

## **Neighbors Abroad Annual Meeting**

**Community Room, Lucie Stern Community Center**

**1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto**

**Sunday, September 30, 5:00 to 7:00 p.m**

**5:00 Social Time**

**5:30 Supper is served**

**6:00 Brief Meeting for Election of Board of Directors  
and other business.**

**6:15 Program: Neighbors Abroad member Barb  
Mackraz will update us on the Morocco Library Project.**



*Barb Mackraz  
with Fatima  
Zahra Taghlaoui,  
a founding team  
member of the  
Morocco Library  
Project.*

**Please RSVP to Barbara and Joe Evans at 650-856-0618, or  
evansbanjo@sbcglobal.net so we can plan food accordingly.  
See more on the Morocco Library Project inside.**

## President's Report

What forms the connections between our sister cities? People, of course. As I have served Neighbors Abroad, I have been struck with the importance of institutions that bring context to the personal relations. Neighbors Abroad has been evolving, for good and through change, where the institutional anchors tying our sister cities together have been evolving. In our history, the connections may have been through our respective committees in each city—a sister city committee formed by community volunteers—toward institutions like the local government, the school districts, and businesses. While I hold nostalgia and respect for the strength of these earlier sister city committees, I have been relieved to find these new institutions ready to take over as our several volunteer committees have dwindled. The relationships in the past were likely more “fun” as they were filled with adult exchanges and recreation. Recently the shift is to more institutional collaboration with at-work objectives such as education or sustainability. The trade-offs are intriguing. In cities like Enschede and Linköping, our sister city committees lapsed, and only through the rejuvenation of local government relations has the engagement between these cities been restored. The form of the connections has changed from simple community relations to institutional relations. As Heidelberg and Yangpu District of Shanghai have entered into our sister city community, these did not even offer a classic local sister city committee, and instead the connections have been formed solely through city, school and business.

A temptation of connecting via institutions is to go “virtual”—working with Skype, Facebook and other modes of connection. However, a fundamental tenet of being sister cities is the personal face-to-face connections. If you don't meet face-to-face, the bonds of friendship are never truly formed. Having traveled to Yangpu District, and meeting the young students, entrepreneurs and even government officials, I came to know our new sister city in the powerful new light of friendship. In the future we might not have as many of our sister city committees, but as we work through institutions of business, schools and government, we must always assure the visits occur in person, and that meals and laughs are shared. As such sister cities will carry on, more reliant on institutional connections, but always wise to the fact that one must build personal friendships forged by direct contact.

Finally, I wanted to salute several of our board members that have served Neighbors Abroad for many many years. Betty Gerard has supported communication, Jim Newton supported our treasury and Mary Ashley has been the creator of *El Chisme* for countless editions. While Jim and Mary are not quite out the door, it is important to honor their contributions over the years. In that same light Ruth

Carleton and her attention to Palo cannot be unmentioned. I will save some thanks for our next issue—an issue that may take new shape as we necessarily evolve *El Chisme* without Mary's dedication. Towards a new evolving Neighbors Abroad—perhaps the new spirit is reflected in our updated logo. A logo showing eight people symbolic of our eight sister cities spanning the globe. Thanks to Lynn Grant for making this happen.

*Bob Wenzlau*

**September is Membership Renewal Month. Watch for a notice in the mail. You will be able to renew online with a credit card or by return mail with a check. Neighbors Abroad needs your continuing support!**

### MOROCCO LIBRARY PROJECT

At the general meeting, long-time Neighbors Abroad member Barb Mackraz will update us with a talk and video presentation on recent developments with the Morocco Library Project, now part of the OliveSeed Foundation, which was also founded by Barb. The project started with a visit to a high school in Erfoud in Southeast Morocco a few years ago while Barb was touring in Morocco. The school had no library or English language books, but did have students wanting to learn English and a teacher with an after-school English club. Barb decided to help. In her talk she will tell us how the project has grown from that first library in Erfoud to more than 30 libraries, and now has a local team in Morocco working with her to develop even more.

Dear Readers,

I've enjoyed presenting Neighbors Abroad news and activities to you for many years as editor of *El Chisme*, but I have decided it's time for me to retire from newsletter editing and from the Neighbors Abroad Board. The December 2018 issue will be my last. If anyone is interested in the job, I'm happy to show you the ropes.

Mary—meashley@pacbell.net; 650-494-1829

## Palo Alto Mayoral Delegation Visits Newest Sister City—Yangpu of Shanghai

This September Labor Day weekend, Palo Alto Mayor Liz Kniss, City Manager Jim Keene and Neighbors Abroad President Bob Wenzlau with China VP Bing Wei and Assistant to City Manager Chantal Gaines visited Yangpu, Shanghai.

Since the signing ceremony in March at Palo Alto City Hall of the Palo Alto and Yangpu Sister City Agreement, Yangpu has been expecting an exchange visit from Palo Alto to showcase their city.

The Mayor of Yangpu Xie ZhiGang welcomed the delegation with his colleagues from Yangpu's Departments of Education and Commerce, and the Yangpu Foreign Affairs office. They discussed the possible framework of collaborations in high school or college education as well as innovation entrepreneurship-based business training and exchange.

The Palo Alto delegation visited the Number 1 High School affiliated to Tongji University and were impressed by top-notch equipment for Robotics and 3-D printing, as well as the Makers Studio and Media Lab. It was also interesting to tour one of the Community Centers in Yangpu to witness senior care where craft making, calligraphy and ping-pong games were the center of the close-knit and warm neighborhood community.

VMWARE General Manager of Shanghai R&D Center Stephan Hu hosted a dinner and company visit, while the Consul General Sean Stern of the United States Consulate in Shanghai provided a comprehensive briefing on sister cities' important role in today's U.S.-China relationship.

The Delegation also visited Fudan University Innovation and Entrepreneurship Institute where they talked to student entrepreneurs. Another visit to the Shanghai Science and Technology University of Yangpu allowed the Delegation to see the most advanced optical lab on campus.

An interesting meeting with the Shanghai Municipal Environment Protection Bureau shed some light on our shared sustainability and climate change concerns and solutions.

The highlight of the visit was a Palo Alto Delegation reception sponsored by Home Valley and Bay Area Council with a full house of over 70 attendees where Mayor Kniss, City Manager Jim Keene and Neighbors Abroad President Bob Wenzlau and VP for Yangpu Bing Wei all spoke.

With such a packed schedule of intense meetings and events, the Delegation has much take-away to work on the detailed content of Sister City programs to be launched in the near future.

As the Chinese say—the milestone is only the first step of a long march of thousands of miles to come.

**Stay tuned!**

**Bing Wei**



*Mayor Xie ZhiGang is charmed by Mayor Liz Kniss's gift of a Yangpu plaque.*



*US Consul General Sean Stern hosts Palo Alto Delegation at US Consulate of Shanghai*



*Mayor Xie and Mayor Kniss's Delegations*

# TSUCHIURA

The Tsuchiura committee is actively recruiting participants for the 2019 student exchange. Tsuchiura students will visit in March for 10 days, and Palo Alto students will travel to Japan for two weeks in early June 2019. The exchange is for middle-school students who are studying Japanese. The students stay with families, but also do some traveling and sightseeing. The student whose family hosts a visiting student will then stay with that

student's family in Japan. This is a very successful exchange. Next year's program will be the 24th year of this exchange. Please read the reflection below by one of the 2018 students. For more information or questions about the exchange, email or call Jennifer Buenrostro at [sistercity.tsuchiura@gmail.com](mailto:sistercity.tsuchiura@gmail.com) or 650-224-9539 and be sure to let friends and relatives know about this opportunity.

*Jennifer Buenrostro*

## TSUCHIURA EXCHANGE REMEMBRANCE

My impression of Japan is that it's charming. Japan is a country rich with history. A country overflowing with natural and cultural beauty. Tsuchiura reflects all of these qualities. My host student's house was very traditional and her family was very welcoming. They showed me around the city and I fell in love with the comfortable and homey aesthetic. Because I like video games they took me to the arcade and the mall demonstrating the perfect balance of urban and greenery that is Tsuchiura. One of my favorite memories was when I attended school. At first, I was nervous, I was told that Japanese students were ever so studious and tidy. I was scared I would not meet their expectations, but I was pleasantly surprised. The students were loud, loose, and fun loving. Seeing that kids were the same no matter the country was relieving, enabling me to fully enjoy Japanese school life.

Temples are the cathedrals of Japan, grand and full of cultural background. Nikko was my favorite because of its serene location and how it displays Japan's unique architecture. Although the Kinkaku-Ji (the golden temple) and the Ryoan-Ji (the one with the rock garden) are crowded with tourists, they are both worth going to and are truly works of art. The Asakusa temple is huge. It is more like a marketplace where you can buy souvenirs and food for fair prices. Since it is crowded and there is no shade it is very hot, but fortunately, they sell ice cream.

On our way to Kyoto, I quickly discovered the absolute treasure that is vending machines. What really makes the vending machines special, besides the delicious drinks or snacks, was that they are everywhere. This adds to the general charm. I loved our stay in Kyoto, the hotel was culturally unique and surprisingly comfortable since we slept on the floor. The city of Kyoto itself is more urban than expected but overall wonderful. From Kyoto, we went to Himeji Castle and the Deer Island. I especially loved how sneakily Himeji castle was built, the hidden traps how it was near impossible to invade. The Deer Island had the best Okonomiyaki, and some of the most beautiful scenery.

Last, was energetic Tokyo; I personally love busy cities like Tokyo, skyscrapers and neon lights are one of the reasons I love traveling. After seeing a more traditional Japan, we got to discover a different type of culture. Pop culture. When my host family took me to Harajuku I was thrust face first into the youth of Japan, their clothes, and their interests. Although there still is a "kawaii culture" it has died down. According to my host student, American streetwear is the newest trend, all denim, and graphic tees. The anime shop and the arcade was all I could hope for. Busy and full of things I can spend my money on, exactly what I love about cities like Tokyo.

As I waited in the Haneda Airport for the plane to Japan, I was excited and had high expectations for what I was about to experience. And Japan did not disappoint.

—*Michaela Seah,*  
2018 Exchange Student



## ENSCHEDÉ

### Possible Student Exchange

Diederick Van Zuijlen from Enschede is interested in having a student exchange with Palo Alto. He participated in the Neighbors Abroad Palo Alto/Enschede student exchange in 1987, as did with Mary Ashley's daughter Ellen, among others, and wants his 16-year-old daughter to have a similar exchange experience. They have already spoken to several other interested Enschede students.

His proposal is that the exchange be for 15- and 16- year olds. He envisions that students from Palo Alto would travel to Enschede where they would stay with host families for about three weeks. The Enschede "brothers" and "sisters" would then come to Palo Alto for the next three weeks. He had suggested July 1-20 for the first half and July 21 to August 10 for the second part. I thought that perhaps was cutting it pretty close on the start of school here.

I have also commented to Diederick that in the survey done by BEAM students several years ago, two weeks in each city was preferred to a longer stay. In the case of our French or Mexican sister cities, there is some advantage to a longer stay for more exposure to the language, but here there is no language requirement and the Dutch students all speak English. Two weeks might be an easier "sell" to Palo Alto parents and students.

The next step for Neighbors Abroad is for us to identify ways to reach high school students who might be interested in the exchange. At least once in the past we did advertise in the student newspaper, and that is one possibility here. Other suggestions from NA members about possible contacts would be welcome.

All thoughts appreciated. I would love to see an exchange happen!

*Barbara Evans,*  
*evansbanjo@sbcglobal.net or (650) 856-0618*



**neighbors abroad**

**PALO ALTO SISTER CITIES**

## OAXACA



We have heard from our friends in Oaxaca that Sra. Maria del Pilar Zamora passed away on August 6. She was a long-time member of the Comité Ciudad Hermanas and served as president of the committee for many years. She then continued as committee liaison for the fire department exchanges and donations between Palo Alto and Oaxaca. Our condolences to

her family and friends in Oaxaca.

The exchange program was small but successful this summer, with only two participants on either end. We'll try for a larger turnout for 2019. Watch for an announcement about a Family Information Meeting for the 2019 exchange in the latter part of November.

The Oaxaca trip to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the Albergue Infantil Josefina (the orphanage that Neighbors Abroad helps to support in Oaxaca) is coming up on October 11 to 18. There will be opportunities for local touring as well as the orphanage celebration. We must have numbers for the Oaxaca Committee very soon, however. Please let Marion know what your plans are.

We have also heard that a group from the Los Altos Rotary are going to Oaxaca at the end of October for the Day of the Dead Celebration and are also bringing stuff for "our" orphanage.

*Marion Mandell*

## HEIDELBERG

This summer two youth groups travelled to Heidelberg. Cristina Cismas Florea lead a group of BEAM students from Gunn High School to the German sister city. They stayed for one week, worked together with German and Dutch BEAM students on new projects, visited German companies to learn about international business, and explored Heidelberg and its vicinity.

In July, Christine Shin of Palo Alto's New Mozart School and three of her students took part in the CMHYO youth orchestra, a two-week gathering of young musicians from Cambridge (UK), Montpellier (France) and Heidelberg. The program culminated in a concert at Heidelberg's famous castle and the group came back enthused about their new friendships.

*Jeannet Kiessling*

# el chisme

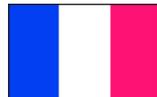


Neighbors Abroad  
P. O. Box 52004  
Palo Alto, CA 94303  
U.S.A.

NEIGHBORS ABROAD is a volunteer organization which maintains and carries out the activities of the City of Palo Alto's officially recognized Sister City Program with Palo Alto in the province of Leyte in the Philippines, Oaxaca in Mexico, Enschede in the Netherlands, Linköping in Sweden, Albi in France, Tsuchiura in Japan, Heidelberg in Germany, and Yangpu in China. Its activities have served and continue to serve the community interests of international and intercultural understanding.

Bob Wenzlau, President	248-4467
Jim Newton, Treasurer	854-4360
Mary Ashley, Newsletter	494-1829

<http://neighborsabroad.org>



## Neighbors Abroad Plus Community Events Calendar

**Sept. 19, Wednesday**, 7:30 p.m., Neighbors Abroad Board Meeting, 1409 Dana Ave. P.A.

**Sept. 30, Sunday**, 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., Neighbors Abroad Annual Meeting, Lucie Stern Community Center. RSVP needed. See cover for details

**October 11-18**, Visit to Oaxaca for Orphanage Anniversary.

**October 17, Wednesday**, 7:30 p.m., Neighbors Abroad Board Meeting, 1409 Dana Ave. P.A.

### PALO ALTO



ADULT SCHOOL

In support of our sister city relationships, Palo Alto Adult School offers training in corresponding world languages. As an integral part of the Palo Alto Unified School District, the adult school has been providing affordable, high-quality programs since 1921. In addition to Spanish, French, Mandarin, and German, classes are also available for English learners, parents, job seekers, hobbyists and others who want to expand their skills. Whether you want to learn to cook, travel to foreign lands, try your hand at woodworking, upholstery or birding, or enhance your art, gardening, photography or music skills, the adult school will meet your lifelong learning needs. Visit [PAAAdultSchool.org](http://PAAAdultSchool.org)

**Next El Chisme Deadline—November 15, 2018**

- Send your articles to Mary Ashley
- E-mail: [meashley@pacbell.net](mailto:meashley@pacbell.net)
- 3114 Cowper St., Palo Alto, CA 94306