



EXCHANGES

**JAPANESE
SISTER CITY
COMMITTEE**

Spring 2005

2005 Student Ambassadors

STUDENT AMBASSADORS PREPARE TO DEPART FOR OUR SISTER CITY

Ten outstanding youth from Independence and an adult escort will soon be leaving for our sister city of Higashimurayama, Japan on June 2, 2005 through June 21, 2005.

The student city ambassadors include: Chris Jenks (William Chrisman), Rachel King (Truman), Leilani Sua (William Chrisman), Elizabeth Perdue (Truman), Adam Lovewell (Truman), Ashley McConnell (Ft. Osage), La'Chelle Moore (William Chrisman), Jeremey Smith (William Chrisman), Willie Nelson (William Chrisman) and Jenny Moxley (Blue Springs).



The student delegation is under the adult leadership of Ed Passman, a resident of Independence for over 30 years. With an avid interest in world cultures, Ed and his wife have traveled and been involved with AFS for the past six years, having hosted four boys; one each from Switzerland and Italy and two from Japan. Active in community affairs, Ed has served the city as a member of the Beautification Commission.

Over the course of the past ten months, the group has met monthly exploring the customs, history, geography, language and foods of Japan.

The students are very excited about their trip and express their gratitude to the Sister City Committee for making this opportunity of a life time available to them.

According to Ed, "We are going to take the spirit and pride of Independence to share with the people of Higashimurayama and bring back to our community the spirit and the pride of the city of Higashimurayama, Japan. This is an opportunity to build and foster international relationships that can lead to world peace."

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Happy Times in HC



King Kumaki, Lane White, Carolyn Weeks and City Liaison U. Poma

The 25th Anniversary trip to Higashimurayama got off to a start with the meeting of 37 hardy souls meeting at MCI on Sept. 9, 2004. The flight was long, but we



Connie McQuain receives gift from Friendship Club President U. Seki

drive into Higashimurayama!! That almost did us in. We were greeted by our families and after welcome



The White Wolf carved by John Killip Presented by Kathy Killip to U. Seki

ing comments, were all hustled out to cars for our trip to our homes.

The next five days were packed full of activities, visits to Megurita school (this was one HOT day, but the kids were sensational), Nikko, and family directed times. By the time we were to leave on Wednes-

a r - rived still kicking, then had a four hour

day we needed the trip into Tokyo to recuperate. Of course, leaving was really hard, no one wanted

to go! We spent nights in Tokyo, Hakone, then hopped on the bullet train (so COOL) and went to Kyoto. After three days of touring around there we were on a plane to Beijing, China. We were met by a lovely young man named Brian who was our guide for the city--it was a delight for all of us



The first Sister City Mayors in 1978 Richard King and Reiji Kumaki

to listen to his stories and history of this ancient city. We walked for miles at the Temple of the Moon, Tian'amin Square, Forbidden City and the Summer Palace, but the highlight for all of us was actually standing atop the Great Wall. This was absolutely overpoweringly awesome!! I only wish all of you could have experienced this trip with all of us.



Reception for Travelers

Consul General Shibata recognizes Sister City Delegates who visited Higashimurayama. A wonderful meal was served accompanied by sharing fond memories with Mr. Shibata.



Consul General Honored

Consul General Shibata was honored at a Christmas Reception at the Bingham-Wagner Home. He and Mrs. Shibata were recognized for their service to the community and support of the Independence Sister City program. Mayor Stewart presented the couple with a special Proclamation from the City and the Committee presented them with a gift. . More Photos on Page 4



Japan Council Formed

The formation of the Greater Kansas City Japan Council was a result of Council General Shibata's concern that the local Japan organizations work closely together to keep a presence in the area for the Consulate of Japan in Chicago. The first two meetings were to determine how the group was to function and actions that needed to be taken to bring this about.

An important first step was the establishment of a website (www.japancouncil.org) which is now up and running. The twenty-two member organizations are

listed with information about each group. A calendar of events is being prepared at this time.

A meeting on January 21 was held just prior to the JAS Shinnenkai. Consul General Yoshizawa of Chicago attended and received an overview of what is happening and what we are hoping for. He had some in-pur as well as questions.

The Consul General is very supportive of the new organization and wants to do whatever is needed to help us make this a success.

New Web Site Open

The Sister City Commission is happy to announce that our newly redesigned Web site is now open for everyone. Mark Baumann, of the City's IT staff is Webmaster and spent many hours helping design it with the assistance of Gerald Hancock and Kathy Vest. It is very comprehensive and includes history, ongoing events, past news articles, an archive of Newsletters and links to many other related sites.

The Commission wishes to thank Mark and his staff for doing such an outstanding job. We can truly be proud of their efforts. Go to <http://www.ci.independence.mo.us/sistercity/>

Financial News

A special committee led by Eric Hamm has been formed to develop a major funding source for the Commission. Ideas and plans will be formulated and developed over the next few months. The goal is to have one major source of revenue that can provide the level of funding needed to annually sustain Sister City activities.

Japan Festival

Once again, the Sister City Committee was represented at the Fall Japan Festival sponsored by area organizations promoting Japanese culture and business. Connie, Lana and Rosie managed the Sales Table and total sales for that day were over \$400. Thanks to everyone who donated items for the event.

Calendar of Events

June 2-21

Student Delegation visits Higashimurayama

July-August

Higashimurayama Students visit Independence

October 8 & 9

Japan Festival

Johnson County Comm. College

Visit us on the Web

<http://www.ci.independence.mo.us/sistercity/>

E-mail us at: visitjapan@fcmail.com

Phone: 816: 252-0921

Fax: 555-555-5555



More Reception Photos



JSCC
City Hall
Independence, Missouri 64050