



# The Dispatch

Monthly News From Neighbors Abroad

## The Dispatch -- March 2019

Welcome to The Dispatch, a monthly newsletter from Neighbors Abroad of Palo Alto. The Dispatch brings current news from our sister cities, and their connections to Palo Alto.

We are in the midst of our 2019 membership campaign, if you have not renewed or joined, please do so now at our [membership page](#). Our 2019 has over \$50,000 budget toward programs of student exchange, children's programs and welcoming international travelers to Palo Alto.

[Renew Your Membership](#)



## Summer Ambassadors and Computers

Please help us find high school students to serve as Summer Ambassadors. The summer exchange to introduce diplomacy with member Evan Reade formerly of the State Department planning to visit with students. We will provide students with a commendation as a Student Ambassador. Please help us find candidates with details on this [link](#).

The City of Palo Alto has donated 70 surplus laptops. Neighbors Abroad with the support of Microsoft has become a certified refurbisher. The computers will be distributed to numerous charities in Oaxaca with a focus on children. We have been working with Todd Henderson in the City of Palo Alto IT department along with our local Oaxaca Committee member Sarah Burgess. We are anticipating the support from the Kiwanis as we get ready to ship.



## Children's Library In Transition

We became alarmed that the Children's Library has been padlocked! With the 25 year lease ending for the Palo Children's library we are in a period of transition to a new children's library facility. The Giants working with the current owner have gained a reprieve. A new children's library is under construction with plans for an interim library. At time like this Palo seems far away. While the loss of the original library is a setback, all parties in Palo seem aligned to recreate the library. Our annual provision for the librarians, scholarships and provisions will continue.

Members Beatrice Duran and Ruth Carleton have been developing a STEAM program in Palo - Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. STEAM program aims to excite and educate the young and the aging through hands-on experiential learning materials like pop-up books, do it yourself science kits, games, puzzles, 3D posters, toys that teach, etc. In general, the goal is to help increase public understanding of science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics. Now the STEAM has no budget, but given this news, we should anticipate support from Neighbors Abroad going forward. Often many initiatives begin by individual generosity, and we are grateful for their contributions!



## Linköping Sweden

### Sustainability Conference in April

Our sister cities are talking sustainability and plan a first exchange on April 16. The web conference will allow the sister cities of Linköping, Enschede, Heidelberg and Oaxaca to share three sustainability successes and three sustainability challenges. Kerstin Reimstad of Linköping has been leading this, and the outcome will be shared with the members. Watch our calendar on the web for details.



## Tsuchiura Japan

### Welcoming Students, A Marathon Runner and a Tenth Anniversary

The annual Tsuchiura student exchange is in full swing now. We are excited to be hosting 16 Tsuchiura middle school students again this year between March 16-24. This year marks the 10th anniversary of our sister city relationship and the 24th year of this wonderful student exchange program. Palo Alto students will travel to Japan June 4-16 to stay with their buddies in Tsuchiura.

Next month, Palo Alto sends a very special one-man delegation to Japan: Hobe's former president and co-owner [Edward Gerard Fike](#) will represent Palo Alto and run the Tsuchiura marathon. Hobe's generously hosted all the exchange students for a wonderful meal.

In October we are working on our tenth anniversary celebration in Tsuchiura. More details will be forthcoming, We are hopeful for representatives both from Neighbors Abroad and council representatives.

## Yangpu District Shanghai China

### Palo Alto Students Travel to Shanghai

On March 29, 2019, nine Palo Alto students and their parents will travel to Shanghai, China. The students are current or alumni students from Ohlone Elementary School's Mandarin Immersion Program and Greene Middle School's Mandarin Bridge Program -- both programs are offerings of the Palo Alto Unified School District. The traveling group includes students currently in elementary, middle and high school. All the students have learned Mandarin language and cross-cultural studies through the Palo Alto public schools and are eager to apply their language skills and classroom learning toward establishing friendships with their Chinese counterparts.

The traveling group's first stop will be to Yangpu District, Shanghai. The students will carry messages of good-will and best wishes from the City of Palo Alto to their new sister city Yangpu District. The students and parents are looking forward to learning more about Yangpu's education and technology environment. Neighbors Abroad is facilitating arrangements for the group to visit an idea lab and a local school. For many of the American students, it's their first experience of the vibrancy of Shanghai. The student group will continue traveling the rest of the week to visit additional schools in the Zhejiang Province.

Students from Ohlone Elementary School's Mandarin Immersion program in years prior have made two trips already to China in order to visit schools. Often, in meetings with Chinese educators and students, the American students find that their Chinese counterparts are curious and inquisitive about American school life and, particularly, about Ohlone's unique teaching practices (characterized by multi-age classrooms; developmental approach to teaching and learning; project-based curriculum; and emphasis on whole child growth). The Chinese students find the Ohlone Farm of great interest, and the Chinese educators and parents often ask questions about the American education system and about the Bay Area and California. The American students have seen first hand the large-scale modernity and advancements, population density and fascinating cultural aspects of China. Friendships made between families during those trips have resulted in visits by Chinese students during the summers, as well as subsequent return visits by the American families.

It is the hope of the traveling families that the relationships created on these short-term trips will translate to deeper future ties, from which each learns from the other of the commonalities that we share and the differences that enrich our world.



## Welcoming Students and a Tenth Anniversary

This summer marks the sixth music and cultural

exchange between the Palo Alto's Aurora Singers and the Chorale Assou Lezert of Albi. In July, a group of 32 singers plus family members will come to Palo Alto and join the Aurora Singers for a 10-day tour of Northern California, including concerts, wine tasting and home stays with Palo Alto Host families. The group arrives Saturday, July 13, and will meet their host families at a simple reception. We have scheduled an official welcome with the City of Palo Alto to kick off the week before the group heads out to Sacramento and Napa, including touring and concerts. Back in Palo Alto, the groups will perform jointly on Sunday, July 21, at the Portola Valley Church. Mark your calendars for the 7pm concert (tickets at the door).

This music exchange first started through Neighbors Abroad, and has been sustained directly by the two choral groups. The Chorale Assou Lezert was here in 2001 and 2005, and Palo Alto's Aurora Singers have travelled 3 times to Albi, in 2002, 2007, 2016. Neighbors Abroad and the City of Palo Alto are pleased to support the ongoing series of cultural exchange. Please contact [leemerkleraymond@gmail.com](mailto:leemerkleraymond@gmail.com) if you can help or attend the July 13 evening welcome celebration. Also, plan to attend the joint concert on July 21st at Valley Presbyterian Church (945 Portola Rd, time TBD).

And we close with news that City Council Member Liz Kniss has reconnected with the local officials of Albi. We had a multi year lapse in communication, and now communication has been restored. Liz spoke with Marie-Eve Cortés's, director of international affairs (she is also the director of culture and heritage. She anticipates a visit in July.



## Checkout the Neighbors Abroad Shop

Finally, you can add to your wardrobe with Neighbors Abroad threads. Lynn Grant created a fresh Neighbors Abroad logo that now adorns shirts, sweatshirts and bags. Each garment brings a small contribution to Neighbors Abroad and the children's programs.



## Neighbors Abroad

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