



EXCHANGES

**JAPANESE
SISTER CITY
COMMITTEE**

Summer 2005

2005 Student Exchange

STUDENT AMBASSADORS RETURN FROM SUCCESSFUL VISIT TO HIGASHIMURAYAMA

Ten outstanding students from Independence, Missouri and their adult chaperone departed on June 2, 2005 for an exciting and adventurous 20 day visit to Higashimurayama, Japan.

The trip was the experience of a lifetime. We were met at the Narita International Airport by members of the Higashimurayama Friendship Association. Needless to say we were very exhausted after a 13 hour plane ride from Kansas City to Chicago and on to Tokyo, Japan. After claiming our luggage we were on a bus ride from the airport to the city hall in Higashimurayama. It is only approximately 45 miles, however it took almost 2 ½ hours to make the short trip. We were greeted at city hall as if we were official dignitaries. Upon arrival, we assembled and were greeted by the mayor and several council members. Higashimurayama has 24 council members. We were introduced to our host families and then we were off for some much needed relaxation and sleep.



2005 Student Delegation Visits HC City Hall

Throughout our 20 days in Japan, the host families were very cordial and took excellent care of us. They introduced us to Japanese cuisine and even provided us with a few American favorites. We all became quite proficient eating with chopsticks. We were happy to see some familiar sights such as McDonald's, Wendy's, and KFC.

Some of the many activities that we engaged in during our trip included a traditional Kabuki play, visiting the Higashimurayama fire department with an extensive HAZ MAT presentation, flower arranging, a traditional Japanese tea ceremony, visits to many shrines, beautiful waterfalls in Nikko (about 3 hours from Higashimurayama), Kendo (Japanese fencing), instruction from a Buddhist monk on meditation, the sights and sounds of Tokyo, a beautiful Iris water garden and best of all four visits to some of the local public schools. We spent an entire day with the elementary children at Megurita Elementary School (the sister school of Glendale Elementary). We presented the principal with a book (on Mark Twain) "River Boy" and a miniature yellow school bus on behalf of Glendale Elementary School. It is interesting to note that not many of the children ride a school bus. Parent's, provide for their

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2005 Delegation Visit Cont.

bus on behalf of Glendale Elementary School . It is interesting to note that not many of the children ride a school bus. Parents, provide for their children's transportation. We also visited another elementary school, junior high school, and a high school. The children at the elementary



schools were so excited to see us. They had special welcoming ceremonies for us. We were able to visit and interact with the children in their classes. We even had the wonderful experience of sharing in two school lunches. The Independence youth delegation performed a musical presentation from the American movie "Grease" several times during the visit. The Friday before our departure we were given a special treat with a visit to Tokyo Disneyland. Actually, Disneyland is in the city of Chiba outside of Tokyo.

During "Family Days", the host families took students to see other sights of Japan. They were very gracious, kind and generous hosts. On Monday June 20th we attended an official luncheon with Mayor Hosobuchi and many of the city council. At this time, we presented the mayor with special gifts from Independence. The gifts were miniature wooden carvings of several historic buildings in Independence, The Three Trails Center, Community of Christ Temple and the

Old Clinton Pharmacy. At this time, the students thanked the City of Higashimurayama and their host families for their wonderful experience. We realized it may be a long time before we can meet again.

The people of Higashimurayama were so excited by our



Ed Passman with Higashimurayama Student Escort Toshiko Yoshikawa

visit that they showered each of us with overwhelming kindness, warmth and generosity. There are no words that can express our deep gratitude for these wonderful people.

Even though we are separated by a wide Pacific Ocean and some 6,825 miles we are joined closer together by strong bonds of friendship and unity between our two cities.

"The kindness and generosity of the people of Japan is awesome. No words can express how grateful I am to have had this opportunity to visit the people of Higashimurayama", in the words of Chris Jenks. The youth of Independence performed an outstanding job in their role as a "youth ambassador". We can be very proud of them. It is with gratitude that we also express a thank you to the Sister City Committee of Independence for making this trip possible.

Ed Passman – Adult Chaperone

Jenny Moxley (Blue Springs H S)

Elizabeth Perdue (Truman H S)

Adam Lovewell (Truman H S)

Rachel King (Truman H S)

Ashley McConnell (Ft. Osage H S)

Jeremy Smith (William Chrisman H S)

La'Chelle Moore (William Chrisman H S)

Chris Jenks (William Chrisman H S)

Leilani Sua (William Chrisman H S)

Willie Nelson (William Chrisman H S)



Delegation Visits HC Fire Station

Financial News

The Finance Committee and the Friends of Independence Japanese Sister City Committee are pleased to announce a very successful fundraising program this Spring. Donations totaled \$2750 which is about one half of the total amount needed each year to meet Committee program obligations. Thanks to all who are helping us meet our goal.

Japan Festival

Japanese items are once more being sought to sell at the Japan Festival on Saturday, October 8th. A Food Booth featuring Rosie's Famous Fried Rice will be part of a Food Court on Sunday, October 9th. A presentation by the Committee will also be made that afternoon. The annual event will be held at the Student Center of Johnson County Community College.

Calendar of Events

July-August

Higashimurayama Students visit Independence

October 8 & 9

Japan Festival

Saturday, Oct. 8th

Sale Booth

Sunday, Oct. 9th PM

Presentation by our Sister City Comm.

2006 Student Delegation

Meet the 2006 Student Delegation with Escort Don Blanner,
Counselor at St. Mary High School



Amanda Argo



Brandi Nicholson



Courtney Gonzalez



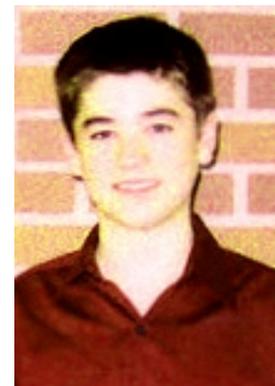
Elizabeth Ingram



James Ingram



Don Blanner, Escort



Kyle Dunning



Samantha Forsythe



Sophia Thompson



Jourdan Bentley



Walter Hare

2005 Cherry Blossom Festival

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Glendale Japan Club Sings



Ikebana Ladies Arrange



Japan Club Corner



Lois and Bill Anderson



Randy Vest Takes Orders



Rosie Smith and Helpers



KU Martial Arts Demo



Sales Table



Playing the Koto

JSCC
City Hall
Independence, Missouri 64050