



SISTER CITY ASSOCIATION OF TRACY, INC.  
STUDENT EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGE  
P.O. Box 428 Tracy, CA 95378  
Tracysistercity.org

Dear Parents and Students,

Thank you for your interest in the Tracy Sister City Youth Exchange Program to Memuro, Japan. Established 30 years ago to promote friendship and cross-cultural understanding with our Sister City in Memuro, the Youth Exchange Program has proven to be a wonderful experience for over 200 Tracy-area 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. We sincerely hope your child will find it a rewarding and enriching experience, with memories and friendships to last a lifetime. A parent informational meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 11, 2019 at 6:30 p.m. at Lolly Hansen Senior Center. Listed below you will find an overview of the Exchange Program in addition to the application requirements and participation guidelines.

Introduction to Tracy's Sister City of Memuro, Japan: Memuro is a small, agricultural community of about 20,000 people located on the northern island of Hokkaido, Japan. It is a very safe and scenic town. We have found over the many years of friendship that the people are warm, genuine, and are wonderful host families.

Trip Details: Each year, the program selects up to ten Tracy "Youth Ambassadors" and sends them with two chaperones to Memuro for a nine-day stay (including travel time). Six of those days are spent with a Japanese home stay family. In addition to the home stay experience, students will attend several schools as well as have the opportunity to tour local museums, shrines, and shopping areas. Students are selected through an application and interview process in November, and the trip (2020 dates TBD) usually occurs in June. Once selected, Youth Ambassadors participate in mandatory bi-weekly cultural classes in preparation for their visit. Since this is a cultural experience, cell phone use is limited or not available during the trip.

Ambassador Duties: As a representative of the City of Tracy, and American youth, Ambassadors will interact with the Mayor and Town Council of Memuro, as well as Teachers, Principals and the Superintendent of Schools. Ambassadors are expected to speak and carry themselves in a manner which represents the best of Tracy and America. Occasionally, students will also give speeches while in Memuro.

Cultural Classes: Prior to the trip to Memuro, students must attend mandatory bi-weekly cultural classes, each class lasting 1½ hours. The class schedule is determined at the first Youth Ambassador meeting. Classes, emphasizing Japanese customs, culture and language are taught by members of Sister City. Youth Ambassadors also prepare a dance which is later performed at the Youth Ambassador's "Sayonara Party" in Japan. **We realize many students have various other school and athletic commitments, but it is imperative and mandatory that students attend these classes.**

Home Stay Experience and Exchange: Memuro is a small town, with many of their host families being well-known and respected members of their community. Most have children who are participating in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade Memuro Youth Exchange to Tracy.

Every Spring, Tracy entertains a group of ten Memuro Youth Ambassadors for a nine-day stay. Their stay in Tracy mirrors our Youth Exchange trip to Memuro in many ways. Memuro Ambassadors visit for nine days total, six days spent with a Tracy host family. Memuro Ambassadors visit Tracy schools, museums, shops and city government buildings. The other time is spent with their tour guide in San Francisco. Because these Memuro students come to Tracy in Spring and the Tracy Ambassadors do not



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leave for Memuro until June, we strongly encourage our Tracy Ambassadors and their families to host a Memuro student. Not only is it a terrific and rewarding experience for the entire family, but in most cases it gives our Tracy Ambassadors the opportunity to get to know their future host 'brother' or 'sister'. (If the Memuro Ambassador's family is also willing to host, we do our best to "match and exchange" families. The Tracy Ambassador's family will host a Memuro student in Spring, and then visits their Memuro student's family in June).

If your family is not able to host, Tracy Ambassadors will be placed with Memuro families based on hobbies, interests and family makeup (children of same sex/age, etc.). Any allergies or special medical needs are also taken into consideration.

Costs and Expenses: While Sister City reserves the group airline tickets for the trip, each family is responsible for the cost of the airline ticket, understanding that ticket prices vary each year and an exact price cannot be quoted until Spring. As such, we require the parents and students to actively fundraise in the months preceding. In addition to the tickets, other costs include obtaining a US passport, inexpensive host family gifts, new shoes for visiting Memuro schools, spending money in Japan, travel uniform, etc.

Fundraising: Parent participation is crucial to the success of the trip. While the students are attending cultural classes, we require the parents to meet and discuss fundraising opportunities. As a target goal, we ask that the parents raise at least \$5,000 to cover all group ground expenses for Ambassadors and chaperones (two hotel nights in Sapporo, group meals at airports and hotels, tour and museum entrance fees). The parent group is responsible for managing all fundraising money with a bank account provided by Sister City strictly for this purpose. If the parent group raises more than \$5,000, any leftover money is divided equally and dispersed back to the 10 Ambassadors and 2 chaperones. While many parents have fundraising experience through schools and various organizations, we recognize that not all parents are familiar with the fundraising process. Sister City will provide at least one parent group mentor who can recommend and supply general support on where to fundraise and how to get started. In the past, parent groups have raised as little as \$3,500 and as much as \$20,000!

Application Process: The Sister City Educational Exchange committee is seeking qualified eighth grade students who demonstrate maturity, responsibility and leadership skills. A parent informational meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 11, 2019 at 6:30 p.m. at Lolly Hansen Senior Center. Please complete the attached application and mail it to the address provided (P.O. Box 428 Tracy, CA 95378) along with:

- \_\_\_\_\_ A recent photograph
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$10 application fee (checks made out to Sister City Association of Tracy)
- \_\_\_\_\_ A one-page essay as to why they would like to be considered for selection

**APPLICATIONS MUST BE POSTMARKED BY OCTOBER 11, 2019.**

Additionally, the applicant must give the attached Teacher Recommendation form to two teachers along with a stamped and addressed envelope. Applicants must allow ample time for the teacher to complete their recommendation and mail it to Sister City Association by the deadline.

Sister City Association of Tracy offers student exchange opportunities to Tracy's sister city of Memuro, Japan. Tracy public schools promote these opportunities through the Sister City Student Educational Exchange Program. Tracy's public schools and Sister City Association of Tracy, Inc. assume no liability or sponsorship for the student program but endeavors to assist the program coordinators in finding qualified candidates.



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**APPLICATION**

**MUST BE POSTMARKED BY OCTOBER 11, 2019**  
 Contact: Julie Mangskau at julie.mangskau@gmail.com

**Parent Informational Meeting Wednesday, September 11, 2019 at Lolly Hansen Senior Center**  
**Only complete applications will be considered for an interview on Saturday, November 2, 2019**

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ School Attending \_\_\_\_\_

Parents Names (1) \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Parents Names (2) \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (day) \_\_\_\_\_ (evening) \_\_\_\_\_

Names of Teachers asked for Recommendations (1) \_\_\_\_\_ (2) \_\_\_\_\_

**SCHOOL VERIFICATION**

**(It is the responsibility of the applicant to get the school verification completed)**

I, the legal guardian of \_\_\_\_\_, give my permission for the school to verify to the Sister City Student Educational Exchange committee that my child meets the criteria to be recommended for the Educational Exchange visit to Memuro, Japan.

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_

School Verification \_\_\_\_\_

Person Verifying	Title	Date
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Please verify student qualifications

- Student in good academic standing (2.0 or higher)
- Attendance at 90% or better
- Behavior – NO suspensions (in 7<sup>th</sup> grade to present)

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**\*\*\*FOR SISTER CITY ASSOCIATION USE ONLY\*\*\***

Application Received: \_\_\_\_\_ Application complete and legible: \_\_\_\_\_ Application Fee: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Essay: \_\_\_\_\_ Photo: \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher Rec 1: \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher Rec 2: \_\_\_\_\_



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## TEACHER RECOMMENDATION FORM

**\*\*\*CONFIDENTIAL\*\*\***

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

School Attending \_\_\_\_\_

To the Applicant:

Fill in the above information and give to your teacher with a stamped envelope addressed to Sister City Association. Remember to give your teachers sufficient time to complete and mail before October 11, 2019.

To the Recommender:

This student is applying to be an Ambassador for the Sister City of Tracy Student Educational Exchange Program visiting our sister city of Memuro, Japan. Ambassadors should be individuals who take pride in themselves, demonstrate respect of authority, and interact with their peers. Your candid comments will be very helpful and your information will only be reviewed by the selection committee of Sister City Association. Please complete this **confidential** form and mail directly to the address below. For this applicant to be considered, this recommendation must be postmarked by **October 11, 2019**.

Recommender's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ School Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Recommendation form must be postmarked by: **OCTOBER 11, 2019**.

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