



Long Beach-Yokkaichi Sister City Association

Founded 1963



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Newsletter

July 2015

2015 Trio Off to Yokkaichi, Japan

Every other year, the Long Beach-Yokkaichi Sister City Association (LBYSKA) selects a teacher, one male student and one female student for a three-week cultural visit. Yokkaichi is the host city this year and a delegation of three Long Beach ambassadors will travel as a group and follow an itinerary developed by Yokkaichi officials. This is known as the Trio Exchange Program which was founded in 1965.

This year LBYSKA is sending a teacher, **Joe Aihara**, and two students, **Sebastiaan Blom** and **Michelle Rufino**. The trio will serve as ambassadors to Yokkaichi from July 22—August 10.



2015 Trio Members
(l-r) **Joe Aihara, Michelle Rufino, & Sebastiaan Blom.**
—Photo by Will Cullen

Joe Makoto Aihara is a Long Beach resident and has been a Long Beach-Yokkaichi Sister City Association board member since 2009. A high school teacher since 1995 teaching 9th—12th graders, he has also coached boys basketball at various high schools and at the varsity level since 1997. He currently teaches at Anaheim Union High School.

Joe received his Bachelor's Degree and Teaching Credentials in Japanese. In 2011 he chaperoned fifteen 8th graders to the Yonsei Basketball Organization to Japan and "witnessed firsthand how the experience was life-changing to the students."

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2015 Environmental Summit Team

In 2007 former **Yokkaichi Mayor Tetsuo Inoue** proposed that a delegation of Long Beach students participate in a solution-finding study and discussion regarding environmental problems with other students from Japan and China.

Each summer four students and a chaperone/advisor from Long Beach take part in this annual environmental summit. This year's selections are **Azalia Avellan, Emilio Carreon, Danielle Santos, Daniel Sato** and advisor, **Justin Luedy**.

Emilio Carreon, 16, a Polytechnic High School student, loves to play violin and is in the string orchestra. He enjoys studying history, reading, drawing, swimming, and kayaking and paddle boarding with his family. He also volunteers at Inapayr Arts art studio as a student instructor.

"I am very concerned with the environment and how humans from all countries are affecting it. By participating in the Environmental Summit, I hope to bring back new ideas to the United States on how to prevent and solve pollution problems and become more efficient in saving the environment and reduce our carbon footprint."

Fifteen-year-old **Danielle Santos**, also of Polytechnic High School, enjoys reading, drawing, writing and playing soc-

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2015 Environmental Summit Delegates
From left: **Emilio Carreon, Danielle Santos, Justin Luedy, Azalia Avellan, and Daniel Sato.**

—Photo by Bonnie Sharp Stoepelman

2015 YEF Selected

The very successful Yokkaichi English Fellows Program (YEF) provides an opportunity for Long Beach teachers or Cal State Long Beach graduates to serve in a paid capacity for two years as assistant language teachers at the elementary and middle school levels in Yokkaichi, Japan.

This year, three teachers were selected by the Yokkaichi City Board of Education:

Ana Lee Martinez has been interested in the Japanese language and culture since the age of ten. She began learning Japanese in 2008 and changed her major from Architecture to Japanese in 2010 in which she received a BA in 2014. She enjoys working with students and volunteered as an ESL teacher's aide at Norwalk High School.

Anthony Matthews has served as a speech tutor and coach for homeless children at School on Wheels. Unlike most children, Anthony's favorite place was school where he had teachers who made a deep impression on him. As a result, he wanted to follow in their footsteps. He has worked with Japanese students on the CSULB Forensics team helping them to build more confidence in English and speaking skills.

Monika Tayag received her BA degree in Linguistics in 2010 and an MA in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) in 2014. She took four semesters of basic Japanese as an undergraduate. She has always wanted to teach and is looking forward to working with the young people in Yokkaichi and making a difference in their lives and her life as well.

Good luck to our YEFs!



2015 Yokkaichi English Fellows
Monika Tayag, Anthony Matthews and Ana Lee Martinez.
—Photo by Will Cullen



Like Us on FACEBOOK at Yokkaichi-Long Beach Sister City and view more photos of our events!

2015 Trio—*Cont'd from pg 1*

Sebastian Blom has been taking Japanese for two years at Polytechnic High School. He plays tennis, and the piano and enjoys painting, camping and hiking. He serves as a docent at Rancho Los Cerritos. Last year, his family hosted 2014 Yokkaichi Trio teacher, **Megumi Kondo**.

Sebastian feels that “being a trio ambassador to Yokkaichi will enable me to learn and understand a different culture. I know that the trip will change my views as a global citizen and see the world in a different light.”

Michelle Rufino is bilingual in English and Spanish and is teaching herself Japanese and Mandarin Chinese with hopes of becoming an interpreter. Michelle helps her community in the Interact Club and helps the PTA raise funds for school events and scholarships.

Michelle is “looking forward to serving as a Trio Ambassador to Yokkaichi to meet new friends, learn the culture and the language. I feel that speaking different languages is a great asset that leads to friendships”.

The Trio team will stay with host families in Yokkaichi, Japan for 3 weeks. Their days will be filled with representing Long Beach at civic events and participating in cultural activities.

Congratulations to our goodwill ambassadors!

2015 Doctors Program

In February 2015 three doctors from Yokkaichi, Japan arrived in Long Beach to participate in an intensive 2-week study program at the L.B. Memorial Medical Center and other medical facilities. This program was established 14 years ago to enable doctors from Yokkaichi Municipal Hospital to study medical techniques and observe surgeries.

Pictured below at a welcome reception in February are **Mike Vaughn**, LBYSKA president; **Dr. Masanori Fukushima**; **Dr. James Wells**, LB Memorial Medical Center Chief of Staff; **Dr. Takehiro Hachisuka** & **Dr. Ryo Yamaguchi**.



2015 Summit Team—*Cont'd from pg 1*

cer. She enjoys volunteering with UNICEF and Hillcrest Care Center.

Says Danielle, "Taking care of the environment is a responsibility that everyone shares. The Environmental Summit allows students my age to unite ideas, exchange cultures, and increase awareness of our environment."

Azalia Avellan, 16, a Polytechnic High School student, started out playing flute and now loves to sing. Her hobbies include dance (ballet, jazz, lyrical, and hip hop). She cooks traditional Salvadorian food to sell to locals and gives the proceeds to FUCENDAR.

"I have always had an inclination toward pressing environmental issues, and, as such, I have enrolled in an AP Environmental Science class to have an even deeper understanding of the intricacies involving the earth. By attending the Environmental Summit I hope to learn from and teach others the importance of environmental responsibility."

Polytechnic High School student, **Daniel Sato**, age 16, loves sports, especially baseball. He enjoys volunteering in church activities.

"I would like to take this opportunity to visit Japan because it would not only expand my knowledge of my heritage and of the world, but of the now rapidly changing climate. I would like to learn about ecology and increase my knowledge of the environment and learn how we affect it daily. I would also like to see the way that other nations, such as China, are attempting to improve the environment. I want to learn how I can improve the environment at home and how I can help other people change the environment."

Chaperone and advisor, **Justin Luedy**, works for the Port of Long Beach as an Environmental Specialist. He is the lead in the development of the port's Climate Change Adaptation and Coastal Resiliency Strategic Plan. He has a BS in German and Marine Biology from the University of Salzburg, Austria and Bowling Green State University and a MS from California State University, Fullerton.

Mr. Luedy states, "Our students and children are the future stewards of this planet, and I firmly believe in and support programs that expose students to the pressing environmental concerns facing our country and world. Studying abroad as both a high school and undergraduate student changed my life forever, and I hope this program will do the same for the four selected students. The environment is both my personal and professional passion, and I hope to bestow that on to this program and the students."

This year's Environmental Summit team is exceptional and we wish them a wonderful time in Yokkaichi, Japan.

Yokkaichi Receives Prestigious Award

We are proud to announce that Yokkaichi, Japan, was recently honored with the "Minister for International Affairs and Communication Award". The commendation is given to municipalities that have creative and original international exchange programs with sister cities. Yokkaichi city won the award due to the successful results made through mutual exchanges with Long Beach over the past 50 years.

The award ceremony took place on June 16 in Tokyo and Yokkaichi City **Mayor Toshiyuki Tanaka** accepted the award on behalf of his city.

There are over 1,600 international affiliations between Japanese and foreign local governments engaging in various unique exchange projects, and to be recognized is a great honor.

Long Beach congratulates our sister city for receiving this well-deserved award.



Yokkaichi City Mayor Toshiyuki Tanaka accepts the Minister for International Affairs and Communication Award on behalf of Yokkaichi, Japan, at a ceremony in Tokyo. Pictured on the left is Yasumasa Oono, Yokkaichi City Staff.

Long Beach-Yokkaichi Sister City Association Supporting Organizations of Long Beach



Port of Long Beach



City of Long Beach



Earl Burns Miller Japanese Garden at CSULB



California State University, Long Beach



Long Beach Unified School District

Bon Voyage Dinner for 2015 Trio, Summit and YEF Teams

The beautiful Earl Burns Miller Japanese Gardens at California State University of Long Beach was the setting on the evening of July 14 where the 2015 Trio members, Environmental Summit team and Yokkaichi English Fellows were introduced to the community.



Attendees were welcomed by LBYSOCA President, **Mike Vaughn**, who acknowledged the dignitaries present and thanked them for their support: **Jane Close Conoley**, President of California State University, Long Beach; **Diana Craighhead**, President of the Long Beach Unified School District Board of Education (LBUSD); **Cecilia Fidora**, Assistant Director Education Abroad Center for International Education; **Tomio Ito**, owner of Ito Farms and a representative of Mie Kenjinkai; **Margaret Madden**, Officer, Long Beach Neighborhood Improvement; and **Dr. Felton Williams**, Vice President of the LBUSD Board of Education.

Sharon Weissman, Senior Advisor to **Mayor Robert Garcia**, presented a Certificate of Recognition to the Long Beach-Yokkaichi Sister City Association and Yokkaichi, Japan, which read: *“For your outstanding programs that promote youth leadership, and for your devotion to strengthening relations between our two cities through cultural exchange...”*

Trio Program chairperson, **Yoko Pusavat**, introduced the 2015 Trio Exchange ambassadors: Teacher **Joe Aihara** and students **Sebastian Blom** and **Michelle Rufino** (see article on page 1).

Yokkaichi English Fellowship Program chairperson, **Jeanne Karatsu**, introduced the 2015 Yokkaichi English Fellows who will assistant teach for a 2-year period in Yokkaichi: **Anthony Matthews**, **Ana Lee Martinez**, and **Monika Tayag** (see article on page 2).

Bonnie Stoeppelman, Chair of the Environmental Summit Program, introduced Advisor and Chaperone, **Justin Luedy**, and students **Azalia Avellan** and **Emilio Carreon**. **Danielle**

Santos and **Daniel Sato** were out of town and unable to attend (see article on page 1).

Dr. James Wells, Chief of Staff of the Long Beach Memorial Medical Center, spoke of the 2015 Doctors Program of which he serves as Chairman (see article on page 2).

Mike Vaughn thanked **Jeanette Schelin**, Director of Earl Burns Miller Japanese Gardens **and her staff** for a lovely evening; LBYSOCA committee members for their time and dedication in making our programs successful; and to the following partners for their assistance and support:

Port of Long Beach	ICETT
City of Long Beach	Earl Burns Miller Japanese Gardens
City of Yokkaichi	LBUSD Board of Education
CSULB Alumni Association	LB Memorial Medical Center
CSULB Amer. Language Institute	Yokkaichi Municipal Hospital
CSULB Center for Int'l Education	Yokkaichi School Board of Education

Finally, Mike Vaughn closed the evening with the mission of the Sister City Program which was established in 1956 by President Dwight D. Eisenhower: *“By creating people-to-people friendships with foreign countries through cultural and educational exchanges, the world will be a far more peaceful place...for we do not go to war with our friends.”*

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LBYSOCA Website: <http://longbeach-yokkaichi.org>



Long Beach-Yokkaichi Sister City Association 2015 Board Members

Joe Aihara	Rose Siengsubcharti
Will Cullen	Bonnie Sharp Stoeppelman
Victor Fukuhara	Frank Tabar
Jeanne Karatsu	Mariko Tabar
Jim Krug	Aki Vaughn
Trisha Krug	Mike Vaughn
Pat McMaster	Scott Warren
Janet Mullen	James Wells, MD
Yoko Pusavat	Roy Wood
David Reinsvold	David Zanatta
Jeanette Schelin	

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