



EXCHANGES

JAPANESE
SISTER CITY
COMMITTEE

Fall 2004

2004 Delegation Visits Japan

It is impossible to sum up the wonderful experience we all had in Higashimurayama in one short article. The words awesome, once-in-a-lifetime, incredible, amazing and fantastic were all used many times as the students and escort reported on their June, 2004 trip.

Our flight over was a long one but smooth and uneventful. You can only imagine how thrilled we were to set foot in Japan and to be greeted by HIFA's (Higashimurayama International Friendship Association) gracious welcome committee. Our every need was attended to and we began the last leg of our trip to Higashimurayama. Once we arrived in our Sister City, we were once again greeted by the many members of HIFA, city officials and our host families. What a resounding welcome we were given!

There is not room in this newsletter to write of all the exciting, educational and fun-filled activities we enjoyed during our stay. Each student has different memories, different 'favorites', different family experiences. We each had an amazing time absorbing the Japanese culture and hospitality. We returned with many, many things to share – our hearts were definitely filled to the brim! Each of us will do our best to be excellent ambassadors to share this marvelous Sister City friendship with others and to encourage other Independence citizens to become involved in this unique organization and the incredible opportunity to share our lives with friends across the ocean.

Thank you so much for this opportunity. These quotes from some of the students illustrate our appreciation for your support of our trip.

- "I had the time of my life and you can quote me on that."
- "I am hoping to go back to Japan in a couple of years."
- "I learned so much and I loved every minute and second of the trip."
- "They had everything planned out so that we were never bored."
- People in Japan have such big hearts and open arms - who wouldn't want to go back."

Deborah Orr, Student Escort



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Successful Exchange in 2004

For eighteen days in late July and early August, eleven Independence families hosted ten students and one adult escort from Higashimurayama, Japan.

Higashimurayama has been the Sister City to Independence for 26 years. On an annual basis, each city receives student guests from its Sister City. The students stay with host families and learn about the culture and history of another country.



The Japanese students who visited Independence ranged in age from 15 to 19 years. There were two boys and eight girls. Their escort, Harumi Numakura, is a 48 year old middle-school English teacher in Higashimurayama. Harumi enjoyed her stay with Sister City Committee member David Ragan and his wife, Ann.

The students arrived on Sunday, July 24, and enjoyed a welcome party picnic at Santa Fe Park on Sunday afternoon. Early on Monday morning, the students began a busy schedule by spending the morning at the Sunshine Center, a school for severely disabled children. In the afternoon, the students enjoyed an afternoon of boating at Blue Springs Lake, courtesy of the Moxley family, a prior year host family.



Other activities enjoyed by the students during their first week in Independence included tours of the Independence Police and Fire Departments, visits to local historic sites escorted by Committee member Kathy Vest, and a day of relaxation at Worlds of Fun. The highlight of the first week was the Thanksgiving pot-luck dinner hosted by John and Kathy Killip.



Weekends were primarily set aside for family time. Some host families took their student guests out of town to such destinations as the lake or to St. Louis. Others enjoyed family time in Independence.

To start their second full week in Independence, the Japanese students and their host parents enjoyed a pool-side buffet dinner at the house of the Japanese Consul General in Kansas City.



During the rest of the week, the students visited Powell Gardens, the Plaza, and various local museums. The students visited Glendale Elementary School, sister school to Megurita Elementary School in Higashimurayama. The students also visited the University of Kansas at Lawrence escorted by Dr. Henry Russell, Deputy Superintendent of the Independence School District. Other sites visited by the students during their stay were the Harley Davidson Plant and Royals Stadium for a major league baseball game.

The Independence Sister City Committee hosted two meal events for the student guests. Past host families and other friends of the Independence Sister City Committee were invited to a pot-luck western party in the Fellowship Hall at Noland Road Baptist Church. The Japanese students presented a traditional Japanese dance program which was enjoyed by everyone. The students were also hosted by Independence Mayor Ron Stewart at the annual Mayor's Luncheon near the end of their stay in Independence. Each student gave a speech in which they thanked their host families and shared their impressions of Independence.



Joe Gall, Coordinator

Thank You Host Families

The Sister City Committee wishes to express its sincere thanks to the eleven host families who made the 2004 Student Exchange a great success. Some of the comments from host families included: "Our time with our student was far too short; our student enjoyed visiting Truman Lake and enjoyed fishing for the first time"; "our student became part of our family while she was here"; "hosting is like adding a new member to your family"; and, "we would recommend this experience to anyone thinking about becoming a host family." The host families and their guests are as follows:

David and Ann Ragan	Harumi Numakura
Dale and Kim Trotter & family	Yamato Kaneko
Randy and Kathy Vest	Ayako Kobayashi
Janelle Smith & family	Kinjo Eiichi
Otto and Colleen Marten & family	Rie Tanimizu
Larry and Robin Leavy & family	Shiho Kaneko
Ed and Elizabeth Streich & family	Asami Koenuma
Jim and Lucinda Ingram & family	Chikako Miyama
John and Kathy Killip & family	Mio Ito
Jim and Janice Pallo & family	Yuko Motai
Mike and Cindy Parkes & family	Keina Nakamu



Financial News

The recent fund-raising campaign launched by Friends of Sister City resulted in donations in excess of \$3,000. The Committee wishes to thank everyone for their generous gifts.

Volunteers who worked the Commerce Bank parking lot off the square for Santa-Cali-Gon Days reported revenue of \$3,400. Thanks to all who helped.

GEHA Success

With Rosie Smith, Committee Member, heading up the team, Sister City earned a profit of \$399 serving a wonderful Chicken Fried Rice lunch to employees at GEHA (Government Employees Health Association) located off the corner of 291 and 24 Highway. It was so good that we are invited back when she recovers from her hard work. Thanks Rosie

Calendar of Events

November 28th

Farewell Reception for Consul General Takao Shibata and Wife.

April 1

Student Applications due

February 25

Escort Applications due

April 24

Visit us on the Web
Http:www.geocities.com/
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Phone: 816: 252-0921



Meet Ed Passman

Mr.. Ed Passman has been selected as Escort for the Student Exchange to Higashimurayama in 2005. Ed has been a resident of Independence since 1973 and has served on the City's Beautification Commission. An active member of AFS, Ed and his family have hosted students from Switzerland, Italy and Japan.



He is, by profession, a Medical Imaging Educator and is Past - President of the Missouri Society of Radiologic Technologists. Ed also teaches Jr. High students at East Alton Community of Christ Church. Ed's wife is a Registered Nurse and they have two adult children.

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