

Student Ambassadors from Ashiya Arrive in Montebello

The Montebello-Ashiya Sister City Association (MASCA) welcomed the two 2017 Student Ambassadors from Ashiya City, Hyogo Prefecture at a welcome potluck party on Aug. 2 at the Montebello City Hall.

Representing Ashiya Cosmopolitan Association, Eriko Yamakuma and Sakura Hanashima, both 17 years old, were introduced to the sister city members and guests by MASCA President Emma Delgado.

Eriko is in her second year at Kobe Municipal Fukiai High School in Chuo-ku studying international courses. She enjoys watching movies from Hollywood and was active in figure skating since she was six years old, but recently stopped due to her busy schedule. She is interested in the history and culture of Montebello and hopes to experience the city as much as she can.

Sakura is in her second year at a high school in Suma-ku in Kobe and her hobbies are dancing, Japanese calligraphy, and dressing in kimono. She wants to meet many Montebello residents to teach them about beautiful Ashiya and learn everything about Montebello so that she can be a bridge between the two cities.

Sakura and Eriko will be living with Montebello host families for three weeks to experience daily familial life and American society. MASCA's 2017 host ambassador, Noah Lopez, will accompany the student ambassadors to various activities in Montebello such as tours of City Hall, the Police Department, and the Fire Department, being presented at a City Council meeting, an ice cream social, pool party, and a

visit the historic Juan Matias Sanchez Adobe.

Other activities planned include a Los Angeles Dodgers game, excursions to USC and UCLA, Disneyland, the Japanese American National Museum/Little Tokyo, Getty Center and Villa, Hollywood, and a beach outing, to name just a few.

The pair will be in the Nisei Week Grand Parade along with MASCA's 2017 student ambassadors, Alicia Amamoto and Celeste Zepeda, who are winding down their three-week stay in Ashiya and will be returning on Aug. 14.

The Sayonara Lunch farewell event for Eriko and Sakura will be held at the Quiet Cannon, 901 Via San Clemente, Montebello, on Sunday, Aug. 19, at 11:30 a.m. The program is open to the public and tickets are \$35 each or \$300 for a table of 10. For information about the event or tickets, contact Gloria Haro at (323) 722-1383.

In 1961, Montebello and Ashiya signed an international agreement as part of the "People to People Student Ambassador Program" initiated by President Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1956. Their respective sister-city organizations created the Student Ambassador Program in 1964 and have been exchanging two high school or college students every summer.

MASCA is a nonprofit, community organization; donations are welcome. For information and the activities planned for the ACA student ambassadors, visit <http://montebellosistercity.wixsite.com/classic-layout> or contact Michael Okamura at michael.okamura@hotmail.com.



From left: 2017 Montebello-Ashiya Sister City Association Host Ambassador Noah Lopez, 2017 Ashiya Sister City Association Student Ambassadors Sakura Hanashima and Eriko Yamakuma.