



The Consulate General of Japan in San Francisco

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News from the Consulate

2014 Welcome Back Reception for Newly Returned JETs

On Friday, October 3, Consul General Masato Watanabe hosted a welcome back reception for JET (Japan Exchange & Teaching) Program participants who have recently returned to the Bay Area after completing their term on the program. Many of the newly returned JET Program participants expressed their interest in staying connected with Japan. One organization that helps former JET Program participants maintain their ties with Japan is the JET Alumni Association of Northern California (JETAANC).

During the reception, the JETAANC received the Consul General's Commendation in recognition of their role in helping to promote US-Japan related exchanges and activities. Since its founding in 1994, JETAANC and its members utilize the experience and knowledge they gained while living in Japan to share Japanese culture with their local communities.

To learn more about how JETAANC supports US-Japan exchanges, please visit: <http://www.jetaanc.org/>. To contact JETAANC regarding sister city activities, please e-mail Jaclyn Funasaki at jackie.funasaki@jetaanc.org.

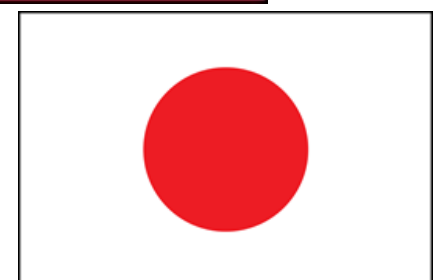


Consul General Watanabe and Madam Watanabe (center) with newly returned JETs

Newsletter Celebrates 2 Years

This 12th issue marks the completion of the second year of the Northern and Central California Sister Cities Newsletter. There are now 99 sister and friendship city relationships between California and Japan, and we look forward to reaching number 100, hopefully soon!

In anticipation of this milestone, we are beginning the process of updating our sister city contact list. This contact list includes the names and contact information of both the leaders of sister city committees/associations, and the point person for that association's submissions to the newsletter. We would appreciate if representatives from each committee/association could send this information to kevin.odonnell@sr.mofa.go.jp by **December 12**. Thank you in advance!



News from the Sister Cities

Past Events

Making Connections, Part 2

By Robb Mayeda, Kawakami-Watsonville Sister City Association
(Edited for length; continued from Issue 11)



Newspaper clipping from press conference in Azumino City

Over the next year, Kimiko was the go-between for the museum staff and me. They were surprised to learn that there were nine of his paintings here in the US. They said that a Mr. Teiichi Saito was publishing a book about the butterflies studied by Yukio Tabuchi. Mr. Saito had an old photograph of him with three paintings, two of which were unaccounted for and presumed lost. Mr. Saito was happy to hear that these paintings were in my home in Aptos!

Fast forward to this spring, when Kimiko contacted me again and connected me with Mr. Furuhata, a climber and butterfly collector who was writing the English summary. He asked that we send my three paintings to them for a press conference to announce the debut of Mr. Saito's book. We then decided to hand-carry the painting and tag along with the Watsonville student trip to Kawakami. This time, we decided to go early and visit Tottori Prefecture, where my maternal grandmother and grandfather were born. Since I met my mother's Tabuchi cousin last year, this year I wanted to meet her Shinoda cousin. So once again, our sister city friend, Kimiko, helped to contact Hotake, who, in addition to Mr. Furuhata, gave her contact information for the Shinodas in Tottori-ken.

Kimiko worked with our guide to arrange a meeting with the Shinodas. We took a train from Tokyo to Yagano City and met Kadomi Shinoda. He was also a friendly person, who drove us to the tiny 15-building village of Okuma. He showed us the house in which my grandfather Shinoda was born and raised. He also drove us to a tunnel and showed us two commemorative monuments. One was dedicated to my great-great-grandfather, who built the original tunnel in 1840, and the second to my grandfather, who donated the money in 1968 to modernize it. It would not have been possible to see these kinds of things without the help of my sister city friends and connections.

After our visit to Tottori-ken, we accompanied the Watsonville students on a four-hour bus drive to our sister city in Nagano-ken, where we spent two days. One day, when the students went to the Fuji-kyu amusement park, Kimiko and some of our other friends took us to Azumino City for the press conference. Mr. Saito made a 35-minute presentation about his new book and displayed our three paintings. After his presentation, Mr. Saito and Mr. Furuhata hosted an hour-long Q&A session! My relative, Hotake Tabuchi, and I were both interviewed. That evening, a segment was aired on the NHK station and an article appeared in a newspaper. All my experiences meeting relatives in Japan and learning about their family history were made possible through our Kawakami sister city ties.

48th Annual Otsukimi

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



Keiko Allen and the Tatsumaki Taiko group performing

On October 5th, the Oakland-Fukuoka Sister City Association partnered with the Golden State Bonsai Collection North to host the 48th Annual Otsukimi (moon-viewing festival).

OFSCA members, Consul Kei Hagiwara, Mayor Jean Quan, and the community at large gathered for an evening filled with Japanese cultural performances, such as Japanese dance performed by MIWA-Kai, Misachibana-Kai & Keiko Allen and the Tatsumaki Taiko group. Students who participated in the Pacific Children's Convention also shared their experiences from their recent trip to Japan. The Eastbay Astronomical Society also volunteered their time and brought a variety of high-powered telescopes to point out stars and the moon.

This summer, OFSCA will be sending six high school students to Japan for the 45th annual exchange program. Applications are due on December 15th and can be found [here](#).

Past Events

Berkeley-Sakai Sister City Association Hosts Goodwill Visit

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



The Berkeley-Sakai Sister City Association was honored to host visitors from our sister city of Sakai, Japan, from September 12-16, 2014. Association members hosted 32 guests from Sakai, including 8 artists from the Pacific Bridge Art Exchange.

Highlights of the Goodwill Visit included tours of the Saturday Berkeley Farmer's Market, Irene Imfeld's Photo Gallery on 25th Street in Oakland, and a special sake tasting and performance by Tatsumaki Taiko at the Takara Sake tasting room in Berkeley. Our Sakai guests were pleased to see traditional Japanese art forms practiced and appreciated in Berkeley.

In the spirit of cultural awareness and friendship, 14 artists from Sakai and Berkeley exhibited their work in a blend of East and West, traditional and contemporary art, at the ACCI Gallery in North Berkeley. The artists who were able to accompany their artwork from Sakai visited museums in San Francisco and the di Rosa Art Center in Napa during their visit to the Bay Area.

On the final day of the visit our guests were given a tour of the Berkeley Police Department, and were given an official welcome to Berkeley by Vice Mayor Linda Maio. That evening, we bid our visitors farewell at the Bancroft Hotel with dinner, songs, and delightful classical guitar music.

Thank you to all BSA members who shared their homes and hearts with our visitors. It was a memorable experience, and BSA members are now looking forward to the 50th anniversary of our Berkeley-Sakai sister city relationship in 2017. If you are interested in participating in planning local activities, or joining us for our next Goodwill Visit to Sakai, please contact Bonnie Borucki at bonnieb@berkeley-sakai.org.

Cupertino-Toyokawa Student Exchange Program

By Alysa Sakkas, Cupertino Toyokawa Sister Cities Committee
(Edited for length)

Sixteen students and their three chaperones visited from Japan as this year's delegation participating in the student exchange program organized by the Cupertino Toyokawa Sister Cities Committee. They work with the City and the Cupertino Union School District (CUSD) to create a program that includes touring and attending a CUSD Middle School. The hallmark of the student exchange program is a "home stay" that allows the students to experience cultural immersion by living with a hosting family for a week of their stay.

This year's program took the delegates to Sam H. Lawson Middle School, where they visited classrooms, created art projects, participated in P.E. activities, and even performed at a school assembly! (Watch the performance here: <http://youtu.be/U-GTnA8wpk>) The chaperones visited several of the district's schools and enjoyed a luncheon with CUSD Superintendent Wendy Gudalewicz and Cupertino Vice Mayor Rod Sinks.

Seventh and eighth grade students of all CUSD schools are eligible to apply for the program each January. Once selected, the students meet weekly until leaving for Japan in late June, bonding as a group, learning about Japanese language and culture, and preparing a short group performance to give at the Japanese host school and reception banquet. In the fall, these students serve as hosts for the visitors from Toyokawa. For more information about the Cupertino Toyokawa Sister City program, now celebrating its 36th year, please visit: www.cupertinotoyokawa.org.



Commemorative plate made by the delegation
(Photo credit: Sharon Fong)

OFSCA Activities Update

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



The 26th Annual Asian Pacific Children’s Convention took place from July 10-24 in Fukuoka, Japan. Four Oakland 5th grade students and their chaperone attended this event as guests of their sister city. The children participated in a camp with hundreds of other student ambassadors from all over the Asia-Pacific region, followed by a home stay with Japanese families for the duration of their visit.

The 44th annual Oakland-Fukuoka high school exchange took place from July 25 - August 4. Six Fukuoka high school students and two chaperones visited Oakland.

Daily activities included English lessons, a history lesson about art from the Japanese American internment, a City Hall meeting with Mayor Quan, an Oakland A’s game, a Dance Exchange, volunteering their origami and calligraphy skills at MOCHA (Museum of Children’s Art), and visits to UC Berkeley, Oakland Museum, Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk, and Pixar Studios.

OFSCA held a summer picnic on Sunday, August 3, at Lake Temescal in Oakland. They honored six newly elected Directors, welcomed back the Asian Pacific Children’s Convention student ambassadors, said goodbye to the Fukuoka high school students and chaperones, and thanked their respective host families.



Concord-Kitakami 40th Sister City Anniversary Dinner

By Michael Pastrick, Concord Ambassadors (Edited for length)

On October 2nd, Concord, CA, and Kitakami, Japan, celebrated the 40th anniversary of their sister city relationship at Centre Concord in Concord.



Approximately 200 people attended the ceremony, including a delegation of 46 from Kitakami led by Mayor Toshihiko Takahashi and former Mayor Akira Ito, Concord Mayor Timothy Grayson and the rest of the Concord City Council, Concord Ambassadors President and Former Mayor Michael Pastrick, Concord citizens, and Consul General Watanabe. The attendees pledged to further develop the exchange between the two cities while continuing to grow their friendship for many more years to come.

In addition to the Official Dinner Celebration, the Kitakami delegation enjoyed 4 days of touring Concord and the surrounding area, a Hawaiian Luau and show, a Western Hoe Down and Karaoke party, home stays and the traditional Concord Ambassadors “Hello-Goodbye” Brunch at the Japanese American Religious and Cultural Center in Concord where Mayor Takahashi and his wife performed a special tea ceremony to commemorate the visit.

Update from the SSCA

By Mark Kato, Sunnyvale Sister City Association (Edited for length)



From August 20th to 27th, the Sunnyvale Sister City Association (SSCA) hosted its first group of exchange students from Iizuka. I would like to express my personal appreciation towards Sunnyvale Middle School and each of the host families who helped welcome these 20 junior high school students. I am certain that their experiences in America will continue to shape their lives as they begin to consider the world outside of Japan and the Iizuka countryside.

As they were about to depart back for Japan, many of the Iizuka students wished that they could stay longer in America and tears were shed as the students and host families said their goodbyes. I am confident that many of these students will eventually make their way back to the USA and that the bonds of friendship they have formed will continue to grow and strengthen through the years.

Iizuka has also donated several cherry trees to the city of Sunnyvale that have been planted around the city. I am looking forward to seeing these cherry trees in full bloom next April and I hope that they will continue to be a reminder of the friendship between Iizuka and Sunnyvale.

Now that SSCA has concluded its primary 2014 events, we have begun planning the 2015 student exchange programs. SSCA is also considering an adult exchange program and our volunteers are busy discussing how to create international and intercultural opportunities for Sunnyvale and Iizuka residents of all ages.

Santa Cruz-Shingu 40th Sister City Anniversary Ceremony



*A toast by Santa Cruz Mayor Lynn Robinson, Shingu Mayor Michitoshi Taoka, and Consul General Watanabe
(Photo credit: City of Santa Cruz)*

On October 4th, Santa Cruz and Shingu celebrated the 40th anniversary of their sister city relationship at the Santa Cruz Wharf. The anniversary was shared with the 100th anniversary of the Santa Cruz Wharf, and many came to the event in costumes to reflect that time period. Approximately 100 people attended the ceremony including the Shingu delegation led by Mayor Michitoshi Taoka and Shingu Sister City Association Chair Taku Iwasawa, Santa Cruz Mayor Lynn Robinson and the rest of the Santa Cruz City Council, Santa Cruz Sister Cities Shingu Subcommittee Chair Roxi Goin, and Consul General Watanabe. The attendees pledged to further develop the exchange between the two cities while continuing to grow their friendship for many more years to come.

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 **December 12th**. Please direct all submissions to: kevin.odonnell@sr.mofa.go.jp

Event Calendar

November

11/22 Sebastopol World Friends Annual Dinner

December

12/9 Sausalito End of Year Celebration