



Sister City News

Palmer, Alaska - Saroma, Japan

❄ Winter

2015

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Celebrating 35 Years of Friendship

In mid-July of this year, the cities of Palmer and Saroma wrapped up a weeklong celebration of the 35th anniversary of their Sister City relationship.

Twenty guests from Saroma, Japan stayed with Palmer host families and enjoyed local activities. Friendships of many years were rekindled and new friendships were established.

The weeklong celebration included a whirlwind of activities including: taiko drummers at the downtown Friday Fling, a day trip to Talkeenta (including a flightseeing tour), bilingual worship service at Palmer United Protestant Church, a special 35th anniversary dinner celebration (attended by Governor Bill Walker), visits to local area schools (with Superintendent Deena Paramo), a tour of Hatcher Pass and Independence Mine, visits to the Colony House

and Palmer museums, ocean fishing for halibut and salmon, a walk on Matanuska Glacier, a visit to Arctic Fire Bronzes, lunch at the Palmer Senior Center, a tour and tasting at Arkose Brewery, a community picnic at Matanuska River Park, as well as many other activities coordinated by local host families.

Our guests from Saroma were:

Mayor of Saroma: Mr. Akio Kawane and his wife, Ms. Michiko Kawane

President of Saroma Sister City Committee: Mr. Jiro Hori, and his wife Ms. Masako Hori

Co-founder of the Sister City relationship: Mr. Mutsuhiro Ishiguro

Saroma Superintendent of Schools: Mr. Kenichi Kagawa

Principal of Saroma High School: Mr. Hideki Nakagawa

Principal of Saroma Jr High: Mr. Katsuhito Nomura

President of Saroma Council: Mr. Osamu Kagaya

Saroma Council Member: Ms. Mami Mita

Saroma City Staff Members: Mr. Harutomo Takeda and Ms. Yuko Hirouchi

Sister City Committee Members: Mr. Yukitaka Omote and his wife Ms. Emi Omote, Mr. Eiji Omote, Mr. Tetsuya Tanigawa, Mr. Akifumi Otani, Ms. Ryoko Abe, Ms. Mariko Ono, and Ms. Hitomi Ozaki.

Thank you to all our visitors from Saroma, for traveling so far.

Thank you to everyone who helped make their visit special and very successful.

(More Photos on Page 3)





Quarterly Calendar of Events

Student Fundraiser

Please help Palmer students raise money for their visit to Saroma next summer.

Go to this link: pamperedchef.com/go/Saroma2015 and click "Shop Now".

Up to 15 percent of total sales will go towards this fundraiser.

The fundraiser ends November 24th.

Call Kim Akers at 746-8404 with any questions.

Tea Ceremony & Palmer Saroma Kai Annual Meeting

The Palmer Saroma Kai annual meeting will be held **January 16th from 2 pm to 4 pm** at the Palmer United Protestant Church. Join us for a Japanese tea ceremony demonstration and board member elections. Please see the last page of this newsletter for more information.

Palmer to Saroma - Exchange Highlights

The City of Saroma hosted a group of students and chaperones from Palmer in June 2015.

The group included three Palmer High students: Krista Mahan, Mattie Stuart, and Peyton Murphy; four Palmer Jr/Middle students: Ethan Copp, Zoe Copp, Zane Carter, and Tobin Hushower; and two chaperones: Kim Akers and Tanya Lang.

They lived with Japanese host families, attended school, and participated in local activities.

The Frontiersman published several articles about their visit. Google any of the following to read more.

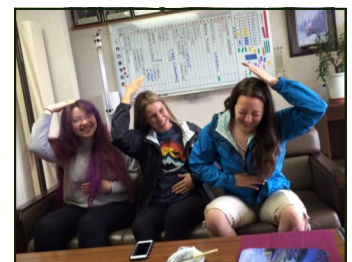
Reflections on Saroma, Japan - by Zoe Copp

Student experiences new foods, familiar activities - by Ethan Copp

Senior student encourages cultural exchange - by Peyton Murphy

Saroma exchange: It's hard to say goodbye - by Tobin Hushower

From Palmer to Saroma for 35 years - by Tanya Lang



Palmer Students Selected for Next Saroma Visit

By Kim Akers

Eight fantastic students have been selected to visit Saroma in June 2016.

Palmer Jr/Middle Students

Lillian Bryan
Anika McDonough
Anesia Pavilla
Tucker Christiansen

Palmer High Students

Haley Hershman
Connor Monroe
Hannah Villanueva
Tabitha Villanueva

Chaperones are Kim Akers and Elizabeth Crowley.

Students have recently started Japanese language and cultural lessons, which will continue until departure. Students will also create profiles of themselves. These will be included in a future newsletter.

This year we are making some changes to improve the program. At the end of

this month we will be asking for applicants for the June 2017 Saroma trip.

This will ensure more applicants because it allows for fundraising and saving money over a year's time (rather than paying for a ticket as soon as they are chosen to go), more language and cultural lessons, and a longer time period to develop relationships with Saroma.

35th Anniversary Visit - Photos



Saroma to Palmer - Exchange Highlights

By Saroma Middle School Students

In September 2015, six Saroma students -- Chiri Murayama, Ayato Muroi, Maaya Saiki, Koudai Nagano, Masashi Arata, and Neiju Fujisawa plus chaperones Yuko Hirouchi and Miki Tsukada -- visited Palmer. They stayed with Alaskan host families, attended school and visited many interesting places.

Many thanks to the host families, local schools, the City of Palmer, and everyone who made their visit a success.

Below are some highlights from their visit.

Chiri Murayama

Saroma Jr High - 8th Grader

Before the trip I was really excited, but also nervous about being able to communicate properly with people. But after a long flight and meeting my host family and all of the friends who had visited Saroma earlier, my exhaustion and anxiety vanished.

Finally, though being away from home was difficult, my world view changed. I learned many things, and had a wonderful experience. I want to return to Alaska again someday.

Ayato Muroi

Saroma Jr High - 8th Grader

Ethan's house is three stories tall, and his room was big and very nice. They had a tree house and had a sauna too. The family was very happy with the souvenirs I brought from Japan. I brought Ethan's father a big size box of Koala's March candy

and he ate all of them saying "Delicious!" I really got along well with Ethan's family. On the weekend we spent the night at Alyeska. The hotel at Alyeska had a pool, and everyone had fun swimming. The water tasted salty, which I thought was a little strange. The next day we hiked up the mountain. I was so tired! But, I felt a huge sense of accomplishment. The surrounding views were really pretty. I'm so happy I was able to have such a great experience.

Maaya Saiki

Saroma Jr High - 8th Grader

At Palmer Junior Middle School I participated in classes with Zoe. Many people shook hands with me and I thought the school had many friendly people. The last day at the middle school, we went outside and played. At Sherrod Elementary, when class was over and we were getting ready to leave a boy came up to me, asked questions, and gave me a hug. When we went outside, 2 boys and 2 girls played with me and took pictures. Chiri told me, "They're so cute! I want to take them home with me!"

Koudai Nagano

Saroma Jr High - 8th Grader

This cultural exchange was full of surprises. It had fun things and happy things. The challenges I faced, lessons learned, and encouragement received were enriching. I received a lot of guidance from my host family, and I will treasure the memories

of the places we went together. There are no words to describe the depth of my gratitude and thanks towards them.

Masashi Arata

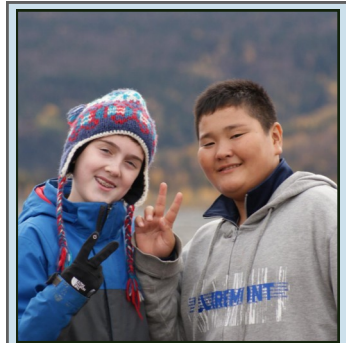
Saroma Jr High - 8th Grader

I had a great time coming to Palmer. My host family, the teachers, and students were all very nice and interesting people. At first, I was homesick and wanted to go back to Japan, but when it came time to return I didn't want to leave. Someday, I wish to return to Palmer.

Neiju Fujisawa

Saroma Jr High - 8th Grader

At first, when Christa came to Japan I was a little nervous, but when I went to Palmer I was very nervous. Some of the things that have changed since going to Palmer are my English pronunciation, and being able to talk to people I don't know a little bit better. I also realized what a great place Japan is. I think you have to leave your home country to understand how good it is.



Near the Matanuska Glacier



Visiting the Reindeer Farm



Top of the Butte

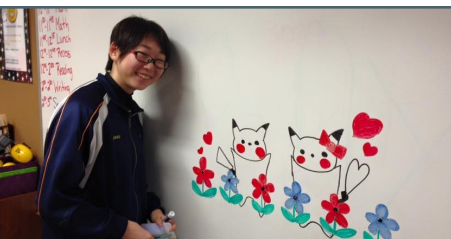
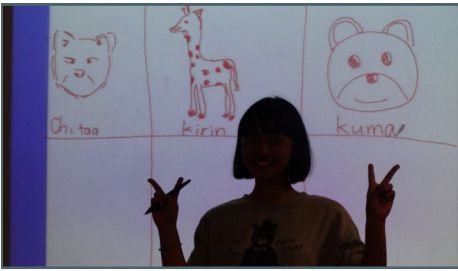
*"...my world view
changed..."*

Chiri Murayama



Saroma exchange students

Saroma to Palmer - Exchange Photos



Please Join Us for a Sister City Community Event

January 16th, 2016 from 2-4pm



Palmer Saroma Kai Presents

A Japanese Tea Ceremony demonstration by Yuki Moore

Saturday, Jan 16th 2016, 2- 4 pm
Palmer United Protestant Church (Church of 1000 Trees)
713 S Denali St, Palmer

The Japanese tea ceremony, also called the Way of Tea, is a Japanese cultural activity involving the ceremonial preparation and presentation of

matcha (抹茶), powdered green tea.

The tea ceremony will be part of the Palmer Saroma Kai annual meeting.

The brief annual meeting portion of the event will include reports from the board president and treasurer as well as board member elections.

If you would like to run for a board member seat, contact Carla Swick at 775-0807.



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!