



Long Beach-Yokkaichi Sister City Association



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Newsletter

July 2016

LBYSKA Welcomes Yokkaichi Trio to Long Beach—July 25, 2016

The beautiful Earl Burns Miller Japanese Garden at Cal State Long Beach was the setting to welcome the 2016 Yokkaichi Trio to Long Beach and introduce the 2016 Environmental Summit Team and 2016 Yokkaichi English Fellow (YEF) teacher.

LBYSKA President, **Frank Tabar**, warmly welcomed all to the event and introduced special guests: **Lisa Sumiyoshi**, Vice Consul of the Japan Consulate; **Jon Meyer**, LBUSD President; and **Sharon Weissman**, Senior Advisor to the Mayor.

Also in attendance were **Dr. Allison Blizzard**, CSULB Director American Language Institute; **Diana Craighead** and **Dr. Felton Williams**, LBUSD Board Members; and **Shige Higashi**, Cultural News Publisher and Editor.



*Environmental Summit Chaperone **Taylor Peck** flanked by Environmental Summit Chair **Bonnie Stoepelman** & Co-chair **Scott Warren**.*

After a delicious dinner, the group moved to the Friends Garden where former LBYSKA President **Mike Vaughn** introduced Environmental Summit Chair, **Bonnie Stoepelman**, who presented three of the five 2016 Environmental Summit representatives: **Grace Armendariz**, **Fatima Nunez**, and chaperone **Taylor Peck**. **Michaela Gonzales** and **Courtney Yeh** were out of the country and not able to attend the dinner (*read more on page 2*).

Dr. Jim Wells, retired Long Beach Memorial Medical Center Chief of Staff and now Chair of the Doctor's Physician's Program, spoke of the four doctors from Yokkaichi who came in February of this year to study medical techniques and procedures at L.B. Memorial Medical Center.

Jeanette Schelin, Yokkaichi English Fellow (YEF) Co-chair, presented the new YEF teaching assistant, **Christarith Meas** (*see article, next column*).

Yoko Pusavat, Trio Program Chair, gave an overview of the Trio Program which was formed in 1964 to create a cultural exchange and promote friendship 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 experience our city's culture.

Ms. Pusavat then introduced the 2016 Yokkaichi Trio: Teacher **Arisa Nishio** and students, **Akiho Tanaka** and **Hiroki Yoshikawa**. Each spoke of their families and hobbies in very good English. Arisa enjoys music, dance, traveling and photography; Akiho

is trained in ballet and likes One Direction and Taylor Swift; and Hiroki's interests are table tennis, swimming, baseball, and calligraphy. The Trio gave a Powerpoint presentation about Mie Prefecture and Yokkaichi.

Each of the Trio members will be staying with the following host families: **Joe & Kristen Aihara**; **Leticia & Hector Carreon**, **Martha Garcia & Hans Blom**; **Jim & Trisha Krug**; **Laura & Michael Plantenga**; and **Jennifer & Steven Sarantos**.

The evening ended with students and guests socializing over scrumptious dessert.

Special thanks to Jeanette Schelin, Director of the Japanese Garden, and her wonderful staff for a lovely evening. ///



*2016 Yokkaichi Trio Teacher **Arisa Nishio** with students **Akiho Tanaka** and **Hiroki Yoshikawa**.*

2016 Yokkaichi English Fellow Selected

Christarith Meas was selected as the 2016 Yokkaichi English Fellow (YEF).

The YEF Program began in 1986 by the Yokkaichi City Board of Education to provide an opportunity for Long Beach teachers or CSULB graduates to serve as assistant language teachers at the elementary and middle school levels in Yokkaichi, Japan. Selected teachers or new graduates work at a paid position in the Yokkaichi School System for two years.

Christarith was highly recommended and one recommendation letter came from the Signal Hill Elementary School where he had been serving as a volunteer teacher since September 2015. As part of his teaching curriculum at CSULB, Christarith was required to volunteer at a school for 9 hours. "He went beyond the requirement and volunteered for over 110 hours, working one on one with the most needy students with prep, paper, and computer work, while never failing to give each student words of encouragement."

Christarith departed for Yokkaichi on July 29th and word is that he has "hit the ground running and already on the job."

Gambatte, Christarith! ///



*2016 YEF **Christarith Meas***

2016 Environmental Summit Team in Japan

In 2007 former Yokkaichi Mayor Tetsuo Inoue proposed 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 9th year.



**2016
Environmental Summit Students
Courtney Yeh, Michaela Gonzales,
Grace Armendariz, and
Fatima Nunez.**

This year, four Long Beach Polytechnic High School students, **Grace Armendariz, Michaela Gonzales, Fatima Nunez** and **Courtney Yeh** were selected as the 2016 Environmental Summit students. Accompanying the students as their chaperone and advisor is **Ms. Taylor Peck** (see photo on page 1) who studied Japanese language courses at Long Beach Polytechnic High School and Long Beach Japanese Language School.

Each of the team members is an excellent student and very active as leaders in their school and community. The paragraphs below give a brief snapshot of these well-qualified students.

Grace Armendariz, the youngest student, has been studying Japanese for the past year with hopes on continuing. She is looking forward to the trip to expand her Japanese and learn about Japan's culture. "It is important that our two cities find new ways to cut down on pollution and understand what problems our cities face and how we can work together to help our communities thrive."

Michaela Gonzales has taken Japanese classes for 3 years and is currently enrolled in the Japanese 5-6 Honors course. She has always had a strong interest in the environment as evidenced in her participation in Key Club which hosts beach clean ups every month and with UNICEF which holds tree plantings in different L.B. neighborhoods. She hopes "to discover more ways to protect and improve our environment."

Fatima Nunez is in AP Japanese and has competed in the Japanese Language & Culture Team Competition for High School Students (Japan Bowl) for 2 years and placed in championship. Fatima feels that "the Environmental Summit is a valuable opportunity to share, exchange, and create new ideas that will better the current situation of our environment at home and in school. The summit's open panel is a beneficial experience to gain confidence that will become a learning factor towards our futures."

Courtney Yeh has taken Japanese for the past 3 years and is also enrolled in the Japanese 5-6 Honors course. She is "a member of Poly's Green Team, an on-campus organization dedicated to improving the environmental climate of the school as well as the community. I have had the opportunity to participate in and oversee countless events that have encouraged the betterment of the environment."

Prior to the students' trip to Yokkaichi, Environmental Summit Program Chair, **Bonnie Stoepelman**, and Program Co-chair, **Scott Warren**, met with the team members to teach them about Japanese customs and how to travel and pack for their trip.

The students also experienced boat tours of the Long Beach Port and Thums Oil Island, and visited SA Recycling and the Water Replenishment District Groundwater Festival to better understand the complex environmental issues of Long Beach.

On Sunday, July 31st, the Environmental Summit team departed for Yokkaichi for 10-days to study and discuss this year's theme, "Sustainability of Water and Air," with students from China and Japan. At the end of their study program, the team members are required to present a Powerpoint of what they have learned to a large audience which will include local media.

Good luck to our Summit team!

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All photos courtesy of Bonnie Sharp Stoepelman.

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



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



2016 Long Beach-Yokkaichi Sister City Association

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