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News from the Consulate

New Year's Greetings from the Consulate

It is my great pleasure to offer my first greetings to you for the New Year. 2017 is the year of the rooster, or "tori" in Japanese. Some cities are celebrating their *kanreki* sister city anniversary this year, which means a full rotation of 60 years of the zodiac calendar. This is a symbol of great longevity and marks the beginning of the second cycle of one's life in Japan, so let us look upon these celebrations as both a continuation of a lasting friendship and the start of something new and beautiful!

Traditionally we celebrate the New Year with family in the comfort of our own homes, and I would like to emulate that same atmosphere throughout the upcoming year with you, our California-Japan sister cities family. Here's to a 2017 filled with love, peace, and harmony! I sincerely wish you all a very healthy, prosperous, and happy New Year!



News from the Sister Cities

Oakland-Fukuoka

OFSCA Update

By Liane Scott, Treasurer, Oakland-Fukuoka Sister City Association
(Edited for length)

The Oakland Fukuoka Sister City Association is proud to announce their student ambassadors for 2017 who will be traveling to Oakland's sister city in Fukuoka this spring and summer.

OFSCA participates in two annual student exchanges:

Summer High School Exchange (47th Annual) –
Participants listed in picture caption

All Nippon Airways Spring High School Exchange (11th Annual) –
Ryan Chong



Summer Exchange Ambassadors: Leila Jahouach - San Leandro High School, Emily Kinoshita - San Leandro High School, Sean Fienberg - Bishop O'Dowd High School, MacKenzie Owens - Las Lomas High School, Kihiro Lambert - Piedmont High School, Matthew Drake - Saint Mary's College High School, Valerie Lee Ow & Greg Ow - OFSCA Summer Chaperones
Photo credit: Kim Nakamura, OFSCA

Winter Break Trip to Sausalito

By Mari Kobayashi, Exchange Program Alumnus,
Sausalito-Sakaide Sister City Program
(Edited for length)

I went to Sausalito in 2014 as an exchange student, and last month I visited Sausalito again. I go to a college in NY and during the winter break the dorm closed, so I contacted one of the people I met two years ago in Sausalito and asked whether I can stay at her house. First I assumed it is impossible because the winter vacation lasts for one month! However, I received an e-mail which said I am able to stay in Sausalito for a month! Interestingly, I was accepted by eight different families and I spent time with each of them for about 4-5 days. When I arrived at SFO, I was welcomed very kindly and I really am happy with the weather! In NY it already started snowing in October and they don't have snow in Sausalito even in December and January! Everyone asks me what was my favorite thing in the trip, but I can't decide only one. However, the most exciting thing was that I was able to eat sushi and fresh fish which I can't find in upstate NY.



Mari with one of her eight host families over winter break

I felt a lot of love from all the families and they embrace me every time we do something. Since I live in a dorm at school in the United States, I study English in both class and daily life, but what you really learn is totally different when I spend time in actual homes in Sausalito and Marin County. For example, family love which is different from friend love, how to educate and raise children in American style, how to develop relationships with people and between families (husband and wife, parents and children). It is very interesting to observe what family is like and how children have been raised probably because I often talk with my mother about the relationship between us. I am proud of my mother and I am pretty sure our relationship is the most difficult and the best in the world because we are sure that we love each other and we are both independent. I found similar relationship in my host families too. All the host families are enjoying their lives and that's why I could enjoy the special time in Sausalito and Marin County. When I woke up there was always hot tea and delicious breakfast made by the husband with beautiful music playing and landscape. (In Japan it is still rare to see husbands cooking!)

This trip allowed me to put myself in the daily lives of Americans. What I really appreciated is how everyone treated me as an adult person. In Japan we tend to treat people depending on what community you belong and we even change our treatment towards them. However, I was treated as a one person and they didn't change their attitude just because I am 18, a Japanese girl, and not a native English speaker. Through this trip, I came to love Sausalito and Marin and the American culture more. Thank you so much and I LOVE YOU. ♡♡♡

Gilroy-Takko

Gilroy Hosts Takko-machi Senior High School Visitors

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

On January 6, 2017, Gilroy welcomed a group of six senior high school students from Takko-machi, our sister city in Japan. The students came to spend a week learning about life here and visiting Gilroy schools. They were accompanied by Mr. Kenichi Nakamura, Vice Principal of Takko-machi High School; Mrs. Yasuyo Ichihashi, chaperone and interpreter; and Ms. Laura Doughty, Coordinator of International Relations for Takko-machi. The students were: Satsuki Shiraita, Mika Yamazaki, Ryuhei Noba, Hideto Kudo, Ken Sugisawa, and Miyu Kobayashi.



The students visiting Takko-machi Lane in Gilroy

On the evening of their arrival in Gilroy, the students met their host families. The next day, a Saturday, the Takko students visited Stanford University, Silicon Valley, and San Jose's Japantown, where they had a guided tour of the Japanese American Museum. After spending a free Sunday with host families, the Takko students started their week on Monday with breakfast at Sandy's Restaurant where they practiced their English skills in ordering breakfast. In the following days, they visited Gilroy High School, Christopher High School, Gavilan College, and various businesses where they were able to further their experience with American culture. The week ended with the Takko students attending a farewell party on Wednesday. They departed for home early the next morning, after an exciting and eventful week in Gilroy bonding with their host families and having new adventures.

Watsonville-Kawakami Update

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

The Kawakami Watsonville Sister City Association thanks those community members for their support at our flapjack breakfast fundraiser at Applebee's in December. Our 16 students and their families sold 300 tickets which will help the students fund their airfare. Another 37 community members walked in and purchased tickets at the door. The walk-in proceeds help the KWSCA fund hosting activities for the students who visit from Kawakami and help offset the price of the chaperone airfare. The parents served 200 breakfasts, while our 16 student travelers greeted our guests.



Annual flapjack breakfast fundraiser at Applebee's

On a different note, many of you may have read about the friendship quilt that Dorothy Mayeda created for one of the sister city anniversaries. This month Dorothy received a box containing fabric and 1,000 paper cranes. The cranes were folded by members of the Kawakami-mura Friendship Committee to encourage Dorothy in her fight against cancer. The photo below shows Dorothy holding the thousand paper cranes that were arranged in 20 strands of 50 cranes each!



Sausalito-Sakaide Update

By Dina Hatchuel, Co-Chair, Sausalito-Sakaide Sister City Program
(Edited for length)

In January 2017 our Sausalito Sakaide Program leaders participated in Sausalito Sister Cities Inc.'s Annual General meeting which was followed by a luncheon to thank Board members and Committee Leads. We felt proud about our achievements in 2016 and are now looking forward to our work in 2017. As usual, in our outbound years, outreach for our program will lead to recruitment and selection for this year's student delegation. We plan to send a delegation of 12-14 students (aged 15-17 years), chaperones, our Mayor, and other key Sausalito representatives to Sakaide for 10 days in the summer. Many teens from our 2016 host families are applying to be on the delegation. Our Fellowship Program will be piloted again in 2018 after a very successful 2016 year. We will be working on exposure and recruitment for this program during 2017, and planning is already underway for our 30th anniversary events in 2018.

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 **March 14**. 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

January

- 1/11 Welcome reception for Takko-machi high school students in Gilroy
- 1/29 Oakland Fukuoka Sister City Association New Year's Dinner

March

- 3/4-5 Sunnyvale-lizuka robot programming class
- 3/10 Berkeley-Sakai Sister City Association Annual Meeting & Potluck
- 3/18 Livermore-Yotsukaido 40th Sister City Anniversary Celebration

April

- 4/21-23 San Jose-Okayama 60th sister city anniversary events
- 4/29-30 Cupertino Cherry Blossom Festival