvale Middle School Library. Over 20 families attended the session and received information packets on the Sunnyvale/Iizuka Students Exchange Program for 2015. Mark Kato, SSCA President, gave a presentation on exchange program activities in 2014 and explained program expectations and requirements for participants. In 2015, the program will be expanded to include students from four schools in Sunnyvale (Columbia Middle School, Sunnyvale Middle School, Fremont High School, and Homestead High School). At the meeting, participants and host families from the 2014 student exchanges shared their experiences with interested families and students. Applications for the 2015 Exchange will be accepted through January 9. For more details, please see: <http://sunnyvalesistercity.org/resources.html>. Inquiries can be made to s2i2015@sunnyvalesistercity.org.

OFSCA Annual New Year's Dinner

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

Please join us for our Annual New Year's dinner to meet our 2015 ambassadors to Japan! It will be held on Sunday, February 8, 2015, from 5:30-7:30pm at the Buddhist Church of Oakland (825 Jackson St.) Dinner will start at 6:00 and we will begin our program and have a raffle at 7:00. The cost for the event is \$20/person, but OFSCA will pay for the student ambassadors. Options for parking are either in the church parking lot (limited) or street parking. Please show your support by contributing a wrapped item for the raffle and/or buying raffle tickets (6 tickets for \$10, 12 for \$20, etc.). All funds from the raffle benefit the Student Exchange programs. Please bring your checkbooks as we will have Hakata Doll Master, Seitaro Muroi's limited-edition items for sale. Deadline for reservations is Friday, January 30. If paying by check, they need to be received with enough time to allow planning for the event. Please make checks payable to: OFSCA – Oakland Fukuoka Sister City Association, and send them to Liane Scott (5900 Bagshotte Drive, Oakland, CA 94611).

Event Calendar

February

2/8 OFSCA Annual New Year's Dinner