

Burlington Mundialization Committee Itabashi subcommittee 2018 annual report

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

- Rob Lyng, Chair
- Chuck Morris
- William Swybrous
- Ed Dorr
- Eric Lim
- Karla Veites
- Dan McNeill (volunteer)
- Shinobu Yajima (volunteer)
- Leanne Cecil (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:

2018 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
- Planning the 30th anniversary of the twinning with Itabashi

Cultural events:

Cultural Events were held in conjunction with the Burlington Public Library and the Japan Foundation:

- Ikebana workshops, January 16 and October 25
- Haiku workshop by Kimiko Horne, April 10
- Japanese movie screening “A Tale of Samurai Cooking”, May 2
- Tea ceremony demonstration, November 10

Sakura Matsuri (Cherry Blossom Festival)

The sixth annual Sakura Matsuri (Cherry Blossom festival) was held May 5th 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, musical performances by Japanese folk singing duo accompanied by traditional sanshin (3-stringed banjo) 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

2018 marked the 13th elementary school art exchange. Each year a different Burlington secondary school participates. This year, Sir Ernest MacMillan elementary school (grade 8) and Itabashi's Fujimidai school (grade 5&6) participated. The art from both schools was displayed at the Art Gallery of Burlington in April and May. On May 7th, the formal opening, "Celebration of Art" was held during which the Sir Ernest MacMillan students were presented certificates for their participation in the art exchange. The art was taken down May 28th and shipped to Itabashi for display.

High school pen pal program

In September 2017, a pen pal program was initiated between students at M.M. Robinson high school and Dai-Ichi high school in Itabashi, with approximately 20 grade nine students from each school participating. Letters were exchanged through to March 2018, aligning with the end of the school year in Japan. Given the enthusiasm shown by students and the teachers involved, another pen pal program was started in September 2018. Letters and flags from Japan have been delivered to the MMR class. Return letters and a signed flag from MMR were sent to Japan in November.

Itabashi Garden

The location of the future Itabashi Garden was identified at Tansley Woods Community Centre on Itabashi Way. In December 2017, Council approved a budget to complete the garden in 2019 to coincide with the arrival of the Itabashi delegation for the 30th anniversary of the twinning between Itabashi and Burlington. In February 2018, a letter was sent to Mayor Sakamoto to inform Itabashi of the initiative and seek input on the garden design. The subcommittee also provided input on the garden design and has been kept informed of progress throughout the year. Construction work started in November 2018. 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 inside the Tansley Woods Community Centre near the new garden.

Planning the 30th anniversary of twinning with Itabashi

In 2018, the Itabashi subcommittee began planning the schedule and proposed activities to celebrate the 30th Anniversary. The anniversary is expected to consist of three main events:

- Itabashi delegation visit to Burlington
- Itabashi citizen(student) visit to Burlington
- Burlington delegation and citizen visit to Itabashi

The subcommittee is working with city staff to incorporate 30th anniversary plans and commemoration into the planned renovation of the cherry trees in Spencer Smith Park. The cherry trees were a gift to Burlington from Mr. Kan Nakazawa, Itabashi citizen and philanthropist who was Chairman of the Itabashi City Council at the time of twinning between Itabashi and Burlington in 1989. Three unhealthy trees were removed in 2018

with other removals planned in future years. The plan is for the trunks of trees removed in the future to given to Burlington's Wood Turners Guild. Guild members will use the wood to make commemorative gifts that may be used for 30th Anniversary and other events. The plan also includes the Mayors of Burlington and Itabashi conducting a ceremonial re-planting of a replacement cherry tree in Spencer Smith Park.

Other:

In 2010, Mr. Kan Nakazawa also established the "Kan Nakazawa International Award" scholarship, awarded annually by the Rotary Club of Burlington Lakeshore to a Burlington student entering international studies at a University. In 2018, the award was presented to Noah Godin, a graduate from Corpus Christi high school. Noah plans to attend Malmo University in Sweden to study Human Rights in the Faculty of Culture and Society.

In 2018, the City of Burlington once again 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 out Centre for Kids (ROCK). The presentation was made to ROCK in March.

In May, Burlington Council proclaimed June as Itabashi month.

On the invitation of the Consulate-General of Japan in Toronto, Rob Lyng and Chuck Morris represented Burlington at the National Day Reception, marking the Emperor's birthday, on Friday December 10th at the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre in Toronto.

In December, Itabashi set-up a public display in their city hall to celebrate their sister city/twin city relationships. A letter from the Burlington city manager expressing appreciation for the Itabashi and Burlington twin city relationship was included in the display.

A Distinguished Service Award and related letters of appreciation were received from Itabashi in recognition of the passing of former Mundialization committee member and chairman Ako Matsubayashi. These were passed on to his family.

2019 Work Plan Highlights:

- Cultural Presentations - ongoing
- Sakura Matsuri (Cherry Blossom) Festival) – May 04th
- Elementary Student Art Exchange - ongoing
- Elementary School Pen Pal Exchange – ongoing
- 30th Anniversary of the Twin City Agreement with Itabashi
 - Itabashi delegation visiting Burlington, June 30th to July 3rd.
 - Itabashi citizen student visit, August 14th to August 20th.

- Burlington citizens visiting Itabashi, October 16th to 27th.
- Burlington official delegation visiting Itabashi, October 17th to 20th.

In summary, in 2019 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