

Sister City Activities of Other Local Jurisdictions

Staff has investigated the sister city activities of several other local jurisdictions in order to determine whether there is a general standard of criteria/policy for establishing and maintaining sister city relationships.

Santa Clara, California:

Santa Clara is a member of Sister Cities International (SCI) and currently has sister city relationships with three international jurisdictions: County Limerick, Ireland; Izumo, Japan; and Coimbra, Portugal.

Santa Clara's Cultural Commission acts in an advisory capacity to the City Council in matters pertaining to the enhancement of multi-cultural experiences. It recommends potential city funding and support for community cultural groups, organizes some city cultural events. It also makes recommendations on the city's international exchanges, working closely with the Santa Clara Sister Cities Association, an independent non-profit organization, and other support groups.

The Cultural Commission also helps develop international contacts designed to enhance cultural exchanges, communication and understanding, with special emphasis on encouraging and coordinating activities with Santa Clara's three sister cities.

The Cultural Commission's recommendations to the City Council also include programs and activities that encourage educational, cultural, sports, technical and governmental exchanges to help acquaint Santa Clara citizens with cultural and political diversity here and abroad.

The Cultural Commission consists of volunteer Commissioners appointed by the City Council. The Commission meets on the 1st Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at Santa Clara City Hall. Eligible candidates must be registered voters, a resident of Santa Clara, and not hold any paid office or be employed by the City of Santa Clara. Interested candidates are referred to the City Clerk's office for details.

Santa Clara's website directs inquiries for sister city information to their City Manager's office.

The Santa Clara Sister Cities Association (SCSCA) is a non-profit, tax exempt, 501 (c) (3) organization that is volunteer based, with a board of directors elected on an annual basis. The mission of the organization is to bring different cultures together through people-to-people relationships. Their objective is to enrich the lives of students through cultural exchanges to build strong leadership skills and to enhance goodwill and global understanding. They host various student exchange programs through their Youth Commission that works under the SCA board of directors.

Fundraising for SCSCA exchange programs and other cultural events are all year long and include such community events as an Annual Chicken BBQ, a Street Dance, a Tea Party, and an A&W Festival.

The SCSCA Youth Commission is open to all high school students either living in Santa Clara or attending a Santa Clara school. There are currently SCA student clubs at Wilcox High School and Santa Clara High School, and students participate in cultural exchange and fundraising events through the SCSCA.

Annual memberships in the SCSCA are available at individual (\$10), Family (\$15), Senior (\$8), and Friend of Sister Cities (\$100) rates.

Mountain View, California:

Mountain View is a member of Sister Cities International (SCI) and currently has sister city relationships with two international jurisdictions: Hasselt, Belgium and Iwata, Japan.

Started in 1974, the Sister City Affiliation of Mountain View, an independent non-profit organization governed by a board of directors, serves to foster and promote international understanding and acceptance amongst the citizens and organizations of Iwata, Japan and Mountain View. In 1988, the Affiliation adopted Hasselt, Belgium as its second sister city. Throughout the year, the program holds meetings and events and hosts a student exchange program focused on the sharing of information, ideas, culture, economic and social relations.

Annual memberships in the Sister City Affiliation of Mountain View are available at individual (\$15), family (\$30), and corporate (\$75) rates, and the proceeds help to support the program.

The Sister City Affiliation of Mountain View holds board of director meetings on the second Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the Mountain View Senior Center.

A Nishimoto Scholarship program was available in 2014 to all graduating students within the Mountain View Los Altos High School District and funded from donations in honor of Yosh Nishimoto, one of the founding members of the Sister City Affiliation of Mountain View. Scholarship applications can be downloaded from the city's website.

Mountain View's youth exchange program offers students who live in the Mountain View Los Altos High School District the opportunity to develop an understanding of the countries, cultures, and people of Iwata, Japan and Hasselt, Belgium. Exchange students are chosen by committee through a selection process that includes group interviews, individual interviews, and home visits with parents or guardians. Selected students and families host a foreign exchange student for two weeks in July or August of the application year. The following summer, the Mountain View Sister City exchange student is hosted by their exchange "brother" or "sister."

In past years, students from Mountain View and Los Altos High Schools have raised a portion of their airfare as exchange students through various activities such as car washes and babysitting, and through sponsorships with local businesses.

In August 2015, activities organized for exchange students from Iwata, Japan included a welcome dinner at the Historic Adobe Building in Mountain View, a camping trip to Lake Tahoe, attendance of a ballet show, and tours of various sites throughout the Bay Area, including Stanford University, Ano Nuevo State Park, Google, NASA Ames, the Rengstorff House, Shoreline Park, Mountain View City Hall, and police and fire stations.

The rock garden and benches in Mountain View's Pioneer Park were a gift from Iwata, Japan to celebrate Mountain View's completion of its City Hall building. Iwata also gave Mountain View a gift of 100 books in celebration of its 100th anniversary. Mountain View has given Iwata a thank-you wall plaque, as well as miscellaneous mayor-to-mayor gifts from approximately \$60 to \$70. Additional miscellaneous gifts are often traded by the exchange students.

Palo Alto, California:

Palo Alto is a member of Sister Cities International (SCI) with six sister city relationships: Albi, France; Linkoping, Sweden; Oaxaca, Mexico; Enschede, Netherlands; Palo, Philippines; and Tsuchiura, Japan.

Neighbors Abroad, the official sister city organization of Palo Alto, is a volunteer community organization operating under the auspices of the city for the purpose of promoting international and intercultural understanding. Annual membership categories include \$25, Individual; \$40 Family; \$50, Business or Sponsor; \$100, Friend; \$500, Patron; \$1,000, Benefactor; and \$5,000, Gold Circle.

Gifts exchanged over the years include nominal items such as notebooks, books, and pins. They opt for the philosophy of providing smaller gifts rather than one large gift for the entire group. They retain a stack of books/notebooks in the City Manager's Office, and their Clerk's Office has some similar items available for visits. They may also be exploring more substantial gift offerings in the future.

Some gifts provided the city of Palo Alto include a sister city monument installed March 2012 in front of City Hall from the Rotary Club in the form of a metallic road marker showing the direction of all six of the city's sister cities, with a brief summary for each city in placards around the base. In 1989, Palo Alto also received a wooden sculpture from Linkoping, Netherlands, called "Foreign Friends," of a man, woman, dog and bird sitting on a park bench. Its location was originally on Embarcadero Road and Waverly Avenue, but due to repeated criticism and vandalism was removed and dismantled in 1995 and placed in storage until its destruction in 2000.

Los Gatos, California:

Los Gatos is not a member of Sister Cities International (SCI), but currently has five sister city relationships with Zihuatanejo, Mexico; Jhonghe City, Taiwan; Tallinn,

Estonia; Liaoyang, People's Republic of China (PRC); and Listowel, Co. Kerry, Ireland. The city has no formalized process or procedure in place regarding the formation or maintenance of sister city relationships, and each of their sister city opportunities has come along organically, some being formalized through resolutions, some through simply a motion during a Council Meeting. Listowel, Ireland is currently their most active relationship.

Los Gatos has received both a county and a country flag from Listowel as well as a few tapestries from Taiwan. Only small miscellaneous gifts have been exchanged. Los Gatos has given its sister cities various trinket gifts, such as pins, city and state flags, and Town logo mugs.

Past records from the city's website show that the Los Gatos Arts and Culture Commission's (ACC) January 2011 to June 2013 Arts Plan included a Sister City Exchange project to have one installment of public art in their Council Chambers as part of the city's collection. However, this project was dropped from the ACC's Arts Plan, asking that the Town Manager's Office assume responsibility for the administration of this program.

Redwood City, California:

Redwood City is a member of Sister Cities International (SCI) with two sister city relationships: Zhuhai, People's Republic of China and Colima, Mexico. Redwood City International (RCI) is a non-profit citizens organization, assisted by the City Manager's office, that facilitates Redwood City's sister city relationships. It was formed in 1990 by a group of local residents partnering with the city.

Funds to operate RCI are raised through individual, business and non-profit memberships with additional support from the city. Annual membership dues in RCI are \$50, Individual; \$80, Couples; \$35, Senior; \$150, Small Business (10 employees and under); and \$250, Business (11 or more employees).

Activities include hosting sister city delegations, interns, and other visitors; promoting understanding as a member of SCI; advancing cultural awareness in Redwood City's sphere of influence; and visiting China and Mexico as ambassadors from Redwood City.

Redwood City has donated a fire engine, firefighting equipment, clothing, and specialized landscaping and maintenance equipment to Colima; and has hosted several delegations, including a high-level group of officials interested in mutual economic development. Several other delegations, including the former Mayor, visited Redwood City and participated in the dedication of the new City Hall in 1997. After a devastating earthquake in 2003, RCI spearheaded a local fundraising effort to assist the citizens of Colima.

Zhuhai has sent several economic and business delegations to Redwood City, touring

the city, port, and other community areas, meeting with local business leaders. Representatives from Redwood City have also visited Zhuhai.

Los Altos, California:

Los Altos was previously listed in the Sister Cities International (SCI) 2015 membership directory as having sister city relationships with four cities: Greater Bendigo, Australia; Syktyvkar, Russia; Shih Lin, Taiwan; and Rustington, U.K. Until last year, the city's Sister Cities program was managed by a non-profit organization called Los Altos Sister Cities, Inc., and the city provided minimal resources to this effort. Towards the end of 2015, Los Altos Sister Cities, Inc. and the city ended their involvement in the Sister Cities program altogether, and the city no longer has any sister city relationships.

Campbell, California:

Campbell is not a member of Sister Cities International (SCI). Currently it has inactive sister city relationships with Keelung, China and Rio Verde, Mexico per its sister city policy.

Campbell's Civic Improvement Commission (CIC) advises the council on sister city matters, with the assistance of a steering committee comprised of community members, business community members, service clubs, school districts, or other organizations. The CIC reviews requests for new sister city relationships, provides recommendations, and shares information with and receives reports from sister city steering committees.

Sister city committees are responsible for carrying out sister city activities. Committees are not appointed by Council, nor represent Council.

When a sister city relationship is found to be in the best interest of the city, Campbell's Mayor and Council officially establishes the relationship by resolution. As official representatives of the city, Mayor and Council host city-sponsored sister city receptions, greet sister city delegations who visit City Hall, visit sister cities, adopt appropriate resolutions and proclamations, and present city gifts to the officials of sister cities.

Campbell's City Manager Office staff draft official proclamations and resolutions for adoption by Council and coordinate visits to City Hall, the giving of city gifts, and small receptions hosted by the city. Staff also coordinate city-sponsored sister city activities with the appropriate steering committee. Staff members do not serve on sister city committees.

Press releases may be written by city staff for distribution to the media in order to publicize activities of the sister city committees and the sister city program.