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News from the Consulate

40th Annual Conference of the Northern California Chapter of Sister Cities International

On October 28-29, 2016, Sister Cities International Northern California Chapter will be holding their 40th annual conference in San Jose. The event is being hosted by sister cities advocate and San Jose City Councilmember Magdalena Carrasco. Friday, October 28, there will be a reception and dinner held at The Flames Restaurant at 88 S. 4th St., and the activities will be held on Saturday, October 29, at San Jose City Hall. Included in the program will be a keynote address by California State Senate President Kevin De León, as well as two informative workshops on Sports Diplomacy and Small Business. Coming on the heels of the 60th anniversary celebration of Sister Cities International this summer, the weekend is sure to be an amazing opportunity for networking, sharing, and celebrating the sister city relationships we all so deeply care for. To sign up, please see attached or e-mail Abby Duran at abbyduran@sbcglobal.net.



San Jose City Hall

News from the Sister Cities

Past Events

Berkeley-Sakai

Cal Band 2016 Asian Tour

By Bonnie Borucki, Outreach Coordinator, Berkeley-Sakai Sister City Association
(Edited for length)

As part of their Asian tour this year, the University of California Band visited Berkeley's sister city, Sakai, from May 20-21. They performed twice—once in front of Sakai City Hall and again at the Kanaoka Park Gymnasium, where they shared the floor with the bands from Kanaoka Kita Junior High, Osaka University, and Kinki University. During their City Hall performance, Mayor Osami Takeyama took to the podium and conducted them in "Fight for California." Sakai extended an invitation to the Cal Band as a precursor to Berkeley and Sakai's 50th sister city anniversary celebration in 2017. You can find a video of their City Hall performance at <http://berkeley-sakai.org> or on Facebook.



Cal Band playing in front of Sakai City Hall

*Past Events**Modesto-Kurume***Modesto-Kurume Exchange**

By Nancy Holmes, Kurume VP, Modesto Sister Cities International
(Edited for length)

On August 6, ten high school students from Kurume, along with their two chaperones, arrived in Modesto for an 11-day exchange. A welcome party was held in their honor on Sunday, where everyone had a fun time while enjoying lots of pizza and salad. Introductions were made, followed by a dance performance, swimming, and the students getting to know their host families.

The week was busy with a trip to the State Capitol, Old Sacramento, and a stop at the Shima Center at San Joaquin Delta College. They visited local sites including Hilmar Cheese, Stanislaus State University, and the McHenry Museum & Mansion. The day would not have been complete without a stop at A&W for some ice cream! Other activities included Calaveras Big Trees, Columbia State Park, Fresno Water Park, bowling, and a memorable visit with Modesto Mayor Ted Brandvold. The group was even introduced at the Modesto City Council meeting by Modesto Sister Cities International President Adrian Harrell.

As school was back in session, the group was able to visit Modesto High School where they were matched up with leadership students and had the opportunity to experience a day in the life of a student. The weekend was spent sightseeing, making friends, and trying local food. Oh, and shopping. They did LOTS of shopping! As the exchange came to an end the host families said goodbye to their new friends and the group headed out for an overnight trip to San Francisco where they visited the Japanese Consulate, checked out the local sites, and enjoyed the cool Bay Area weather. Early the next day, they returned home to Kurume. In 2017 Modesto and Kurume will celebrate 25 years of friendship, and another delegation will visit Modesto to commemorate the continuation of the sister city relationship.



Kurume delegation posing in front of Modesto's famous flower clock

2016 Cupertino Student Delegation

By Isha Venkatesh, Student Delegate, Cupertino Toyokawa Sister Cities Inc.
(Edited for length)

On June 28, the 2016 Cupertino-Toyokawa Student Delegation 2016 set off for their trip to Japan. The student delegation of 14 students from the Cupertino Union School District, along with two district staff chaperones, went through hours of cultural and language classes as preparation.

The students' first stop in Japan was Nagoya in Aichi Prefecture. There, they visited the SCMAGLEV & Railway Park, Nagoya Castle, and Atsuta Shrine. Later that day, they arrived in Toyokawa and met their host families for the first time. They went sightseeing in Toyokawa, visiting Toyokawa Inari Temple (famous for its hundreds of fox statues, no two with the same expression!), and the Toyota Motor Plant in nearby Toyota City. Their first day in Toyokawa ended with a welcome reception where the delegates enjoyed conversation over dinner with the Toyokawa delegates. Cupertino students performed a medley of American music from the 1900s to the 2000s. During the Cha Cha Slide, students encouraged the audience to get on their feet and dance with them! Soon after, they returned with their host families, spending the weekend with them. Students enjoyed activities such as the nearby amusement park, Japanese spas, shopping, and getting together with other delegates.

The next two days were spent at Chubu Jr. High School. The delegation shadowed Japanese students, ate lunch together, and engaged in cultural projects such as Japanese cloisonné work, calligraphy, and stamp making. Shadowing Japanese students showed the delegates how Japanese schools compared and contrasted with their own schooling, and lunchtime was great for making friends with classmates. To conclude their visit to the school, Chubu Jr. High School hosted a farewell ceremony with team games and a Japanese taiko drum performance by one of the Cupertino delegates.

The next morning was their last in Toyokawa, with many delegates and host parents giving tearful farewells. Their next stop was Toyohashi Station where the delegation rode the Shinkansen to Kyoto. There they visited Nijo Castle, Kinkakuji, and enjoyed a kimono fashion show. After a night at their hotel, the Cupertino students visited Uzumasa Movie Town, Kiyomizudera, and the Kyoto Handicraft Center. On their last day, after touring the Fushimi Inari Shrine, they stopped at the Todaiji Temple and deer park in Nara. Finally, they made their way to Umeda Sky Building in Osaka before heading to the airport in Osaka. Welcome back, Cupertino-Toyokawa Student Delegation 2016!

Newly Revamped Student Exchange Program for 2016

By Brad McCullough, Board Member,
Berkeley-Sakai Sister City Association (Edited for length)

This year marks a revitalization of the high school student exchange between Berkeley and Sakai as part of their sister city relationship that began 50 years ago. The nine members of the exchange included three current Berkeley-Sakai Sister City Association board members and their daughters (Cheryl and Gaby Rego, Brad and Claire McCullough, and Jay and Elah Sordean) and the twin grandchildren (Kelsey and Rachel Hirota) of one of the founders of the association, Tad Hirota, as well as their mother, Katie Sanbongi. The exchange trip took place from July 28-August 8, 2016.

During their stay in Sakai, the Berkeley exchange students interacted with Sakai high school students and their families, talking about differences and similarities in culture, government, business, food, teen interests, etcetera. The Berkeley guests taught their hosts how to make pizza and gave food-related presentations, and the Sakai hosts treated the Berkeley students to Sakai culture and tradition by having them sell various live food from the sea standing on a platform in front of thousands of people while dressed in fancy yukata as part of the 700-year old Sakai Grand Evening Fish Market. Their stay in Sakai also included time spent on activities with their host families, meeting with the Mayor and other government officials of Sakai, touring local businesses, and learning the tea ceremony.



The 2016 BSSE with officials from the City of Sakai in the City Council chambers

After visiting Sakai, the group spent three nights in Kyoto and then on to Hiroshima for two nights before returning home. In Hiroshima, they attended the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Ceremony, held each year

on August 6, the anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. The ceremony included an activity called Light and Music for Peace, which involved setting lanterns afloat with thousands of others in a show of remembrance and honor for those no longer with us.



The 2016 BSSE send lanterns with messages of peace floating down the Ota River as part of the 2016 Hiroshima Peace Memorial Ceremony

Hercules-Tsushima

Tsushima Friendship Delegation Visits Hercules in August 2016

By Lynn Fissell, President/Treasurer, Hercules Sister City Association
(Edited for length)

On August 1, 2016, upon their arrival from Japan, the twelve members of the Tsushima Friendship Delegation came to Hercules for a four-day stay with host families. Their Hercules hosts planned several events that provided them with hospitality, good food, sight-seeing, and friendship. Some members of the Hercules Friendship Delegation that have already been selected for a trip to Japan in 2017 will be able to get reacquainted with these visitors when they see them in Tsushima in July for a homestay experience that will include witnessing the Owari Tsushima Tenno Festival.



Tsushima delegation posing in front of the entrance to Hercules City Hall

Kawakami Visitors Arrive September 6

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

Sixteen students from Kawakami Jr. High School, along with three chaperones, arrived on Tuesday, September 6. There was a tour of city departments including meeting the Chief of Police David Honda. We held a traditional American turkey dinner at 6:00 P.M. at the Watsonville Buddhist Temple. The eight pairs of students went home with their host families, and then attended school on Wednesday with their assigned buddies. On Thursday morning, Lakeview Middle School hosted a welcome assembly for all the visiting students, after which they left for the Monterey Bay Aquarium. Friday morning the students had a tour of the Pajaro Valley Ag History Museum at the fairgrounds. This was followed by a pizza lunch at Cassidy's. The traditional beach party barbecue was held at Seaclyff State Beach, and also served as their farewell event.

Rio Vista-Tobishima

Tobishima Academy Students Enjoy Rio Vista

By Ron Jones, Chairman, Rio Vista Sister Cities Association
(Edited for length)

When 35 Tobishima Academy students arrived in Rio Vista the morning of August 19th, the annual exchange cycle was complete. The 12 seventh grade students from Rio Vista's Riverview Middle School, who traveled to Tobishima in early June, were curbside as the Tobishima students arrived aboard Rio Vista fire trucks. The hugs and shouts of joy as friends bonded once again were heartwarming. The remainder of the school day was spent touring the campus and participating in a student body assembly.



Students enjoying a minor league baseball game

With the school day finished, Tobishima students were paired with host families for a weekend homestay. An early evening "Welcome to life in California BBQ" ensured that any lingering anxieties were dashed! Normal weekend family activities, including breakfast out and an evening at a minor league baseball stadium, were enjoyed by all. On Sunday morning, following more hugs and tears, it was on the bus to San Francisco and the Monday morning departure for home. The cycle starts again as Riverview seventh grade students are selected for the trip to Japan next June.

Gilroy-Takko

Gilroy Sister Cities Association Welcomes Takko-machi Visitors

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

On July 28, 2016, we greeted seven visitors from our sister city Takko-machi, led by Vice Mayor Mr. Masanori Hara. Their first day included a meeting with Mayor Perry Woodward, a Gilroy police station tour, and a welcome party where they met many citizens of Gilroy and also their host families. We were very fortunate to also have Vice Consul Higo and Mr. Kevin O'Donnell from the Consulate General of Japan in San Francisco attend our welcome party and meet with our Takko-machi visitors.



Arrival day for the Takko-machi delegation

The remainder of Takko-machi's stay included a full day at the Garlic Festival, a day-long tour around the local area, and one free day with their host families to cap off their time here. This was a short visit that only lasted four days, but everyone enjoyed meeting old friends and making new ones. Additionally, Takko-machi sends two groups of students annually to Gilroy for cultural exchanges, and we are making plans for the next group who will arrive in late October. Our Takko visitors stay with host families while here, which always enhances the experience both for them and for us who host them.

Wakayama Students Visit Bakersfield

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

From August 4-9, 2016, a group of junior high and high school students from Wakayama visited Bakersfield as part of the Wakayama Summer Cultural Study program. All 40 students and the three adult chaperones stayed with local host families. Planned activities included a tour of California State University, Bakersfield, hosted by the staff of the Intensive English Language Center. Later that same day, many attended a swim party at the McMurtrey Aquatic Center. On Sunday evening, everyone gathered at Emerald Cove Park for an All-American Picnic and the 3rd Sister City Olympics. Entertainment included dances performed by the Wakayama students and music provided by a local youth group, the Mariachi Juvenil Atzlán. This was followed by silly Olympic games, with every participant receiving a winner's medal. The evening concluded with a piñata for those celebrating birthdays and dessert. It was truly an evening filled with laughter, joy, and love.



The delegation posing with a mariachi band after watching a performance

Monday morning, everyone was invited to Murray Family Farms, where the group was able to take a hay ride, pick apples, visit the petting zoo, and play on the giant bounce pillow. The Murrays were there to welcome the students, and Vickie provided a treat of frozen watermelon on a stick (nature's popsicle)!

Host families also provided their guests with many memorable experiences, including trips to Six Flags Magic Mountain, the Sequoias, and even Yosemite. Special activities for the adult chaperones included a dinner party hosted by Susan and Richard Stone, a visit to an ostrich ranch, a shopping excursion to the local outlets, and a farewell dinner. Tuesday morning came too soon, and there were many tearful faces when it came time to say goodbye for now. But the tears were proof that once again this visit had accomplished its purpose: to foster and deepen mutual understanding and friendship between our two countries. View more photos at: www.facebook.com/Bakersfield-Sister-City-Project-Corporation-168391733233922/



Some students enjoying apple picking at Murray Family Farms

In celebration of the 55th anniversary of the Wakayama-Bakersfield sister city relationship, Mayor Masahiro Obana of Wakayama will lead a delegation of city officials to Bakersfield from October 25-27 of this year. Plans for this visit are still in the formative stages, but activities will include a gala dinner and a cherry tree planting ceremony at the Wakayama Pavilion of the Sister City Gardens at Mill Creek in Bakersfield.

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 **November 17**. 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

September

- 9/24 Vallejo Sister City Association Annual International Dinner & Auction
- 9/26 Cupertino Sister Cities Sign Post Dedication Ceremony
- 9/30 Santa Cruz Mayor's Reception for Shingu Delegation

October

- 10/2 Santa Clara-Izumo 30th Sister City Anniversary Dinner
- 10/16 Oakland-Fukuoka Otsukimi Moon Viewing Party
- 10/25-27 Wakayama officials' visit to Bakersfield
- 10/29-29 40th Annual Conference of SCI NorCal Chapter

November

- 11/5 Sebastopol World Friends Annual Friendship Dinner

December

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