



Springfield, Missouri

## Upcoming

**November**

5th Board Retreat &amp; Workshop

**6th & 8th**

Supercharge Fundraisers

**December**

14th Board Meeting &amp; Nomination of 2011 Board

**Full Listing of SSCA Events - Insert →**

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Travel to Mexico**Pass It On - Share this newsletter with a friend or family member**

# Springfield Sister Cities Association

## Fall Festival Sets Records

### Weather & volunteers key

By Cindy Jobe



Ikebana flower arranging by a guest from Isesaki

they learned about Japanese culture.

This year, the City of Isesaki sent a performing delegation made up of 10 wonderful ladies that entertained the crowd with traditional Japanese arts. Several members performed many tea ceremonies, so guests could participate and experience this very unique ritual first-hand. Another part of the delegation gave several "hands-on" ikebana (a form of flower arranging specific to Japan) demonstrations, and yet another part of the delegation performed traditional Japanese dance. We are so grateful to this group. They help make this a truly authentic event. Their attitudes about meeting people were great, they wore the beautiful kimonos, smiled as they posed for

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## New Sister Cities Plaza

### Gateway for Jordan Valley Park

**By Carolyn Gerdes** A very visible reminder of our relationship with Isesaki, Japan and Tlaquepaque, Mexico can now be seen in Jordan Valley Park. The old quarry site has been transformed into the Commons at Jordan Valley and a plaza dedicated to our sister cities can be seen just west of National on Trafficway.

The plaza consists of a series of curved concrete benches. In the center of the benches is a granite map of the world and the flags of the United States, Japan and Mexico will be flown in the plaza. Ceramic tiles produced and designed by our friends in Tlaquepaque decorate the exterior of the benches. A similar enhancement will be



**Entryway at National & East Trafficway**  
added at a later date to recognize Isesaki. In addition, cherry trees, which are the national tree of Japan, will be planted in November.

This plaza is an attractive addition to the park and a gathering place for all to

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photographs, and simply had a good time. The weather forecast had us a bit on edge, but it turned out to be an absolutely beautiful weekend, so we were off to a good start. We kicked off the event with our parade of 200 school children on Friday evening. They marched in, led by a local Japanese group, dancing and singing. Immediately after the opening ceremony, the children were entertained by the Osuwa Taiko drum group from St. Louis. The drummers are always a highlight to our event, so this year we added them to the schedule for Friday night.

Other performers included a traditional Japanese story teller who flew in from Massachusetts, Springfield Ballet members who performed to Taiko music, a local Suzuki violin group, Kellswater Band (the group who represented us in Isesaki this year), the JRB Band (represented us in Tlaquepaque this year), Supercharge (who has been chosen to represent Springfield at the 2011 Isesaki City Festival),



Traditional Japanese dance by guests from Isesaki

Photo: Russ Robert

local flutist Chapel Tagami, several local martial arts groups, and more. We had a good combination of out-of-state professional performers, mixed with local performing artists.

A special thanks to the Branson High School Japan Club for hosting the children's area this year. They did a great job of entertaining hundreds of kids with Japanese crafts and games. This is quite the undertaking, and even though they were a bit overwhelmed, the Branson students were organized and enthusiastic.

SSCA shares the proceeds from the entry gate with the Springfield-Greene County Park Board. The relationship between Parks and SSCA has grown into a true partnership in many ways, so giving back to support the Park Board and their efforts with the maintenance and development of the Mizumoto Japanese Stroll Garden is the perfect way to say "thank you." This year SSCA will donate approximately \$12,000, so we thank each and every one of you who came to our Festival! Mark your calendars now for the 16th Annual Japanese Fall Festival on September 9-11, 2011!

## Kellswater Does a 'Jig' In Japan

### First class travel experience to Isesaki for band members

By Bob Stephens

There is no travel as exciting and immersing as Sister Cities home stays. Instead of staying in anonymous, internationally-identical hotels, our Sister Cities trips give you a real feel for the place and its people that no tour guide can provide. And the people are the Sister Cities folks themselves, and so are incredibly loving and giving hosts.

This year's cultural exchange trip for the Isesaki City Summer Festival was no exception. Kellswater played Irish folk songs at the Saturday festival, then helped to carry the shrines for the Sunday parade through downtown.

It was a thrilling, first-hand experience for the band members - Myself and wife Cindy, vocalist (and percussionist) Steve Gaither, and tenor and guitar player Bob Jones. But we also reaffirmed dear friends from previous trips (for the Bobs) and all of us made new ones.

We had a very touching moment when playing music in the lobby of the large municipal hospital the day before the festival. The visitors and the patients clapped along, tapped their feet, and smiled, even though many

had no idea what the words were saying. But, when we performed one Japanese song "Hometown," one of the ladies with the Isesaki Sister Cities program took a mic around and got some of the audience to sing



Heavy lifting during the summer festival parade



Kellswater plays in a hospital lobby along. There were several folks in the audience with tears in their eyes.

As always, the Welcome Party and other get-togethers were full of warm socializing with our wonderful friends. The parades on Saturday and Sunday were riots of color, with very polite and appreciative crowds. And the tears returned again as we left our host families and friends to return to our Springfield homes. Our Isesaki homes are still in our hearts.

# From Apprehension to Appreciation

## One family's incredible experience as a host home

**By Susan Hom**

We had always planned to host an exchange student "some time," but each year there was an obstacle we couldn't seem to work around. So when asked to host visitors from Isesaki for the 2010 Japanese Fall Festival, we agreed, thinking it would be a similar, albeit shorter, experience. But as September approached, we thought we had gotten in over our heads.

The issue of living/sleeping space for our visitors was troubling, since we have stored in our house an apartment's worth of furniture and most other possessions of our adult son and daughter-in-law who have lived and studied overseas since 2007. Family members have come for visits during this time, but what made us think we could expect the same degree of acceptance of this clutter from complete strangers?!

Then, we received preliminary information about our visitors. They looked like friendly people in the photos, and their families seemed much like ours. They had hobbies we could relate to – cooking, handicrafts, volleyball. So far, so good. But both their applications indicated English ability "not at all" - just what our Japanese ability was. Now, we were really worried. How could we manage for a week with just a Japanese-English phrase book, gestures, and the occasional use of the internet for translation help? The reassurances of those who had hosted Isesaki visitors before were not enough to make this worry go away. The rest of the time we spent preparing for our visitors was not fun. It was like getting ready for a surgery.

Then, we finally met our visitors at the airport. We found Maki and Sanae to be very friendly people, both so glad to be in Springfield for the Fall Festival and warmly appreciative of being our guests. When we showed them around our home, they did not seem to notice the crowded rooms. Who knows, they may have returned to Japan thinking that all Americans live that way!

Our communication worries also disap-

peared. The obstacles were few, infrequent, and surmountable. Maki and Sanae spoke much better English than "not at all" and understood far more than they spoke. Sanae brought along her daughter's electronic Japanese/English dictionary, so we could turn to that when necessary. A children's picture dictionary checked out from the library also proved to be helpful as were two placemats we have for our grandchildren's use – one a U.S. and the other a world map.

Those helped when we told our visitors about our families, who are spread from Montana to Texas to Massachusetts to the United Kingdom. The U.S. map helped when we explained the meal of traditional Southern cooking a good friend prepared for us one night. One of our funniest moments came when Sanae asked how to spell the dessert we were about to serve as part of that meal. After our attempts to describe it, she keyed-in "cobbler" on her electronic dictionary, then looked at us very surprised and asked, "are we going to eat shoes that have been mended?"! That was one of many times we laughed and said, "English is such a crazy language!".

We had lots of fun getting to know Maki and Sanae and really wished they hadn't had to spend

so much of their limited time here just touring the city with the group and working out at Nathanael Greene Park. One evening, our in-town family was over for a cookout. While we got supper ready, Maki taught our grandchildren to make Origami cranes, then Sanae conducted a mini-tea ceremony. Our grandson took copies of their photos, along with his crane, to "show and share" at Kindergarten the next day. We got to watch Maki

and Sanae prepare food as they might in their own homes one evening when they fixed Okonomiyaki, a delicious pancake with cabbage, shrimp, and ham inside. When we were getting ready for the Sayonara party, Sanae offered me her mother's kimono to wear, and they dressed me - what an experience and an honor! We stayed up late talking nearly every night and wished their visit had been longer. As we drove to the airport for their departure, Sanae looked back at our house and said, "Oh, I didn't get to ride on your porch swing." Clearly the visit was not long enough for them either.

They have been back in Japan for just 24 hours now. We have already had an email telling us that "on the way home we flew over Montana at 34,000 feet and thought about your family there and wished them good health." We are so glad we took the leap and hosted these women! Even in a short time, we have built friendships that we hope to maintain through email. Maybe we'll even be able to go to Isesaki ourselves someday. What a surprisingly wonderful experience this has been!

## In Memoriam

### SSCA lost another centerpiece of its board recently with the passing of Dennis Whaley

**"A great friend and inspiration to us all has joined the Lord and we will miss him dearly. He will live in our memories though, as Dennis was NOT one to go through this life unnoticed..."**

*- Arturo Magana, Tlaquepaque, Mexico*

**Donations to a scholarship fund can be made in Dennis' name at:**  
**Evangel University**  
**1111 N. Glenstone Ave.**  
**Springfield MO 65802**

# A Message From SSCA President Price



We have had a busy summer and fall at SSCA! I saw many of you at the Japanese Fall Festival, which broke all of our past attendance and revenue records. Three days of great weather were a big help, but the sun could not outshine the wonderful performances by our visitors from Isesaki, the Osuwa Taiko drum group from St. Louis, and all our local performers and martial artists. Our special thanks go to all the SSCA volunteers and board members and the Park Board staff, who worked so hard and made the entire weekend go so smoothly.

We also watched over the last few months as the new Sister City Plaza at the Commons in Jordan Valley Park broke ground and took shape. It is amazing that what started as an idea drawn on a napkin two years ago at an SSCA meeting is now an actuality.

Your Sister Cities board is busy planning for next year's events. The board will hold its annual retreat on November 5, to discuss activities and budgets for 2011. We hope to continue to enhance our traditional events, and to help initiate an exciting new student exchange program with Isesaki and Missouri State University. If you have comments or ideas about SSCA or our programs, we would love to hear from you. Send us an email at the new SSCA website – [www.peacethroughpeople.org](http://www.peacethroughpeople.org) or to Cindy Jobe at [cjobe@springfieldmo.gov](mailto:cjobe@springfieldmo.gov). Your involvement is very important; SSCA has flourished through the commitment and work of our many volunteers. Let's keep on growing!

- John Price



An etched globe recognizing our two sister cities is the centerpiece of the plaza

→ Plaza from page 1

visit and relax, and will be a great site to host events in the future. We hope it signifies our intention as an organization that as we learn about other cultures there is "Peace Through People" and we are thrilled that this is located at the entry into a revitalized, happening downtown!



Hand painted tiles made by Tlaquepaque artisans surround a sitting area within the new Sister Cities Plaza



## Springfield, Missouri

### 2010 SSCA Board of Directors

**John Price, President**

**Dianne Elizabeth Osis, Immediate Past-President**

**Bob Jones, Vice President**

**Carolyn Gerdes, Secretary**

**Lois Weston, Treasurer**

**Cindy Jobe, Coordinator**

**Brad Bodenhausen**

**Ric Buchanan**

**Jane Fast**

**Tom Finnie**

**Araceli Hanks**

**Mika Logan**

**Dana Logsdon**

**Sandra Lowther**

**Juan Meraz**

**Kelvin Pamperien**

**Russ Rubert**

**Bob Stephens**

**Michael Thomas**

# SUPERCHARGE



## Boy Band Heads to Isesaki - Needs Your Help

The band Supercharge will take their act international, as this group of Springfield 12-to-14-year olds have been chosen to represent SSCA in Isesaki, Japan. The group of four boys: Ben Grosser, singer and bassist; Sam Holmes and George Timson, guitarists; and Brock Cantrell, drummer got their start in their elementary school talent show at Eugene Field. In just a short few years, the group has become the talk of the town and has created quite a following.

They have made two CDs, “DEMocracy” and “Life,” and even earned “Best Local YouTube Video” in 417 Magazine with their self-filmed and edited music video, to Jets, “Are You Gonna Be My Girl.” They perform music falling under classic and original rock, influenced by Van Halen, KISS, Led Zeppelin, Rush and The Beatles. These boys feel strongly about giving back to their community and have enjoyed playing at many local fundraisers and events, such as the Kitchen Fun Run, Day for Kids Concert, MDA Stride & Ride,

school functions, Springfield Art Walk, Cider Days, McSalty’s Pizza, birthday parties, churches and many other venues.

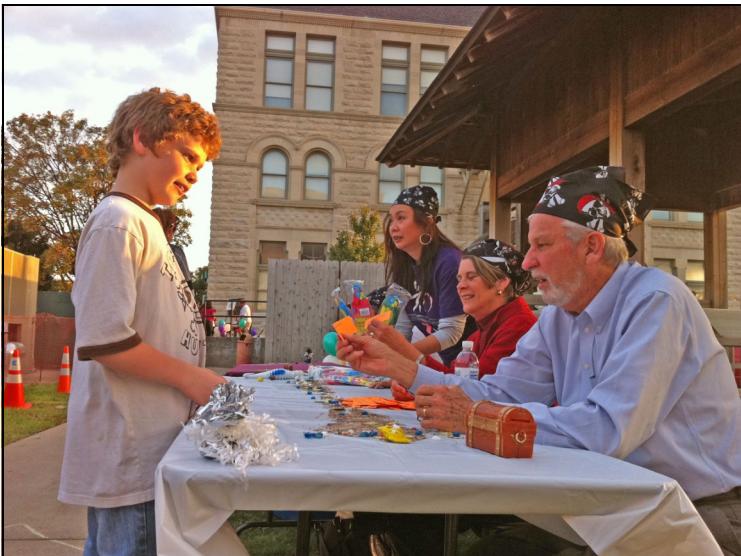
They are looking forward to being young ambassadors for Springfield, learning about Japan and bringing some of that culture home to Springfield when they return.

Supercharge needs your help! Please make any financial donations to SSCA in their name, or attend one of the following fundraisers:

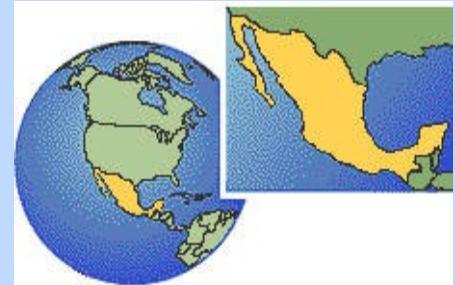
### Mark Your Calendars

**Pancake Breakfast - Applebee's on Primrose – Sat., Nov. 6 - starts at 8 a.m.**

**McSalty's Pizza Café on Battlefield Mon., Nov. 8 - 2 shows 5:30 & 7 p.m.**



SSCA participated in the annual City of Springfield—Partners in Education “Treasures of the City” scavenger hunt. Area third graders converge on government plaza once a year with lessons learned in the classroom, as they go from department-to-department, meeting those who run our city. SSCA members (right to left) Tom Finnie, Joyce Mundon , and Mika Logan.



*Get away from our winter weather and travel with friends to mild, beautiful, and scenic Tlaquepaque in February 2011 .*

*Interested in joining us for a citizen's trip to our sister city of Tlaquepaque, Mexico? We are taking names now, so register early.*

Please email [cjobe@springfieldmo.gov](mailto:cjobe@springfieldmo.gov) to request more information, or call 417-864-1341



## Keep up with SSCA Events and Activities

[PeaceThroughPeople.org](http://PeaceThroughPeople.org)

# WE NEED YOU!

**SSCA Board of Directors**  
meetings are held at 5:15 p.m., the second Tuesday of each month at Busch Municipal Building, 840 Boonville Ave.

**Isesaki Committee**  
meets at 5:30 p.m., the first Monday of each month, locations vary.

**Membership Committee**  
meets at 3 p.m., the first Monday of each month, locations vary.

**Tlaquepaque Committee**  
meets at 5:30 p.m., the first Wednesday of each month, locations vary.