



EXCHANGES

Japanese Sister City
Commission

Summer 2007

2007 Student Exchange

HIGASHIMURAYAMA LOVES STUDENT DELGATION

Ten students and I traveled to Japan and simply put, have been transformed by the beauty and wonders of the adventure. We spent twenty days exploring Japan, laughing, and making life long friendships. We were able to see Mt. Fujiyama which was the first time in a long while that any exchange group was able to see it, as it is normally covered in clouds this time of year. It briefly revealed to us its beauty and strength. Our host families however revealed to us an even greater beauty and power, for they opened their hearts and their homes by taking in strangers and making us family.

The parents of my students should be



very proud of their children as they were the best group to ever go to Japan in mine and others opinion. This says a lot as we have had many won-

derful and great groups that went before us. They were polite, happy and excellent ambassadors for Independence. I received many compliments about all of them from the Mayor, teachers, students, and people of Higashimurayama. The food was also awesome!



I want to say thank you to Leann, Lori, Jeff, Jared, Anthony, Susan, Josh, Rachael, Audrey and Mandy for making this such a fantastic experience. I also want to thank the Independence Sister City Commission for making this trip possible.

There are few things in this world that are universal, laughter and smiles are two of them. Our days were filled with both while we lived in Japan. Thank you,

John Seeley, 2007 Escort

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CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL 2007



A tremendous success!



Volume of participation by groups and businesses up in 07



Proceeds will benefit the Adult Delegation events of the 30th Anniversary Celebration in the fall of 2008.

The design of the festival to give exposure of the Japanese culture was evident during the day to all guests.





RANDY VEST AND DAVE RAGEN RECEIVE SISTER CITY APPRECIATION

Commission Members and Friends showed their appreciation for the over 20 years of service that Randy Vest and Dave Ragan each have given as members and leaders during a reception held in their honor. At Joe and Ann Gall's home.

Mayor Don Reimal honored their years of service with certificates of appreciation and President Joe Gall gave each a plaque noting

their contribution to the Commission. Connie McQuain was also recognized for her three

years of service as Chairman of the Commission.

Long-time supporters of Sister City attending the reception included Larry and Susan Blick, and Bruce and Marilyn Lowery. Past President Peggy Hausheer was also there enjoying the good company.



Connie



INTRODUCING NEW COMMISSIONERS

My name is Debbie Lovewell, and my husband is Ed. We have been married for 29 years and have lived in Independence all but three months of that time. I have been employed at AT&T for 28 years and Ed works for Builders Steel in NKC. We have 2 children. Sarah, 24, is a Physical Therapist and lives in St. Louis. Adam, 20, is a PFC in the US Army. He is currently stationed at Ft. Riley, KS where he flies unmanned aircraft.



Both of our children were fortunate enough to have gone to Higashimurayama on student trips in 2000 and 2005. I saw what a wonderful program this is through their experience, as well as when we hosted Japanese students 3 times. We have had the pleasure of having a couple of the students return for visits several times, bringing with them other family members and friends. We enjoy those visits and the contacts we maintain.

One of our "daughters" Nori just got married last week, in Japan and our other "daughter" Shiho spent last year in NYC going to school. I was able spend a few days with her seeing the sights. We have made many new friends here and in Japan through this program and I am honored to be given the opportunity to be on the commission. I

I am Alan Davison, married to Sandra Schiess with four sons; Chad, Brian Shawn and Ian. Our two daughters-in-law are Kristen and Luci and I am most proud of our two Grandchildren, Drew and Leah.



A twenty-year veteran of the Columbia Fire Department, I retired in 1992, enrolled in MU and received a BS in Environmental Design in 1995. I also played Tuba in Marching Mizzou. After graduation, I operated a construction business until moving to Independence in 2001. I currently own and operate a real estate, investment and rental business.

Always active, I am involved in theatre, community redevelopment and housing issues. My personal time is committed to family, golf and cars.

My association with the Sister City program is recent. We hosted a wonderful young lady, Eri Ono, in 2006. I was devastated when she left. She had become an important part of our family in that short time. We are hosting one more time this year and have another wonderful young lady to enjoy as part of our family.

The Sister City program touches many lives in our two communities and certainly is worthy of our support and the support of our community.

Visit us on the Web

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

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Cherry Blossom

Queen Visits



The Cherry Blossom Queen for the USA visited Glendale School in May. This year's Cherry Blossom Queen is from Independence. Isn't she pretty? The kids were very excited about a real Queen visiting us.

Jeannae Segura-Brown, Sponsor

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