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LOCAL NEWS

Breakfast is a big deal, even for lunch restaurant





Lifeguards, others strut their stuff



Development projects hit by delays, cancellations



LB, Yokkaichi celebrate 60th anniversary as sister cities

Some homes are being sold before officially listed



INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

LB, Yokkaichi celebrate 60th anniversary as sister cities

Sixty years ago, Edwin Wade, then the mayor of Long Beach, welcomed a delegation of officials from Yokkaichi, Japan, in what was to be the start of a special relationship

between the two port cities.

And this week, the two cities will celebrate their 60th anniversary together, the oldest relationship of the nine international locales Long Beach is involved with under the International Sister Cities program.

Rich Archbold "The relationships that have Columnist been built over the last 60 years,"

said Mike Vaughn, board chair for Sister Cities of Long Beach, "have created a special and vibrant bond between the two cit-

Festivities to commemorate the milestone will take place from Friday to Aug. 15 and will include a visit by Yokkaichi Mayor Tomohiro Mori and a delegation of other Yokkaichi officials to renew the Sister City agreement. The weeklong celebrations also will feature the unveiling of a commemorative anniversary plaque, donated by Yokkaichi, at the Yokkaichi Friendship Garden at Seventh Street and Federation Drive in Recreation Park at 10 a.m. Sat-

The rededication of the Friendship Garden is free and open to the public.

Sister Cities International was created at a White House summit on citizen diplomacy called by President Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1956. Eisenhower envisioned a network of people to champion peace around the world and foster bonds between those from different countries to lessen the chance of conflicts.

There are now 1,800 cities, counties and states participating in the Sister City program in 138 countries worldwide.

Long Beach joined Sister City International in 1963 when it established its relationship with Yokkaichi.

Eventually, Long Beach established relationships with eight other cities: Qingdao, China; Sochi, Russia; Phnom Penh, Cambodia; Mombasa, Kenya; Bacolod, Philippines; Venice, Italy; Rosarito Beach, Mexico; and, most re-

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Yokkaichi Garden was dedicated in 1964 downtown. It later was demolished and moved to the Rec Park.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF LONG BEACH SISTER CITIES

Students and a teacher from Yokkaichi meet with Long Beach Mayor Rex Richardson, From left are Kuzuki Ichikawa, Nao Mori, Richardson and Ako Ikoma.

Archbold

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cently, Taoyuan, Taiwan. The Long Beach-Yok-kaichi relationship traces itself back to the Los Angeles-Nagoya sister city relationship, which began in 1959. The then-mayor of Nagoya, a major port town in Japan near Yokkaichi, recommended the partnership, saying Yokkaichi and Long Beach would make good partners, since they were both port cities, just like LA and Nagoya.

On Sept. 25, 1963, Wade and the Long Beach City Council unanimously recognized Yokkaichi as its sister city.

In the past 60 years, Vaughn said, the relationship between Long Beach and Yokkaichi has expanded - and continues

"We have sent about 140 teachers to teach English in Japan," he said. "We have nine teachers in Yokkaichi now who will be there for two years.

"The Yokkaichi Nursing School sends their stu-dents to Cal State Long Beach each summer to study medical English, Vaughn added. "The Yokkaichi Hospital and the Long Beach Memorial Medical Center also have exchanged doctors to meet and discuss medical topics with each other.'

More than 140 students and teachers have participated in Trio, an 18day exchange program in which a teacher and two students from Yokkaichi visit Long Beach and are hosted by Long Beach families, Vaughn said. This year's Yokkaichi Trio includes elementary school teacher Kazuki Ichikawa. and students Ako Ikoma and Nao Mori, both 15.

Recently, four students and a teacher from Mc-Bride High School left for Yokkaichi to participate in the Yokkaichi Environmental Summit, which has students and teachers

from China, Japan and the United States discuss environmental issues. The McBride teacher is Jennifer Macklin. The students are Aldir Moreira, Joseph Valdespino, Kimberly Rosas and Alexis Wallace. This environmental program, Vaughn said, started in 2008 in partnership with the Port of Long Beach and the Long Beach Unified School District.

Long Beach also participates with Yokkaichi in a middle school program through Zoom and digital video presentations. Vaughn said.

Susan Redfield, president of Long Beach Sister Cities, called this year a "remarkable" one for sister cities.

"We brought in our first new sister city - Taoyuan, Taiwan - in 15 years," she said. "And despite challenges due to the interruption of international travel and communication brought on by the COVID pandemic, we have continued our mission of cultural and educational exchanges, promotion of international trade and development of greater un-derstanding and compassion between citizens of Long Beach and citizens of our sister cities.

For more information about the Long Beach Sister City program, call 562-901-3081 or email info@ sistercitiesoflongbeach.org.

Exchange student watches idol

Ako Ikoma, a teenager from Yokkaichi, Japan, was excited about her first trip to Long Beach as part of the sister city program.

But she didn't know that one of her more unforgettable moments was going to come from, of all places. Angel Stadium.

Īkoma, 15, an exchange student in Long Beach for 20 days, was able to get a ticket to the Angels home game against the Seattle Mariners on Thursday night.

The starting pitcher for the Angels was their allaround pitching and hit-ting star Shohei Ohtani, who is from Oshu, Japan and is a national hero in his home country.

Ikoma, one of his many fans, had never seen him play in person and was looking forward to the game. In the eighth inning, Ohtani smashed a home run, his major league-leading 40th. Cheerful fans, Ikoma included, shook the foundations of the stadium with their roars.

Unfortunately, the Angels lost a heartbreaker in the ninth inning — but Ikoma was thrilled by Ohtani's performance.

Ikoma, who said she wants to be a diplomat and make the world a better place, speaks excellent English, much of which she said she learned by singing songs from Disney movies like "Frozen" and its sequel.

She had no trouble telling everyone that she was thrilled by seeing Ohtani

"I told her that this was a memory she would have for the rest of her life," Vaughn said.

She agreed, with a smile almost as wide as the 5,658 miles from Long Beach to Yokkaichi.

