

# Arlington-Nagaokakyo Sister City Student Exchange Program

- Learn about our Sister City, Nagaokakyo
- Students' experiences from 2009 exchange visits
- 25th anniversary celebration in Arlington and Nagaokakyo

## Our Sister City, Nagaokakyo, JAPAN



The City of Nagaokakyo (長岡京) is located in southern Kyoto prefecture, central Honshu, between the cities of Osaka and Kyoto.

Principal industries are machinery and electrical appliances. Nagaokakyo's 79,464 people live in 7.4 square miles. Nearly 10% of population is over age 65 and 25% is under age 20.

People have lived in this quiet, gentle, calm weathered Nagaokakyo for approximately 20,000 years. Many old tombs were built around 300 A.D., and several shrines were built in the following centuries. Buddhism temples were built during the introduction of Buddhism in the 6th century. Emperor Kanmu built the capital of Nagaokakyo (hence the name of the town now) in 784 and it remained as the capital until 794, when Kyoto city became the new capital.

The "Kyo" (京) in Nagaokakyo recognizes the city's status as the former capital.



## The Friendship between Arlington and Nagaokakyo

The friendship between the two communities began in the 1970s. Groups of citizens from Arlington visited Nagaokakyo every year, and groups of citizens from Nagaokakyo have also visited Arlington frequently through the 1980s and 1990s. Arlington and Nagaokakyo signed a formal Sister City Agreement in 1984.

The student exchange program started in Spring of 2005, and we now send our students group to Nagaokakyo in July, and Nagaokakyo students visit Arlington at the end of April.



**Cherry Blossom  
in Shoryuji Castle Park**

In 2009 spring, Mayor Oda of Nagaokakyo and his delegation visited Arlington with 16 students to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the friendship between the two communities. The Board of Selectmen voted to create a committee to strengthen our friendship and keep our exchange program strong so that many more youth of both towns will benefit from for many more years to come.

# Arlington-Nagaokakyo Sister City



The Students of Nagaokakyo have visited Arlington during "The Golden Week" in Japan from at the end of April since 2005.



Nagaokakyo Mayor Yutaka Oda and Arlington Selectman Kevin Greeley planted the commemorative cherry tree at the Town Hall garden on April 26, 2009. The Mayor Oda visited Arlington with the students and the citizens group to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Sister City Relationship.

## What did Nagaokakyo students learn in Arlington?

~From their essays after 2009 visit

### Taro Munakata

During the stay, I slowly realized that it is actually kind and considerate to others to be clear about what you want in American way. It is easy for others to make a plan if they know what your wish is. In Japan, we consider that kind of attitude to be selfish, but I think this is the interesting difference between the cultures of Japan and US. And despite the difference, both culture value the attitude to consider others and not being selfish, which is the universal.

### Arisa Tsuji

This visit is not over. I will grow and come back to Arlington. I want to show the people of Arlington how I grew and improved. I feel that this trip was the first big step towards my dream.

### Kanami Kuno

When we left Arlington, my host family gave me a lucky penny and told me to give it back to them when I return to Arlington again. I will definitely come back! I will study English hard. I will grow up as a person and I will come back to return this penny! And I hope that I'll be able to tell them how we, Japanese treasure the connection between people as well as they do in Arlington.

## *Arlington BOS chairman Kevin Greeley will visit Nagaokakyo in November 2009*

Kevin Greeley, the chairman of Board of Selectmen of Arlington will lead the group of Arlington citizens and the supporter of the Sister City Exchange Program to visit Nagaokakyo to celebrate our 25th anniversary during the annual Galatia Festival in Nagaokakyo on November 8, 2009. This visit reciprocates the earlier visit by the mayor in April. Both visits strengthen the friendship between the two communities.

## The Experience of hosting the students by Cindy Starks

Cindy Starks, one of the host families for 2008 Nagaokakyo Students visit wrote a wonderful essay about her experience for “The Neighborhood Newsletter” Here’s some excerpts:

“My family was fortunate enough to be one of the many families hosting students from our sister city of Nagaokakyo, Japan this April. It was an experience that I am sure Saki (our exchange student) and none of us will soon forget. Not only did we learn a lot, but we also made friendships that I hope will last a lifetime.”

“On the day that Saki and the other students left, there was not a dry eye among us. We were all sad to see her go, although very happy for the time we had with her. We learned that we all have much to learn and much to teach. We are already committed to visiting Saki in Japan next summer and as a family we have vowed not to go until we know a bit more Japanese!”

### *Experience a little piece of Japan at home*

“Hosting a visitor from Japan has been one of the most interesting and rewarding things our family has ever done. “

Experience a little piece of Japan at your home! Nagaokakyo Students will be visiting Arlington again from April 24 to May 2, 2010. Hosting these students is one of the best way to help strengthen the friendship between two communities and deepen understanding between different cultures. You will develop the friendship for life beyond the barrier of language and thousands of miles.

The more details of hosting will be announced from each Arlington public schools in October. If you are already interested, please feel free to contact Rieko Tanaka at [riekopiano@gmail.com](mailto:riekopiano@gmail.com).



APS students enjoying water polo at Otokuni High School in Nagaokakyo during their visit in 2009.



APS students and teachers with School Committee member Cindy Starks at Golden Pavilion in Kyoto during their visit to Nagaokakyo



Nagaokakyo students broke into tears at the farewell party with their host families.

# *The Arlington Students visit to Nagaokakyo*

## *July 7 - July 18, 2010*

### *The Experiences of 2009 Visit to Nagaokakyo*

- Nagaokakyo was an amazingly breathtaking place! I loved every minute of the nine days I spent there, and I wished I could spend longer; the people I met there and the memories I made with them will never be replaced. (Shaira Ali)
- The sites we visited were the most beautiful places I have ever seen, especially the Buddhist temple. The decorations were very intricate and just amazing. I just loved it so much. (Rita Kambil)
- I learned that even with language barriers, you can communicate and share cultures with many people from different parts of the world. Quickly sketching an object in a notebook can be a good way to communicate things you don't know how to say. Everyone was kind and accepting, and helpful as they could be. (Louise Tanner)
- For one so small, Japan is an astounding place. The temples, the shopping, the ceremonies, and, did I mention the shopping? Yeah, that's Japan for you. My idea of heaven. (Jasmina Coggins)
- Every culture is different. But everywhere, you discover that overall, the human race is bonded. (Abigail Fowler)
- My stay in Japan has been one of the best things of my life, and it always makes me feel good to know that I have friends in another country. Someday, I will return, and I will meet all my friends again. (Robert Harrelson)
- As I reflect on my experience, it is inspiring to think about all the other bonds that have been established between the two cultures over the past 25 years of this sister city exchange program. (Olivia Tysson)
- The time I spent in Japan this summer was truly amazing. It really opened my eyes to the differences and similarities between Arlington and Nagaokakako. It was a wonderful experience only enhanced by our host family who we got to know very well during our stay. (Morgam Hopeman)
- For me, this experience was a defining piece of my cultural immersion in Japan, which will stay with me for years to come. (Holly Everett)
- The experience becomes so much more special and valuable if you try as many different things as you can. For then you will experience Japanese culture first hand as if you were part of a Japanese family. (Christian Fischer)
- We really had great fun the whole trip, and I will always miss my family in Japan. However exhausted we all were at the end of the trip, I wouldn't trade this experience for anything. (Jeremy Fischer)
- I think that Arlington and Nagaokakyo can learn from each other. Both cities have things that the other doesn't. To help this program we should get students more interested in learning about different cultures. Many different things I learned in Japan that I can carry in my everyday life, is that we should be more open to different ways of thinking and life styles. Also that going away from home can help you learn more about yourself. (Manon Jean)
- Perhaps what I will remember most about this trip is the hospitable personalities of the host families and citizens of Japan. (Laura Meadows)

**The group of Arlington students from Ottoson Middle School and Arlington High School will visit Nagaokakyo on July 7 - July 18 in 2010. They will stay with the host families of Nagaokakyo and visit the City Hall, schools, temples, shrines, and surrounding cities of Kyoto and Osaka during their trip. The details about application and selection process will be announced in October at Ottoson and Arlington High School. Stay tuned!**

To learn more about Arlington-Nagaokakyo Sister City Student Exchange Program, please email : [riekopiano@gmail.com](mailto:riekopiano@gmail.com)