

A Short History and Information about the Livingston Sister City International Educational and Cultural Exchange Program

Naganohara initially contacted the Japanese Consulate in Seattle during the spring of 1987 hoping to establish relations with an American city that had similar industry and topography and a roughly comparable population. At the time, Livingston Mayor Bill Dennis answered the inquiry. Not until 1990 when Naganohara had an English speaking employee, Vice Mayor Brad Kirby, did Naganohara mail materials to Livingston inquiring about an interest in a "Sister City Relationship." A delegation from Naganohara visited Livingston in mid-April, 1991, and made a proposal to the Livingston City Council to join in relations as Sister Cities.

Livingston, Montana and Naganohara, Japan officially began their Sister City relationship on October 28, 1991. Starting in the summer of 1992, both communities have sent their junior high or high school aged students for exchange homestay visits. (Exceptions: 2009 H1N1/Swine Flu and 2011 earthquake). Certificate of Incorporation was filed with the office of the Secretary of the State in the State of Montana on February 25, 1993. An organization meeting of the incorporators was held at 414 East Callender Street, Livingston, Montana, on March 22, 1993, at 4:00 pm with the election of officers of the corporation. President, John Orndorf, Vice President, Shelly Blatter, Secretary, Tara DePuy, Treasurer, Kenton Griffin. In November 1994, the Internal Revenue Service, issued a determination letter that recognized the organization as exempt from federal income tax; exempt under section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, TID #81-0485344.

Grants and donations initially funded the program, followed by loans taken out to pay for travel and homestay expenses. Currently fundraising covers all costs related to the exchanges. The City of Livingston pays the annual Sister City International dues.

The Livingston Sister City program is comprised of a group of volunteers committed to the ongoing relationship with our Sister City. We strive to improve the community of Livingston through our relationship. The value of this program to the community is numerous including cultural, economic and educational benefits.

As our name implies, we are a student and cultural exchange program. The mutual student exchanges occur during July and August. Several adult cultural exchanges have also taken place between our cities. The Taiko drummers from Naganohara last visited in 2008 leaving behind a gift of the drums they performed with. The drums are currently loaned out for use to Montana Taiko, a group that teaches drumming and performs locally. More recently, in October 2013, a delegation of nine adults traveled from Livingston to Naganohara for a homestay visit as a celebration of over 20 years of Sister City relations.

We are a 100% volunteer group dedicated to the idea that all students selected for the exchange are able to participate regardless of income. This requires all students and their families to make this program a personal priority during their two year commitment covering the fundraising and exchange time periods. The City Commission selects a liaison Commissioner that attends our

Board meetings when available and reports back to the Commission on our activities.

Each year, the families and chaperones strive to raise enough money to cover the travel costs, expenses for hosting our guests during the Livingston Homestay and set aside funds for Cultural Exchange purposes. The students and chaperones travel to Japan during the 2nd & 3rd week of July. About ten days after their return the exchange group from Nagano-hara arrives in Livingston in early August.

The selection process begins each year in the fall with applications available at St. Mary's, Sleeping Giant Middle School, and Park High School. Students age 12-15 as of September 1st of the application year can apply. We have recently selected 6 students with the understanding that they will travel to Nagano-hara, along with two chaperones, the second summer after selection. This allows the program to have sufficient families to assist with the fundraisers and raise enough to cover the current year travel expenses for eight. The families meet twice a month January through June then as needed to make plans for the homestay visit in early August.

Students who participate gain a great deal from the experience. Being able to travel to Japan, staying with a host family and participating in all of the activities the City of Nagano-hara has arranged are some experiences that will never be forgotten. Going to Japan is only half of the program. The students and their families gain by participating in the activities for the Japanese students when they are in Livingston in August for our portion of the homestay exchange. Not only will students have the experience of traveling to and learning the customs of another country, but they also have the opportunity to set goals, make plans and work with other students and parents to make their trip possible. Students are given lessons in Japanese language, culture and etiquette, customs and currency. The students are able to improve their speaking skills through group presentations in Japan and at home to civic organizations and schools. Students do a presentation at the Middle School in the fall after their trip to encourage other students to apply. The exchange is a learning experience that lasts a lifetime.

Our board members are made up of a variety of alumni parents and other community adults. We come from a variety of professions including Railroad employees, School Teachers and Counselors, School Administrators, retirees, and bankers. Some of our fundraisers are as much for public relations and assistance to other non-profits as they are for income. We can be seen helping serve dinner at the annual Park County Pioneer Dinner, assisting with serving for a variety of local non-profits, volunteering our time for the Park County Fairgrounds or working at Depot Museum Foundation events.

Board Officers

Bev Sandberg President
Carey Yeager Vice President
Teri Giao Secretary
Donna Pace Treasurer

Board Members

Tami Froelich
Kristi Hayes
Sarah LaClair
Rich Lund
Jody Ogata
Hand Poeschl

Faith Kinnick – Representative from City Manager's Office



CITY OF LIVINGSTON

414 East Callender
Livingston, MT 59047
(406) 222-6120

March 26, 1989

SISTER CITY RELATIONSHIP

The City of Naganohara contacted the Japanese Consulate in Seattle during the Spring of 1987 in hopes of establishing relations with an American City that had similar industry and topography and a roughly comparable population.

Mayor Dennis answered the inquiry. But, Naganohara did not have an English speaking employee until 1990. They then mailed some material and inquired about an interest in "Sister City Relationship." Mr Pat Owens, Governor Stephen's Office, addressed the City Council at the March 4th meeting and explained the Sister City Relationship.

Naganohara's Vice Mayor, English speaking Brad Kirby and a representative of the Sister City Office will visit Livingston on/about April 16-18th. They expressed an interest in seeing Yellowstone National Park. The time of arrival and of departure and the weather will dictate what the visitors may see and do while they are here. A Special Council Meeting may/may not be possible. Their itinerary is expected within a few days.

The meeting tonight is an attempt to establish broad goals for a Sister City Relationship and initial planning for the mid-April visit. It should be noted that the City did not budget any money for a Sister City Relationship.

It is customary to exchange gifts. Apparently the Japanese think highly of Native American artifacts i.e. arrow heads. Another suggestion was frozen beef steaks to take with them when they depart.

Please refer to the attached sheets.

Japanese want to foster sister city relationship

By MATT GIBSON
Enterprise Staff Writer

The three-member sister city delegation from the Japanese town of Naganohara returned home Thursday evening laden with gifts and eager to come back to Livingston.

They told the city council during an informal discussion Thursday afternoon that they hoped to visit again in July or October, and would definitely return by next March. And they said they'd like a delegation from Livingston to visit Naganohara, if possible.

The delegation, which included Naganohara Deputy Mayor Tsutomu Nagai, Satoshi Ichimura from the city's planning and tourism section, and interpreter Brad Kirby, a native of New Jersey, presented the council with a list of proposed sister city activities, including a variety of educational exchanges.

The council had no firm proposals of its own, but the Japanese representatives weren't disappointed at all.

"When you're trying to put together an international arrangement such as this, you have to look to the future," Nagai said at the delegation's farewell party at the Wade Gallery.

Among their proposals were a middle school student exchange and a "sister classroom" for swapping educational materials.

"In the future, the students of Naganohara and the students in Livingston will be the towns' leaders," Kirby told the council, explaining the delegation's interest in education.

They also suggested a citizens' exchange, encouraging Livingston residents to explore Naganohara and study its culture.

The delegation also asked to have a Livingston resident come to Naganohara to teach English. As part of the Japan Exchange and Teaching Program, established in 1987 by the Japanese Ministry of Education to help improve English language studies in Japanese schools, the teaching assistant would be paid roughly \$26,000 a year and receive free housing as well as a government-owned automobile.

"If possible, we'd like to have someone from Livingston fill that position in Naganohara," Kirby told the council.

During the nearly hour-long discussion, Livingston's council members seemed less interested in the sister city proposals than the operation of the Naganohara city government, asking many questions about public utilities and garbage collection.

Livingston Mayor Bill Dennis said the council would have to meet with representatives from the Livingston Chamber of Commerce and the school district before responding to the sister-city proposals.

"I hope we can keep it alive," Dennis said later. "I'm very impressed. The only thing is we really didn't have enough time with them."

Chatting and eating sushi at the farewell party, the Japanese visitors said the best part of their trip was the friendliness and hospitality of the people they met.

Translating for Nagai, Kirby said "He's very, very happy that everyone received us so warmly."

The delegates also enjoyed their visit to Yellowstone Park, where they were amazed by the abundant wildlife, and said they were happy to meet some Japanese people here, including an exchange student at Park High School.

"It shows there's very much an international face to Livingston," Kirby said.

Most of the money for the sister city visit was provided by the Japanese government, Nagai said.

Before their send off, the Japanese delegation received a wealth of gifts ranging from baseball caps and bumper stickers to a painting, donated by Livingston artist Parks Reese, and a brass plaque cast into the shape of the state of Montana. Mayor Dennis also gave them the key to the city.

In turn, they presented the city with a hand-carved wooden kokeshi doll, one of the few traditional crafts still existing in Naganohara, Kirby said.

Livingston Enterprise, April 19, 1991

Japanese impressed with Livingston's self-sufficiency

By MATT GIBSON
Enterprise Staff Writer

What most impresses Japanese visitor Satochi Ichimura about Livingston is its autonomy — the independence and self-sufficiency of its economy and public services.

Ichimura is part of the three-member delegation from the Japanese town of Naganohara here this week to develop a sister city relationship with Livingston. He works for the Japanese sister city organization.

After just one full day in town, Ichimura said that he hadn't yet seen very much, but offered his first impressions of Livingston and the surrounding country.

"Livingston is a very independent town," Ichimura said Wednesday evening during an interview in his room at the Murray Hotel. Brad Kirby, a New Jersey native on the Naganohara city staff, helped interpret the conversation. Though all Japanese students take six years of English classes, Ichimura has only a limited ability to speak the language.

While Naganohara is spread out, and only limited services are available locally, Livingston is very "concentrated," with every necessity right in town, Ichimura observed.

Naganohara has no newspaper or radio station, and most shopping has to be done in a larger nearby town, he said. Likewise, the city does not have its own police force, he said — law enforcement is provided by the Gunma prefecture, the equivalent of an American state — and the fire department is only very basically equipped and relies on neighboring departments for help.

Naganohara also lacks a distinctive local culture, Ichimura said, explaining that Tokyo, located just 2½ hours east, has a dominant influence in the region.

But even though Naganohara is little more than a suburb of the gigantic Asian city, the lifestyle there is noticeably different than in the urban center, he said.

In Tokyo, everything is work oriented, and most men have little time to spend with their families, but in Naganohara life is more relaxed and fulfilling, Ichimura said.

He's noticed a similar feeling in Livingston, describing the local people as "bountiful."

"Everybody is living life to the fullest," Kirby said, elaborating on Ichimura's impression of Livingston's residents.

Both Kirby and Ichimura repeated again and again that the people of Livingston have been especially warm and gracious hosts.

"We didn't know Livingston would be so positive about the sister city relationship," Ichimura said. "When we were leaving Japan, we had no idea people in Livingston would do so much."

Surprisingly, Ichimura said he hasn't experienced too much "culture shock" since arriving in Livingston. Because Japan is so saturated with information about the United States, he was well prepared for the visit, he said.

Recalling recent trips to China and Korea, he said those countries were much more strange to him than the United States.

He admitted though that a Tuesday night stop at the Old Saloon in Emigrant "was almost like being in a Western movie."

He was also startled by the wildlife in Yellowstone Park, which the delegation visited Wednesday. When a bison crossed the road in front of the group's van, Ichimura assumed it was a backpacker at first. Then he took a closer look, he said.

The Japanese sister city delegation is scheduled to return home Thursday evening after a farewell at the Wade Gallery. Gail Jockers of the Chamber of Commerce said sushi will be served, prepared by Livingston resident Robin Ogata, and artist Parks Reece will present the delegation with a painting.

The delegation will also meet with the Livingston City Council this afternoon to discuss the potential for a sister city relationship.

APRIL 1991

Oaza Naganohara 66-3
Naganohara-machi
Agatsuma-gun
Gunma-ken 377-13
Japan

March 13, 1992

Office of the City Manager
City of Livingston
414 East Callender
Livingston, MT 59047
U.S.A.

Dear Mr. Griffin:

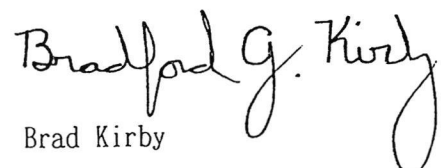
I realize that today is not a very auspicious day for making introductions, but I wanted to get this letter in the mail before the weekend. My name is Brad Kirby. I have been working at the Naganohara Town Hall for about two years, and my work consists mainly of translating, English teaching, and facilitating communications between Naganohara and Livingston. I am looking forward to working with you in the future, and I hope to see you when our delegation arrives in Livingston this June. I realize that the City Manager position can be pretty hectic at times, so any time you can spare to work with us will be most appreciated.

Enclosed with this letter is a copy of Naganohara's Town Bulletin. It is a monthly publication put out by the Town Hall which is designed to keep residents informed of local events, changes in regional and national laws, and services offered by the local government. Also included are health tips, short articles about Japanese literature, and announcements of awards presented to Naganohara citizens. I have translated five articles from this month's bulletin: one about awards given to local farmers, another about Naganohara Karuta, a third about the prohibition of spiked tires, a fourth about the meaning of the plum blossom in Haiku, and a final article about Japanese food.

I hope to send a few translated articles along with the original to Livingston

Finally, I would like to thank you once again for taking time out of your busy schedule to help make our Sister City Relationship a powerful educational tool for people in both of our towns. Talk to you again soon.

Sincerely


Brad Kirby

Japanese students enjoyed their stay

By BREND A BINKERD
Enterprise Staff Writer

On Monday, the final for the 10 Naganohara students' stay in Livingston, two host families treated their guests to a traditional "Thanksgiving" dinner.

Lin and Gary Lee, who have played hosts to the Japanese teacher-chaperones at the Greystone Inn and to two Japanese boys in their home, Masashi Takayima and Sinichi Toyoda, decided turkey and all the trimmings would be an appropriate meal for their last evening with their young guests.

In addition to their young guests, whom Lin fondly refers to as "our boys," the Lees had the John and Sherrey Angle family and their two Japanese girls, Taeko Miyamae and Masayo Hirokawa, as dinner guests.

The group enjoyed a spirited meal, with the "language barrier" proving little more than a comical challenge to both guests and hosts. After the meal, the four students sat in a circle on the floor and talked about their visit through their interpreter.

All four young people unaniously proclaimed floating the Yellowstone River as their favorite activity during their week's stay, with horseback riding ranking a close second.

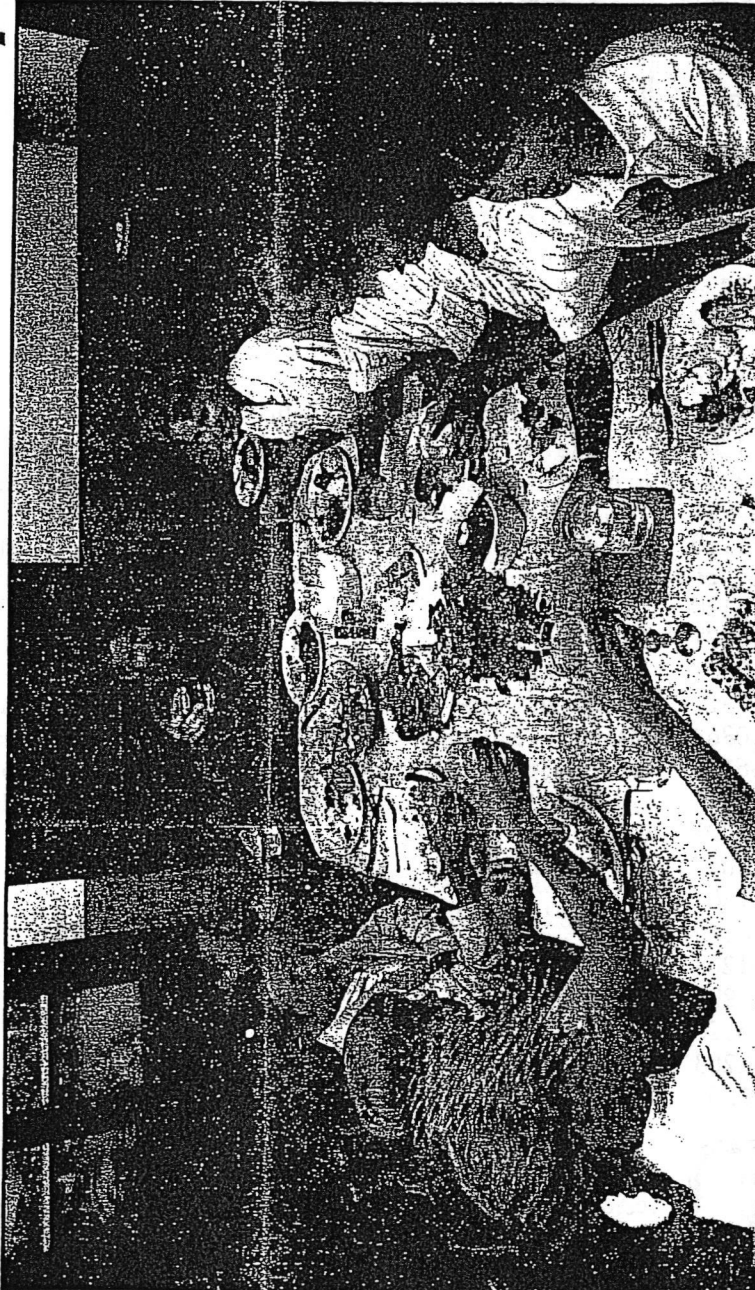
Both boys and girls expressed initial apprehension at coming to Livingston, but Monday night they giggled and grinned when asked if they were still nervous.

"They aren't nervous anymore," laughed Brad Kirby, the interpreter. He said the students were reluctant to speak English but they soon discovered it wasn't necessary to speak full sentences to exchange ideas. One or two words and some "body English" usually got the point across, added Kirby.

Kirby asked the students if they would like to come back to Livingston. All four responded affirmatively with Masashi stating he'd like to come back and build a house here, and Sinichi saying he'd like to come back and fish.

Masashi said the turkey dinner he had just eaten was his favorite meal of the week, while Sinichi and Masayo liked sandwiches the best — especially tuna sandwiches. The fourth member of the group, Taeko, really loved pizza.

The foursome were in complete agree-



Lin and Gary Lee host a traditional Thanksgiving dinner Monday night at the Greystone Inn for the Japanese visitors that were staying with them. The John and Sherrey Angle family and the Japanese children they were

ment on a couple of items: they were thrilled with the Calamity Jane Rodeo — especially the bull riding — and they were impressed with both the town of Livingston and the area around it.

They said Livingston is much more of a city than they thought it would be, said Kirby, and that the country around here is very beautiful.

"When asked if any of them had part-time jobs such as babysitting or delivering newspapers like middle school students in our country, they shook their heads vigorously and answered animatedly.

"It is forbidden by school rules," explained Kirby. "A few high school students get permission to work, but then they can only work limited hours on the week-ends," he added.

The Japanese school system expects the students to devote their full attention to their studies, said Kirby, adding that the students spend much more time in the classroom than American students do.

As the boys and girls talked all at once, Taeko motioned with her hands, describing the stack of homework that would be waiting for her at home.

They are already thinking about the school work they will have to catch up with when they return, said Kirby.

What do these Japanese students do for recreation in their precious free time? Both the girls enjoy playing basketball and volleyball and they are pianists. Masashi likes listening to Japanese and American music and he is a member of a Kendo team, a kind of martial arts discipline. Sinichi plays a mean game of ping-pong, according to Kirby, and he also enjoys collecting coins.

The students live in Naganohara, a small, rural, Japanese town that was incorporated from several villages about 100 years ago.

The area has "farms carved out of absolute wilderness," according to Kirby, who added the families in the country often have three generations of members living

in the same household.

The students' chaperones were Mr. Kobayashi, the principal of West Junior High, which has about 118 students in grades 7 through 9, and Mrs. Yamada, an East Junior High teacher who works in a school with 225 middle school students.

Kobayashi wanted to express his gratitude to the people of Livingston. "This whole experience has been really worthwhile," he said through the interpreter. "We are very grateful the families have taken care of our kids so well."

The other Livingston host families are the Roger and Cleo Nack family, the Roger and Carol Powalisz family and the Bernie and Terry Rustad family — all of whom live outside of town.

The Japanese delegation left for their homeland Tuesday afternoon. Next week, on August 20, a delegation of Livingston students with teacher-chaperone Marla Bray, leaves for their week in Naganohara.

The visitors left Tuesday to go back to Japan. (Enterprise photo by Jud McCrehin)

197
KOBAYASHI
1992



1-800-366-8538

The Town Crier

Volume II, Number 2, February 20, 1994

The official communication link between the City of Livingston and its citizens.

City Services

What can we do for you? And, what must we refer to someone else? Here are phone numbers to help you.

(We ran this last month, but some people stated 'x' in the listing confused them. The 'x' was supposed to mean 'extension'. We'll try to simplify. Sorry!)

NOTE: If you are calling 222-2005 you must have a touchtone phone to access the extensions. If you call during the day, push 1 and the extension number when the recorded greeting begins. If you call after normal work hours, you can still leave a message by pushing 2 and the extension number.

SERVICE	PHONE #222-
Ambulance service, police, and fire	2050
Abandoned vehicles	2050
Block Watch	2050
Building Inspection	2005+1209
Business Licenses	2005+1208
Cemetery	3119
Civic Center rental	2005+1204
Dog control	2005+1210
After normal work hours, call the police.	
Driver's Licenses	6120
Electrical utility	2521
Fire - non-emergency	2061
Gas, natural gas utility	2521
Library	0862
License Plates	6120
City Parks	8155
Planning	2005+1208
Police	2050
Potholes	2005+1204
City Recreation	8155
Sign information & regulations	2005+1208
Solid Waste (garbage)	2005+1204
Tax information	6120
Water or Sewer	2005+1203
Zoning information	2005+1208

Mark Your Calendar

- Mar. 7: City Council Mtg, 7:30 PM @ City Hall
- Mar. 21: City Council Mtg, 7:30 PM @ City Hall
- Apr. 4: City Council Mtg, 7:30 PM @ City Hall
- Apr. 18: City Council Mtg, 7:30 PM @ City Hall
- May 2: City Council Mtg, 7:30 PM @ City Hall
- May 7: Livingston Derby Race, 9 AM
- May 16: City Council Mtg, 7:30 PM @ City Hall
- June 4: Livingston in the Park, Sacajawea Area
- June 6: City Council Mtg, 7:30 PM @ City Hall
- June 20: City Council Mtg, 7:30 PM @ City Hall

Sister City Booster Club

The Sister City Committee has launched a campaign to create the Sister City Booster Club. Memberships are available at a variety of levels beginning at \$10.00. All members will receive a window sticker for display. These window decals were designed through an Art Contest for students in grades 7-10 in the Sleeping Giant Middle and Park High schools. Nastasia Shannon, a 7th grader, designed the winning entry.

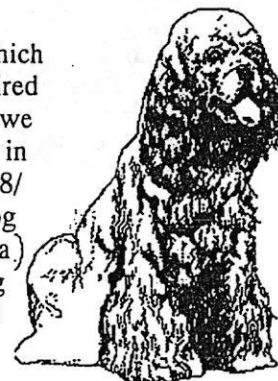
If you would like to support the continuation of the Sister City Student Exchange Program, please send your tax deductible contribution to: Sister City Booster Club, c/o City Hall, 414 E. Callender St., Livingston. Thank you!

Japanese Dinner - a Success

The Sister City Committee hosted its first Japanese Dinner on February 12th, at the Civic Center. 135 people attended. Thanks to all of you who supported this fund raiser. Special thanks to Verne Beffert and the Ranger High Sports programs for the dinner flyers included inside of programs.

Dog Licenses Due

All dogs over six months old which reside with in Livingston are required to have a City license. Last year we sold over 1,000 licenses. To date in 1994, we have sold about 300. 2/28/94 is the last day to get your dog licensed. Thereafter you may face a fine or other penalty. Please bring your proof of rabies vaccination and buy your dog license at City Hall. Thank you!



The Town Crier is published monthly by the City of Livingston, 414 East Callender St., Livingston, MT 59047; phone: 222-2005. It is intended to keep our citizenry informed on how and what the City government is doing.

- Pat Mikesell Mayor
- Sheryl Dahl Councilmember
- Fred Hall Councilmember
- Lee Harris Councilmember
- Barbara Williams Councilmember

The Livingston Sister City program is comprised of a group of volunteers committed to the ongoing relationship with our Sister City, Naganohara, Japan. One of the ways we accomplish this is by an annual shared homestay experience with teenage students from both cities.



Montana students meeting Japanese students for the first time, Naganohara, Japan, July 2012

The Sister City Committee, a 100% volunteer group, is dedicated to improving the community of Livingston through our Sister City relationship with Naganohara, Japan. The value of this program to the participants and the community is numerous including cultural, Economic, and educational benefits.

Additional information about the Livingston exchange program, our Sister City, Naganohara, Japan, and other web sites of interest can be found at the following links.

On Facebook: [SisterCity Livingston](#)

Email: livingstonsistercity@gmail.com

Livingston Sister Cities Organization
<http://livingstonsistercities.org/>

City of Livingston
<http://www.livingstonmontana.org/>

Naganohara Town
~ Japanese version ~
<http://www.town.naganohara.gunma.jp/>

Montana Taiko ~ Japanese Style Drumming in Bozeman Montana
On Facebook: [Montana Taiko Drum Community](#)

The Livingston Sister City Board meets at 7 PM on the third Wednesday of each month, except December, at the Park County Library. Meetings are open to all interested parties. Send an email to livingstonsistercity@gmail.com for notices

The Livingston Sister City Cultural & Student Exchange Program is a 501(c)(3) Non-profit Corporation
TID # 81-0485344

Livingston Sister City Cultural & Student Exchange Program PO Box 1415 Livingston MT 59047



Livingston, Montana & Naganohara, Japan began their Sister City relationship on October 28, 1991.

Both cities are members of Sister Cities International



Sister Cities International
 Connect globally.
 Thrive locally.

Mission

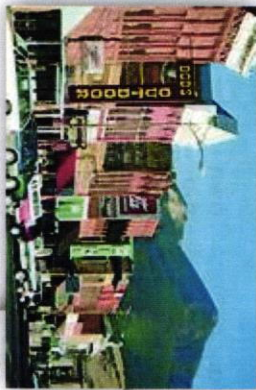
Promote peace through mutual respect, understanding, & cooperation — one individual, one community at a time.

Sister Cities International is a nonprofit citizen diplomacy network that creates and strengthens partnerships between U.S. and international communities. We strive to build global cooperation at the municipal level, promote cultural understanding and stimulate economic development.

<http://sistercities.org/>

Exchange students and their families work various fundraisers to pay for travel, homestay expenses in Livingston, and set aside a portion of funds for other cultural exchange programs and expenses. We fundraise as a group so that all students selected can participate regardless of income.

Livingston, in southwestern Montana, is the county seat of Park County. The Yellowstone River runs on the east edge of Livingston with the Absaroka-Beartooth and Gallatin mountain ranges surrounding it; the Crazy Mountain range is visible to the North. Yellowstone National Park is 60 miles South. The elevation is 4,501 ft (1,372 m). Estimated population of 7,400. The downtown buildings from the 1880s and 90s stand as a testimony of the old west and give Livingston its special turn-of-the-century charm. Livingston is historically known as the gateway to Yellowstone National Park.



Nagano is located in the northwestern portion of Gunma Prefecture, right in the center of Japan, about 155 miles from Tokyo. Almost all of the town has an elevation higher than 500m (1640 ft.) with Mount Shirane to the north and Mount Asama, with Asama Volcano Museum, to the south. The town has an estimated population of 5,600. The Agatsuma River runs through the middle of the town and is scheduled to be dammed. The residents have all relocated to higher ground above the Agatsuma Gorge in preparation for the Yanba Dam.

Thank you for your contribution of \$ _____ to Livingston Sister City. Your support will help continue the student and cultural exchange program. Your contribution is tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. No goods or services were provided in exchange for your generous financial donation. Thank you for helping us build bridges of friendship and cultural understanding.

Name _____

Address _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Please detach & Mail to:
 Livingston Sister City PO Box 1415 Livingston, MT 59047