

Burlington Mundialization Committee Itabashi subcommittee 2016 annual report

Members of the Itabashi subcommittee include council appointed members of the Mundialization Committee and citizen volunteers:

- Chuck Morris, Chair
- Rob Lyng
- Mary Vuk
- William Swybrous
- Ed Dorr
- Shinobu Yajima (volunteer)
- Liz Pellegrin (volunteer)
- Sam Kawazoye (volunteer)
- Marlene Fraser (volunteer)
- Leanne Cecil (volunteer)

Again this year, the committee gave willingly of their time and energy to present a full program of activities to promote the twinning of Itabashi and Burlington. The program consisted of the following:

2016 Annual Report Highlights:

- Cultural Presentations - ongoing
- Sakura (Cherry Blossom) Festival - May
- Elementary Student Art Exchange - ongoing
- Photo Exchange - January
- Culture Days

Cultural Presentations:

These were mainly held at the Burlington Public Library

- Jan. 23-Introduction to Buddhism
- Mar. 23- Haiku workshop
- Apr. 2- Kumi Himo (Japanese braiding)
- July 9- Anime Session (youth)
- Aug. 15-Sushi Making (youth)
- Oct. 29- Tea Ceremony
- Nov.16- Sushi Making

Sakura Festival:

The fourth annual Sakura (Cherry Blossom) festival was held May 7 at the Art Gallery of Burlington (AGB) with approximately 200 visitors. Presentations by Japanese dancers, martial arts group and a local taiko drum group were among the highlights. This family event continues to attract new participants and the public.

Elementary Student Art Exchange:

2016 marked the 11th elementary school art exchange. Each year a different Burlington elementary school participates. This year, Trinity Christian School participated. The Itabashi schools were Itabashi #10 Elementary School, Wakagi Elementary School and Hasune Elementary School. The student's art was displayed at the AGB during the month of May. A Celebration of Art including students, their families, teachers and dignitaries was held at the AGB on May 18th to hand out certificates of participation. The guest speaker was local artist Cheryl Goldring.

Student Travel Exchange:

During the year, discussions were held with the Halton District School Board (HDSB) to promote a student travel exchange between Burlington and Itabashi. Billeting was proposed to keep costs down and facilitate a closer relationship between students. The proposed travel exchange would involve grade 8 students to accommodate the school system in Itabashi. After several months of discussions with the Halton District School Board (HDSB) and the City of Itabashi, it was determined that a travel exchange would not be feasible at this time due to financial constraints in Itabashi and concerns in Burlington with the age of students.

Photo Exchange:

Photos taken around Itabashi by students at the Buzan School in Itabashi were displayed in the lobby of City Hall for two weeks in January and via a photo gallery on the Mundialization Committee's website.

Itabashi Park/Garden:

The location of the future Itabashi Park/Garden has been identified at Tansley Woods Community Centre on Itabashi Way. The park is anticipated to be completed in 2019 to coincide with the 30th anniversary of the twinning between Itabashi and Burlington. The subcommittee proposes that the Japanese lantern gifted to the City of Burlington by the City of Itabashi in 2014 during the 25th twinning anniversary celebrations be incorporated as a permanent display at the new park/garden.

Blooms of Friendship:

This new program was held in May to celebrate the "blooms" that represent the twinning of Burlington with the cities of Itabashi and Apeldoorn. In addition to the blooming sakura trees at Spencer Smith Park and Itabashi Way, 7,000 tulips

were featured in the downtown. Displays were set up at Brock Park, Civic Square, Spencer Smith Park and Apeldoorn Park to highlight the city's twinning relationships. Turnout was poor and as a result the event will not be repeated next year.

Culture Days:

During the Culture Days weekend (Sept 30 – Oct 2), the committee organized a display of Mundialization, Apeldoorn and Itabashi artifacts at the Burlington Performing Arts Centre on Oct. 2.

Woodblock Print Display:

Throughout 2016, discussions took place between the City of Itabashi, the Japan Foundation, the Itabashi subcommittee and the Art Gallery of Burlington (AGB) to bring a Japanese woodblock display to Burlington. It was identified that the transportation of the items was too costly to proceed. Subsequently in 2017, a woodblock prints display of local artists was hosted at the AGB and sessions on woodblock print making were held.

Other:

In February, a Japanese Taiko Drum group performed at the Burlington Performing Arts Centre as part of their regular programming. To complement the performance, the committee coordinated a display of Itabashi artifacts in the lobby to promote and bring awareness of the twinning relationship with the City of Itabashi and Japanese culture.

In 2016, the City of Burlington received a donation from Itabashi citizen and philanthropist Mr. Taroo Enomoto. Mr. Enomoto has donated generously to the City of Burlington for a number of years. His request is that the money be used to assist youth in Burlington. In keeping with Mr. Enomoto's wishes, the committee recommended the donation be given to the Reach of Centre for Kids (ROCK). The presentation was made to ROCK in February.

Mr. Nakazawa, another Itabashi citizen and philanthropist did not make his annual visit to Burlington this year due to health reasons. The "Kan Nakazawa International Award" awarded annually by the Rotary Club of Burlington Lakeshore was presented to Abi Mackey, a student at M.M. Robinson High School.

2017 Work Plan Highlights:

- Cultural Presentations - ongoing
- Sakura (Cherry Blossom) Festival - May
- Elementary Student Art Exchange - ongoing
- Photo Exchange - January
- Elementary School Pen Pal Exchange - new

In summary, in 2017 the Itabashi subcommittee will endeavor to build on the past years' programs to enhance them and reach more Burlington citizens - to have them experience the highlights of Japanese culture and bring awareness to the twinning relationship with the City of Itabashi. The subcommittee will also focus on initiating an elementary school pen pal program that can be broadened in the future.

In January 2017, Rob Lyng was elected chair of the Itabashi subcommittee.

Chuck Morris, Chair

On behalf of the Itabashi subcommittee