

Taking Japan-U.S. Sister City Exchanges to the Next Stage: As Sister Cities International Marks Its 70th Anniversary



A page from a local St. Louis newspaper in 1956 showing the then-mayor of Nagasaki visiting the City of St. Louis (courtesy of Sister Cities International)



Ambassador Yamada, Japan's Ambassador to the United States, in conversation with Board Chair Kapua at the Sister Cities International 70th Anniversary Reception on July 23, 2026

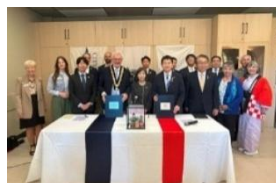


A visiting delegation engaging in exchanges in Rikuzentakata City (courtesy of Crescent City)

Japan and the U.S. share as many as 474 sister-city relationships and have built a long history of active exchanges. Longstanding grassroots exchanges have supported the friendship and trust between the two countries, and in recent years they have expanded into collaborations aimed at addressing regional challenges. Marking the 70th anniversary of the founding of Sister Cities International, this article introduces the history of Japan-U.S. sister city exchanges, the ties among the people who sustain them, and their future prospects.



The two mayors reaffirming the friendship city agreement in Nanaimo



The ceremony commemorating the 30th anniversary of the friendship city partnership



Representatives of the two cities planted a cherry tree to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the friendship city partnership



Commemorative photo of participants at the welcome reception

Celebrating the 30th Anniversary of the Friendship City Partnership between Saitama City and Nanaimo, Canada

Saitama City and Nanaimo, Canada, established a friendship city partnership in 1996 and, over the years, the two cities have deepened their friendship through youth, cultural, and citizen exchanges. To commemorate the 30th anniversary this year, a delegation from Saitama City visited Nanaimo, where the two cities reaffirmed their friendship city agreement and planted a cherry tree. They confirmed their commitment to expanding cooperation in areas including multicultural inclusion, tourism, and the environment, while passing on their bonds of friendship to future generations.

“Happy Sake New Year!” : Sharing the Appeal of Japanese Sake and Cuisine with ASEAN



Reception participants deepening exchange through Japanese sake and cuisine



Chargé d' Affaires Chujo introducing guests involved in sake brewing



Participants enjoying a tasting of Japanese sake

A reception, “Sake New Year,” was held in Jakarta to celebrate the beginning of a new brewing year for Japanese sake. Focusing on “fermentation culture,” a shared aspect of the culinary traditions of Japan and ASEAN, the event showcased the appeal of Japanese sake and cuisine. With the call of “Happy Sake New Year!”, a new year of exchange through food culture began.

Bridges Built by the Expo: New Exchanges between Ishikawa Prefecture and the Kingdom of Bahrain



Courtesy call on Governor Yamano of Ishikawa Prefecture



Courtesy call on President Wada of Kanazawa University and the faculty

Using Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai as an opportunity, exchanges between Ishikawa Prefecture and Bahrain are developing. H.E. Ms. OKAI, Ambassador of Japan to the Kingdom of Bahrain, visited Ishikawa Prefecture and paid calls to various locations in the prefecture that have ties with Bahrain. It is expected that the maritime bridge that has connected the two thus far will be further strengthened and that these bonds will lead into the future.



Courtesy call on the headquarters of Magara Construction, visit to Kamide Choemon Kiln

The Bond and Enduring Friendship Between Showa Village and Eagle Point –Celebrating the 250th Anniversary of U.S. Independence Together–



The Grand Parade Celebrating the 250th Anniversary of Independence



Mayor Kathy and Village Chief Takahashi waving from an open-top car

Showa Village in Gunma Prefecture and Eagle Point, Oregon, became sister cities in 2005 following the dispatch of an Assistant Language Teacher, and have deepened their friendship through exchanges involving middle school students and other activities. As a result of this relationship, a delegation from Showa Village was invited to Eagle Point's ceremony commemorating the 250th anniversary of U.S. independence, where they reaffirmed the long-standing bonds of friendship with the local community.



The fire chief, wearing a Happi coat, presented by Nagai, Chairman of the Village Council

