Burlington Mundialization Committee
Itabashi subcommittee 2017 annual report

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

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

2017 Annual Report Highlights:

- Cultural Events - ongoing
- Sakura Matsuri (Cherry Blossom Festival) - May
- Elementary Student Art Exchange - ongoing
- High School Pen Pal Program – ongoing
- Itabashi Garden

Cultural Events:

Cultural Events were held in conjunction with the Burlington Public Library

- Buddhism in Canada Talk, February 15
- Animation Exploration Workshop March 25
- Haiku Workshop by Kimiko Horne, April 25
- Ikebana Workshop, June 13
- An Itabashi display was installed in the Central Library lobby during the month of November.

In addition, a Woodblock Print display was mounted at the Art Gallery of Burlington from February 10 – to April 02.
Sakura Matsuri (Cherry Blossom Festival)

The fifth annual Sakura Matsuri (Cherry Blossom festival) was held May 6th at the Art Gallery of Burlington (AGB). More than 200 visitors attended the two-hour program which featured traditional and ‘Yosakoi’ Japanese dancing, a karate demonstration, and musical performances by a koto (Japanese harp) ensemble and by a local taiko (Japanese drum) drum group. This family event continues to be popular with the public and the performers.

Elementary Student Art Exchange

2017 marked the 12th elementary school art exchange. Each year a different Burlington secondary school participates. This year, Elizabeth Seton school (grade 7&8) and Itabashi’s Fujimidai school (grade 5&6) participated. The art from both schools was on display at the Art Gallery of Burlington in May. On May 21st, the formal opening, Celebration of Art, was very well attended (~150 people). The art was taken down May 31st and shipped to Itabashi for display. The art display proved to be a complimentary attraction to the Sakura Matsuri.

High School Pen Pal Program

In September, a pen pal program was initiated between students at M.M. Robinson and Dai-Ichi high school in Itabashi. Approximately 20 grade nine students from each school are participating. Letters were received from Itabashi in October and replies from MM Robinson were sent in November. A second set of letters from Itabashi was received in December. The program will end in March 2018, aligning with the end of the school year in Japan. However, given the enthusiasm shown by students and the teachers involved, starting another program in September 2018 will be pursued.

Itabashi Garden

The location of the future Itabashi Garden has been identified at Tansley Woods Community Centre on Itabashi Way. In December, Council approved a budget to complete the garden 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 garden.
Other:

On the occasion of Canada 150, Itabashi Mayor Takeshi Sakamoto wrote to Mayor Rick Goldring offering congratulations to all residents of Burlington on behalf of the residents of Itabashi.

In 2017, 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 March.

Mr. Kan Nakazawa, another Itabashi citizen and philanthropist, was unable to visit Burlington this year due to health reasons. The “Kan Nakazawa International Award”, awarded annually by the Rotary Club of Burlington Lakeshore, was presented to Clariza Isobel Castro from Corpus Christi high school. Clariza plans to study International Development at McGill.

Torontonian Amber Roberts, whose mother made and contributed ceramic art as a gift to Itabashi during the 15th Twinning Anniversary, traveled to Japan in the fall. Arrangements were made with Itabashi to show Amber the display of her mother’s art.

On the invitation of the Consulate-General of Japan in Toronto, Chuck Morris represented Burlington at the National Day Reception, marking the Emperor’s birthday, on Friday November 24th at the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre in Toronto.

While vacationing in Japan, Rob Lyng, chair of the Itabashi sub-committee met with Itabashi Mayor Takeshi Sakamoto and hand-delivered greetings from Mayor Goldring on behalf Council and the citizens of Burlington.

2018 Work Plan Highlights:

- Cultural Presentations - ongoing
- Sakura Matsuri (Cherry Blossom) Festival – May 05th
- Elementary Student Art Exchange - ongoing
- Elementary School Pen Pal Exchange – ongoing
- 30th Anniversary Planning
In summary, in 2018 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.

Rob Lyng, Chair
On behalf of the Itabashi subcommittee