



Sister City News

Palmer, Alaska - Saroma, Japan

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2019

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Palmer to Saroma - 2020 Adult Delegation

by Mike Chmielewski

Hajimemashite!

July 2020 seems far away, but for 21 Palmer residents excitement is already building.

They have all committed to travel 6,800 miles by air from Anchorage to Seattle to Tokyo to Sapporo and will finish with a 200-mile road trip to their destination - Saroma.

Every five years a delegation makes this journey - either coming from Saroma to Palmer or going to Saroma from Palmer - all to honor a sister city relationship built on shared experience living in a rural, northern agricultural environment.

Long standing friendships established decades ago are leavened by delegation members making their first trip. Palmer Saroma Kai has supported these exchanges as an opportunity to host visitors in homes and share experiences of life here in Palmer. For the eight days the Palmer delegation is in Saroma, a similar hosting by individual families will provide the deepening understanding of how we are more the same rather than different, honoring a culture whose language and customs we can all learn from.

The 21 travelers to Saroma include eight members who have previously traveled to

Saroma, representatives from the Mat-Su Borough School District, community members and three Palmer City Council members, including Deputy Mayor Linda Combs.

In these days of international tensions and debates about differences among peoples of the world, the Palmer Saroma Sister City relationship and the re-affirming of the importance of individual connections at all levels of society is both refreshing and encouraging.

When the delegation returns, we look forward to sharing the experience to further deepen the Palmer Saroma relationship.



2020- Adult Delegation to Saroma

Top: Council Member Sabrena Combs, Cassi Campbell, Tamora Harding-Childs, School District Director of Instruction Traci Pedersen, Marilyn Thom, Laura Sampson, Robert Thom, Sherrod Principal Lorri Cook, Clinton Alley

Middle: Council Member Julie Berberich, Tony Berberich, Deputy Mayor Linda Combs, Tanya Lang, Norma Alley

Bottom: Lance Swick, Lee Henrikson, Carla Swick

Not Pictured: PHS Principal Paul Reid, Swanson Principal Rourke Spatz, Sandra Holmes, Chris Woods Soulak, Mike Chmielewski, Brenna Kennicker



Upcoming Calendar of Events

Christmas Cranes

A Colony Christmas Event
Saturday, Dec 14th 2019
from 12 – 3pm at the
Palmer Library,
655 S Valley Way

FREE

See the back page of the newsletter for more details.

Yuki Fest Anime Convention

Saturday, Feb 1st, 2020
from 12 - 8 pm at
Palmer High School
1170 W Bogard Rd, Palmer

Cost \$10

Toyko 2020 Summer Olympics

July 24 - Aug 9, 2020
Toyko, Japan

<https://www.olympic.org/tokyo-2020>

Elementary School Connections

It is now the third year of the official sister school partnership between Saroma Elementary, and Sherrod and Swanson Elementary schools in Palmer.

The relationship continues to be strong. Students from Saroma middle and high school spent a busy day at both schools during their September visit. At Sherrod, the Saroma middle and high school students put on a series of demonstrations that included introductions, a game, and a dance, so that all of the Sherrod students could participate.

Another stalwart element of the elementary partnership resumes soon. With the return of standard time in Alaska, Sherrod and Saroma can begin the annual series of Skype sessions between

the fifth grade classes. Started 10 years ago, the Skype sessions focus on students speaking directly to each other, sharing facets of their lives at home and school. Assisted by guidance from ALT Audrey Holder, the Saroma students prepare short phrases to present, and the Sherrod students bridge gaps in verbal communication by creating pictures or posters to convey ideas.

This year will be one of change for the program. Longtime Saroma Elementary English instructor Kazuo Nagasaki has moved on. The new English instructor is Mr. Souichi Kashimoto. He was born in Hokkaido and has been a teacher for about 16 years. He began in Saroma a little over a year ago as a special needs teacher for the

children of Saroma Elementary. He loves his students and finds the interaction between the Saroma children and the Palmer children to be enriching to both groups. Change is inevitable, especially in schools, but it is a hallmark of the Palmer-Saroma relationship to endure as the people involved come and go. Mr. Nagasaki will be missed, but everyone involved looks forward to a successful continuation

Anyone interested in assisting with the elementary sister school program is encouraged to contact Mr. Williams at Sherrod. Volunteers with Japanese language or culture skills would be most beneficial, but those who can provide basic logistical support on Skype days are also welcome.

2020 Palmer Student Delegation to Saroma

The student delegation that will be visiting Saroma in 2020 has been selected.

Palmer High School

Josh Bevan
Amethyst Childress
Logan Olson
Jesse Hushower
Zachary Riedel
Chaperone: Nikki Henry

Palmer Jr/Middle School

Adyson Schmitt
Aaila Johnson
Allysa Hicks
Chaperone: Stacy Roberts



Saroma to Palmer - Exchange Highlights

In September, seven Saroma students and two chaperones visited Palmer.

They attended classes at Palmer Jr/Middle School and Palmer High School, visited with students at Swanson and Sherrod Elementary Schools, and visited sites around Palmer and elsewhere in Alaska.

Many thanks to the host families and everyone else who helped our visitors enjoy their stay in Palmer.

This is what the Saroma students had to say about their visit to Palmer and Alaska.

Yuka Tarumi

I'm 13 years old. I loved exploring the city of Palmer. It was fun. Visiting the Palmer Fire Department was my highlight.

I want to say thank you to my host family. Mom took me to see so many places and Kylee always helped me.

Thank you very much. I will be back to see you someday. Arigatou!

Mirei Yonezawa

I go to Saroma Junior High School. I enjoyed my time in Palmer. My favorite memory was exploring the city.

I really enjoyed going to Japanese class and learning about everyone's recommendations for us.

My favorite day with my host family was playing at the trampoline park. I will never forget my memories with Larkin.

I hope to come to Palmer again. Thank you for giving

me this experience of a lifetime.

Kashii Fujisawa

I'm 13 years old. I go to Saroma Junior High School. I thought it was a really good idea to come to Palmer in Alaska.

What I enjoyed at Palmer Junior Middle School was having lunch with everyone. In the morning, I played basketball with my host sister, Abby. It was fun playing against many people, and everyone at PJMS spoke up and said hello. This made me feel so welcome and happy.

On the weekend, my host family and I played at a trampoline park, and went to the Anchorage Rodeo. It was so exciting. Swimming in the Wasilla pool and eating Taco Bell food with Mirei, Abby, and Larkin are some of my favorite memories.

I will never forget my two weeks as a Palmer girl and a Moose. I really enjoyed the nature of Alaska, especially when we hiked Matanuska Glacier and strolled around Palmer.

Thank you so much for giving me an experience I can't have in Saroma. I am very happy to meet everyone in Palmer city. I love Palmer! Thank you for the wonderful memories!

Takuho Abe

I go to Saroma Junior High School. I really enjoyed my time in Palmer.

One favorite memory is fishing. I really enjoyed going to English class at Palmer Jun-

ior Middle School. My favorite memory with my host family was going hiking.

I want to come to Palmer again. I LOVE PALMER! Thank you for giving me these experiences!

Yuuri Shinbo

There are 3 memories I would like to talk about.

First, I would like to talk about my host family. The whole family was kind and I enjoyed every day.

Second, I would like to talk about Palmer. Palmer's food is delicious. Pizza is my favorite food. I would like to eat pizza again.

Third, I would like to talk about the school. Everyone at Palmer High School was kind and very friendly. I was happy that everyone said "Hello".

Thank you for the 2 weeks.

Miu Shibata

Hello! There are three memories I would like to talk about.

First, I would like to talk about my host family, the Bryants. My whole family was very kind.

Second, I would like to talk about Palmer. Palmer is rich in nature and very beautiful.

Third, I would like to talk about Palmer High School. It made me very happy that every student at Palmer High talked to me and said hello in Japanese. Every day was a lot of fun.

Thank you very much.

Hiking Matanuska Glacier



Palmer City Hall Visit



Palmer Fire Department Visit



Musk Ox Farm Visit



Homestay

Continued on Page 4

Saroma to Palmer - Exchange Highlights

Haruki Nomura

I am 13 years old and I go to Saroma Middle School.

During my two weeks in Palmer, I experienced so many things. And, I was able to make so many great memories. Introducing myself in front of the entire school at PJMS is probably my top memory. Everyone really cheered for me, which made me feel great!

The classes at PJMS that really interested me was English class, where we made our own book; the class where we made Alaskan yoyo's; PE; and music. The music teacher created such a fun atmosphere. The thing that made me so happy was kids talking to me in the classes, in the hallways, and cafeteria.

I have so many memories from my homestay. Out of all of them the one that was most precious to me was playing Alaskan Monopoly with Carla-sensei & Billy. It took us two days, but we played to the very end. For me, it was a little bit like the board game called Life. We would get so excited and into it, so it made a big impression on me. It was my first time playing the game

and I had to go to jail so many times. Billy ended up winning, but I had so much fun.

I loved my time in Palmer & in Alaska's nature. Simply riding the field trip bus was great! Nika would point out all the mountains & ocean scenery for me. During the bus ride, students were laughing, talking, & singing to the radio. It was so much fun. I will never forget it. Also lake fishing with Dillon & his family from a canoe was awesome. I caught two fish & saw the beauty of the autumn colors changing.

Also, I had my 1st Alaskan kiss! It was with a MOOSE at the Reindeer Farm! And my biggest surprise in Alaska was hearing the noon siren at Palmer City Hall! I jumped so high. I also got to try on police swat gear, sit in the jail under Palmer City Hall, & learn about the Palmer Colonists.

I also felt like it was fate that I got to hear about George Carte at Palmer City Hall. My heart just wanted to say, "arigatou." Thanks to him & so many of you, I was able to come to Palmer!

I love Palmer!
ありがとうございました。



Radio Free Palmer Visit



Moose Kiss!



Hiking the Butte



Palmer Homecoming Football Game



Palmer Sister City Monument



Saroma Students Performing the Fan Dance

Saroma ALT Introduction

by Mackenzie Jenkins

Hi! I am Mackenzie Jenkins, and in January 2020 I will be the new Assistant Language Teacher (ALT) for Saroma. I would like to introduce myself and share with you my background and how my interest in Japan started.

I studied Japanese language and culture under Carla Swick at Wasilla High School. During my freshman year, I was given the opportunity to participate as a delegate from Wasilla High School on a three-week tour of Japan along with my fellow students and our teacher, Carla

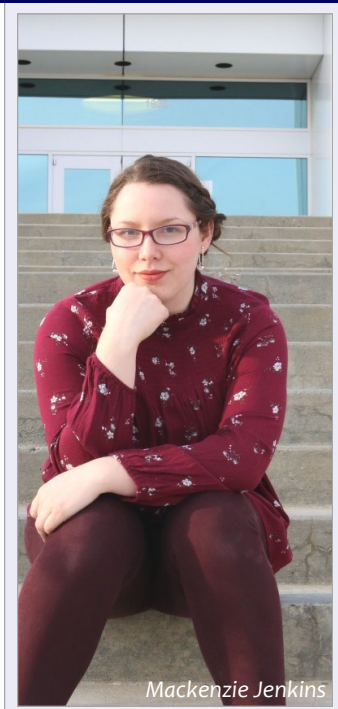
Swick. During this time in Japan our delegation traveled around southern Honshu and Kyushu followed by homestays in Fukui Prefecture. After this trip, I knew I wanted to study abroad in Japan during university.

Following high school graduation, I attended the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) where I studied biochemistry and Japanese. In 2015 I returned to Japan as a student at Tohoku University studying biochemistry. During my year living in Sendai I was able to explore

northern Honshu and help with tsunami prevention and rebuilding along the coast.

Upon returning to Alaska, I completed my degree and graduated, May of 2019. After graduation I started working as a research intern studying neuroprotective therapies for cardiac arrests, to help prepare me to attend medical and graduate school, in the future.

I am very excited for my first trip to Hokkaido and the opportunity to experience life in Saroma!



Mackenzie Jenkins



Tokyo 2020 Emblems Concept
<https://tokyo2020.org/en/games/emblem/>

Three different rectangular shapes represent diversity. Diversity makes the world a vibrant place. It sets us apart but can bring us together. With mutual respect and support, diversity becomes unity. These two emblems are made of the same number of shapes. They remind us that all people are equal. That regardless of ability or disability, we are united in our humanity. The thrill and excitement of sports inspires us and makes hearts around the world beat together as one. This is where a dazzling future begins.

~ Designer Asao Tokolo

Cultural Corner - Olympic Mascots

by Akiho Negishi

Do we love our Palmer mascot, the Moose? Yes, we do! Well, Miraitowa and Someity are the mascots for the next summer Olympics and Paralympics 2020 held in Japan.

Miraitowa is good at sports, learning from our ancestors, and practicing those lessons in everyday life. This concept comes from the traditional four-character/letter idiom, “温故知新

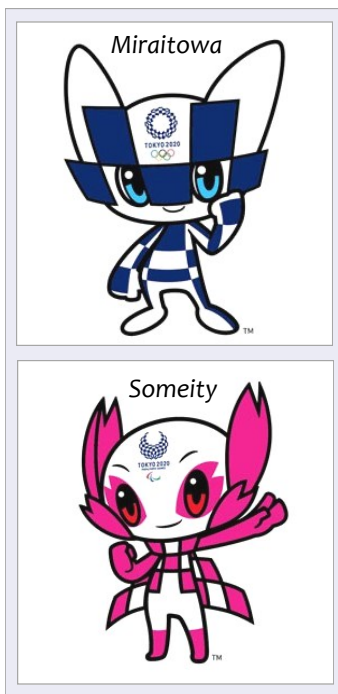
(Onkochishin)” which means: develop new ideas based on the study of the past. Also, “mirai” and “towa” of Miraitowa means future and eternal. The Japanese people named the mascot as a wish for a wonderful everlasting future.

Someity is the mascot of the Paralympics. Someity loves nature and has the ability to talk to nature, too. The name is a combination of “so mighty” in English, and

“ソメイヨシノ (someiyoshino),” which is one of the popular kinds of “さくら (sakura)” – cherry blossoms.

These mascots were chosen by elementary school students’ votes. Surprisingly, 205,755 classes voted during a two-week period!

Check out their instagram pages - @miraitowa & @someity.



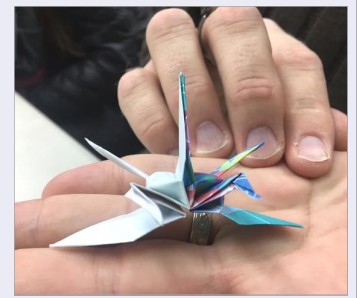


Christmas Cranes - A Colony Christmas Event

Saturday, Dec 14th 2019 from 12- 3pm
Palmer Library, 655 S Valley Way

Paper cranes are an international symbol of peace and hope and remind us of the Sister City relationship between Palmer, Alaska and Saroma, Japan.

- Make a unique and beautiful ornament for your holiday celebration.
- Enjoy family fun for all ages.
- Learn more about Saroma, our Sister City in Japan.
- FREE materials and instruction.
- Donations for food and drinks will go to the student delegation visiting Saroma next year.
- We hope to see you there!



The Sister City Program , established in 1980, works together with the Sister Schools Program in the cities of Palmer, Alaska and Saroma, Japan, to promote cultural enlightenment, student and teacher exchanges, international good will, and lasting relationships between cities.

This newsletter is published by Palmer Saroma Kai, an organization that provides encouragement and support for the relationship between the Sister Cities of Palmer, Alaska and Saroma, Japan.

To submit articles, photos, or items of public interest, please contact Carla Swick at carlaswick2010@gmail.com or by phone 907-775-0807.

Your comments, suggestions, and constructive feedback are welcome!