



The Dispatch

Fall 2024

Welcome to *The Dispatch*, Neighbors Abroad's roundup of our many projects in furtherance of Palo Alto's Sister, Sibling, and Friendship City relationships around the world. The last few months have been especially busy as we marked a number of milestone Sister City anniversaries. You can read our newsletter below or, for optimal viewing, via [this link](#).

Camera Collaborations

Photography Clubs in Enschede and Palo Alto Point Their Lenses on Their Respective Cities



Sister Cities since 1980, Palo Alto and Enschede both have longstanding amateur camera clubs. The [Palo Alto Camera Club](#) has been a haven to Silicon Valley shutterbugs since 1935, and in Enschede, [Fotoclub de Zoeker](#) (which means the Seeker) is about to celebrate its 75th anniversary.

We brought together a select group of photographers from each club and gave them a simple mission: explore your cities and capture both their beauty and the blemishes. The resulting images offer thoughtful and sometimes surprising perspectives on each town. The Palo Alto photographers tended to draw inspiration primarily from the surrounding natural beauty, while the Enschede photogs focused on their city's

bustling streets and varied architecture. The project also revealed how the carelessness of a few can impact the overall aesthetic of a town.

After the photographers submitted their photos, they met over Zoom in mid-September, along with Enschede VP Monica Schreiber, to discuss their work, share tips and tricks--and build relationships that we hope will one day lead to "real world" trips to each other's cities for more photographic adventures.

View the project [here](#). Please also view the Enschede photos on Photoclub de Zoeker's own website in English [here](#) and in Dutch [here](#). Pictured above is Enschede photographer Martin Klein Schaarsberg, who also collaborated with us on the [We Are What We Eat exhibit](#) we hosted in early 2024 at the Palo Alto Art Center.



For the series of photos focused on the beauty of each city, Enschede photographer Henk Snuverink captured this warm image of Enschede's Old Market, the bustling heart of the town.





Palo Alto Camera Club member Yumiko Ready trained her lens on one of downtown Palo Alto's iconic buildings, left, while Enschede photographer Roald Kooijman showcased how the thoughtless actions of graffiti artists ruin a city's attempts to help its citizens and visitors by providing a city map.

[Click Here to View the Camera Collaborations Series](#)

Golden State Warriors Assistant Coach Travels to Enschede to Lead Basketball Clinic



Basketball players in Enschede and the broader Twente region of the Netherlands, were treated to a master class in early September from Golden State Warriors Assistant Coach Ron Adams. Twente Basketball Chairman René Ebeltjes has known Adams for decades and organized the visit, along with the municipality of Enschede and other entities. Going forward, the plan is to leverage the connections and community established through this event to coordinate basketball trainings and exchanges with Palo Alto-area basketball organizations. Please contact Enschede VP Monica Schreiber (mschreiber@neighborsabroad.org) if you would like to get involved or have ideas for some local hoops collaborations with some of the tallest people in Europe!

Terrific Teens: Let's Hear it For Our Exchange Students and Their Host Families!



A high point of our summer was the overlap of our two exchange students: Ariadna Yamile Fourzan Ortiz (Yami) from Oaxaca, Mexico and Julien Gandra-Moreno from Albi, France. Both of these teens were delightful representatives of their cities and countries. Yami stayed for three weeks with Harriet Stern, Curt Kinsky and their children, Beatrice and Jacob Kinsky. Earlier in the summer, Beatrice had her own live-abroad adventure Yami's family in Oaxaca. Julien split his time between the Ernest family (Ivan, Shana and their daughter Sydney, all of whom have been Neighbors Abroad-supporting rock stars over the last few years) and the Bonnard family (Matthieu, Karen, and their son Alec). We deeply appreciate these families opening their homes and their hearts to our Sister City youth and look forward to continued collaborations.

We snapped the above photo at the top of Salesforce Tower. From left to right: Sydney Ernest, Beatrice Kinsky, Yami Ortiz, Sophia Schreiber, Julien-Gandra Moreno, and Alec Bonnard. The group also got together on August 12, when the Palo Alto City Council honored them at the start of their regular meeting.



[Oaxaca, Mexico](#)

Oaxaca Firefighters Send Their Thanks

In August, Neighbors Abroad board member Wayne Thompson presented a plaque of appreciation from Manuel Maza, former Fire Chief in Oaxaca, to Palo Alto



Fire Chief Geo Blackshire. Wayne and Chief Blackshire are pictured here with the plaque.

Over the years, the Palo Alto Fire Department has arranged for numerous donations, including fire trucks, to their fire-fighting and emergency services counterparts in the state of Oaxaca. Most recently, the Palo Alto fire crew donated turnouts (protective clothing), which were delivered to Oaxaca by the delegation that visited to mark the 60th anniversary of the Sister City relationship. See the photo of the turnout handover below, and read more about the delegation...



Delegation to Oaxaca Marks Six Decades of Sister City Ties



Twenty Neighbors Abroad members traveled to Oaxaca, Mexico in September to mark the 60th anniversary of the Sister City relationship with Palo Alto. Delegation members – including Palo Alto's Vice Mayor Ed Lauing and Neighbors Abroad President Sarah Burgess – participated in impactful meetings and activities over three days in the culturally rich city and UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The group visited the village of Yaxe, two hours from the city center, where they toured a school and a local home that have benefited from the rainwater recapture units funded by Neighbors Abroad. (The project was awarded the 2022 Innovation in Humanitarian Assistance Award from Sister Cities International.) The massive tanks provide water security year-round to Yaxe's 2,000 residents, allowing them to devote more time to work and education. Later that evening, guests were treated to a sumptuous dinner – and several rounds of booming fireworks! – at the gorgeous hillside home of NA board members Flor and Ken Sanchez.

The next day, *Presidente* (the Mexican equivalent of mayor) Francisco Martinez Neri provided an official welcome to the group at Oaxaca's grand City Hall. The group cut the ribbon for a sanitation truck that was donated to the municipality by GreenWaste and the City of Palo Alto. A hearty breakfast of chilaquiles and a city bus tour followed.

The final morning was hosted by the Albergue Infantil Josefino, a home for vulnerable youth, and featured informative presentations by Albergue leaders and representatives from six other agencies that benefit from Neighbors Abroad's financial support. Energetic performances by young band members and folk dancers delighted the crowd. Sarah Burgess surprised the attendees by distributing additional

grants to the presenting organizations. At an afternoon visit with the *Bomberos* (Oaxaca State firefighters), board member Wayne Thompson presented the squad with fire suits that he had procured from the Palo Alto Fire Department.

With official activities concluded, the delegates toured Monte Albán, a stunning pre-Columbian archaeological site. Afterward, during a visit to his nearby studio, talented artisan Angelico Jiménez Carrillo solicited the birthdays of each of the two dozen participants and provided an entertaining description of their unique “spirit animals.” This prompted purchases of brightly-hued wooden coyotes, owls and ocelots.

Neighbors Abroad is indebted to Flor and Ken Sanchez, and the members of the Oaxaca Committee for their meticulous planning and gracious hospitality. “Salud” to 60 years of the extraordinary friendship between Palo Alto and Oaxaca!



The Oaxaca Celebration Continued on California Avenue

To celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Sister City relationship between Palo Alto and Oaxaca, Neighbors Abroad and the City of Palo Alto partnered with Lazos Oaxaqueños to bring a *calenda* to California Avenue on October 19. Part of

the rich cultural fabric of Oaxaca, calendas are celebratory public processions featuring dancing, paper mache figures, music, and revelry: part street party and part parade. The expected dancers were not able to make it, but the music and dancing continued on Cal Ave. for hours. Neighbors Abroad President Sarah Burgess clearly had a blast!



[Tsuchiura, Japan](#)

Delegation From Tsuchiura Welcomed in Palo Alto for 15th Anniversary Celebration

In early October, Neighbors Abroad was delighted to celebrate the 15th anniversary of the Sister City relationship between Palo Alto and Tsuchiura. It was especially meaningful to mark the occasion with our friends from Tsuchiura right here in Palo Alto. The visiting delegation, led by Mayor Mariko Ando, enjoyed a packed, three-day

itinerary that included a welcome dinner at California Avenue hotspot Terun, visits to Greene and JLS middle schools, as well as the Mitchell Park and Rinconada libraries. A high point was the planting of a 15th anniversary commemorative cherry tree at JLS, attended by Councilmember Vicki Veenker and JLS Principal Chris Grierson. The group also met with Palo Alto Mayor Greer Stone, council members, and City Manager Ed Shikada to discuss bicycle-friendly infrastructure and water conservation. At a celebratory dinner at the Palo Alto Art Center, speakers toasted the long-running middle school exchange program and past participants in the Lake Kasumigaura Marathon, among other shared topics of celebration.

The visit was capped with a thrilling Cal football game, where the delegation members were treated to a "welcome" message on the football stadium's giant screen.

Kudos to Tsuchiura Vice President Evelyn Shimazaki (and the many board members who helped) for ensuring that the visit was a grand success! And as soon as she waved goodbye to the delegation, Evelyn was hard at work organizing the next middle school exchange program. And for more on that, keep reading below...





[Read More About the 15th Anniversary](#)

Impressions From our Tsuchiura-Palo Alto Exchange Students: Read the Neighbors Abroad Blog

From Isabella Wang, 8th grader at JLS: "Staying at someone else's house was a new experience for me, and I was very nervous. However, my host family was extremely welcoming and I felt right at home....."

From Tsuchiura student Chiharu Kusama: "I applied for this program because of my longing to speak English and to go abroad. However, what I gained in those 10 days was a hundred times more intense than I had imagined, and what I had longed for turned into a goal to become an English speaker and a dream to work internationally...."

From Tsuchiura student Runa Matumoto: When I went to school, I was very surprised. Because it was too different from Japanese schools. Classes, lunch times, activity methods, are all different. I was excited. School students talked to me a lot. I was so happy and I am grateful....



Visit the [Neighbors Abroad blog](#) to continue reading these and other heartfelt essays from participants in our Tsuchiura-Palo Alto exchange program, as well as an essay from Neighbors Abroad VP and recent trip chaperone Nodelyn Smith.

[Albi, France](#)

Celebrating 30 Years of Sister City Connections in Beautiful Albi

In July, Albi Mayor Stéphanie Guiraud-Chaumeil and Palo Alto Mayor Greer Stone (pictured here) met in Albi to mark the 30th anniversary of the Sister City relationship. Albi city officials and citizens, along with three Neighbors Abroad representatives, were honored to join the mayors over three days of festivities, convivial gatherings (and of course some wine tasting), capped off with a ceremony marking the milestone anniversary. At the ceremony, Albi unveiled a lovely plaque commemorating the anniversary, which is now on display in Albi's Parc Rochequede.



Demonstrating typical French hospitality, the Albi team planned a robust schedule of activities to showcase their picturesque, red-brick city. *"To receive someone is to take charge of their happiness when they are with us,"* was the refrain we heard over and over during our stay--words we certainly live by in the world of Sister Cities!

The group made stops at the Sainte-Cecile Cathedral, said to be the largest brick building in the world, as well as the world-famous museum dedicated to Albi native son and world-renowned artist Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec. In addition to the mayors, participants in the 30th anniversary festivities included Serge Labordère (Chief of Staff for the Mayor of Albi), Jean-Luc Dargein-Vidal (City Counselor for International Affairs), Carole Barbera (Manger of City Hall Affairs), Julie-Anne Petrilli (Albi's Hydrogen and New Mobilities Manager), Sarah Burgess (Neighbors Abroad's President) and her husband Ron Valencia, and Ken and Flor Sanchez (Neighbors Abroad Board Members). *Joyeux anniversaire, Albi et Palo Alto!*

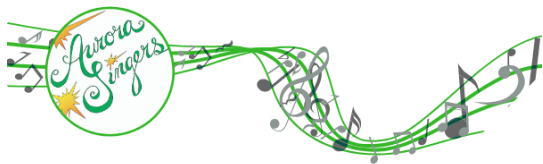


Is it just us, or does this photo of Serge Labordère, Mayor Greer Stone, and Jean-Luc Dargein-Vidal give you renewed appreciation for the current state of men's fashion? (Looking sharp, Mayor Stone, but still, as usual, the French win the fashion game.)

A Sustainable Symbol of Friendship: Palo Alto Plants a Silver Linden in Honor of Albi

A few months after the anniversary gathering in Albi, Palo Alto marked the 30th anniversary with an October evening tree planting at JLS Middle School, where our teacher-partner Jacqui Kandell teaches 7th and 8th grade French. Again, Mayor Stone honored us by helping with the tree planting and offering a few words about his appreciation for our French Sister City. We planted a silver linden tree, similar to the linden trees found in the Albi region. Among the attendees were former board member Carol Stevens; members of the Aurora Singers, which has a decades-long relationship with a chorale group in Albi; and various city officials and teachers. Albi VP Jennifer Kleckner organized the event and baked several heavenly French cakes and tarts that would have impressed even our discerning friends in Albi.





Music to Our Ears: Palo Alto's Aurora Singers

The Palo Alto-based community chorus the [Aurora Singers](#) is a longtime friend of and collaborator with Neighbors Abroad and our French Sister City, Albi. The non-profit Aurora Singers have collaborated and performed with the Chorale Assou-Lézert from Albi for more than 30 years. The Aurora Singers is looking for community-minded singers to join its ranks and would love to hear from people looking to get involved with or support the choral group. Please contact Cynthia Mahood Levin at cynthiamahood@yahoo.com

[Read More About the Albi-Palo Alto 30th Anniversary](#)

Sibling Cities Bond Over Three Days in Palo Alto



Seven delegates from our domestic Sibling City, Bloomington, Indiana, including Mayor Kerry Thomson, were in Palo Alto from October 11-13 for a busy few days of meetings, brainstorming sessions, and other activities with members of the Palo Alto city government, Sibling Cities USA, and Neighbors Abroad. Board member Wayne Thompson took the lead for

Neighbors Abroad and helped ensure a productive visit along with Palo Alto City Councilmember Vicki Veenker, founder of Sibling Cities USA, as well as many other people who contributed to the successful visit.

A welcome breakfast with the Palo Alto University Rotary Club kicked off the visit, during which various speakers addressed each city's challenges and opportunities in the realm of housing, including affordable housing. The group then went to City Hall to meet with City Manager Ed Shakada and his staff where they discussed economic development, sustainability, and climate change mitigation efforts. Neighbors Abroad hosted lunch at the Palo Alto Arts Center.

The group also toured the new, 15,000-square-foot, state of the art building that will soon house the city's fire and police departments. Many thanks to the Police Department for organizing the tour. Rotary Club member Richard Schoelerman and his wife Jackie hosted a lovely dinner at their home to round out a busy first day.

The next day, the group toured the restored Roth Building on Homer Avenue, which will soon open as the Palo Alto Museum, the permanent home of the city's archives. The Museum will showcase hands-on activities for

children and serve as a central resource for local history and research.

On Sunday, the Mitchell Park Community Center was the site of a Town Hall on housing issues. More than 30 delegation members and people from the community participated with their counterparts in Bloomington, engaging in lively and informed discussions about the housing challenges facing each city.



SF Chamber Orchestra Packs the Pews in Palo Alto



Neighbors Abroad partner the San Francisco Chamber Orchestra gave a standing-room-only concert at St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Palo Alto on October 19. Check out [SFCO's website](#) for information on upcoming concerts -- which are always free!

Neighbors Abroad Members - Save the Date!

Dues-paying members of Neighbors Abroad annually receive an invitation to the event of the season: our holiday party at the beautiful home of one of our board members. More details will come, but in the meantime, please save Sunday, December 15. The merriment will start at 5 PM.

Mark Your Calendars - San Francisco Chamber Orchestra's Free Nutcracker 'Sweet'

Neighbors Abroad Partner the San Francisco Chamber Orchestra will be giving its annual free "Nutcracker Sweet" concert and puppet show on December 1 at Mitchell Park Library in Palo Alto. Back by popular demand, Oakland Fairyland's beloved puppeteers team up with the SFCO for a delightful version of the holiday classic. Click [here](#) for more information.

In Memoriam: Our Barbara and Joe Evans
Three cheers for Barbara and Joe.
Who brought joy where'ere they did go!
Whether near or far--
They were like a star
And good will, they always did sow!
As President of Neighbors Abroad, Barbara did bide
With Joe ever present at her side
The hard work They did not shirk
And a sometimes raucous group they did guide!
The concept of Sister Cities, they held dear.
Eisenhower's dream that world peace could be clear.
The idea's a gem, So true to them,
It's the dream we ALL still do cheer!
One thing, among others, at their home, never ceased--Each delicious,
wonderful feast!
With people galore From every shore. They always gave the MOST not
the least!
So today, we can joyfully sing
Of the hope Joe and Barbara did bring!
Our voices lend, Fond memories send--And for all of us, these hopes
always ring!
Submitted by Ruth Carlton, former Neighbors Abroad Board Member

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