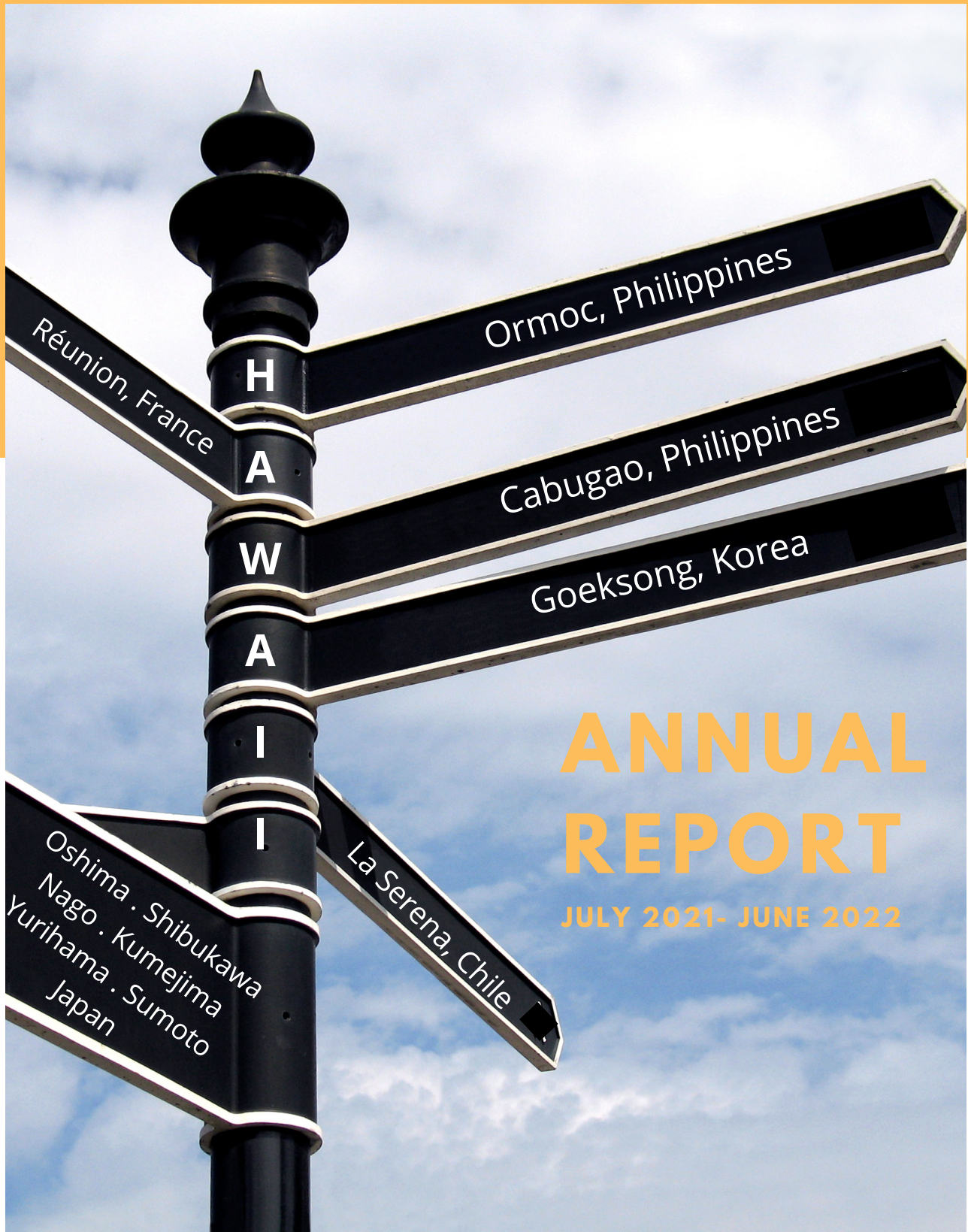




ANNUAL REPORT

JULY 2021- JUNE 2022

WWW.HAWAIICOUNTY.GOV
25 AUPUNI ST., HILO, HI 96720



CONNECTING HAWAI'I ISLAND TO THE WORLD



HISTORY

The U.S. Sister City Program formally began in 1956 when President Dwight D. Eisenhower proposed a people-to-people citizen diplomacy initiative. It was originally a program of the National League of Cities, and Sister Cities International became a separate corporation in 1967 due to the growth and popularity of the U.S. program.

OUR MISSION

Promote friendship, goodwill, and understanding between global communities by providing opportunities for the residents of Hawai'i Island and our sister cities to experience different cultures through education, and social and economic interaction.

OUR OBJECTIVES

- Provide opportunities for local government, business leaders, and the wider community to experience and explore other cultures through long-term community partnerships.
- Promote and develop economic, trade, cultural, educational, technical, social, and other beneficial exchanges.
- Foster international understanding and the exchange of information.

A WHOLE NEW WORLD SISTER CITY VIRTUAL CONCERT



Hawai'i County's first-ever Sister City Virtual Concert themed "A Whole New World," premiered on July 30, 2021, on Nā Leo TV. The concert showcased mayoral messages and cultural performances from eight sister cities across the globe. Represented in the concert were five cities in Japan, two in the Philippines, and one from Chile. In addition to the individual cultural performances, there was joint hula to the song "Sending Aloha," written and composed by Hilo musician/songwriter/educator Brandon Nakano, performed by each respective city.



This concert was created to remind us of our connections across the world, as we continue to fight through a pandemic that has left many of us feeling disconnected and alone," said Mayor Mitch Roth. "Our Sister City relationships have always been integral to our identity, diversity, and vibrancy here on Hawai'i Island, and we are excited to showcase them in a new and exciting way for all to see, feel, and be inspired."

The full video of the concert can be viewed on the County's sister city webpage at www.hawaiicounty.gov/sistercities

ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION AND REAFFIRMATION OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN HAWAI' COUNTY AND ORMOC CITY



Mayor Gomez, Vice Mayor Locsin and members
of the Ormoc City Council



Congresswoman Lucy Torres-Gomez, also the wife of
Mayor Gomez gave a brief remark



Vice Consul Andrea Caymon Kauhanen gave the opening remarks
on behalf of the Philippine Consulate General in Honolulu

September 11, 2021, marked the 10th anniversary of the sister city relationship between the County of Hawai'i and Ormoc City, Philippines.

Mayor Mitch Roth and Ormoc City Mayor Richard Gomez commemorated the occasion by signing a Reaffirmation of the Sister City Agreement on October 20, 2021.

The virtual event was attended by government officials and other dignitaries and guests from both municipalities.

Video of the virtual event can be found on the sister city webpage at www.hawaiicounty.gov/sistercities



Ormoc City Mayor Richard Gomez signing the agreement



Hawai'i County Mayor Mitch Roth signing the agreement

ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION AND REAFFIRMATION OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN HAWAI' COUNTY AND KUMEJIMA TOWN



Konawaena HS Japanese Class students presented and read the description of Hawai'i County's omiyage to Kumejima in Japanese.



Kumejima HS student presented and read the description of Kumejima's omiyage to Hawai'i County in English.



Event attendees: Dwayne Mukai, Lee Lord, Vice Consul Matsuzawa, Mayor Roth, Candee Ellsworth, Jane Clement, Tommy Goya, Art Taniguchi and Ross Birch.

Mayor Mitch Roth and Kumejima Town Mayor Haruo Ota commemorated the 10th anniversary of sisterhood between their two municipalities through a virtual signing of the Reaffirmation Agreement on October 27, 2021.

The event was attended by government officials, host organization members, and other dignitaries from both sides.

A full video of the event can be viewed on the sister city webpage at:
www.hawaiiicounty.gov/sistercities



Kumejima mayor Haruo Ota giving his remarks before signing the agreement.



Mayor Mitch Roth signing the Reaffirmation Agreement.



Mayor Roth and Sister City Protocol Officer Jane Clement waived aloha to the people gathered in Kumejima during the virtual signing event.

ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION AND REAFFIRMATION OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN HAWAI' COUNTY AND YURIHAMA CITY



Mayor Mitch Roth and Mayor Misamichi Miyawaki pledged to continue to promote and expand effective and mutually beneficial cooperation between the people of their two cities during a virtual signing of Reaffirmation Agreement on December 3, 2021.

"It is an honor to be a part of this Reaffirmation Ceremony. In our culture, there is a saying that goes, 'The whole is larger than the sum of its parts.' What this means is together we are stronger, and we can accomplish so much more than we can individually."

Lincoln Ashida
President, Japanese Chamber of
Commerce and Industries of
Hawai'i.

"On this 25th anniversary, my wish is that new opportunities for economic exchange between Hawai'i County and Yurihama will continue to emerge, in addition to the cultural and educational exchange we have had up until this point."

Mitsuaki Kawaguchi
President, Yurihama Chamber of
Commerce and Industry

HAWAI'I COUNTY - YURIHAMA TOWN

**VIRTUAL REAFFIRMATION
OF SISTER CITIES
DECLARATION**

DECEMBER - 03 - 2021, 300PM HST
DECEMBER - 04 - 2021, 1000AM JST

EVENT PROGRAM

WELCOME
Jane Clement
Hawai'i County Sister City Protocol Officer

NATIONAL AND STATE ANTHEMS
Star Spangled Banner
Hawai'i Pono'i
Kimigayo

OPENING REMARKS
Lincoln Ashida
President, Japanese Chamber of Commerce & Industry of Hawaii
Mitsuaki Kawaguchi
President, Yurihama Town Chamber of Commerce

MAYOR'S MESSAGES
Honorable Mitchell D. Roth
Mayor, Hawai'i County
Honorable Masamichi Miyawaki
Mayor, Yurihama Town

**SIGNING OF AGREEMENT
FINAL REMARKS AND EXCHANGE OF GIFTS**

ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION AND REAFFIRMATION OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN HAWAII COUNTY AND SHIBUKAWA CITY

Shibukawa City and Hawai'i County residents have continually endeavored to deepen their mutual understanding and friendly relations through active exchange over the past 25 years.

Mayor Mitch Roth and Shibukawa City Mayor Tsutomo Takagi commemorated the 25th anniversary of sisterhood between their two municipalities by pledging to continue to propagate feelings of goodwill during a signing of the Reaffirmation Agreement on February 17, 2022.

The hybrid virtual and in-person event was attended by government officials, members of the Japanese Community Association of Hawai'i, Shibukawa City Board of Education and Shibukawa Ikaho Onsen Tourism Association, and other dignitaries and guests.

A full video of the event can be viewed on the Sister City webpage at www.hawaiicounty.gov/sistercities



Mayor Tsutomo Takagi reaffirming Shibukawa City's commitment to the sister city relationship during his remarks.



Mayor Mitch Roth delivered his remarks before signing the agreement.



County officials, members of the Japanese Community Association of Hawaii and other special guests attended the hybrid virtual and in-person signing event between Hawai'i County and Shibukawa City.



City Officials, members of the Shibukawa City Board of Education and Shibukawa Ikaho Onsen Tourism Association waving goodbye at the end of the event.

COURTESY VISITS TO PHILIPPINE, JAPAN AND RMI CONSULATE



Vice Consul Tamera Heine, Consul General
Isabela Silk, Mayor Roth, Jane Clement



Vice Consul Aya Kumakura, Consul General
Aoki, Mayor Roth, Jane Clement,
Vice Consul Matsuzawa



Vice Consul Grace Bulos, Consul General
Emilio Hernandez, Mayor Roth, Jane Clement

On December 2, 2022, Mayor Roth and sister city protocol officer Jane Clement paid a courtesy visit to Consul General Emilio Hernandez. He is the newest diplomat assigned to Hawaii and will serve as the Consul General of the Philippine Consulate General in Honolulu for the next three years. Mayor Roth and Ms. Clement provided him with information about the County's two sister cities in the Philippines.

Mayor Roth and Ms. Clement also met with Consul General Isabela Silk of the Consulate General of the Republic of the Marshall Islands in Honolulu to begin discussions about a possible sister city relationship with Enewetak Atoll and other Atolls in the Marshall Islands. The majority of the Marshallese population living in Ocean View is from Enewetak.

The day concluded with a visit to the Consulate General of Japan in Honolulu. Mayor Roth and Ms. Clement met with Consul General Aoki, Vice Consul Kumakura, and Vice Consul Matsuzawa to provide a status update on Hawai'i County's sister cities in Japan.

SAKADA DAY COMMEMORATION COUNTY OF HAWAI'I AND CABUGAO CITY



Council member and former mayor Josh Cobangbang laid a wreath at the Sakada statue at Salomague Port, Cabugao

Governor David Ige signed House Bill 604 on April 9, 2015, designating December 20 of every year as "Sakada Day." This year's celebration was delayed a few days to coordinate commemoration between the County and Cabugao City.

A full video of the lei-draping and wreath-laying ceremony can be viewed on the sister city webpage at www.hawaiicounty.gov/sistercities

Mayor Mitch Roth joined Sister City Cabugao City, Ilocos Sur, to commemorate Sakada Day on December 22, 2021, recognizing and honoring the pioneering achievements and courage of the first Filipino sakadas and their contributions to the history and development of Hawai'i Island.

The Sakadas or Filipino plantation workers were first brought to Hawai'i in 1906 to work on the plantations, and the "First Fifteen," as they were later coined, began their work on Hawai'i Island at the Ola'a Plantation in the Kea'au area.



Mayor Mitch Roth draped a lei on the Sakada Statue in Kea'au



Hawai'i County Board of Supervisors Chairman Thomas "Lofty" Cook and Mayor Toyonosuke Fujii shook hands after signing the sister city agreement between their two cities on February 16, 1962.



Members of the Hilo High School Chorus traveled to Japan in June of 1996 and visited Oshima Island.



Members of the Hawai'i Oshima Friendship Association held an exhibit in Oshima to commemorate 60th anniversary of sisterhood.

Hawai'i County celebrated its eldest Sister City relationship with Oshima Town, Japan on February 11, 2022, via a virtual film event that included dignified representatives from both cities.

The official establishment of the relationship between the two cities was signed on February 16, 1962, by then Chairman and Executive Officer of the County of Hawai'i, Thomas "Lofty" Cook in Oshima, Japan.

To celebrate this important milestone, Hawai'i County and Oshima Town compiled interviews of former and current government officials, organizations, and other individuals to glean stories and anecdotes about this historic Sister City relationship. The accounts were compiled into a commemorative documentary film produced by Nā Leo TV (NLTV).

The commemorative documentary can be viewed on the sister city webpage at www.hawaiicounty.gov/sistercities



Members of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industries of Hawai'i and sister city protocol officer Jane Clement after filming interviews for the documentary.

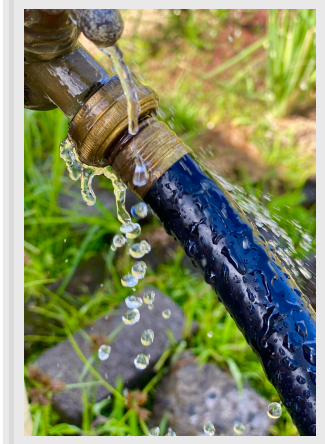


Na Leo TV production crew during the filming of the documentary film.

YOUNG ARTISTS AND AUTHORS SHOWCASE (YAAS)

The Young Artists and Authors Showcase (YAAS) is an annual art contest that encourages youth worldwide to express the mission of Sister Cities International through original artwork, literature, poetry, photography, and music.

This year's theme is **GENERATION RESCUE: SUSTAINABLE WATER FOR ALL**



Artist: Shantacley Arhelger
Grade: 11th Grade
School: Pahoa High School



Artist: Dayshalyn Keohulua
Grade: 11th Grade
School: Pahoa High School

This is Hawai'i County's first year of participation. Invitations were sent out to all the public high schools on Hawaii Island. A total of 25 submissions were received and five were selected as Hawaii County's official entries to the YAAS.

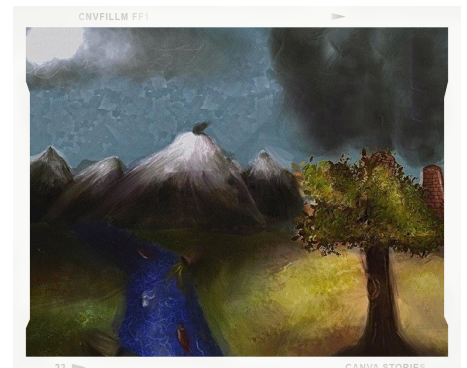
Winners will be announced in August during the Sister Cities International Annual Youth Summit.



Artist: Morgan Pierpont
Grade: 12th Grade
School: Ka'u High School



Artist: Alejo Xenophone
Grade: 10th Grade
School: Pahoa High School

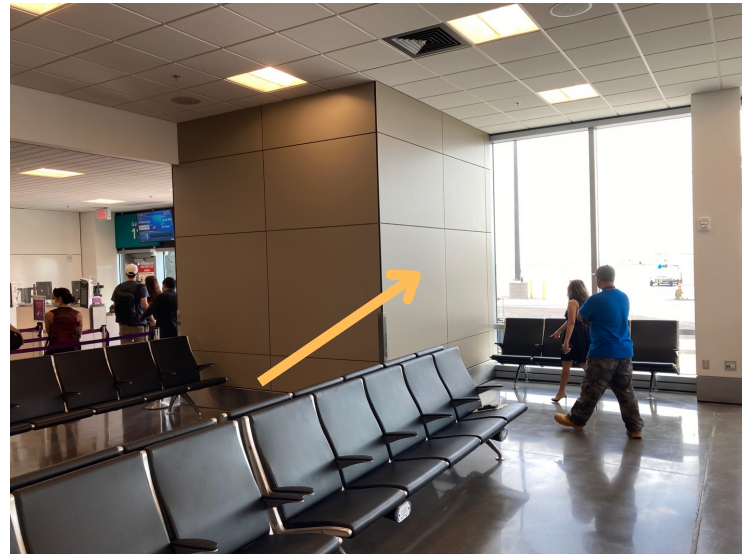


Artist: Rapha Shvartsman
Grade: 10th Grade
School: Homeschool

SISTER CITY DISPLAY CASE AT KOA

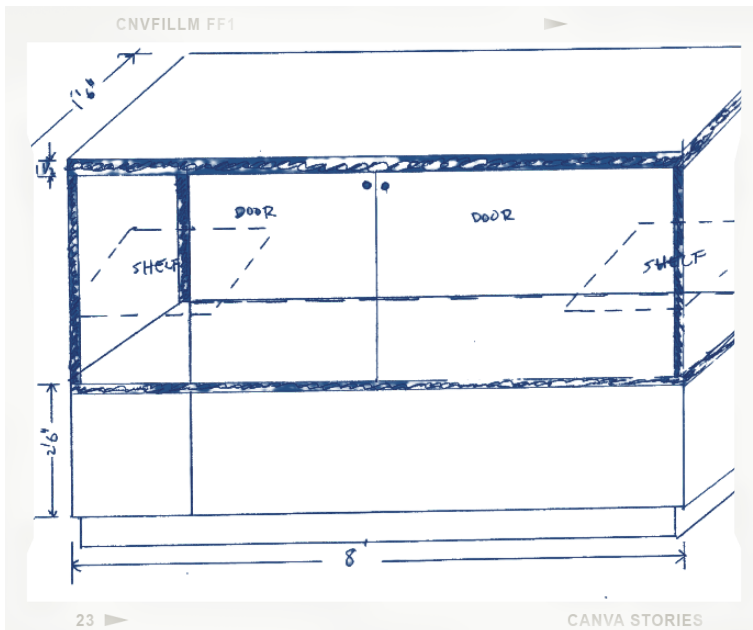
The County of Hawai'i in partnership with the State Department of Transportation will be installing a sister city display case inside Gate 11 at the Ellison Onizuka Kona International Airport at Keahole.

The County will have full responsibility for the maintenance of the display case once it is installed.



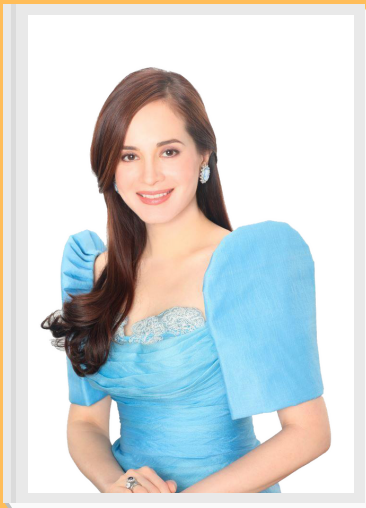
The display case will be built by our County carpenters. This free-standing cabinet will be 8ft in length, 6 ½ ft in height, and 1 ½ ft in depth. The cabinet will be made mostly of wood with plexiglass on the front and sides.

It will contain an informational board about our sister cities as well as select memorabilia that the County has received from the sister cities over the years.



SENDING ALOHA AND BEST WISHES TO THE NEWLY ELECTED MAYORS

The Philippines and select cities in Japan recently held an election. As a result, our sister cities in Ormoc City and Cabugao City, Philippines, and sister cities in Kumejima Town and Sumoto City, Japan now have a new mayor to lead their respective municipalities. Mayor Roth sent congratulatory letters to all of them and wished them a successful tenure.



Mayor Lucy Torres-Gomez
Ormoc City, Philippines



Katsunori Uesaki
Sumoto City, Japan



Mayor Hideo Tobaru
Kumejima Town, Okinawa



Mayor Josh Edward Cobangbang
Cabugao City, Philippines



STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAM



In January 2022, we introduced a new student exchange program called V-PAL or Virtual Partners in Acquisition of Language. V-PAL is a school-to-school language exchange program between Hawai'i County and its sister city schools in Japan, the Philippines, and Chile.

The program is non-academic and participation is voluntary. Participants meet once a month and choose a topic to discuss.

They talk about similarities and differences in each other's cultures, traditions, and practices while speaking alternately between their native language and the foreign language they are trying to learn.

Designed for middle and high school students, the program aims to provide participants with opportunities to learn a new language, make new friends abroad, and engage in cultural exchange.



The first two schools to partner and subscribe to this program are Konaweana High School in West Hawaii and Kumejima High School in Japan. 14 students from both schools have met every month since January 2022. Staff from both schools are present at each session to facilitate the discussions.

Our sister cities in La Serena, Chile and the Philippines have expressed interest in the program and we are working on getting them on board before the end of the year.

STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAM REVIEW

Here's what the students are saying about the program

I緊張してあまり話せなかったけど、ハワイの高校生と交流
ができて嬉しかった

I was so nervous that I could not talk so much. Happy to
interact with students from Hawaii.

たしかったです！ IT WAS FUN

VERY FUN AND INTERESTING!

楽しかったです！でも、自分の英語力が落ちてることを痛感しました
IT WAS FUN. BUT I FELT MY ENGLISH SKILLS ARE NOT AS GOOD AS USED TO BE.

I want to challenge my own writing/typing and reading
skills in Japanese. Particularly my kanji.

英語を使って自分の考えを言え
るようになりたい

I want to be able to express my
thoughts in English.

外国に友達を作る I want to make friends abroad.

久米島高校の生徒は英語、コナワエナ高校の生徒は日本語で交流する！日常生
活を英語で説明できるようになる！！

Kumejima high students use English and Konawaena uses Japanese during the
activities. Hope to be able to use English in everyday life.

I want to challenge my Japanese listening comprehension. I really really want to
work on my Japanese and be able to speak more of it but I find it very difficult on
my own so I hope through this program I can grow a little more. I also get really
nervous when I have to speak Japanese out loud to other people so I hope to
improve and get less nervous

FUTURE ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS



Hawai'i County - Marshall Islands Sister City Agreement

Mayor Mitch Roth and the government of the Republic of Marshall Islands through Consul General Isabela Silk of the Consulate General of Marshall Islands in Honolulu are exploring a Sister City Relationship Agreement between Hawai'i County and Wotje, Enewetak, Namorik, Ebon, Mejit, and Jaluit Islands of the Republic of Marshall Islands.

A resolution to approve the creation of such a partnership is being drafted and will be submitted to the County Council for consideration after review by the Corporation Counsel.

Sister City Goodwill Visit to Japan

Mayor Mitch Roth and Sister City Protocol Officer Jane Clement will lead a delegation to Japan for a sister city goodwill visit from July 22 to August 3, 2022.

The group will meet with the mayors, business and industry leaders and other dignitaries in Sumoto City, Oshima Town, and Shibukawa City.

A meeting with tourism industry leaders is also planned in Tokyo.



Nago City Student Visit

For many years, our sister city in Nago City, Okinawa has been sending students from area schools to Hawai'i Island as part of their homestay program. Now that we are finally emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic and after a three-year hiatus, Nago City is resuming its student exchange program and will send 12 students to Hawai'i Island in August 2022. Hawai'i County is working with the sponsoring organization Hui Okinawa to find host families for the students and to make sure the group will have the best experience during their visit.