

City of Richmond

Sister City Advisory Committee 2022 Year in Review

2022 Summary:

The Sister City Advisory Committee (SCAC) manages the relationships with three official Sister Cities: Pierrefonds, Quebec (since 1967), Wakayama, Japan (since 1973), and Xiamen, China (since 2012); as well as one Friendship City: Qingdao, China (since 2008). Information from various SCAC activities and events are outlined in the following pages and can be found on the City's website at www.richmond.ca/sistercity.

2022 Committee Members:

Chair

Lisa MacNeil

Vice Chair, Pierrefonds

Allen Chan

Vice-Chair, Wakayama

Glenn Kishi

Vice-Chair, Qingdao

Melissa Zhang

Vice-Chair, Xiamen

Victor Zhuo

Members

Charan Gill

Joan Page

Karen Shigeno

Nicholas Sturtevant

Polly Tang

Sue Tian

David Yang

Jenny Zhang

Council Liaison

Councillor Andy Hobbs

School Board Liaison

Ken Hamaguchi

Debbie Tablotney (Alternate)

2022 Sister City Relationship Highlights

January

- The newly appointed SCAC member(s) were introduced at the first meeting in January.
- The SCAC elected the Chair and Vice-Chairs for Pierrefonds, Wakayama, Xiamen and Qingdao sub-committees and selected members to the following sub-committees:
 - Pierrefonds Sub-Committee;
 - Wakayama Sub-Committee;
 - Xiamen Sub-Committee; and
 - Qingdao Sub-Committee.

February

- The City of Richmond sent Lunar New Year greetings to Xiamen and Qingdao.



Lunar New Year Greeting from Council and Sister City Advisory Committee

- As part of the Sister City Program, 28 students in grades 6 and 7 from General Currie Elementary School sent Lunar New Year Greetings to a class in Qingdao, China.

"What a wonderful gesture of friendship for sending us the Chinese New Year packages from one of your elementary schools! When we receive and relay this package to students in Qingdao, I believe they will be deeply touched by this warm friendship coming from afar."

Wu Chunmei, Qingdao City Contact



Lunar New Year Greetings from General Currie Elementary School

- To celebrate Valentine's Day, 30 Richmond Kindergarten students created Valentine's Day greeting cards for seniors at Manoir Pierrefonds, a seniors residence home in Pierrefonds, to brighten their days due to the ongoing lockdown.



Valentines Greetings for Seniors at Manoir Pierrefonds

- In late 2021, the Committee began planning and preparing for Richmond’s relationship milestone anniversaries with Wakayama, Japan (50 years) and Qingdao, China (15 years), which will be celebrated in 2023. One action was to establish a “SCAC Alumni” group made up of past chairs and vice chairs.

March

- On March 1, 2022, the Sister City Advisory Committee met with key stakeholders from past SCAC membership to plan for the 50th anniversary relationship milestone celebrations for Wakayama, Japan occurring in 2023.

Current Sister City Membership

Lisa MacNeil, Chair, SCAC
Glenn Kishi, Vice-Chair, Wakayama
Charan Gill, SCAC Member
Karen Shigeno, SCAC Member

Past Sister City Membership

Hans Havas, Past Chair, SCAC
Sylvia Gwozd, Past Chair, SCAC
Jim Kojima, Past Vice Chair, Wakayama
Kevin Lainchbury, Past Vice Chair, Wakayama

- In early 2021, the Sister City Program launched a street banner photo contest in Pierrefonds, similar to the photo contest held in Richmond. Pierrefonds resident, Ginette Biron’s photo of the Centre Local De Services Communautaires (the Local Community Service Centre) was selected as the winner! This building provides health and social services to the residents of Pierrefonds.

The “Look Up” street banner was created to celebrate the 55th milestone anniversary between the City of Richmond and the City of Pierrefonds. The cities twinned on July 29, 1967. Six street banners were installed on Granville Avenue between No. 3 Road and Minoru Boulevard, outside Richmond City Hall. The banners had alternating wording in both English and French.



Pierrefonds Street Banner in English and French located on Granville Avenue

- In March 2022, the Pierrefonds Pen Pal Program at Mitchell Elementary School was in full swing in a Grade 1 class and a Grade 3/4 class.

The Grade 3/4 class enjoyed sending letters and participating in a video chat.



Mitchell Elementary School Pen Pal Video Chat

The teacher even shared their experience on Mitchell Elementary's Twitter account:



Mitchell Elementary School Social Media Posts

The Pierrefonds schools enjoyed the experience with their new friends in Richmond as expressed by our city contact:

"This is so great! Johanne received some letters this week and the students are answering back this morning. The kids love the project! Thank you for sharing this with us!"

Olivia Marleau, Bibliothécaire - Animation, médiation et hors les murs

- In an effort to preserve and digitize historical Sister City Program documents, the SCAC hired a photographer and worked with staff at the Richmond Archives to photograph key relationship documents. The documents that were photographed include signed twinning documents for Pierrefonds (1967) and Wakayama (1973) plus various historically significant documents such as letters establishing the Sister City Twinning Committee in February 1974.



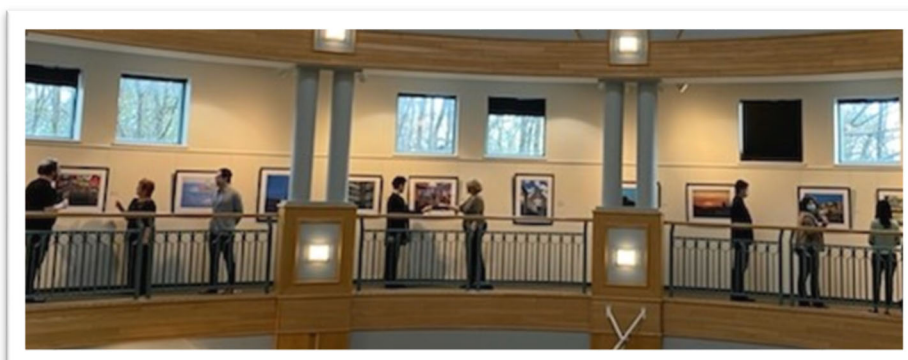
Photographing historical Sister City documents at the Archives

April

- The SCAC partnered with the organizers of the Cherry Blossom Festival and highlighted the historical connection between Richmond and Wakayama as sister cities through a blog post co-authored by the City of Wakayama city contact. The full post can be found here:
<https://richmondcherryblossomfest.ca/blog/richmond-cherry-blossom-festival-celebrating-the-season-in-canada-and-japan/>
- Twenty-six students from a Grade 6/7 class from General Currie Elementary School paired with 40 students from a Grade 5/6 class from Qingdao Hengshan Road Elementary School to exchange emails in English. This was the first pen pal program with Qingdao.
- The SCAC initiated phase 1 of a full-scale redesign of the Sister City Program webpages on the City of Richmond's website. The webpage's content was audited and reduced to a single page to standardize content among all sister/friendship city relationships. Check out the new page at: www.richmond.ca/sistercity

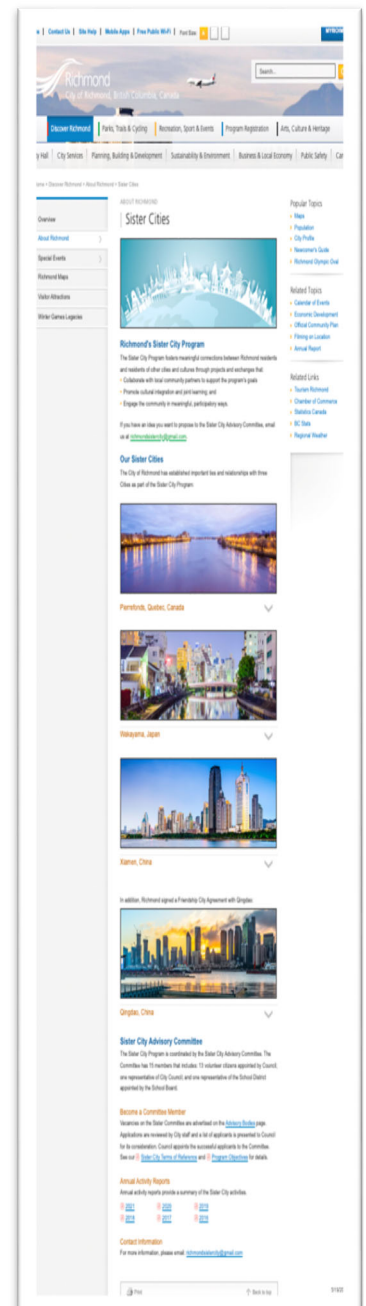
Phase 2 and 3 will be addressed following the City's web-redesign and will include links to external Sister/Friendship City relationship webpages and highlights of photos from key moments in the relationship.

- From April 1 to April 22, 2022, the SCAC hosted a Sister City Photo Exhibition to celebrate the 55th milestone anniversary with Pierrefonds, Quebec and the 10th milestone anniversary with Xiamen, China. Photos were on display at the Richmond Cultural Centre Upper Rotunda from students in Richmond, BC and Xiamen, China in addition to the "Look Up" Street Banner Photo Contest Winner Ginette Biron's photo.



Sister City Photo Exhibition – Pierrefonds and Xiamen

- With letters from both mayors, the cities of Richmond and Xiamen celebrated their 10th milestone anniversary on April 27, 2022.



Sister City Web Page

May

- In recognition of Richmond Youth Honour Choir's 20th anniversary, the choirs in our sister/friendship cities sent well wishes and pre-pandemic videos of their favourite performance.



Choir Performance sent to Richmond Youth Honour Choir

- During May, Wakayama featured a Tourism Display of their sister cities promotional videos at Wakachika Square. Wakachika Square is an open space with display screens and is used for events and performance arts. Tourism Richmond provided the Tourism Richmond Anthem video. Feedback from Japan was "Richmond is a cool city!"



Scan for the Tourism Richmond Video

- As the pandemic protocols and travel restrictions continued into 2022, the Richmond-Wakayama Student Exchange adapted to ensure the continuity of this long-standing program. In the spring of 2022, students met via Zoom to share introduction videos of their country, city and school; sent New Year postcards; and connected through a pen pal program. The schools in Wakayama have already declined to travel to Canada in 2023 so we hope an in-person connection will happen in 2024.



Joto Junior High School Art (2000) and Celebration of 50th Anniversary at Steveston-London

- Christmas came in May! Much to the delight of the students of one class at General Currie Elementary who received Christmas cards from Wakayama Fukko School. Due to COVID, Japan postal services terminated usage of air mail meaning all packages had to be sent via ground, which takes months to receive. As the students said, “it is always the thought that counts.”

June

- In celebration of the 55th milestone anniversary of Pierrefonds and Richmond’s Sister City relationship, delegations from Pierrefonds & Richmond met in Regina, Saskatchewan on June 2, 2022. The delegations were in Regina to attend the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) conference.

City of Richmond

Mayor Malcolm Brodie
Councillor Chak Au
Councillor Alexa Loo
Jason Kita, Director

City of Pierrefonds

Mayor Jim Beis
Councillor Chahi (Sharkey) Tarakjian
Councillor Benoît Langevin



Left: Gift to Richmond from Pierrefonds

Right: Gift to Pierrefonds from Richmond



From left to right: Councillor Alexa Loo, Councillor Chak Au, Mayor Malcolm Brodie, Mayor Jim Beis, Councillor Benoît Langevin, Councillor Chahi (Sharkey) Tarakjian



**Left side: (front to back): Councillor Alexa Loo, Jason Kita, Councillor Chak Au
Back: Mayor Malcolm Brodie
Right side: (front to back): Mayor Jim Beis, Councillor Chahi (Sharkey) Tarakjian, Councillor Benoît Langevin**



Presentation of City to City Gifts from Pierrefonds and Richmond

July

- On July 1, 2022, SCAC members hosted a booth at the Steveston Salmon Festival to promote the Sister City Program to the community. The booth featured display boards with information about the Sister City Program and each of Richmond's sister/friendship city relationships, as well as an interactive Japanese lottery wheel to select a give-away item when answering a question about the Sister City Program.



Sister City Booth at Canada Day Festival in Steveston

- From July 18 to August 2, 2022, the SCAC hosted **Pierrefonds Art & Museum Exhibition** to celebrate the 55th milestone anniversary with Pierrefonds, Quebec. Photos and museum artefacts were on display at the Richmond Cultural Centre Upper Rotunda including the “Look Up” Street Banner Photo Contest Winner Ginette Biron’s photo. The featured photos are from Pierrefonds Photo Club showcasing the City of Pierrefonds.



Pierrefonds Art and Museum Exhibition to Celebrate the 55th Sister City Anniversary

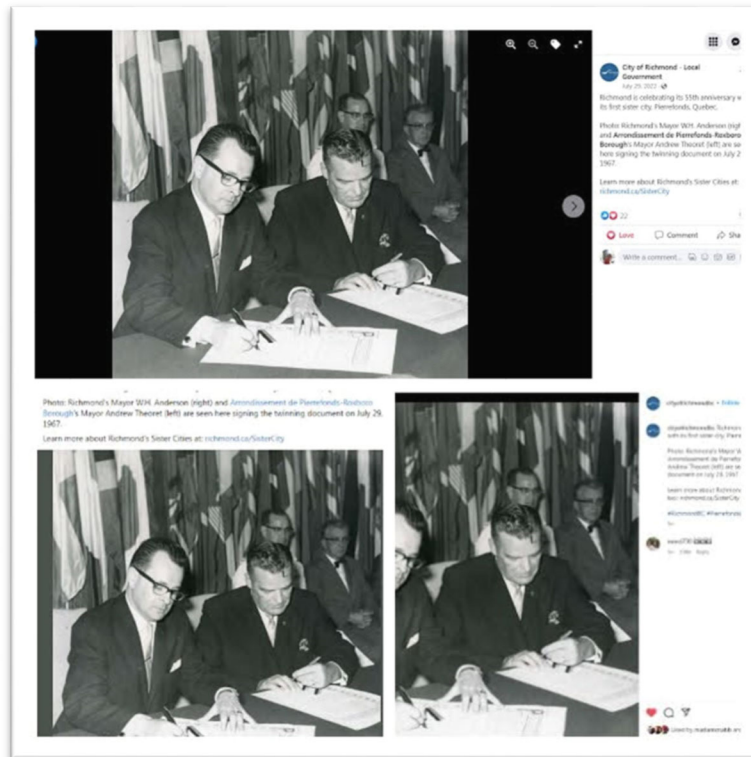
- On July 27, 2022, SCAC members hosted a follow-up meeting with the SCAC Alumni. This was an opportunity to continue the discussion around milestone anniversary celebrations with Pierrefonds and Wakayama and ask those questions that committee members continually asked. One output was the document about why the differing twinning anniversary dates and the details behind the promotion from friendship to sister city for Xiamen. Current committee members found this continual contact with past committee members invaluable.

- On July 29, 2022, SCAC members partnered with Walk Richmond to host a special Sister City Walk on the 55th milestone anniversary of the twinning of our first sister city, City of Pierrefonds. The walk began at City Hall, walking by the Pierrefonds Sister City Garden and ending at the Pierrefonds Garden adjacent to the Minoru Chapel.



Walk Richmond Walk to Pierrefonds Garden in Minoru Park

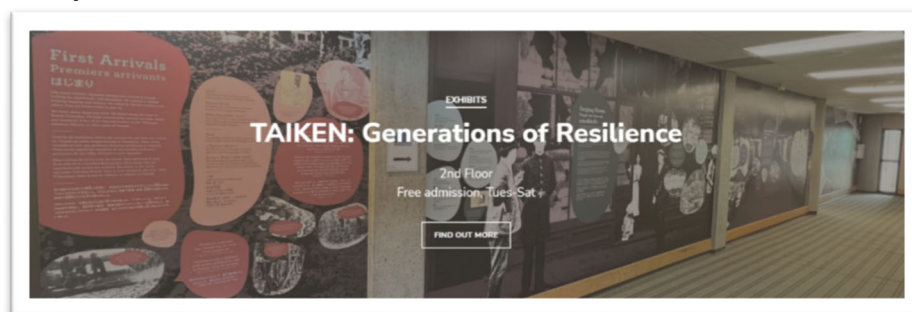
- On July 29, 2022, the anniversary milestone for the Richmond-Pierrefonds relationship was featured on the City's social media pages (Facebook / Instagram / Twitter). This post highlights the sustained efforts made by the SCAC to increase the program's visibility and reach to the residents of Richmond. In return, Pierrefonds responded by sharing the posts on their social media pages.



Social Media Post Celebrating the Twinning of Richmond and Pierrefonds

August

- An ongoing exhibit opened at Nikkei National Museum called **TAIKEN: Generations of Resilience**. SCAC was consulted as the coordinator was interested in potentially using one of our photos in a section celebrating the continuing connection between Wakayama and Steveston's Japanese Canadian community.



Digital Promotional Banner for TAIKEN Exhibit

September

- Expression of Interest invitations were sent to sister/friendship cities to participate in the Canadian Adult Recreational Hockey Association (CARHA) tournament happening in Richmond from March 19-26, 2023. Pierrefonds, Xiamen and Qingdao expressed interest however hockey clubs were not ready to travel due to continuing COVID concerns.

<https://carhahockeyworldcup.ca/>

October

- From October 3-31, 2022, the SCAC in partnership with Richmond Public Library celebrated **Canadian Library Month** with photos of public libraries from each of our sister/friendship cities. Photos were on display at the Richmond Cultural Centre Atrium.



Photo Exhibit of Libraries in Richmond's Sister/Friendship Cities for Celebrating Canadian Library Month

November

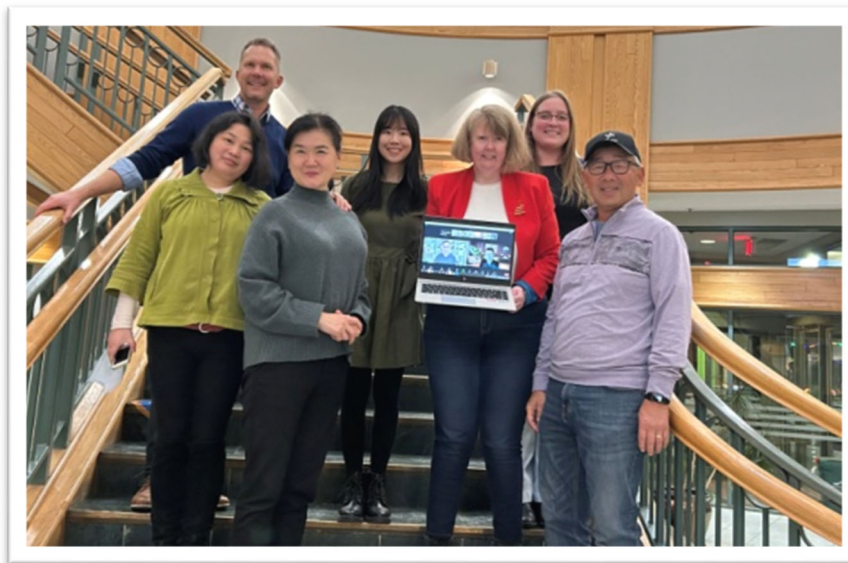
- The Sister City Advisory Committee turns 50 in 2024. In preparation for this milestone, the Committee has been interested in learning how sister city relations originated, particularly with Pierrefonds, Quebec, the first sister city. Why Pierrefonds and Richmond? What led to the successful twinning in July 1967? These questions were researched by Joan Page and her initial findings were documented in a report.



Scan the QR code to view the report

December

- The SCAC had its final meeting where the Committee scored each of the Sister/Friendship cities participation over the past year. All cities achieved a highly engaged score on the Sister City Program's annual relationship scorecard.



Final Meeting of the 2022 Sister City Advisory Committee

- On December 12, 2022, SCAC participated in a virtual information exchange with sister city representatives around the globe to discuss proposed activities. It was decided to move forward on exploring having a Spring book club.

2022 Acknowledgements

Council Appointed Advisory Boards

- Advisory Design Panel
- Aquatic Advisory Board
- Minoru Centre for Active Living Program Committee
- Public Library Board

City of Richmond Partners

- Arts Services
- Corporate Communications
- Development Applications
- Economic Development
- Major Events
- Museum & Heritage Services
- Parks Services
- Production Centre
- Richmond Archives

Community Partners

- Jennifer Strang Photography
- Metro Vancouver Japan Bowl
- Nikkei National Museum & Cultural Centre - Education Program
- Richmond Art Gallery
- Richmond Arts Centre/Media lab
- Richmond Museum
- Richmond Public Library
- Richmond School Board
- Sister City Advisory Committee Alumni
- Textile Arts Guild of Richmond (TAGOR)
- Tourism Richmond
- Walk Richmond

Special Thank You

- Mayor Malcolm Brodie
- Councillor Chak Au
- Councillor Carol Day
- Councillor Laura Gillanders
- Councillor Kash Heed
- Councillor Andy Hobbs
- Councillor Alexa Loo
- Councillor Bill McNulty
- Councillor Linda McPhail
- Councillor Harold Steves
- Councillor Michael Wolfe

- City Staff – Cecilia Achiam, Mike Romas and Kaitlynn Staples