

Cupertino-Hsinchu Sister City Association Student Exchange Program 2023

To the Cupertino City Council:

Honorable Mayor Hung Wei
Honorable Vice Mayor Sheila Mohan
Councilmember Liang Chao
Councilmember J.R. Fruen
Councilmember Kitty Moore

The Cupertino-Hsinchu Sister City Association, CHSCA, is pleased to present to the Cupertino City Council our Student Exchange Program April 2023 Report.

Our student exchange program dates back to 2004 when the first student exchange with our Sister City - Hsinchu, Taiwan occurred. The exchange activities were put on hold in 2020 due to Covid-19. After a 3 year hiatus, we are excited to restart our program this year.

This year's Student Delegation included 20 students from the Cupertino Union School District (CUSD) and Fremont Union High School District (FUHSD) for a one week visit to Hsinchu from April 15th to April 23rd, 2023. During this trip we were also joined by our Mayor, City Staff, and school-district Board Members which allowed our group to show more aspects of our student program in Hsinchu.

The goal of the CHSCA Student Exchange program is to provide 7th-12th graders from our city and 2 school districts the opportunity to stay with a host family in Hsinchu, attend local schools to experience the education system in Taiwan, learn of the history of Hsinchu and Taiwan, and most importantly establish lifelong friendships between our students and host families.

Hsinchu is known as the Silicon Valley of Taiwan and with over 300 tech companies in the Hsinchu Science and Technology Park, this exchange allows students to see how connected our two cities are while experiencing Taiwanese culture firsthand. This report will highlight the major activities of our trip. It also attached a link to our [2023 CHSCA Student Delegation Website](#) which provides more detailed information regarding our trip to our students' families. The information includes student journals where each student was asked to chronicle their experiences throughout the week, and a photo gallery that highlights many of the activities our students participated during the week.

This year's delegation consisted of 20 students, 5 from FUSHD and 15 from CUSD, a teacher chaperone, Dr. Jennifer Lashier, who is the Principal of CUSD's Chinese Language Immersion Program at Muir Elementary School, and our CHSCA members: President Janice Sung, Vice President Angela Chen, Vice President Chia-Ching Lin, and Student Coordinator Angelo Noguera. We were fortunate that 3 of our students are returning from our 2020 Delegation which was canceled due to Covid-19.

Prior to our trip in April, the students participated in 5 cultural training sessions to learn about Taiwanese culture, prepared a skit to highlight our life and culture here in Cupertino, and connected virtually with their host families before arriving in Taiwan. Our meetings were facilitated by members of our group who worked with our families in Cupertino, city and education officials in Hsinchu, and acted as primary contacts for our host families should any

issues arise. These meetings help make sure our students are prepared for their time in Hsinchu with our delegation and host families.



Official Delegation Visit to Hsinchu City Hall on April 17, 2023

Though our student exchange was only a week long, thanks to the Hsinchu City Education Officials and our host school for this year, Hsinke Junior High School, students were able to experience various aspects of student life in Hsinchu. The week consisted of our official delegation meeting with Hsinchu City Hall Officials, a day trip to Taipei and its surrounding areas, 3 days of school with their host student, and time to explore Hsinchu with their host families.

Our adult delegation was able to participate in many student activities as well as meetings with various city and education leaders to observe the educational system in Taiwan and share our own experiences working in the classroom. Our program tries to immerse students as much as possible in the culture of Hsinchu so that they become part of the Hsinchu family rather than just an outside observer.

A major component of our program is having students experience school life in Hsinchu. Not only did students take classes with their host students, but our whole student delegation was able to visit several schools in the area to experience the unique classes and electives junior and high schools have to offer. During our first school visit to Fuli Junior High School on Monday, April 17th our whole delegation participated in classes on glass blowing, traditional dance, and archery. We are very fortunate to have created a strong relationship with Fuli over

the years to help provide our students with this unique opportunity of working with students at the school to create glass charms and decorations while learning archery from a team coached by an Olympic Medalist. The next school we visited as a delegation was Peiying Junior High on Wednesday, April 19th, where students constructed two plastic sculptures from laser cut plastics and wood materials all made at the school. Students finished off their sculptures by inserting LED lights and keychain rings.





Student Delegation visit to Fuli Junior High School on April 17th, 2023





Delegation Visit to Pei-Ying Junior High School on April 19, 2023

With our visit to our host school Hsinke Junior High School on Thursday April 20th, students participated in Taiko drumming and clay sculpting. Even in the short time our students were in the Taiko Drumming class, they were able to learn a short routine and play alongside Hsinke students. Our City Council and School Board members were able to visit the clay sculpting class and see how our students alongside Hsinke students crafted clay hedgehog magnets that students were able to take home after completion. During the week, students were immersed in what a typical school day would be, collaborated with host school students to participate in clubs and electives, and took time to chat and learn from each other about their school life. Many of our students were provided school uniforms, introduced to the entire school, and had a chance to speak to their classes about their life in the Bay Area. Each of our host schools go above and beyond welcoming our students and make sure our students feel comfortable and a valued member of the student body. Creating positive relationships is the same in any culture and these student visits to the various schools in Hsinchu will hopefully lay a foundation for future communication and collaboration between our students and two cities.





City and Student Delegation Visit to Hsinke Junior High School on April 20th 2023

As well as participating in class at their host school, our students have a chance to immerse themselves in Taiwan and Hsinchu's culture through living and exploring Taiwan with their host family for the week. On Tuesday, April 18th, our students along with their host students took a day trip on Taiwan's High Speed Rail to Taipei to visit the National Palace museum to view artifacts and learn about the history of Ancient China. Afterwards, our delegation visited the towns of Jiufen and Pingxi to stroll through traditional street markets, sample local delicacies, and create special sky lanterns with their wishes written on them to send up into the sky. The day was capped off with a special dinner at Ding Tai Fung and exploring Taipei 101 to see the modern city of Taipei at night. It is during this first whole day our students spent with their host student that we see our delegation and Hsinchu students open up and bond with each other.





Delegation Visit to Taipei, Jiufen and Pingxi on April 18th, 2023

The most memorable experiences developed during our trip are made through the time students spend with their host families. Upon landing in Hsinchu on Sunday 4/16, our students were greeted by all our host families at Hsinke Junior High and after a short meeting were off to explore the city. Throughout our program's history, we have always been thankful for the generosity of our host families as they take in our students and make them part of their own family. When our chaperones visit students during the week, students share about their visit to local stores and restaurants, travel to other areas outside of Hsinchu, participate in karaoke nights with other members of our delegation and host students, and enjoy the unique sites and histories Hsinchu has to offer. It is not uncommon that we run into our students in the city taking selfies, drinking Pearl Milk Tea, and laughing with their host student. These relationships that have been developed over the week are recognized in our Farewell Dinner on Friday, 4/21 where each school principal, family, and members of the programs from both Hsinchu and Cupertino were recognized for all the work put in to make this special for everyone. The pictures shown in this report and our website only highlight a few of the laughs, smiles, performances, and tears that were on display as we celebrated our last few days together. It is after the Farewell Dinner and our send off on Sunday 4/23 that as an organization we are proud to say we have been able to create a positive experience for all those involved during this exchange activity. We are fortunate to hear back from past exchange students regarding their experiences, and we hope to continue to create these memorable experiences and long lasting friendships.





Farewell Recognition Part on April 21st, 2023

While the adult delegation participated in many of our student activities, our CHSCA members also visited many of the schools in the area, including reconnecting with many past host schools, principals, and staff. On Wednesday April 19th, we visited The Affiliated Experimental Elementary School of National Tsing Hua University which focuses on visual art and some of the student's work has been displayed in the Cupertino Library in the past. Chaperones were able to make custom buttons that highlighted one of the unique activities or locations in Hsinchu such as dragon boat racing, meatballs, or old shopping districts. With our Mayor, City Manager, and school board members we visited The National Experimental High School (NEHS) at Hsinchu Science Park. This school also hosts the International Bilingual

School at Hsinchu Science Park and in collaboration with the Hsinchu Science Park offers a mix of Western and Taiwanese education systems to support the science park and families who work at the various companies headquartered there. CHSCA started our relationship with the school over 6 years ago. With its mix of the traditional Taiwanese classes and school experiences along with Western Education practices such as Advanced Placement Classes, Content and Area standards used in the Bilingual Department, and the close proximity to the Hsinchu Science Park, NEHS highlights how globalization creates more opportunities and connections in education while building on the strengths of the area to create strong and unique education opportunities for all.

On April 22nd, our final full day in Hsinchu, the adult delegation traveled to Tainan to visit the National Cheng Kung University to learn about the numerous local technology startups in the area as well as listen to products being developed locally. Our group then traveled to Southern Taiwan Science Park to learn about the various local and global tech companies that call this area their home. After bidding farewell to our Mayor and her group, our group traveled to Kaohsiung to reconnect with the former Principal of NEHS and now principal of the I-Shou International School. What stood out about our visit to I-Shou was the focus on STEM with work areas such as Makerspace, Woodshop, Video and Media Production Rooms, Robotic Workshops, and collaboration rooms to allow students the freedom to pursue their creative views while exchanging ideas with others. It is through school visits like this one as well as the other schools during our trip, that our adult delegation is able to continue our relationship with educational leaders in Hsinchu. We hope to welcome these teachers and principals who hosted us in our October 2023 Exchange in Cupertino to continue to share our ideas and strengthen the bonds between our two cities.

As an association, the return of our student exchange program to Hsinchu after 3 years was a moment we were looking forward to. Though the global pandemic has brought numerous challenges and uncertainties in international travel, we are proud to say that upon returning to Cupertino, our trip was a resounding success for all those involved. We are forever grateful to our host families, schools, and city officials in Hsinchu for taking us in with open arms and going above and beyond in taking care of each and every one of us during our week. Being able to reconnect in person with Hsinchu and witness the positive experiences that all of our students were able to create lays a great foundation for future exchanges, including resuming our Host Family Program this coming October 2023 where we hope to welcome many of the Hsinchu students who hosted our students in April.

We would also like to show our thanks and appreciation to our Mayor, the City and School Board Delegation who spent time visiting our students in school as well as touring parts of Hsinchu and Taiwan. The support from our city as well as school districts help ensure a positive and healthy program for students in the future and we look forward to continuing to share our students' experiences in years to come.

Sincerely,
Cupertino-Hsinchu Sister City Association