



Long Beach-Yokkaichi Sister City Association

Founded 1963



Volume 5, Issue 2

Newsletter

September 2015

2015 Trio Return to Long Beach

This year's 2015 Trio Team, teacher and chaperone, **Joe Aihara** (of Long Beach), students **Sebastian Blom** (of Long Beach) and **Michelle Rufino** (of Catalina Island), recently returned from our sister city, Yokkaichi, Japan, serving as Long Beach cultural ambassadors for a three-week visit.

The Yokkaichi International Center (Y.I.C.), kept the trio very busy from day one. Below are excerpts from Michelle's trip report:

"Our stay in Yokkaichi lasted for twenty days, but we were able to learn so much within that tiny span of time. One observation I made was that Japan has more diverse groups than most people would expect. We met people from different countries who were living in Japan from Brazil, South Korea, The United Kingdom, and Peru. Not only did we meet people from different countries, we also heard and spoke different languages as well. Sebastian and I didn't expect to speak Spanish with a group of Japanese students, but we did!

This trip also taught us how the two thousand-year-old culture of Japan is still being practiced and preserved. I found this incredible. An example of one of the practices was wearing "yukata" (summer kimonos) and "geta" (wooden sandals) as everyday clothing—just as they wore them in the past. We trio members were able to experience wearing traditional clothing as well. Other examples we saw were the ancient architecture throughout Japan, and that schools offer Tea Ceremony clubs.

We, of course, tried Japanese food, and there can only be one word to describe Japanese food and that is ... delicious! Compared to my usual diet, I was eating much healthier and nutritious foods. One of my favorite platters was "tonteki" (pork loin steak) and "maguro sashimi" (raw tuna). Thanks to my host mother, Akiko-san, I'll be able to make these dishes from the cookbook she gave me.

We also learned about the many events and festivals that Yokkaichi hosts for its residents, which I find very interesting in the sense that this city has a strong community. We even took part in the Yokkaichi festival by pulling a float with ropes. This reminded me of the parades we have in Long Beach and Avalon.

I'll always cherish the present that we received from **Yokkaichi City Mayor Toshiyuki Tanaka**. It is precious to me because every time I see it, it reminds me of what our purpose was in Yokkaichi as Sister City Ambassadors. As Trio Ambassadors we were to

(Continued on page 3)

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.

This year's Environmental Summit Team of five: **Azalia Avellan**, **Emilio Carreon**, **Danielle Santos**, **Daniel Sato** and advisor, **Justin Luedy**, returned to Long Beach after spending 10 busy days at the International Center Environmental Technology Transfer (ICETT).



The Trio at THUMS Island.

Prior to their trip to Yokkaichi, the team visited several Long Beach areas and businesses to learn more about the environment. They visited THUMS, the "resort islands" off the coast of Long Beach which actually camouflage fully working oil drilling wells.

These wells have been pumping oil for years without incident and are considered state of the art.

Team chaperone, Justin Luedy, an environmental specialist for the Port of Long Beach, led the students on a tour of the port. The students were surprised by the size of the ships. Finally, the team visited a trash company run by Coventa and learned that most people in Long Beach do not realize that non-recycled trash is actually burned to create fuel.

As part of their orientation, students learned Japanese customs and etiquette, photography tips and how to pack their luggage. Armed with their new-found knowledge, the team left for Yokkaichi on July 26.

Justin Luedy kept the LBYSCA Board and the parents of the 4 Summit students updated with daily reports. Following are a few:

"Just got back to the ICETT after a very long day. It was in total a 13 hour day of nonstop go, go, go. We are all exhausted. Today we did a beach cleanup, arts and crafts, a tour of Yokkaichi port, lunch at a

(Continued on page 2)

More photos of our 2015 Trio Members



Cooling down with shaved ice in the record breaking summer heat.



Sebastiann loves Japanese food.



Trio beckoning you to come to Yokkaichi.



Michelle practicing Kanji 光 (light) with brush.



Trio with konyudo-kun (Yokkaichi city's mascot). Kneeling in front: a Japanese floor mat "tatami" maker.

2015 Summit—cont'd. from pg 1

restaurant, and sushi dinner with a family in a traditional Japanese home. What a day. The heat and humidity persists. Working on presentations."



"This morning the students went into the forest to learn how early Japanese people lived harmoniously with trees. Each group cut down a tree and cut it up in a way that people once did to burn for energy. It was extremely hot, but they did a

good job. We then went back to the center and had an outdoor barbecue with grilled meats, vegetables, and noodles. The noodles moved down a long track made of bamboo and they had to pick them out of flowing water.

We then learned how to properly tie and wear a kimono. Right now the students are putting the final touches on their presentations. They will present tomorrow morning and then we will attend an outdoor festival and closing ceremony in Yokkaichi."



"Today was the last day of the program. The students gave final presentations and then received their certificates of completion (see page 3). The rest of the day was spent at the annual Yokkaichi festival which ended with a closing ceremony/dinner."

This year's Summit team were able to extend their stay in Japan with a visit to the beautiful city of Nagoya. They spent a night at a Japanese-style inn (ryokan) and toured the Nagoya Castle. Thanks to Justin, the team navigated the city with no problems.

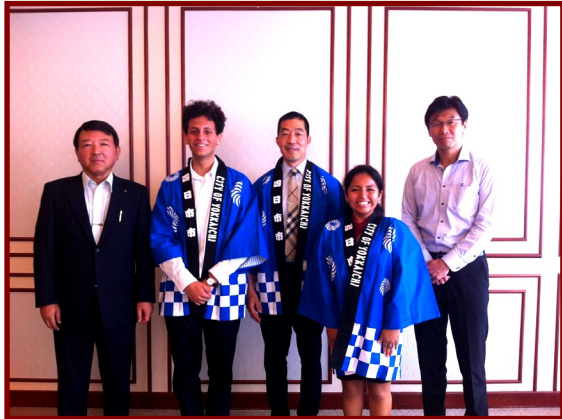
The 2015 Environmental Summit team members are scheduled to report on their activities and experiences in Yokkaichi to the Port of Long Beach Harbor Commissioners.

Kudos to the LBYSCA Environmental Summit Chair, **Bonnie Sharp Stoepelman**, for her hard work to ensure the team members were

(Continued on page 3)

2015 Trio—*cont'd from pg. 1*

represent Long Beach City as a multicultural and progressive city that wants to continue building friendships with neighboring countries and create more Sister Cities.



2015 Trio ambassadors meeting Yokkaichi Mayor Toshiyuki Tanaka (left).

This Trio program has influenced me in a variety of ways, from my perspective of how we should behave in our society to changing my diet for the better. This trip also reinforced my desire to work in Japan, and I'm looking forward to the next time I go there, hopefully within the next four to five years. Although I may not be working as a teacher when I return to Japan, I hope to continue to share my culture and languages with everyone who is interested.

I'm very grateful to the Long Beach-Sister City Association Board for selecting me and letting me be part of this life-changing experience. I hope that others who apply for this program have the chance to experience what I have and keep the relationship between Long Beach and Yokkaichi close. To conclude this report, I would like to say that 'People should continue to share their different cultures and languages with anyone who is curious or interested in another part of the world and to create bridges to bring the world closer together'."

The Trio Exchange Program was founded in 1965 and began with two students and a teacher from our sister city of Yokkaichi, Japan, staying in Long Beach for three weeks. Since then our two cities have alternated trio members every year.

Next year, Long Beach will host a trio from Yokkaichi, but in 2017, it will be our turn to send a trio to Yokkaichi. If you are interested in an experience of a lifetime, please watch our website in December 2016—February 2017 for details.

Special thanks to LBYSCA Trio Program chair, **Yoko Pusavat**, whose leadership was invaluable in making the Trio Program a tremendous success.

###

2015 Summit—*cont'd. from pg. 2*



2015 Environmental Summit students (in blue polo shirts) with Yokkaichi and Chinese students.

well informed on environmental issues and Japanese culture prior to their leaving for Yokkaichi and for coordinating the special trip to Nagoya Well done!

If you are a student and interested in this program, please watch our website in December 2015 for more details.

###

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



Long Beach-Yokkaichi Sister City Association
2015 Board Members

Joe Aihara	Rose Siengsubcharti
Will Cullen	Bonnie Sharp Stoepelman
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	

Questions / Comments?
LBYSCA President, Mike Vaughn
562-592-9350 / mike@vaughnlawoffice.com

LBYSCA Newsletter Creator/Publisher
Aki Vaughn at aki@vaughnlawoffice.com