



# Lakeland Sister Cities

## International (LSCI)

228 S. Massachusetts Ave, Lakeland, Florida 33803

## 2012 Summer Newsletter

Editor: Carol Hoffman rosycaroL1@juno.com



### IMABARI EXCHANGE SUCCESSFUL

With spectacular views of beautiful islands, the stately bridge and the Seto Inland Sea, not even the rainy season could diminish the glorious experience of Imabari to four Lakelanders who visited Shikoku Island ten days in late June and early July.



Authorized by Sister Cities International in DC and funded through the Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnerships, this trip allowed the delegates to spend time in Imabari learning about traditional arts, the Japanese language, teaching English and examining potential areas for future economic interests. The two cities have had a revered high school exchange fifteen years; this project was designed to add new layers to the relationship. Lakeland was one of 7 US cities selected by the national office to participate.

Participating were: Dana Kelly, a 35 year teacher and 21 year LSCI member, Rocky Bridges, 19 year high school arts teacher & Polk Museum of Arts board member, Beatty Raymond, Polk Museum of Art docent and master gardener, and Richard Garzarelli, a Japanese Studies graduate of GW University working on a masters in business/tourism.

Thanks to the tremendous talent, support, generosity, and care by ICIEA, eight host families, many teachers and tour guides, and all the citizens of Imabari, their goals were exceeded. Long-lasting memories will be cherished and Lakeland citizens will be enriched as a result of the team's learning.

They were immersed in the arts with hands-on les-

sons in oshie, haiga, ikebana, kawara pottery, sushi making and towel hand-weaving from gifted artists. They traveled to breathtaking museums on nearby islands where they were enthralled with contemporary art & architecture and immersed in traditional and historical famous works. They enjoyed a calligraphy exhibit at the Kono Museum of Art.



They were enchanted with a sumo wrestler act with an invisible opponent, enjoyed school children sharing music and dance, were hypnotized by the many and varied delicious dishes and eating experiences and enjoyed a karaoke evening. They went fishing on the sea and ate their fresh catch. They learned at every turn.

Host family experiences allowed further art ventures, from a Sunday Market and Puppet Theatre to Buddhist Temples & Shinto Shrines. Some tried karate, went caving, practiced origami, observed a tea ceremony, kimono shopped or enjoyed sounds of the shimasen and the taiko. They enjoyed quiet walks on beautiful rice field-lined streets and admired many gardens. Even the grocery stores provided art to appreciate and photo shots. They toured a towel company, a seasoning factory, antique shops and 100 yen stores to learn more about the culture from everyday life.

As always, the most treasured memories come in the form of touches to the hearts offered by the many thoughtful and gracious people of Imabari. New friendships were born. Inspired, they are now busy "translating" their experiences into tangible action for Lakeland citizens. Stay tuned!



# JOIN OUR SISTER CITIES ACTIVITIES!



## JAMAICAN INDEPENDENCE BALL 50th ANNIVERSARY PARTY!

Please join the Jamaican-American Association and LSCI, Saturday, August 11, 2012 at 7:30 pm at St. Joseph's Academy Hall for the Jamaican Independence Ball. Tickets are \$50. Dress is "festive formal". The *Azwon Reggae Band* will provide the music. A buffet dinner of traditional Jamaican dishes like curried goat, oxtail stew and festival bread will be served. Door prizes include a Weekend for Two at a Montego Bay, Jamaica hotel.

Lakeland is helping Jamaica celebrate their 50th year of Independence, emancipated from the UK in 1962.

Special Jamaican guest Mayor George Lee and his wife Aneita will attend. Mayor Lee is newly elected to the Council of Portmore, our sister city, since March 2012. It is his second term, having been mayor there when it first incorporated, 2003-2007. (He will tour Lakeland while here.)

Dundee's new mayor, of Jamaican heritage, also plans to attend, along with many other special guests. Warren Robinson, LSCI and the Jamaican-American Society have had wonderful sponsor support and have been working very hard to make the annual Jamaican Independence Ball a special memorable experience. Profits will serve educational purposes between Portmore and Lakeland. Thank you for supporting this work with our sister city and enjoying the Jamaican culture. Contact Warren's phone 327-2034, e-mail [wrobinson62@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:wrobinson62@tampabay.rr.com) if you need more information. It promises to be a very special evening.

## IMABARI STUDENTS COMING SOON!

High school students from seven Imabari high schools competed for the honor to visit Lakeland in August and will arrive with chaperones August 14-24 to live and learn the American culture. The ten day experience is choreographed by Imabari Chair, Pam Garzarelli and her committee.

The 13 students will live with host families, tour Lakeland, visit DisneyWorld, the Kennedy Center and other activities. The adult chaperones are City Officials Hiroshi Yamamoto and Sawako Sasama and English teacher Nobuko Kamimura.

More help is needed! Please volunteer with this wonderful experience. Contact Pam soon! You'll remember this forever.....



## PRESIDENT VERPLANCK SAYS....

It seems that the Imabari exchange is our biggest news this summer. Coming up we have more Imabari activity with the August visit by Imabari students & chaperones.

On another front, the Board of Directors held a special meeting June 11, 2012 to consider a request from Eddie Hall, a retired Publix employee, to consider pursuing a Sister City relationship with Babahoyo, Ecuador. Eddie's spouse is from Ecuador and he owns a home in Babahoyo, located at the foot of the Andes Mountains. The city's population is about 150,000 and is the center of a fertile agricultural region 50 miles east of Guayaquil, Ecuador's largest city. The area exports large quantities of fruits, vegetables and seafood to the United States.

Eddie has been communicating with Babahoyo officials and officials of the Federal government and he reports that they are interested in establishing a relationship with Lakeland. Eddie also reports that he has discussed this subject with several Lakeland area residents who have an interest in serving on a local committee.

The Board authorized Eddie to continue discussions with Babahoyo officials and assuming they remain interested it is anticipated that a delegation from Lakeland will visit Babahoyo in the fall.

*Sincerely, Jim*



## KIDS' BIKE MURAL SHIPPED TO IMABARI

The Imabari Exchange Association has informed us that the Lakeland "Bike Safety" mural has arrived safely, looks great and is ready for display. The mural was a project directed by *Platform Art* with Lakeland students, and hung in Lakeland City Hall prior to going to Imabari, Japan.

**BELOW.** Lakeland delegates Rocky Bridges, Richard Garzarelli, Beatty Raymond & Dana Kelly met with the Imabari exchange students at a BBQ and during an English class they provided in July.





# **TWO EXCITING INVITATIONS FOR YOU—NATIONAL, STATE**



## **WANT TO ATTEND INAUGURAL BALL?**

Sister Cities International is hosting its first Inaugural Ball in Washington, DC on January 17, 2013 for \$250 a ticket. They were the first organization to go on the inaugural calendar of the newly elected president! This is an organization fundraiser. Please see their website to purchase tickets and keep us posted if you go!

This is a great opportunity to meet the President and represent Sister Cities.

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## **Think globally Act locally**

(The new national Sister Cities motto.)

## **YOU'RE INVITED SEPTEMBER 21**

The Foreign Service Retirees Association will hold their annual Florida state conference in Lakeland in September and have invited LSCI members to join their September 21 International Day of Peace lunch at Eaglebrooke Country Club by RSVP only. Please let Carol Hoffman (rosycaroL1@juno.com) know of your interest in attending so that you can be placed on their guest list.

Retired marine colonel and current city commissioner Don Selvage will keynote the luncheon.

The US Foreign Service began in 1924 and is made up of four major agencies: USAID, Departments of State, Commerce & Agriculture (though CIA, United Nations, Peace Corp, the Military and others play a part).



## **2012 LSCI Governing Board**

### **OFFICERS**

Jim Verplanck, President  
Al Dotson, Vice-President  
Carol Hoffman, Exec Director  
Laura Verplanck, Treasurer

jimverplanck@aol.com  
amdotson@hotmail.com  
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### **CITY CHAIRPERSONS**

Richmond Hill Gordon Grove  
Imabari Pam Garzarelli  
Portmore Warren Robinson  
Chongming Robert Lee  
Balti Greg Spirakis &  
Steve Thomas

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### **AD HOC COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

Maggie Miller, Scholarship  
John Philbrook, Membership  
Dana K. Kelly, Special Projects  
Deanna Ashe, Youth

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kellyd8955@hotmail.com  
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### **LIAISONS**

J. Johnson, Chamber of Commerce  
Justin Troller, City Commission  
Tom Shaw, Ambassador

jackiej@lakelandchamber.com  
justin.troller@lakelandgov.net  
inezshaw@aol.com



Board Meetings are open to the membership to observe.

The next General Meeting is in September. If you're a current paid LSCI member you will receive notice of meetings and activities via email. This newsletter is distributed quarterly.

Please consider joining a committee and participating actively with the group. We welcome your efforts and ideas!

# NATIONAL ORG NEWS

## JAX HOSTED NATIONAL CONFERENCE

The 56th annual national conference was held July 12-14 in Jacksonville with Dana Kelly attending for Lakeland. Her notes are available to the interested.



John McVay and Trae Holland from ECON, and Jim Verplanck were special panel guests in the Economic Development strand Thursday, sharing their experiences as a trade delegation with Chongming Island, contracting to build East Bay Water World over 5 years for over a billion dollars.

Kelly met with SCI President/CEO Mary Kane and an officer of the Japan Foundation Center (Ranay Loper) to share the benefits of and appreciation for the Center's funding of the recent Lakeland project travel to Imabari. Next year's conference is July 11-13 in San Antonio and will include a Summit for the participating Japanese cities in the funding exchange.

## FL STATE COORDINATOR RECOGNIZED

Florida State Sister Cities Coordinator Cris Boehler was recognized with the Dick Oakland Award 2012 at the Sister Cities International Conference in July. This award is given by her peer state coordinators across the nation for outstanding performance as a state coordinator. Congratulations, Cris! Cris has been the state coordinator five years. This award has come to Florida twice, also earned by Pat Buchanan of Lakeland when she was state coordinator, in 2003.

## LSCI PARTICIPATION CALENDAR

|                 |                                      |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------|
| Aug 9-13, 2012  | Portmore Mayor Lee in Lakeland       |
| Aug 11, 2012    | Jamaican Independence Ball, Lakeland |
| Aug 14-24       | Imabari Students in Lakeland         |
| Sep 21          | Foreign Service Lunch, Eaglebrooke   |
| Fall 2012       | Exploratory trip to Ecuador?         |
| Jan 17, 2013    | SCI Inaugural Ball, DC               |
| Jul 11-13, 2013 | National SCI Conference, San Antonio |
| TBD 2013        | Florida State Conference, Sarasota   |



## THINK GLOBALLY, THRIVE LOCALLY NEW BRANDING FOR SCI

In order to better promote the work of its members, *Sister Cities International* launched a new logo, tagline and website.

A fresh and modern brand will enhance communications outreach and increase the ability to share the power of sister cities networks with the entire world.

The new logo symbolizes connectivity with the crisscrossing lines on the globe representing the wide spectrum of member connections. The tagline, "Connect Globally. Thrive Locally." encapsulates the essence of the work of the members in connecting communities globally for beneficial relationships.



## NATIONAL SISTER CITIES WEBSITE

<http://www.sister-cities.org/>  
 "LIKE" them on Facebook  
 Follow them on Twitter  
 Follow them on LinkedIn.com  
 Search them on Pinterest.com

## LOCAL CONTACT INFORMATION

**Jim Verplanck, President, 899-4782 or 646-2426**

<http://www.lakelandgov.net/CityGovernment/SisterCities.aspx>

(from the city's home page click City Commission tab. Sister Cities is on the left navigation on the Commission page.)

**BELOW.** Yurii Lobelev, Moldova liaison, sent a photo of local children with their new ping pong table & supplies, provided by Santa Fe Catholic High School donations last year.

