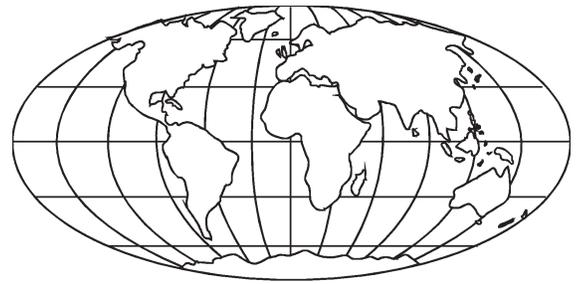


# EL CHISME

## de Neighbors Abroad



Volume 55, Number 1

SISTER CITY PROGRAM ■ PALO ALTO, CALIFORNIA U.S.A.

Winter 2017

### Tsuchiura Exchange Students Arrive March 11

Everyone is invited to come to the Jordan MP Room to welcome the 16 students who will be arriving directly from the airport about 12 noon on Saturday, March 11, and join in the welcome celebration. After the welcome party, the students will go home with their host families. Families will have a free day on Sunday to get acquainted.

After several days attending school with their host sister or brother, the visitors will stay in Yosemite one night and tour the valley. On Friday, March 17, students and hosts will participate in a Bingo night at the Palo Alto Art Center. Again, any Bingo fan among our membership is free to join in that evening.

On Sunday March 19, after a farewell party at Jordan Middle School, the Tsuchiura students will travel by bus to San Francisco for an afternoon tour of the city and an overnight stay before leaving for home.



BINGO for all March 17

### President's Message

In my note today, I am filled with the potential and purpose of Neighbors Abroad. Many of us seek meaningful engagement in an antagonistic foreign policy climate, and Neighbors Abroad brings a venue where we can express our enduring friendship to our sister cities and more broadly to the world.

Palo Alto Mayor Greg Scharff's State of the City Address included comments coinciding with the role of Neighbors Abroad. "We will remain an inclusive, welcoming community. ... We are an international community. The number of languages spoken every day here rivals any American city and the presence of people from many countries adds immeasurably to the vibrancy of our community life."

Neighbors Abroad can help the Mayor fulfill his vision for inclusion as well as celebrating the gifts of our international riches. Obviously along the way we have fun and make friends.

At the top of my mind is the large fire truck and ambulance that should ship to Oaxaca this March. The fire truck will be named "Los Danzantes" to commemorate the Oaxacan dancers that had dreamed of their visit to Palo Alto this April only to lose that given the uncertain political climate. Our gift of these vehicles is an important counter-story to the building of walls. We have yet to raise about another \$4,000 to pay for the transportation, but I appreciate deeply the donations that have helped with this project, and also the orphanage that was to be a beneficiary of the students Folklorico dance.

At this moment, I also applaud Vice President for Oaxaca Marion Mandell who has been honored by Avenidas with a Lifetime Achievement Award. She is busy building yet again another successful student exchange with Oaxaca this upcoming summer.

Neighbors Abroad sports a new website. The website has been build by Lily Liu and Walter Goldberg who are students at Gunn High School and are working this academic year as interns for Neighbors Abroad. Their fresh eye to the website has allowed a focus on our student exchanges. Making a website is hard work, and our previous web presence set a high standard. The new website allows members to make donations and membership renewals online. The students will turn soon to helping bolster our membership database as well as our social reach on Facebook.

continued on page 2

## President's Message *(continued)*

As you will read, Hank Heubach has taken on creating a partnering effort to our local community organizations. An international visitor might want to know how we have such a wonderful urban forest, and we would introduce them to Canopy. Or as communities wonder about the depth of support, we would share the relationship to Kiwanis International. Neighbors Abroad has a role to connect and knit our community to our sister cities and beyond, and now through our organizations and businesses.

We appreciate all of those members who have renewed their memberships, and welcome new members. Several new members have joined as we have explored creating new sister cities with the Yangpu District of Shanghai and Heidelberg, Germany. Considering new cities is fresh, and these two cities bring connections to business and sustainability.

In June 2017 Neighbors Abroad will be the subject of a City Council meeting. The City plans to renew our agreements, consider a budget for the organization, and decide on any recommendations for new sister cities like the Yangpu District or Heidelberg. The Board will be working toward this presentation.

Please write me your ideas. I would love to hear from you. Members are also welcome to attend our monthly board meetings, which are now moving to the 3rd Wednesday of the month.

I close in appreciation for the work Mary Ashley has done to be our voice of Neighbors Abroad through *El Chisme*. On the website we have an archive of six years of *El Chisme*. The stories these annals tell, and I invite you to read these wonderful tales.

*Bob Wenzlau*

**Visit the new Neighbors Abroad website at [www.neighborsabroad.org](http://www.neighborsabroad.org).**

**New features include online membership payment and online donation capability. (If you haven't renewed your membership for 2017, or made your contribution to the Children's Projects, here's a convenient opportunity.)**

**Also check out our Neighbors Abroad Facebook page and give us a thumbs up.**

## BEAM: What is it?

We have gotten several questions about this program. The initials stand for Business, Entrepreneurship And Math. Program founder Cristina Cismas of Gunn High School originated BEAM as a student-led club for which she was the advisor. After several successful years BEAM has become an elective class at Gunn.

The BEAM program, Ms. Cismas tells us, "strives to create a true public-private partnership by providing high school students the opportunity to connect with local innovative communities." With the help of a curriculum designed by Ernst & Young and Pricewaterhouse Coopers, the students learn to apply business principles to the problems of small businesses and non-profits in the community.

Last year a team of BEAM members worked with Neighbors Abroad to create an online survey targeting students and parents to find out about attitudes to student exchange programs. The survey revealed some interesting points: that students in general preferred one or two week exchanges to longer ones and that many felt the best time to go on an exchange would be when they were in middle school or freshman year of high school. But the first thing we realized after talking to these students was that our website contained almost no information about student exchange—what is available, how much it typically costs and what activities are involved.

After working with the BEAM club members last year, the Neighbors Abroad board voted to offer internships to two former BEAM members: Lily Liu and Walter Goldberg.

They were tasked with making changes to the Neighbors Abroad website. As noted on this page, a version of the updated website is now in place with more material to be added. As comments from members and input from sister-city vice-presidents continues to flow in, Lily and Walter will be working to add those items to the website.



*Neighbors Abroad BEAM Interns Lily Liu at left and Walter Goldberg at right*

## Neighbors Abroad Partners Committee

Members spent the first committee meetings grappling with the committee's reason for existence. We have decided that our goal is to help Neighbors Abroad achieve its goals by identifying community organizations that have activities of mutual interest with Neighbors Abroad and by drawing on the expertise, contacts and related activities of those "partner" organizations.

Broadly, our task is to help define Neighbors Abroad's goals and chart its path forward. Neighbors Abroad is exploring expansion of its current program of cultural exchanges between Palo Alto's sister cities to include adding some more sister cities, developing a process for greeting official visiting guests from other cities beyond our established ties with our Sister Cities, and providing the methodology of an outward-looking plan to other Neighbors Abroad programs.

Our vision is to bring a consensus to the current Neighbors Abroad master plan and begin to create a platform of opportunities within our community for visiting guests by creating a working, ethnically diverse database of partner organizations and their programs, by developing a data collection tool for gathering information from organizations that would like to offer an experience or technological exchange for official visitors, and by publishing a list of such opportunities that would serve as a resource for Neighbors Abroad, the City of Palo Alto and the Palo Alto Chamber of Commerce in helping official visitors find what they came here to find.

Good communication with our partner organizations is essential. So far we have established contact with the following organizations: the Kiwanis Club of Palo Alto (Nancy Shepherd, liaison), the Palo Alto Rotary Club (Mike McMahan, liaison), the University Rotary Club (Judy Deggeller, liaison), the YMCA (Paula Collins, liaison), Avenidas (Jim Phillips, liaison), the Palo Alto Chamber of Commerce (Judy Kleinberg, liaison pro tem), the City of Palo Alto (Bob Wenzlau, liaison), the Palo Alto Unified School District (Bob Wenzlau, liaison), and Canopy Trees for Palo Alto (Marty Deggeller, liaison). Our liaison with Sister Cities International remains Pat Sanders. We are working on establishing contact with Stanford University. (There are many other organizations on our list.) Our liaisons will keep the organizations informed of Neighbors Abroad events and official visits (and, conversely, the organizations will keep Neighbors Abroad informed of their events and visitors). The partner organizations should receive copies of *El Chisme* and other official announcements from Neighbors Abroad. Let it be repeated: good communication is essential. We shall try to make it so.

Our hope is that Neighbors Abroad programs will reach a broader segment of our community and, that as a result, more members of our community will be attracted to join Neighbors Abroad. We have already established a better working relationship with the City of Palo Alto. (Bob has addressed this in his President's Message.)

Finally, I must give credit to Judy Deggeller: most of the words for goal, task and vision are hers. Thank you, Judy.

*Hank Heubach*

## Heidelberg Exploratory Committee

Recently a delegation from Heidelberg met with Palo Alto officials and interested citizens to express their desire to affiliate with Palo Alto as a sister city. Neighbors Abroad President Bob Wenzlau intends to put this before the City Council later this spring and he has asked Jeannet Kiessling, a native of Heidelberg now residing in Palo Alto, to head a committee determining the shape of a future sister-city relationship.

In choosing a sister city, we look for important similarities. Jeannet points out that Heidelberg, like Palo Alto, is a city with a world-famous university. Also, both cities are centers for technology-based companies and sustainability is a major interest in each. Heidelberg has a rich cultural environment with many privately organized clubs and cultural institutions, so there are opportunities for exchanges in that sphere also.

At a February 2 meeting organized by Jeannet and attended by Peter Biffar, Markus Fromherz, Bob Wenzlau and Joe and Barbara Evans, four areas of concentration were suggested: sustainability, culture, youth programs and business connections. Jeannet will expand upon these in a future article.

## Yangpu Exploratory Committee

The Committee (Bing Wei, Bob Wenzlau, and David Olson) agreed that to build a cultural bridge between the two very different communities, we should start with a very targeted program, gain success there, build our knowledge of the Yangpu community, and expand the community exchange from that seed. We thought that a youth summer exchange program would be a likely starting point. We have met with PAUSD staff, staff from Paly, city of Palo Alto staff and other interested parties. We also met with representatives of a Yangpu program that does bilingual summer student programs. We believe that such a program is doable and we are working through operational details.

The other effort, headed by Bing, is to identify and recruit community members who speak Mandarin (hopefully with ties to Shanghai) to take on the coordination of the program. Future possibilities are hands-on art exchanges and project-based youth exchanges.

The effort is moving, but it is slow going. The summer exchange program will require enough preparation and coordination that it is unlikely to see the first students traveling to Yang Pu until summer of 2018.

## Palo, the Philippines

News from Palo has been arriving since just after the latest issue of *El Chisme* went to press in November 2016. We heard that the Giants' Club in coordination with GENERIKA Pharmacy, conducted Medical Laboratory Exams for 300 people of Palo on October 16, 2016 at Pio Pedrosa Education Center. (see photo).

The Giants have made some more improvements to the Pio Pedrosa Education Center (PPEC), home of the Palo Children's Library, to accommodate a Day Care Center. The room selected got an outside door, toilet facilities for children, painting, cubbyholes, black boards and bulletin boards. Sheilane and Rebecca, our two librarians, are undergoing training and will be assisted by the Gilacs (the sister organization of the Giants). The PPEC has provided Day Care before, during the summer only. The target clients for this program are 3 and 4 year-olds and it will run Monday-Friday for 2 hours a day. It is a free program of the Giants Club to help the community. Day care centers in Public School and Barangays collect payments.

The GIANTS have selected Neighbors Abroad Scholars for this semester, and we've received bios and pictures:

ANA MAE O. DEGUERIO is a fourth-year student at Eastern Visayas State University (EVSU) in Tacloban City, studying for a Bachelor of Science in Hotel and Restaurant Tehnology. She resides at Brgy. Libertad, Palo, Leyte, and is the eldest of the family, with three brothers and one sister. Her father works in Manila and her mother is a housewife.



CRISANTO A. TABLASON is a fourth-year student at Visayas State University, Tanauan, Leyte, studying for a Bachelor of Science in Criminology. He resides at Brgy. Barayong, Palo, Leyte, with two brothers, a sister and his parents. His father is employed by the NGO and his mother works at the Local Government Unit.



MA. EDEN JOYCE C. ROA is a 4th year student at EVSU, Tacloban City, studying for a Bachelor of Science in Architecture, and resides at Brgy. St Michael, Palo, Leyte. She is the third child of the family. She has two sisters and two brothers. Her mother works as a domestic helper and her father is deceased.



The Giants conduct an examination for high school graduates with an average grade of 80% in all subjects who demonstrate financial need and the high scorers get the scholarships. Upon enrollment they receive P750 (\$15) a month for 4 months plus P2,000 (\$400) as partial allowance. They are expected to volunteer at the library once a week during school time, and also during semester

break and summer. (*ed. note: the number of scholars is less than half of former numbers because of higher costs per scholar and lower contributions for the fund.*)

Sheilane and Rebecca, the two librarians, report the Children's Library "is smooth sailing." They now have WiFi access in the library, so patrons can use their cellular phones for research, instead of going to internet cafes. First Giant Pypes Ygrubay, also authorized the purchase of one computer, to be used exclusively for WiFi. The librarians have to limit use to 30 minutes to an hour per student because of the popularity of this new tool.

The daughter of Giant Manuel Moraleda from Brgy. Cavite West, Palo, Leyte, Sandra Moraleda from Clintonville, Wisconsin, USA, sent the library a Balikbayan box of books, straight from USA in November, which they were excited to receive. And the Giants sent pictures of their annual Christmas party, along with greetings for the New Year to all of Neighbors Abroad.

*At right, librarian speaking to students about the new WiFi service.*



*At left, First GIANT Pypes Ygrubay gets his turn at the medical screening held at the PPEC.*

*At right, 1st Giant Ygrubay with service technician ready to install the WiFi equipment.*



*At left, Giants and Gilacs send Holiday Greetings to Neighbors Abroad.*

## Albi, France

The Aurora Singers is a non-profit community chorus of about sixty mixed voices that was formed in 1989. We are based in Palo Alto, but our choir members come from around the Bay Area and beyond.

Last July, about 30 of Aurora's singers, along with many of their significant others, were hosted for 10 days by Assou-Lezert, a chorus in Albi France. This was the third such trip over 15 years, and the trips just get better each time. We stayed in the homes of singers, ensuring complete immersion into southern French culture and hospitality. We rehearsed and sang in 3 joint concerts, and ate and drank and ate and drank. Our hosts arranged small group parties and other excursions, so over the 10 days, we were constantly mingling and practicing our French language skills, which they appreciated. The two paid concerts were sold out to enthusiastic audiences, while the free Sunday concert in the park attracted another 200 or so. After the last concert, we were whisked off to the Pyrenees for 2 days of short hikes in glorious weather and scenery. Upon return, we had a wonderful final party before flying back. Everyone felt so warmed by our sister chorus. We still talk about it! As one of our singers said, "You cannot buy this kind of experience." We are looking forward to hosting Assou-Lezert here in 2018 for their third visit to Palo Alto and the Bay Area. We anticipate establishing dates for an Assou-Lezert visit here soon.

*Brian LaPorte*

*Below right, French welcoming committee at Toulouse Airport.  
Below, Assou-Lezert singing at the Sunday in the park concert.*



*Aurora Chorus bursting into song at the Albi Mayor's reception.*



*Brian LaPorte (in blue shirt) at Albi host's home—eating again.*



## Oaxaca, Mexico

In the last edition of *El Chisme* we had suggested that the long-term planners among you get out your calendars and mark the last week of April for a visit of a group of international folk dancers from an Arts high school in Oaxaca who were planning to present several programs here of the traditional dances from the seven geographic regions of the State of Oaxaca as a service project for their school to raise funds for the Albergue Infantil Josefino, the same orphanage which we here also help to support. Unfortunately, we are sorry to tell you that this will not be taking place now because many of the parents of the dancers in the group are fearful of sending their teens here at this time. Well, perhaps things might change in a year or so and we can reschedule a visit of the group.

Be sure to look elsewhere in this edition for a report from our Neighbors Abroad President, Bob Wenzlau, about the progress on sending the various fire vehicles to Oaxaca. They are really looking forward to their arrival in Oaxaca!

I am very pleased to tell you that as of this date we have four (and possibly five) applicants interested in going to Oaxaca as part of the summer 2017 Student Exchange. Since we are missing a few of their photos and information at this time we will put the student write-ups in the next edition of *El Chisme*. Also by that time we will no doubt have the names and write-ups about the Oaxacan exchangees who will be coming here too.

It is not too late to send in your contribution for Neighbors Abroad's Childrens Projects, if you have not already done so. Also, remember that if any of you or your friends or relatives are planning a trip to Oaxaca, please ask them to contact me about taking a ready-packed suitcase to the orphanage or the Child-to-child health program. I have LOTS of them all ready to go!

**¡Hasta Luego!**

*Marion Mandell*

## Linköping, Sweden

One strength of a sister-city affiliation is the way we share a desire to bring our cities closer together. Recently when a young Neighbors Abroad family member asked about an opportunity to exchange with a girl from Linköping, a personal message to Maria Lindahl in Linköping led to her colleague, Sonja Johansson, whose daughter was interested in hosting the Palo Altan. People taking trouble for each other and making these connections is what builds and deepens the city relationship.

We are also expecting a visit from city officials and business people during the summer. More as plans develop.

## Enschede, the Netherlands

Late fall visitors from Enschede were Luuk Nijenhuis and Karin Nauta. Luuk is a designer for the city of Enschede and was touring and taking photos in preparation for an exhibit on Enschede's sister cities to be held shortly after their visit here.

Luuk brought a gift to Palo Alto from Enschede, a special lamp that can be lighted in either city by an action in the other. We will be looking for an opportunity to use this as part of some future event. Any ideas?

Touring Palo Alto with Khashayar "Cash" Alae, Luuk took a number of photos. He and Karin also visited Gunn High School where they met with teacher Cristina Cismas and talked to some of the BEAM class students. It is hoped that the students from Gunn and those of Bonhoeffer College in Enschede may be able to cooperate on a project in the future.

On the morning of their departure for a quick tour of California, the Evans hosted an impromptu coffee hour for Luuk and Karin to meet a few Neighbors Abroad members.

### **Another Honor for Marion Mandell, Neighbor Abroad's VP for Oaxaca**

**Avenidas has bestowed a Lifetime Achievement Award on Marion Mandell. In giving the award the committee stressed Marion's long time service to the community. Marion has been a Girl Scout member since 1939, when she became a Brownie. Since then, she has been a Girl Scout camp counselor, troop leader, camp director, trainer and organizer. For 37 years, she directed "Camporees," a gathering of scouting units for camping and activities, for the Girl Scouts of Palo Alto and Santa Clara County. Neighbors Abroad members know Marion as the long-serving Neighbors Abroad vice president for Palo Alto's sister city of Oaxaca, Mexico. Her involvement with Mexico has spanned 50 years, during which time she has become fluent in Spanish and led upwards of 15 trips to Oaxaca.**

## Luis Morales Calvo, High School Student from Oaxaca, Mexico, Visits Palo Alto!

Our daughter, Katie Russell, participated in the Oaxaca student exchange in 2013. She stayed with the Morales Calvo family for 4 weeks, then returned to Palo Alto with her host sister, Sofi, for 4 weeks. In 2015, Katie and Dan spent an incredible two weeks with Sofi's family in Oaxaca. Sofi's younger brother, Luis, age 15, recently spent 6 weeks with us in Palo Alto. We consider Sofi, Luis, and their family to be extended family. We even watched the 2017 Super Bowl together via WhatsApp!

Luis was here from December 2016 through January 2017. We had fun introducing him to Palo Alto and the Bay Area - the best of San Francisco (Golden Gate Bridge, Lombard Street, hot fudge sundaes at Ghirardelli's), a tour of Google, a ride in a Tesla, hiking at Foothills Park and the Stanford Dish, "Casablanca" at the historic Stanford Theatre, Christmas caroling with big group of our friends, and a visit to the beach at our home at The Sea Ranch. We also introduced Luis to the wide-ranging Bay Area cuisine including dim sim, bibimbap, and Indian food. Luis was game to try it all, even though he longed for his beloved tacos from Oaxaca. His favorite? Pizza at the Google cafeteria!

Thanks to Liz Matchett, Spanish teacher at Gunn High School, Luis had the opportunity to spend time with other high school students in two Spanish classes. He also shadowed two students at Paly for two full days, attending classes, going to lunch at Kirk's at Town & Country, and touring Paly's new media arts center, a highlight for Luis since he's a budding cinematographer.

Luis and several of his classmates from Oaxaca are hoping to participate in the exchange this summer, and look forward to meeting students from the Palo Alto area and introducing them to the best of Oaxaca—culture, food, arts, archaeology, and people!

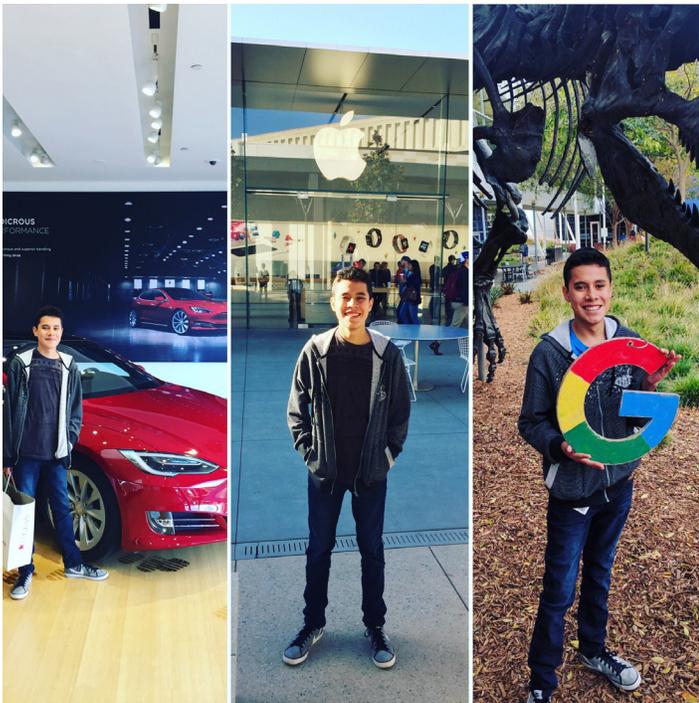
### *Lynne and Dan Russell*



*Luis, Katie, and Dan at the Golden Gate Bridge*



*Luis with Palo Alto "parents" Dan and Lynne Russell, in San Francisco.*



*Luis visits: Tesla, Apple, and Google.*



*At right,  
Luis at the  
Sister City Kiosk,  
King Plaza,  
Palo Alto City  
Hall.*

# EL CHISME

## de Neighbors Abroad



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 in the province of Leyte in the Philippines, Oaxaca in Mexico, Enschede in the Netherlands, Linköping in Sweden, Albi in France, and Tsuchiura in Japan. 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

### March 2017

Saturday, 11th, 12 noon.

Welcome party for arriving Tsuchiura middle school exchange students. Jordan Middle School Cafetorium, 750 N. California Ave. Palo Alto. All are welcome. See cover.

Wednesday, 15th, 7:30 p.m.

Neighbors Abroad Board Meeting. 1409 Dana Avenue, Palo Alto

Friday, 17th, 6:00 p.m.

Tsuchiura Exchange Bingo party. Palo Alto Art Center, 1313 Newell Road, Palo Alto. All are welcome.

### April 2017

Wednesday, 20th, 7:30 p.m.

Neighbors Abroad Board Meeting. 1409 Dana Avenue, Palo Alto

**Next El Chisme Deadline—May 15, 2017**

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