



FRIENDSHIP NEWS

SHINZEN TSUUSHIN

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Late Spring 2013

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Sister City Board:

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Chris Rankin & Jeffrey Hagg at the Abilene-Omitama booth, Central Kansas Japanese Festival, Kansas State University. April 2013

This edition of *Friendship New/シンゼン ツーシン* contains news about the Abilene-Omitama Sister City program:

- ❖ 2013 Delegation from Omitama
- ❖ Report of the Japanese dinner held in February.
- ❖ News from Amanda Soelter, our current AET.
- ❖ News about our new AET/Friendship Ambassador. Report about Japan Club.
- ❖ Report from the Central Kansas Japanese Festival.
- ❖ Report from the Sister City Board.



Reminder: The Sister City Board is on Facebook. Simply search **Abilene-Omitama Sister City** and “like” our page.

Calling all Friends of Sister City...

All their bags are packed, they're ready to go and they will soon be leaving on a jet plane. **The Omitama delegation will arrive in Abilene on July 26 and stay until August 5.**

This is the year that we again receive our friends from Omitama. This will be a larger group than we've hosted in the past – 19 youths and 4 adults, including our ALT Amanda Soelter. The Sister City board is hard at work making plans.

The most essential element of this exchange experience is the home stay. It is the ability to live with a family during their time here, which helps provide the best introduction to our Japanese friends to life in Abilene, Kansas and which allows us to learn about our Sister City and Japan. As in the past delegates will need two host families, one for each half of their stay.

We need host families willing to welcome two or three youths for a period of 5 days.

Of the 19 youths, 15 are girls and 4 are boys. The adult sponsors are Susumu (John) Okajima, the head of the Sister City Program in Omitama; Yagi Tizuru, an English teacher from Tamari Junior High; and Isaka Asako, the Omitama City representative.

Guidelines for Host Families:

- Be willing to provide a clean, safe environment for the Japanese delegate.

- Be able to provide transportation for the delegate in the morning and again in the afternoon.
- Have a child in the home the approximate age of the delegate.
- Be willing to attend informational meetings to prepare for the delegation.
- Have someone with the delegate at all times, making sure the delegate is well supervised.
- Make arrangements with another host family or board member if you need help in transportation.
- Provide meals when not provided by the Sister City Board.
- Avoid any dangerous activities that might injure a delegate.
- Do not allow the delegate to drive.

If you would be willing to host, or consider hosting and would like more information, please contact Donna Reynolds at drose_oo@hotmail.com or Mary Zey at maryzey@eaglecom.net. They may also be contacted by phone.

Look for additional details about the Omitama visit in the coming weeks.



2011 Omitama delegation.



Chris Rankin, Lisa Wright, Bob Bow, Elizabeth Shimabuku, and Corina Ryland cooking away.



Members of K-State Japanese Student Association join our celebration.



so generously supported the 2012 Abilene delegation to Omitama.

Japanese Celebration January 20th members of the Sister City board and the Friends of Sister City hosted a New Year's celebration. 100 or so friends and supporters enjoyed a number of delicious dishes prepared by board members and others. Barbara Johnson, Abilene resident and leader of the Kansas State University Yokosi Dancers, provided an energetic demonstration of Japanese dance. It was an entirely fine evening raising over \$700 to help replenish the Friends of Sister City who



Speaking of sushi...

Announcing - Sushi by Appointment...handmade sushi for that special occasion or just because you have a craving for good sushi. A variety of maki rolls are available. No sashimi (raw fish) used. Contact Donna Reynolds to check on availability, cost, and type. You can message Donna on facebook. Proceeds from sushi sales help support the Friends of Sister City which in turn helps support the Abilene-Omitama Sister City program.



Assistant English Teacher/Friendship Ambassador ...

Amanda Soelter began her time in Omitama in July 2012. She has been working at various area schools assisting in the

English classes and in serving as our Friendship representative. Amanda has a long history with the Sister City program, having traveled to Minori (our Sister City at the time) as a delegate from Abilene.

Since she started, Amanda has written a number of brief reports about her activities and travels which have been published in the Abilene Reflector – Chronicle. Here is her most recent -

Hello Abilene,
I don't know if I should tell you this given the weather you've been having, but I've been enjoying the Spring weather here in Japan. We've had two extended weekends in a row known as Golden Week. I took advantage of this by going to the park to play frisbee and visiting the local "Fire Festival" in Kasama. Kasama as I've mentioned before is famous for it's pottery, and many local artists had their wares on display. Add some live Jazz, locally made pizza and the artsy atmosphere, and it was homesick-American heaven. I hope spring time comes to Kansas soon. Bye for now!
Amanda

Amanda will be traveling to Abilene with the 2013 Omitama delegation, July 26-August 5. Her term of service ends in March of 2014.



Taking part in summer Dance contest as part of an Omitama team.



Kasama Fire Festival with Sara Downs, Masami Kikuchi, and Evan Cheers



A class in Peruvian cooking with her brother, Harrison during his visit to Omitama.

Introducing.... Jeffrey Hagga



Congratulations to Jeffrey Hagga! At the May meeting of the Sister City Board Jeffrey Hagga was approved as Abilene's next Friendship Ambassador/AET, and he will be recommended to Omitama for acceptance. Jeffrey has traveled to Omitama as a delegate and he and his family have hosted delegates from there. He is currently enrolled Kansas State University where he is majoring in Political Science and International Studies. He will graduate in December and would begin his work in Omitama in April, which is the start of their school year. An adventure awaits!

Japan Club...



For the fourth year, the Sister City Board has offered a Japan Club to give students an opportunity to learn about our Omitama and Japan. This year we tried a new format making the club part of the After School program at Garfield School for grades 4 and 5, and at the Recreation Center for Middle School students.

Donna Reynolds and Jerry Rankin of the Sister City Board and Ashley Montgomery (Omitama 2012) were the facilitators. With the encouragement of Dan Brown the Garfield Japan Club was well received. Meeting two Tuesday each month between 12 and 18 students.

The Middle School Club had mixed results and the Board will be taking another look at how to reach our older students about our Sister City as we look to the start of a new program year this September.

Central Kansas Japanese Festival . . .

For the second year, the City of Abilene and the Sister City Board was represented at the Central Kansas Japanese Festival held on April 13th in the Student Union at Kansas State University. This annual event is sponsored by the K-State Japanese Student Association and the Japan Consulate in Chicago.

This year, in addition to information about Abilene and our Sister City program, we offered a information about Omitama and Ibaraki (the prefecture or state where our Sister City is located), and a slide presentation highlighting elements of our program. Jerry Rankin, Chris Rankin (Omitama 2012) and Jeffrey Hagga (Omitama 2010) manned our exhibit.

The Festival was well attended and there were a number of very interesting displays, music, and demonstrations, not to mention the opportunity for a little shopping.

Note: The Greater Kansas City Japan Festival is scheduled for Saturday, October 5. It is held on the campus of Johnson County Community College. For more information go to <http://www.kcjapanfestival.com>.



News from the Sister City Board . . .

With the upcoming visit of a delegation from Omitama we are certainly switching into high gear. But, as can be seen from this newsletter, the delegation visits are not the only area of interest and activity.

At our April meeting, we accepted with regret, the decision of Lisa Wright not to accept a new term as Board member. Lisa had come to end of her full term, which she served out with diligence, grace and energy. We thank her for her service, and hope she will continue to be a part of the Sister City Program.

News has been received that Daniel Sexton and his wife Keiko who serve as missionaries in Japan, and their three children – Tabitha, Tryfena, and Timothy, will be returning to Abilene in June. Daniel is a past member of the Board.

At our May meeting, elections were held for Board officers for the coming year.

Jerry Rankin – President
Donna Reynolds – Vice-president
Corina Ryland – Secretary
Jackie Bisnette – Treasurer.

In addition to the officers, board members are:

Mary Zey
Mary Montgomery
Ron Rein
Elizabeth Shimabuku
Glenda Perkis (City liaison)
Gwyn Johnson (Friends of Sister City liaison)

The Abilene-Omitama Sister City Board is an official organization of the Abilene City Commission.

Meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month at the Convention and Visitor's Bureau office, 201 NW 2nd Street. Meetings begin at 7:00 p.m. and are open to the public.



For further information about the Sister City program contact:

Jerry Rankin 280-9678 or at
jdrankin406@yahoo.com.

Donna Reynolds at
drose_00@hotmail.com.

Or speak with any board member.



Green wheat rippling
Wind chimes and honeysuckle
Spring goes, Summer comes