



Springfield Sister Cities Association

Springfield, Missouri

Upcoming

July
Kellswater Benefit Concert

August
Isesaki Schools Visit
Kellswater in Isesaki

September
Fall Festival
Hispanic Heritage Month

October
Citizens Trip to Japan

November
Board of Dir. Workshop

Full Listing of SSCA Events on Page 5 →

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Old Friends Reunite

Latest Delegation to Isesaki Rekindles Friendships

By Bob Stephens

In February, seven Springfieldians departed through the new Springfield-Branson National Airport for our sister city of Isesaki, Japan. These travelers represented both the Sister Cities Board of Directors as well as the City of Springfield.

Greg Burris, City Manager, and Bob Stephens, Springfield City Council General member, represented our local government. They were joined by John Price, president of the local Sister Cities Association; Bob Jones, vice-



Delegation members attend a welcome reception

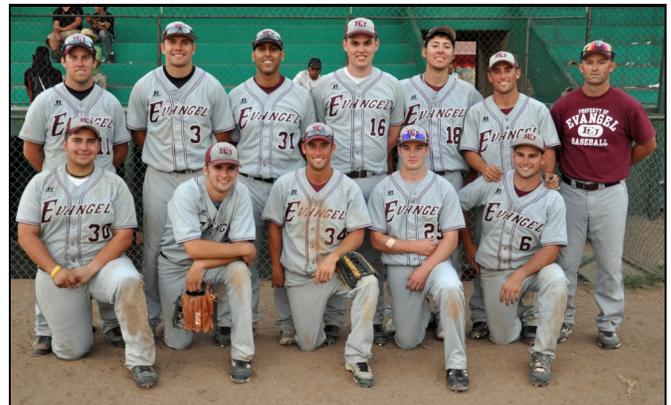
president; Russ RuBert, SSCA Board member, and his wife Pam, who is a former Board member. Cindy Jobe, coordi-

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Baseballers Hit Home Run in Mexico

By Dennis Whaley

Twelve members of the Evangel University baseball team were in the city of Tlaquepaque, Mexico playing the city league teams from Saturday, May 29 - Saturday, June 5. Baseball is a popular local sport, and the games drew hundreds of fans. In addition to playing against the Tlaquepaque team, the Evangel Crusad-



Evangel University Baseball Team during visit to Mexico

ers, together with their Mexican amigos, went each morning and conducted youth Baseball cont' page 2 →

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baseball camps in the inner-city.

The invitation to the team came about through the Springfield Sister Cities Association/Rotary Club relationship. As Evangel's Director of University Relations, I gave two members of the Tlaquepaque Chamber of Commerce a tour of EU's campus in January 2009. They were impressed with Evangel's baseball field house and program.

Baseball is a sport growing in popularity in central Mexico, and Tlaquepaque had been looking for an American team that would be willing to come play their city league. The representatives from Tlaquepaque also were excited about the positive impact that players could have on the young men and boys of their city.

Sponsors for the event included Corporate Business Systems, Empire Bank, Morelock-Ross Builders, and former Mayor Tom Carlson. After playing in



Evangel University and Tlaquepaque teams pose for a group photo at the end of a long, but rewarding week

baseball in the U.S.," said EU Pitcher Al Lebron, Orlando, Fla. "Also, this trip gave us a better understanding of a different culture and other people. It is a great opportunity for the baseball team to go out and touch the lives of others outside of the U.S."

This trip exemplified what Evangel is all about: Teaching students to integrate faith, learning and life. In this case, it's playing baseball. Our students did what they do — played baseball — and in doing that, they were positive role models to young men in another country, having a chance to touch the lives of the children and share beyond baseball one-on-one. This is what Evangel does best.

JRB Rocks It Out In Tlaquepaque

By Bob Jones

Tlaquepaque feels like a second home after one visit. Our group of aging rockers – the JRB band—was treated like stars, both for our first few nights at Quinta Don Jose, and during a home stay with the famous musician Paco Padilla and his wonderful family. Our main gig was on the City Square with an audience of hundreds and a Mariachi band escort to the stage from City Hall. But we also played behind closed doors our last night with some of Mexico's most talented and accomplished musicians—a select audience of Springfieldians, including the Reinerts and Bixlers, there on a Rotary project visit.

Like Springfield, much of the beauty of Tlaquepaque is hidden behind the doors of its build-

ings. In Tlaquepaque, these doors are set in many colored walls against its

narrow sidewalks and streets. From a busy, noisy small city street,

you enter the quiet luxury and open-air living of gardens, courtyards, and open living areas filled with fragrant trees and singing birds.

But the people are what make these Edens so special. The hospitality of Arturo Magana and the Padilla family made us feel as relaxed and as at home in their places as in our own—in fact, some days, more relaxed! If you have not already visited, please go. You can call it a Sister City trip, but it's an indulgence, too.



JRB Band Relaxes over some tunes at Paco Padilla's home in Tlaquepaque

Mariachi! Music! Magic!

By Ed Derr

Mariachi Femenil Nuevo Tecalitlan took our community by storm again a few weeks ago blessing the city of Springfield with rhythms and melodies only their unique style of mariachi music can. They came to play for our annual ArtsFiesta! celebration that was held on May 1. This year's ArtsFiesta! was a special one as our "Fiesta of musical art" helped celebrate Artfest's 30 year anniversary. The outdoor concert on Walnut Street showcased the band's professionalism and showmanship. In addition to mariachi music, the crowd was entertained by wonderful ethnic dances by dance groups Grupo Latino Americano, Hand In Hand dancers, and Grupo Libertad. It was a wonderful evening filled with people, dancing and music. If "art" in its jewelry form is what you were after, the Tlaquepaque Committee had it. Hector Salgado had a booth at Artsfest selling numerous pieces of his Tlaquepaque-made jewelry.

As much fun as ArtsFiesta! was, that event was not the only performance Mariachi Femenil Nuevo Tecalitlan made while in Springfield. The band played at eight elementary schools, two colleges, Springfield Cardinals baseball game, Busch Municipal Building for city employees, the Boys and Girls Club and Missouri Hotel. Perhaps you saw them on KY3 or KSPR? Yes, the band took our community by storm again. The ladies also made a visit to the Good Samaritan Boys Ranch near Brighton, Mo. where they performed for the young men there. Inspirational messages of "peace through people" and the importance of "cultural understanding" were conveyed that day. I also think some hearts were broken when the girls left the ranch.

A delegation of Tlaquepaque city council members also made the trip to Springfield for ArtsFiesta!. These people were all new to Springfield and to our life here in the Ozarks, as they are all newly elected officials to their Tlaquepaque city posts. Our generosity and friendship won them over. They left with many good memories of our community and of the people that call Springfield home. Way to go! The city officials also returned to Tlaquepaque with knowledge



Mariachi Femenil Nuevo Tecalitlan

about some practices and procedures they can implement there. You see, the Tlaquepaque Committee coordinated some special meetings for the delegation to address some topics of interest they hold and that Springfield excels in. The delegation had meetings with representatives from our Parks, Police and Public Works Departments, and a meeting with members from Drury's Education Department on future educational exchanges involving students and faculty.

I applaud the work of the Tlaquepaque Committee for its planning and persistence to make this year's ArtsFiesta! and visit by Mariachi Femenil Nuevo Tecalitlan and city official delegation one of the best ever.

In Memoriam

**SSCA lost a very special friend
and Board member with the
recent passing of Kay Finnie.
Our hearts and prayers go out to
Tom and family.**

**We have established an SSCA scholarship fund in
Kay's name, to be used for youth exchanges. If
you are interested in contributing, please call
864-1341 or send checks to: SSCA, 1923 N. Weller,
Springfield, MO 65803
Memo: Kay Finnie Scholarship Fund**

Extending Your Family Globally

One Couple's Story of Home-Stays

By Cindy & Bob Stephens

Whether coming or going, home hosting is a great experience. This year, my wife and I have had the experience of both.

In February, 2010, I traveled to Isesaki, Japan representing Springfield City Council to renew and re-affirm our 24-year Sister City relationship. After the initial night or two in a local hotel, all members of our visiting party were assigned to home hosts.

The Nishamuri family welcomed me into their home for the rest of the week. My family consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Nishamuri and their two daughters. Their son was away in Tokyo at school.

As home hosts, they volunteered their time to drive me to wherever I needed to be and also spent a day showing me around Isesaki, where we visited a large religious statue, an open air market, a grotto with a number of religious icons displayed, and then had a meal at a very nice restaurant. We then returned to the house, where we all got dressed for the banquet that evening.

Japanese society is more formal or "scheduled" than here in the U.S. and the first order of business on my first evening in their home was to arrange our schedule for the next day. This pattern was followed for the remainder of my trip. I was there, although trying to stay out of the way, while the Nishamuri daughters were getting ready for work. I went with them to the gro-

cery store and, essentially, followed their schedules unless I had other appointments scheduled by the International Relations Department.

The really important thing about staying with my home hosts was the almost immediate feeling of becoming a part of their family. I feel as though I have another family in Japan and I certainly hope they understand that we are their family here in the states.

The hosting part is a little bit different. Cindy and I hosted two of the members, Blanca and Yasmin.

For the all-female mariachi group, we were the ones who knew where we were going, when we had to be there, and were there to help provide whatever they needed to make their trip to Springfield a success. We met them at the airport and took part in the welcoming ceremonies. We also learned which of the musicians would be staying with us and had a few minutes to introduce ourselves before we all headed out to our various homes. It turned out that the ladies were starving (two legs of an air trip without food will do that), so we gave them several options of restaurants and their choice was The Argentina Steak House.

After dinner, we got them settled in and then gathered in the family room to get acquainted. We



Cindy & Bob Stephens (right) with Blanca and Yasmin, who they hosted in Springfield at their home

looked at family photos and learned that all the musicians were professionals and that this was their only job. We heard about their weeklong trip to London (they arrived back in Mexico the day before they left for Springfield!) and about how they were selected for the group.

The next three or four days were a whirlwind of appearances, changing costumes, and getting them from one spot to another. Although they were very tired, they were always professional and their appearances at the schools were highlights of the students' week.

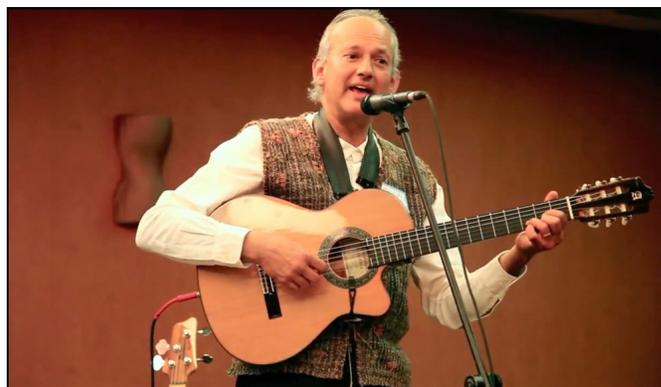
Again, the main take-away for me was the feeling that I now have another extended family in a different country. Cindy summed up that feeling perfectly when Yasmin was playing a solo, "It's our daughter! I'm so proud!" There is no doubt in my mind that Blanca and Yasmin understand that they are welcome in our home at any time and that, when we get to Tlaquepaque, we will be looking for them.

Tlaquepaque Treasure Shared with Springfield Students

By Sonja Baldwin In March, the students at Boyd and Field Elementary Schools were entertained and enlightened by the talents and teaching of recording artist, Paco Padilla, from Tlaquepaque, Mexico. Paco had come to be the guest performer for the annual meeting of the Springfield Sister Cities Association. What a rare privilege it was that he shared his unique gifts with the boys and girls of those schools! Not only did he play songs he had written himself, which portray life in Tlaquepaque, he also intermingled tales of Mexican Independence and the Mexican Revolution which are both being celebrated this year in Mexico.

Paco captures the simple joys of living and loving in his songs, and fills our senses with the savory smells and tastes of fresh *tortillas*, chile peppers, *pan de dulce* and *pan de sal*. He makes the ordinary comings and goings of his *barrio*, his neighborhood, something extraordinary.

Paco is a master at connecting with the audience, and that is no small feat when you consider they ranged in ages from five to 11! Students were encouraged to sing along on certain songs like "A la Cola" and "La Cucaracha." At both schools students asked



Paco Padilla

questions at the end of the performance.

At Field, students sang a special song for Paco, "We are the World," in Spanish and English. As a follow-up to the concert, students in fourth grade reflected on how Paco used music to express himself as a part of their inquiry unit called "Unique Me." Both Boyd and Field offer the Primary Years Programme of the International Baccalaureate. As a part of that programme, they offer Spanish in grades K through 5. As their Spanish teacher, I am so grateful to Paco and SSCA for giving the children the opportunity to experience Mexican culture first hand!

¡Muchas gracias por venir!

Thanks so much for coming!

Mark Your Calendars

July

July 15 - Kellswater Benefit Concert at Lindberg's on Commercial Street

August

August 3 - 6 - Officials from Isesaki Schools visit Springfield

August 4 - 11 - Springfield's Kellswater travels to Isesaki (see insert)

September

September 10 - 12 - 15th annual Japanese Fall Festival at Nathanael Greene/Close Memorial Park

(volunteers and host families needed for delegation arriving Sept. 8)

Sept. 15 - Oct. 15 - Hispanic Heritage Month activities

October

*October - Citizens group from Springfield travels to Japan. *Sign up now!*



New Website

PeaceThroughPeople.org

➔ Japan cont' from page 1

nator of the Sister Cities program for Springfield, did her best to keep us from going astray.

The Sister City relationship between Springfield

and Isesaki has been going on for more than 24 years. With both cities having a new

Mayor and new Council, the time was optimal for a visit to re-assert our interest in Isesaki as a sister city and in continuing the various exchanges between the cities.

While in Isesaki, the group from Springfield had the opportunity to meet formally with the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Isesaki, the president of the City Council, the head of Isesaki's public school system, and a number of members of the International Relations Department, which is a city department in Isesaki. Formal speeches and gifts were exchanged and the formal relationship between our cities was re-established.

In addition, on our first day in Isesaki, we had dinner with the group of gardeners, master gardeners, and landscape professionals in Isesaki. This group was very instrumental in helping us plan areas of the Japanese Stroll Garden at Nathanael Greene Park. And, in the true spirit of the Sister Cities program, they sent 11 gardeners to Springfield and took the lead in raising over \$17,000 to help repair the Japanese gardens after our devastating ice storm in 2007. This is the Sister Cities program at its best.

The first three days were spent in a small hotel in Isesaki and then we all were able to stay the remaining two days with our host families. Mr. and Mrs. Nishimura were my host parents and they and their daughters were absolutely wonderful. They have a very traditional Japanese house and Mr. Nishimura also runs a martial arts *dojo* in a building next to the house.

On the second full day that I stayed with them, we visited a Shinto shrine in a cave and also a huge statue of Buddha near Isesaki. After lunch, we returned to the house and they prepared for their demonstration of martial arts and self-defense at the Sayonara Party that

was held for us on the last night of our stay. Their skills and ability with swords and other historical defensive weapons were astounding.

The Sister Cities Program can and will support the “global perspectives” aspect of our community’s next strategic plan. The cultural exchanges that occur as a result of Springfield’s relationship with both Isesaki, Japan and Tlaquepaque, Mexico are valuable in many ways. As the importance of grasping a more global perspective in Springfield and preparing for the inevitable increase in diversity our community is experiencing and will continue to experience, the Sister Cities program will be a keystone within that initiative.

- Greg Burris, Springfield City Manager, on his trip to Isesaki

Although I was on this trip as a member of the Springfield government structure, I hope to return in the future on one of our citizen trips sponsored by SSCA. The motto of Sister Cities is “Peace Through People” and I encourage all who can go to make a trip to either Isesaki or Tlaquepaque. You will meet some wonderful people who will become very good friends.

SPECIAL TRIP PHOTO COLLAGE ON BACK COVER

2010 Kite Festival Wrap-Up



We were finally blessed with lots of sunshine and warm weather for this year’s Cherry Blossom Kite Festival in Mizumoto Japanese Stroll Garden, which each year kicks off spring and the opening of the Garden. Thank you to the Springfield Regional Arts Council and the Park Board’s SPARC program for their organization of the kite design contest. The garden will remain open through October.

- Cindy Jobe

A Message From SSCA President Price



This is my first opportunity to say how much I appreciate the chance to serve as President of Springfield Sister Cities, and how much I'm looking forward to the next two years. We have a very strong organization, and our affairs were left in great condition by Dianne Elizabeth Osis, our immediate past President. I want to pass along a comment made recently by the Consular Officer of the Mexican Consulate in Kansas City, who told us that SSCA is the most organized and effective sister cities program he has ever experienced. We have created something to be proud of, and I pledge to do my best to help keep SSCA moving onward and upward.

My first official act was a real pleasure – I joined City Manager Greg Burris, Councilman and SSCA Board Member Bob Stephens, SSCA Vice President Bob Jones, our Coordinator Cindy Jobe and Board Member/Past President Russ RuBert and his wife Pam on a February trip to Isesaki. We met the new Isesaki city officials, saw many of our long time friends, and came back with a renewed commitment from both cities to continue and expand our 24-year relationship. Watch for exciting news upcoming about a major student exchange program that we're discussing with Isesaki.

It is always a privilege for the SSCA President to receive visiting groups from our sister cities, and this year's visit by the Mariachi Femenil Nuevo Tecalitlan and city officials from Tlaquepaque was another highlight. SSCA was able to present the mariachi to over 15 different audiences, from elementary schools to the Good Samaritan Boys Ranch, the Missouri Hotel and of course, ArtsFiesta!. Our many thanks go out to the City of Tlaquepaque for making this visit possible again.

I think we all agree that SSCA is a labor of love, and I loved our annual membership meeting in March. Each year the meeting gets better, larger and more fun. It was especially a treat for Bob Jones and I to perform with our good friend, Paco Padilla, and we thank you for indulging us! It shows the quality of friends we have made that Paco came to Springfield on his vacation time to be with us at the annual meeting.

Of course this labor of love keeps us all very busy, and we have a full calendar already planned for the rest of this year. Check out our new website: www.PeaceThroughPeople.org for events and dates, including the Japanese Fall Festival, sending student artwork to Isesaki, continuing our planning work with the City of Springfield on the Sister Cities Plaza, and receiving a group of school officials from Isesaki in August to plan the student exchange program. I am certain you'll find lots of things to interest you, and the website contains easy links and forms to help you get involved (or more involved!) with SSCA. Our biggest event of the year, the Japanese Fall Festival, is September 10-12 and we need you to volunteer and help make it another big success. Our very special thanks go out to Russ and Pam RuBert for all the great work they've done creating and updating the new website – it is a major innovation for SSCA that will take our communications and outreach to the next level.

Springfield Sister Cities Association
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Springfield, MO 65803
www.PeaceThroughPeople.org



Springfield, Missouri

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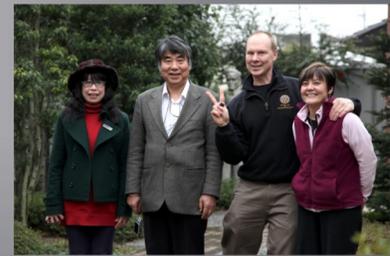
Kelvin Pamperien

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2010 February - Delegation to Isesaki, Japan

Photos by Russ and Pam RuBert, RuBert Studios