

Sister Cities International Mission Statement & Goals

Mission Statement

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

Goals

Sister Cities International is a nonprofit citizen diplomacy network creating and strengthening partnerships between U.S. and international communities in an effort to increase global cooperation at the municipal level, to promote cultural understanding and to stimulate economic development. Sister Cities International leads the movement for local community development and volunteer action by motivating and empowering private citizens, municipal officials and business leaders to conduct long-term programs of mutual benefit.

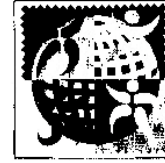
- **Develop** municipal partnerships between U.S. cities, counties, and states and similar jurisdictions in other nations.
- **Provide** opportunities for city officials and citizens to experience and explore other cultures through long-term community partnerships.
- **Create** an atmosphere in which economic and community development can be implemented and strengthened.
- **Stimulate** environments through which communities will creatively learn, work, and solve problems together through reciprocal cultural, educational, municipal, business, professional and technical exchanges and projects.
- **Collaborate** with organizations in the United States and other countries which share similar goals.

SISTER CITIES was conceived by President Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1956 and is now in its fourth decade of fostering global diplomacy and world-wide cooperation. The program is firmly rooted in the idea that when individuals from cities all over the globe come together to share ideas, cultures, and common problems, old misunderstandings and prejudices are replaced by a common spirit of friendship and cooperation.

Each city-to-city alliance in the Sister Cities International network determines its own initiatives and develops programs to meet the needs of the citizens in those cities. The programs vary from academic and medical technology exchanges to traveling art exhibits; from economic and trade development projects to athletic competitions between nations.

Sister Cities International is one of the largest volunteer organizations in the world, attracting a culturally diverse group of people with an infinite number of interests and backgrounds. Their efforts are strongly supported by local and national government officials.

SISTER CITIES



**ABILENE,
KANSAS**

**Omitama,
Japan**

**People to People
What's going on here?**

A little history:
Abilene's Sister City is Minori, Japan. The relationship between the two cities was formalized on October 3, 1984, between Abilene mayor Mr. Cliff Asling and Minori mayor Mr. Mitsuo Tonouchi. The history of the relationship begins back in 1970, with the sale of three cows to a farmer from Minori by Harold and Kathryn Scanlan of Abilene. The farmer, Mr. Mitsuo Tonouchi, later became the mayor of Minori. He never forgot the kindness shown by the Scanlans and the people of Abilene in this initial contact. On hearing about the Sister Cities International Program, Mr. Tonouchi approached Mr. Asling and the City of Abilene about forming a Sister City partnership.

In 1986, a committee was formed, with chairperson, City Commissioner Connie Cooper. Ms. Cooper attended the Sister Cities International Conference in Los Angeles and met with an eight member delegation from Minori to discuss goals of our partnership. Student and adult exchanges were to become the main emphasis of the program, with Minori delegations arriving each year starting in 1987 through 1989. The first delegation from Abilene went to Minori in 1990, led by Mrs. Vina Narciso. This began delegation exchanges in alternating years. In 2003, there was no exchange due to the SARS epidemic in Asia, and in 2004, Abilene ceded its turn to Minori. In 2006,

there was no delegation from Minori due to its merger with two nearby towns and governmental reorganization.

A new epoch began on March 27, 2006, for the Minori-Abilene relationship as Minori merged with two nearby towns to become the new town called Omitama, the name is a combination of sounds from the names of the three merging entities of Ogawa, Minori and Tamari.

On October 3, 2006, a signing ceremony was held at the Eisenhower Presidential Library in Abilene to establish our sister city relationship with the newly formed town. Representing Omitama was Mayor Joichi Shimada (former mayor of Minori), Mr. Tsuneo Endo, and Mr. John Okajima. Representing Abilene was mayor Devin Karraker and the city commissioners: Diane Miller, Judy Leyerzapf, John Zutavern, and Lynn Peterson.

Cultural exchanges have been popular such as: from Minori to Abilene, the Taiko Drummers (performed at the Kansas State Fair in 2001), Edelweiss Chorale Group, and from Abilene to Minori, Pianist Peter Vavra, and folk musicians Bob and Eddie Hiebert.

In 2001, the Sister City Committee became an official Abilene City Board. With this change and need for a financial support group, the **Friends** organization was started whose purpose is to assist the Board in fund raising and support all other activities through its membership.

For more information or referral contact:
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