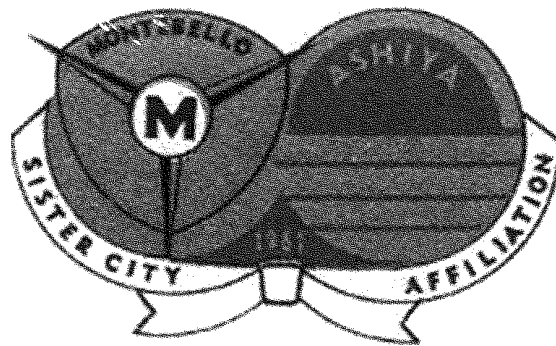


Honoring Our Past

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Celebrating Our Future

***50 YEARS OF  
FRIENDSHIP:  
A LEGACY BOOK***



Montebello-Ashiya Sister City Affiliation Association  
and the *Student Exchange Ambassador Program*  
1961 - 2011

July 2011

Dear Friends,

This year we are celebrating fifty years of friendship and cultural exchange between our beloved cities of Montebello, California and Ashiya, Japan. To honor this significant occasion, we are pleased to present *50 Years of Friendship: A legacy book*. This book is intended to honor our past and celebrate our future.

We would like to thank all those who have contributed to the success of this project including, Kerry Franco, Saya Yamaguchi, Yae Aihara, and all the student ambassadors who kindly shared their experiences with us.

Sincerely,

Marian Lopez

50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Chairperson



***.For me and for all previous and future ambassadors, the Sister City Association and our trip abroad provides a vehicle for understanding, something we must share with those around us here at home.***

*This Association can facilitate furthering the US- Japan relationship from a partnership to a friendship -one defined by respect and a mutual desire to erase any lines now dividing us".*

*-Marc Stad, 1996 Montebello Ambassador*

# Honoring Our Past: Forming the friendship

In September of 1959, the City of Montebello was honored by receiving an invitation to participate in the fifth biennial meeting of the Japan-American Conference of Mayors and Chamber of Commerce Officials. The conference, which was scheduled for the following November in Osaka, Japan, was seen by city officials as a forerunner to establishing a sister-city program. Recognizing the opportunity before them, the city committed to send Councilwoman, Elaine Kirchner by establishing the "Send Elaine to Japan Fund". With a \$2,000 goal to cover travel expenses, the Montebello community responded in abundance. Contributions were collected due to the desire of the community to promote goodwill and understanding between two counties proved to be extremely valuable.

During the conference, Mrs. Kirchner participated in a round table discussion of the "People to People" program, a 1956 initiative by President Dwight D. Eisenhower to establish cultural exchange programs. It was here that Mrs. Kirchner indicated Montebello's interest in establishing a "Sister City" in Japan. As a result of her statements, Mrs. Kirchner was asked to participate in a press conference, which caught the attention of Mr. Hiroyasu Okuyama of Ashiya, Japan. On November 7, 1959, Mrs. Kirchner received a phone call in her hotel room from Mr. Okuyama. Anxious for his city to have an opportunity to affiliate with Montebello, Mr. Okuyama asked for Montebello's consideration to establish Ashiya, Japan as its "Sister City".

Over the next several months, Mrs. Kirchner and Mr. Okuyama worked diligently to gather support from their respective cities. Committees were formed, resolutions were passed, and further dialogue and correspondences continued. By August of 1960, a partnership between the two cities was all but certain. A firm affiliation with the Lions' Club of Ashiya and Montebello was established and solidified by exchanging of Lions' Club banners, furthering the cities intent for partnership.

Additionally, the United States Information Agency and the School Affiliation Service of American Friend Service Committee approved arrangements and created a "pen pal" program for school affiliations between Yamate Elementary School of Ashiya and Greenwood Elementary of Montebello and Ashiya High School and Montebello Junior High School.

On May 24, 1961, a Sister City relationship was officially established between the City of Montebello and the City of Ashiya to promote cultural and industrial exchanges and further promote friendship and international goodwill between the United States of America and Japan. To further this lasting friendship between the cities, the Student Ambassador Exchange Program was initiated in 1964. The Ambassador program has enabled the "Sister Cities" to continue its relationship and will carry on its legacy.



# Celebrating our Future: Continuing our Legacy

The Montebello Ashiya Sister City Affiliation Association continues to thrive in the City of Montebello because of the commitment of its community members. The association has benefited from the invaluable support of the Montebello City Council Members, Montebello Rotary, Montebello Soroptimists, Montebello Lions, Montebello Chambers of Commerce and especially, association members, and ambassadors and their families!

The Montebello community is proud of our relationship with our friends in Ashiya. We hope to continue our program and look forward to strengthening our partnership to see us through for the next 50 years!

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## We are the legacy!

### Presidents of the Montebello-Ashiya Sister City Association:

Elaine Kirchner  
Richard Harris  
Florence Raines  
Dr. George  
Miller Fidel  
Montez Muriel  
Peck

Dr. Bruce Odou  
Nick Valedéz  
Andrew Lambo  
Mike Patterson  
Elizabeth Porras  
Mike Patterson  
Phyllis Malott  
Eleanor Chow  
Heather Lee

Blanca Zendejas  
Phil Olsen  
Yae Aihara  
Irene LaBrada  
Phil Olsen  
Katherine Kivorkian  
Norma Lambo  
Doug McIntosh  
Michael Okamura  
Vivian Alaniz-  
Borup  
Marian Moure Lopez  
Saya Yamaguchi  
Art Najera  
Dr. Carlos Haro

### Presidents of the Ashiya Cosmopolitan Association (ACA):

Saiitirou Hirano  
Yasuzirou Hatiuma  
Hirohisa Kato  
Atushi Watanabe  
Hideo Inakagi  
Takao Takase  
Yoshie Kishii  
Seizi Igarashi

Sadako Toda  
Riichi Hayashi  
Takeyasu Inakagi  
Atuko Emi  
Kenzaburo Idá  
Fumio Harada  
Kaoru Igarashi  
Satoshi Iue  
Takeyasu Inakagi  
Shizuko  
Hashitani

