



Long Beach-Yokkaichi Sister City Association



Volume 2, Issue 2

Newsletter

September 2012

2012 Trio Visits Long Beach

The Long Beach-Yokkaichi Sister City Association (LBYSKA) was formed in 1964 to create a cultural exchange between the two cities. In alternate years, one teacher and two students from Yokkaichi are selected to visit Long Beach as goodwill ambassadors for a three-week visit to learn about our city's culture. This year's Trio ambassadors were teacher, **Aki Okui**, and students, **Maki Kim** and **Shodai Yamashita**. A schedule of activities for the Trio was planned by the Association committee members and coordinated by five host families and Association Board members.

Cultural Exchange Tour

The Trio arrived on Sunday, July 22. Their whirlwind tour included visits to Long Beach Polytechnic High School; Cal State Long Beach (where they were joined by **Sean Rickter**, 2011 Trio member to Yokkaichi); Western High School in Anaheim; and the UCLA campus.

A visit to the Port of Long Beach, which has sponsored the Trio Cultural Exchange Program since 1963, was a top priority for the Trio. They were joined by former Long Beach Trio ambassadors to Yokkaichi, **Faustine Chow** (2009) and **Alyssa Krug** (2011), and 2011 Environmental Summit student delegate, **Kevin Melvin**. The group met with the Port of L.B. Director of Communications, **Heather Morris**, who gave them a tour of the Port offices and discussed the Port's commitment to a clean environment.



2012 Trio Members: Teacher **Aki Okui** and students **Maki Kim** and **Shodai Yamashita** at the Port of Long Beach Administration Building.

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2012 Environmental Summit Trip

In 2007 former Yokkaichi Mayor Tetsuo Inoue began a program to bring a delegation of students from Long Beach and China to discuss environmental problems and solutions with students in Yokkaichi, Japan. With the cooperation from the Port of Long Beach and other environmental groups, the program is now in its 6th year.

Four students, **Jacob Liberman**, **Sonyda Nep**, **Silvio Pham**, and **Nicholas Warren**, and chaperone, **Ashley White**, were selected as the 2012 Long Beach delegation. They left for Yokkaichi, Japan, on July 22, 2012, for a 10-day trip.



2012 Long Beach delegation (in dark blue shirts) and the Chinese & Japanese Environmental Summit delegations meet with **Yokkaichi Mayor Tanaka**.

Following is a summation of Ashley White's email reports from Yokkaichi:

*The Long Beach delegation met their Chinese and Japanese counterparts and, by using a lot of hand signals, became fast friends. The teams met Yokkaichi Mayor **Toshiyuki Tanaka** and the Chairman of the City Council and learned how the city managers cleaned up the city's environment and of its citizens' commitment to keeping Yokkaichi clean and green.*

They visited the Yokkaichi port, four factories, and the COP3, a center affiliated with the Kyoto Protocol. The building has solar panels, double-paned windows, sustainable bamboo floors, plug-in charge stations, and so much more. The delegations were shown the building's "green" applications such as how captured rainwater was used in bathrooms and how the outside air is circulated through a tank underground to heat or cool before using it in the air conditioners.

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2012 Trio Visit—Cont'd. from pg. 1



*At City Hall (from left):
Long Beach Police Chief, **Jim McDonnell**; **Aki Okui**; **Maki Kim**; LBYSKA Board Member, **Mike Vaughn**;
Shodai Yamashita; Long Beach Mayor **Bob Foster**; and
Deputy Police Chief, **Robert Luna**.*

A full day was spent at the Long Beach City Hall and Civic Center. The day began in **Judge James Otto's** courtroom to watch proceedings and then meet with the Judge in his chambers. The Trio then visited with Long Beach Mayor, **Bob Foster**; Long Beach Police Chief, **Jim McDonnell**; Head Deputy District Attorney, **Richard Doyle**; Head Deputy Public Defender, **Mike Suzuki**; and Deputy Police Chief, **Robert Luna**. The last stop was the Long Beach Public Library to see the book collection that was a special gift from Yokkaichi.

The visit to the Los Angeles Japanese-American Museum in Little Tokyo was a unique experience for the Trio members who learned of the Japanese-Americans' relocation to internment camps during WWII.

Sightseeing & Having Fun

No trip to Long Beach is complete without tours of the Long Beach Aquarium of the Pacific and the iconic Queen Mary where the Trio viewed the Princess Diana Exhibit. They experienced the tastes and way of life in Southern California visiting the Santa Monica Pier; kayaking in Naples; learning how to make s'mores at Cabrillo Beach; going on a guided tour of Angels Stadium; and having great fun at the Orange County Fair and Disneyland.

Arigato, Host Families

The Trio program would not be possible without the host families who so generously opened their homes to the Trio and provided transportation to events. Much gratitude to: **Bill Chow** and daughter, **Faustine**; **Jim & Trisha Krug** and daughter, **Alyssa**; **Al & Barbara Regnier** and grandson, **Kevin Melvin**; **Ed & Carmen Rickter** and son, **Sean**; and **Mike & Aki Vaughn**. Special kudos to the Krug family who served as hosts for the entire 3 weeks!

Acknowledgements

The success of the Trio Program relies on the very hard work of many dedicated people. Arigato to the Port of Long Beach and City of Long Beach leaders who took the time from their busy schedules to graciously meet and speak with our Trio ambassadors. Thank you to the following LBYSKA Board members who spent many hours escorting the Trio and/or working behind the scenes at the many events: **Joe Aihara**, **Bianca Angeles**, **Victor Fukuhara**, **Jeanne Karatsu**, **Barbara Parks**, **Yumi Shibasaki**, **Jeanette Schelin**, **Bonnie Sharp Stoepelman**, **Elisa Turien**, **Mike Vaughn**, and **Roy Wood**. A big thank you to the following for their invaluable contributions: **Keiko Kirby** (Poly High School Japanese Language Instructor), **Jeanne Costello**, **Paul Mandeville**, and **Bill Stoepelman**. And finally, thank you to **Yoko Pusavat**, the Trio Exchange Program Chair, who coordinated the Trio's trip from the time of their selection in Japan through to the day of their departure, and to the Assistant Chairpersons: **Joe Aihara**, **Yumi Shibasaki**, and **Mike Vaughn**.



*At CSULB (clockwise from left): **Yoko Pusavat** (LBYSKA Board Member & Trio Exchange Chairperson); **Shodai Yamashita** (2012 Trio); **Sean Rickter** (2011 Trio member to Yokkaichi); **Aki Okui** (2012 Trio); **Ron Croteau** (American Language Institute (ALI) Faculty Member & Program Coordinator); **Lynne Richmond** (Dir. ALI, University College & Extension Services, CSULB); **Joe Aihara** (LBYSKA Board Member); **Maki Kim** (2012 Trio); & **Jeanette Schelin** (LBYSKA Board President).*



***Maki & Aki** at the Long Beach Aquarium of the Pacific.*



*LBYSKA Board Member, **Joe Aihara**, with the Trio at Disneyland.*

2012 Environmental Summit—*Cont'd. from pg. 1*

The students were given homework assignments to prepare presentations of ideas on conservation and how they would solve environmental issues. They worked diligently on their presentations and “knocked it out of the park!”, impressing the panel.



At the International Center for Environmental Technology Transfer:

Sonyda Nep, Silvio Pham, Ashley White, Nicholas Warren & Jacob Liberman.

Although the trip was mainly focused on studies of the environment, the delegates

found time to have some fun and experience the Japanese culture: learning to catch fish with nets; how to make a “furoshiki” by tying a scarf to use as a tote, and experiencing the tastes of unique foods.

The farewell party was bittersweet—filled with laughs, memories and tears when the American, Japanese and Chinese delegations had to bid sayonara to their new-found friends.

Thank you to the students on a job well done and to **Ashley White** for her guidance in assisting our delegation at the conference. And a very special arigato to the Student Environmental Summit Chair, **Bonnie Sharp Stoeppelman**, and the Committee and mentors: **Yoko Pusavat, Roy Wood, Mike Vaughn, Thomas Jelenic'** (for the boat tour through the Long Beach area), **Dr. Robert Kantor** (for training the students and lectures), **Bill O'Toole** (for the special tour to THUMS Island) and **Scott Warren**. Thanks to everybody who made this possible and the extra time spent in coordinating this with both Long Beach and Yokkaichi officials!

If you have any questions regarding this program, please contact: Bonnie Sharp Stoeppelman, Chair, Student Environmental Summit, Yokkaichi@SharpHOA.com or Bonnie@SharpHOA.com, phone: 310-514-1377.

###

2012 Yokkaichi English Fellows (YEF) Named

California State University, Long Beach (CSULB) graduates **Cameron Lombardo** and **Christopher Rohar** were selected as Yokkaichi English Fellows and began teaching English in Long Beach's Sister City of Yokkaichi, Japan, in August. They were selected by the Yokkaichi City Board of Education to serve as assistant language teachers at the elementary and junior high school level for two years.



Cameron Lombardo earned a bachelor of arts degree in Japanese and a minor in anthropology from CSULB in 2012. The Huntington Beach resident attended Tenri University in Nara, Japan, for six months during the fall 2010 semester.

While in Japan, he worked as the English Club coordinator for a middle and high school in Nara.

Also, Lombardo has worked in the Learning Assistance Center at CSULB as an English as a Second Language (ESL) specialist where he helped international students and ESL students prepare for the California State University writing proficiency exam.

“I am extremely interested in internationalism and want to promote mutual understanding between the U.S. and Japan,” Lombardo said. “I feel that programs like YEF are designed to accomplish this goal. Also, I am delighted that I'll be working in Long Beach's sister city of Yokkaichi and sharing my own cultural heritage with my students and colleagues.”

Christopher Rohar's degrees from CSULB include a bachelor of arts in Japanese and a bachelor of science in interna-



tional business, both in 2010. The Rancho Palos Verdes resident also studied at Osaka Gakuin University in Osaka, Japan, in 2007-08.

At CSULB Rohar was vice president of the Chinese/Japanese Calligraphy Club.

He speaks Spanish and since high school has informally helped ESL students with their academic work.

“Helping bring about greater cross cultural understanding is something in which I take great joy,” Rohar noted. “This has also helped me to understand the needs and frustrations of English language learners. Coming from a multilingual background, I am familiar with the trouble that learning a new language can bring.”

“Teaching in the schools requires team teaching with Japanese teachers in English,” explained **Jeanne Karatsu**, a board member of the Long Beach-Yokkaichi Sister City Association that does the initial screening of the applicants. “The two goals of the program are to assist in integrating oral language skills into the classroom and to make the study of English more lively and relevant. The Yokkaichi students score very high on the English tests which the Yokkaichi Board of Education attributes to the YEF program.”

The YEF experience also includes working as tutors, judges or commentators for speech contests and serving as translators or English speakers as needed. The program began in 1986.

###

2012 Trio Welcome Party—July 31, 2012



The 2012 Trio Ambassadors: Aki Okui, Shodai Yamashita, & Maki Kim.

The beautiful Earl Burns Miller Japanese Garden at Cal State Long Beach was the setting for a party to officially welcome the Trio ambassadors from Yokkaichi, Japan.

The event attendees were welcomed by Long Beach-Yokkaichi Sister City Association (LBYSKA) President, **Jeanette Schelin**. Master of Ceremonies and LBYSKA past President, **Mike Vaughn**, recognized special guests and introduced the

Trio Program Chairperson, **Yoko Pusavat**, who introduced the 2012 Trio members: Teacher **Aki Okui** and students, **Maki Kim** and **Shodai Yamashita**, each of whom spoke to the audience in English.

Special guests included Long Beach Councilwoman, **Gerrie Schipske**; Long Beach Unified School District Board Member, **Diane Craighead**; Japan Advisor for Consulate Affairs, **Hiro Kakita**; former Long Beach Mayor, **Eunice Sato**; former Yokkaichi English Fellows to Japan, **Sarah Fujita** and **Cailin White**; and Cultural News Publisher and Editor, **Shige Higashi**.



The Trio with supporters of LBYSKA: The Ito Family of Ito Farms, and former Long Beach Mayor, Eunice Sato.

Also in attendance were former Trio members to Yokkaichi, **Faustine Chow** (2009), **Alyssa Krug** (2011), and **Sean Rickter** (2011); and 2011 Environmental Summit student, **Kevin Melvin**. Sean and Kevin spoke briefly about their unforgettable experiences in Yokkaichi, as did an exhausted **Jacob Liberman**, 2012 Environmental Summit student, who had just returned from Yokkaichi that morning!

LBYSKA Board Members **Bonnie Stoeppelman**, **Jeanne Karatsu** and **Mike Vaughn** spoke about the LBYSKA

Programs: The Environmental Summit, Yokkaichi English Fellows (YEF), and Doctor's Exchange.

Entertainment was provided by the "Hedgehog Swing", a unique-sounding quartet featuring **Gage Hulse**, 2009 Trio member to Yokkaichi. The group played 40's-inspired music and were very well received by all.

Many thanks to the following organizations for their support:

Program Partners

City of Long Beach
 CSULB American Language Institute
 CSULB Center for International Education
 LBUSD Board of Education
 L.B. Memorial Medical Center
 Port of L.B. Harbor Commissioners*
 Yokkaichi School Board of Education

Donors

The Aquarium of the Pacific
 CSULB Alumni Association
 Disneyland
 Japanese American National Museum
 Los Angeles Angels

**Special appreciation to the Port of Long Beach Harbor Commissioners for supporting our program since 1963.*

And once again, thank you to The Earl Burns Miller Japanese Garden and its Director, **Jeanette Schelin**, and her always attentive staff for a memorable evening.

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See MORE pictures on Facebook at Facebook/Yokkaichi-Long Beach Sister City

Please see our website at longbeach-yokkaichi.org



2012 Long Beach-Yokkaichi Sister City Board Members

Joe Aihara	Richard Pastor
Bianca Angeles	Yoko Pusavat
Bruce Easley	David Reinsvold
Victor Fukuhara	Ed Rickter
Larry Hill	Jeanette Schelin
Jeffrey Inui	Yumi Shibusaki
Jeanne Karatsu	Bonnie Stoeppelman
Pat McMaster	Elisa Turien
Kari Milton	Mike Vaughn
Barbara Parks	Roy Wood

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