



Welcome to *The Dispatch*, Neighbors Abroad's regular round up of our projects around the world and within our community. In this final edition of 2022, we:

- Remember a legendary member of the Neighbors Abroad family, Barbara Evans, who passed away on September 2.
- Invite you to donate to our [annual holiday appeal](#) benefitting children in Oaxaca, Mexico, and Palo, Leyte, the Philippines.
- Report on a whirlwind of delegations to and from Palo Alto over the last several months, including Bloomington's and Oaxaca's visits to our city. We share news about our own delegations to Linköping, Sweden, and Palo, Leyte, the Philippines (pictured above is Neighbors Abroad President Bob Wenzlau with young friends in Palo). Our Tsuchiura VP paid a long-awaited visit to our Japanese Sister City as soon as the country started opening up to foreign visitors. We also report on Palo Alto Mayor Pat Burt's summer swing through Europe.
- Provide a recap on Neighbor's Abroad's International Festival, which brought a global vibe to City Hall in late August and coincided with the unveiling of a beautiful new Sister and Sibling City sign.

- Introduce Albi, France's new government liaison to Palo Alto and report on various projects with our French Sister City, including a teen pen pal initiative.
- Proudly relay news of an award we received in recognition of our work on Phase I of our groundbreaking water project near our Mexican Sister City.
- Reveal the winner of the hard-fought virtual tennis match between Palo Alto's and Heidelberg's mayors.

In Memoriam: Barbara Evans



We are sad to share that past president and longtime member Barbara Evans passed away on September 2, 2022.

Barbara and her husband Joe joined Neighbors Abroad in 1998. It did not take long for Barbara to make an indelible mark on the organization. She enthusiastically committed herself to a

wide array of Sister City committees, board meetings, fundraisers, delegation visits, and exchange programs.

Barbara was a formidable leader: In 2007, when Neighbors Abroad lacked a clear candidate to lead the organization, Barbara and Joe stepped up to become co-presidents. As Barbara noted in a 2016 edition of Neighbors Abroad's newsletter, the "interim" position ended up lasting nine years!

We honor Barbara's lasting contributions to Neighbors Abroad. She leaves a legacy of leadership, advocacy, and selfless dedication. The photo above was published in 2013 by the *Palo Alto Weekly* to coincide with our 50th anniversary. It captures Barbara as we will all remember her: Focused, energized, and eager to spread Neighbors Abroad's mission to foster lasting friendships across borders.

In April 2023, we will honor Barbara's legacy when a brass band from Linköping comes to Palo Alto for a long-delayed concert that she helped to organize. Stay tuned for more information about this free cultural event to be dedicated to Barbara. We also will plant a tree in Barbara's memory.

We extend our heartfelt condolences to Joe and the entire Evans family.

Happy Holidays!



As we move into the holiday season, we want to remind Neighbors Abroad's dues-paying members about our holiday party on December 11. All members should have received an invitation by email. If you did not receive one, or are unsure whether you are a current member, please contact mschreiber@neighborsabroad.org

As in past years, we invite you to take a moment to make an easy, online, tax-deductible donation to the [Neighbors Abroad Holiday Children's Fund](#), which provides funding for life-changing programs in Oaxaca, Mexico, and Palo, Leyte, the Philippines.

In Oaxaca, your donations fund a number of critical projects, including the Albergue Josefina, an orphanage that we have supported for decades; El Centro Calpulli, a learning center and children's rights group; and our childhood nutrition partner Vidas y Sueños.

In Palo, donations support various efforts, including our Children's Library, the only public library in the region; and the Scholar's Program, which, since 1968, has graduated more than 70 young people, most of whom have gone on to careers in education.

Delegations on the Move

Since the summer, Neighbors Abroad hosted delegations from Oaxaca, Mexico, and Bloomington, Indiana (Mayors John Hamilton and Pat Burt pictured during Bloomington's recent visit to Palo Alto). In coordination with the City of Palo Alto, we also sent our own groups on impactful visits to Linköping, Sweden; Palo, Leyte,



the Philippines, and Tsuchiura, Japan. In addition, Mayor Burt visited three of Palo Alto's European Sister Cities this summer, joining up with the Linköping delegation and also visiting Heidelberg, Germany, and Enschede, the Netherlands.

While we made the most of Zoom during the height of the pandemic, the past year has offered ample evidence that the most enduring connections, ideas, and shared goals emerge from on-the-ground, in-person visits with our Sister and Sibling City counterparts.

The following are brief reports on each of the delegations:

Oaxaca Delegation Comes to Talk Sustainability, Attend Festival



In late August, Oaxaca city officials and Sister City committee members made the trip from our Mexican Sister City for a visit that coincided with Neighbors Abroad's International Festival and new Sister City sign unveiling (scroll down to read our report on these events).

The trip was led by Presidente Municipal de Oaxaca de Juárez Francisco Martínez Neri (pictured above, at the Peninsula Creamery, with María Guadalupe Hernández de Vargas, President of the Comite of Oaxaca/Palo Alto). The group had meetings with Palo Alto councilmembers and others on a host of issues around recycling, garbage disposal, composting, and wastewater. They also visited Gunn High School, Stanford University, and the local Ronald McDonald House. Receptions and social gatherings included an evening party at the home of Oaxaca VP Sarah Burgess. Delegation members had the opportunity to network with representatives of the local Mexican Consulate.

Bloomington, Palo Alto Mark First Year as Sibling Cities



Over the second weekend in November, Palo Alto city officials, Sibling Cities USA, Neighbors Abroad, and Palo Alto's two Rotary Clubs hosted a delegation from Sibling City, Bloomington, Indiana. The three days of events, conversations, planning sessions, and receptions capped the first year of the dynamic Palo Alto-Bloomington relationship.

Charlie Weidanz, president of the Palo Alto Chamber of Commerce, hosted Bloomington Mayor John Hamilton, arts director Holly Warren, Vice Mayor Don Griffin, economics director Alex Crowley and others for a walk down University Avenue from the Chamber offices to City Hall, where they were greeted by City Manager Ed Shikada and Steve Guagliardo, economic development lead, and other business representatives for a roundtable discussion about economic development.

The next day, Sibling Cities USA founder Vicki Veenker (pictured)—who recently was elected to the Palo Alto City Council—hosted a discussion about civil discourse with a number of participants, including PAU Rotary Committee Head Bob Barrett and Palo Alto Human Relations chair Pastor Kaloma Smith. The group also enjoyed a tour of, and lunch at, the Palo Alto Art Center, hosted by Neighbors Abroad's Andie Reed (pictured at top). The group was treated to a tour of Stanford University before some of the delegates participated in a Climate Collaboration Summit at Gunn High School, with Department of Energy Assistant Secretary Dr. Ali Nouri and State Representative Josh Becker, among others.



The local Indiana University Alumni Association leveraged the occasion to host a standing-room-only reception at Il Fornaio, followed by a concert at the First United Methodist Church by Indiana University's Onia String Quartet.

Palo Alto Mayor Pat Burt Visits Three European Sister Cities



In June, Linköping Vice President Ed Fike enjoyed his first trip to Palo Alto's Swedish Sister City. Ed and his husband, Bill Jeffrey, met with city officials, local business leaders, and faculty from the renowned Linköping University. Palo Alto Mayor Pat Burt and his wife, Sally Bemus, joined the delegation as part of their three-Sister City tour.

Led by Daniel Stendahl from the city's Department of International Relations, the Linköping team provided a comprehensive introduction to their lovely city. Trip highlights included visits to Gamla Linköping, an open-air museum which faithfully recreates Swedish life from 100 years ago; the superb Passagen modern art gallery; the Linköping Science Park, an incubator for innovative Nordic companies; and Vallastaden, a sustainability-focused urban planning project incorporating the varied styles of 40 architects.

At City Hall, the group met with Mayor Lars Vikinge on climate change initiatives and other topics (group pictured above). Mayor Vikinge expertly escorted the Californians through the majestic Linköping Cathedral, one of Europe's largest Gothic cathedrals. Later that evening, the group gathered for a farewell dinner at local favorite Stånga Magasin. With Palo Alto and Linköping marking 35 years as Sister Cities, the mayors pledged to continue the strong bond between the

municipalities. Before departing the restaurant just after 11:00 p.m. – with the Midnight Sun still shining – Mayor Burt and Ed issued an enthusiastic invitation to their hosts to visit Palo Alto during 2023.

In August, Neighbors Abroad board member Hank Heubach invited Ed to present on the Palo Alto- Linköping relationship to the Kiwanis Club of Palo Alto.



In addition to Linköping, Mayor Burt visited Heidelberg, Germany, and Enschede, the Netherlands, rekindling in-person connections in the three cities. In keeping with one of Palo Alto's and Neighbors Abroad's primary missions, Mayor Burt discussed sustainability initiatives with city leaders on each stop.

In our German Sister City, he was joined by Neighbors Abroad's Heidelberg VP, Jeannet Kiessling (pictured with Mayor Burt and Matthias Lautenschläger, VP of the Palo Alto-Heidelberg Club).

Mayor Burt met with a number of city officials, including Lord Mayor Eckart Würzner and Mayor for Climate Protection Raoul Schmidt-Lamontain. Mayor Burt opened our Art & Sustainability exhibition at Heidelberg City Hall (pictured), presented in cooperation with the Palo Alto-Heidelberg Club. Among other stops, he visited the newly opened Mark Twain Center for Transatlantic Relations.



In Enschede, in addition to various meeting with city officials, he participated in a ceremony honoring the young prize winners from our cross-border Overduin Essay Contest; visited technology company Demcon; toured the *Janninkskwartier*, a new, sustainably developed neighborhood; and visited the University of Twente.

Palo, Leyte, Invites Delegation to Witness Success of Programs

Neighbors Abroad was honored to

organize a delegation to Palo, Leyte, our oldest Sister City, in October 2022. The visit coincided with the anniversary of the historic landing of General MacArthur in Leyte Gulf during World War II.



The primary focus of the trip was a review of the many long-running, highly impactful projects Neighbors Abroad is sponsoring in Palo, including the Children's Library, the only public library in the region. Our delegation also toured day care centers supported by Neighbors Abroad and learned about the successes of a new vocational training program for high school seniors, as well as a long-running scholarship program for deserving university students.

Among other activities, the group enjoyed a festive parade, art exhibits, the grand opening of the Eastern Visayas Science Centrum, and various celebrations marking the 78th anniversary of MacArthur's landing in Leyte Gulf. The group was touched by the warm hospitality of their hosts, who included Mayor Remedios "Matin" Petilla and other city officials.

Members of the delegation included Palo VPs Ellen Valentine and Betty Duran and Neighbors Abroad President Bob Wenzlau, along with Palo Committee members Nodelyn and Douglas Smith and Evelyn Shimazaki.

Your tax-deductible [donation to our holiday](#) fund helps us continue our important programs in Palo.



Tsuchiura Relationship Invigorated by VP Visit

While the long-running Tsuchiura-Palo Alto middle school exchange program remains on hold due to continued heightened COVID protocols in Japan, the relationship between our cities was energized by VP Jennifer Buenrostro's October

2022 visit to Tsuchiura, along with her husband, Peter (pictured below with Tsuchiura Mayor Mariko Ando).

Jennifer and Peter spent several days meeting with city officials, including Mayor Ando, city staff, city council members, as well as board members from the Tsuchiura International Association. They exchanged many ideas about future teen, adult, and teacher exchange programs, as well as other ways to collaborate.

Japan only recently began to welcome foreigners into the country after almost three years of COVID-related closure to tourists and most other visitors. However, COVID countermeasures are still being strictly enforced throughout Japan.



Summer Fun: An International Festival and Sign Unveiling Enliven King Plaza

On August 27, Neighbors Abroad took over City Hall's King Plaza for a full day of fun and festivities, starting with an International Festival that coincided with downtown Palo Alto's Festival of the Arts.

The family-friendly event included international music, a Filipino stick fighting demonstration, informational booths, food trucks, and activities for children. We had an enjoyable afternoon showcasing Neighbors Abroad's many passions and projects and were delighted to have some festival attendees join us as members.



In the afternoon, Mayor Pat Burt and other city officials joined us to unveil a new Sister and Sibling City sign. Long a fixture in front of City Hall, with panels pointing in the direction of the far-flung members of our Sister City family, the iconic sign required an update to include our newest family members: Yangpu District, Shanghai, China; and Bloomington, Indiana.

The long-awaited installation was the result of more than a year of collaboration between Neighbors Abroad, Kiwanis Club of Palo Alto, MC Architectural Metal, JT Graphics, and the City of Palo Alto.

Albi and Palo Alto Fostering Teen Connections

This summer, we welcomed the first exchange student from our French Sister City in several years. High school student Alice Caillier, 15, summarized her adventurous month in Palo Alto in [this short Q&A](#). (It can be read in English or French.) Alice is pictured with her host family, Shana and Ivan Ernest and their daughter Sydney. (Fun fact: Sydney, a student at Kehillah Jewish High School, was not only a Neighbors Abroad host sister this summer, she also was one of the winners of our Overduin Essay Contest and the recipient of a trip to our Dutch Sister City, Enschede, next summer.)



Meanwhile, Palo Alto middle school French teachers Jacqueline Kandell (JLS) and Mathilde Lenoir (Fletcher), along with Castilleja School French teacher Lauren Schryver, have partnered with Neighbors Abroad to launch a classroom-to-classroom pen pal initiative with English students in Albi and the nearby town of Gordes. The teachers are pairing students in French classes with their English learner counterparts in France for various writing—and eventually video—projects designed to foster learning of French and English, as well as to create Sister City connections among teens in each city. We will report back on some of the projects as they unfold over the school year.

AlbiMag, the official city publication of the city of Albi, recently ran an article about Palo Alto, along with a [video clip of Palo Alto Mayor Pat Burt](#) discussing the long relationship between our two university towns.

Albi recently announced that Chargée de Missions Carole Barbera will take over the administration of Albi's Sister City relationships. We welcome Carole and look forward to working with her and other members of the Albi city government. Sincere thanks to Karine Hanvey for her years of collaboration with Palo Alto.

Seeking Volunteers to join our Albi Committee!

We are looking for motivated community members to join our Albi Committee. We will be kicking off several fun projects in 2023, including hosting an Albi delegation to Palo Alto. You don't have to speak French (though if you enjoy French wine, that is a plus). Please contact mschreiber@neighborsabroad.org.

Neighbors Abroad Honored for Yaxe Water Project



We are thrilled to announce that Neighbors Abroad has received the Innovation in Humanitarian Assistance Award from Sister Cities International. The honor was given in recognition of our Rainwater Capture Project in the indigenous community of San Nicolás Yaxe, a village near Palo Alto's Sister City of Oaxaca, Mexico.

Employing rainwater capture is a safe, affordable and underutilized means to meet the growing need of those without sufficient access to water. As we have previously reported, the Yaxe project resulted in the installation of 50 water reclamation tanks for use by families who faced daily water insecurity.

Several organizations assisted Neighbors Abroad with this ambitious initiative, including: Vidas y Sueños; the Moises Itzkowich Foundation; Isla Urbanas; and two

service organizations - the North Hunderton Rotary Club and the Palo Alto Kiwanis Club - which raised over \$30,000 to fund the venture. The tireless work of Neighbors Abroad volunteers Bob Wenzlau, Kenneth Sanchez, Flor Sanchez and Sarah Burgess were key to the venture's organization and execution.

Please stay tuned for news about Phase II of this project. We have started to raise funds and will be pushing forward in 2023.

Heidelberg Wins Virtual Tennis Bragging Rights



Who says a vigorous game of tennis can't be played across continents and time zones? Thanks to the Heidelberg Palo Alto Club and Heidelberg-IT, Mayors Würzner and Burt were able to don virtual eyeglasses and go up against each other in a match that almost rivaled the World Cup in terms of international interest (that's our story and we are sticking to it). This time, the win to Heidelberg!

Neighbors Abroad

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