



RICHMOND SISTER CITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE 2025 Year in Review



Our Sister and Friendship Cities

Sister Cities

Pierrefonds, Quebec, Canada — established 1967

Wakayama, Japan — established 1973

Xiamen, China — established 2012

Friendship City

Qingdao, China — established 2008

A Message from our Chair

Reflecting on 2025, we take great pride in the accomplishments of the Richmond Sister City Advisory Committee in during its 51st year. Guided by a shared commitment to cultural exchange, mutual understanding, and global friendship, our dedicated Committee worked collaboratively to strengthen meaningful international relationships.

This year's activities—including cultural exchanges, virtual learning, and artistic showcases—were made possible through the valued support of Richmond City Council, our community partners, our Sister/Friendship Cities, and staff. Together, we are building bridges of friendship that span the globe, right here from Richmond.

As we look ahead to 2026, we remain inspired to build on this momentum and further strengthen these enduring relationships, creating benefits for all involved.

Thank you for your support.

The Committee is pleased to share the 2025 highlights!

Melissa Zhang

Chair, Sister City Advisory Committee

2025 Richmond Sister City Advisory Committee



From left to right, top to bottom: *William Ying, E-Von Lai, Andy Cheung, Danny Chen, Niña Pangilinan, Jordan Oye, Anna Fei, Theresa Chen, Melissa Zhang, Councillor Andy Hobbs*

Absent: Trustee Alice Wong, Charan Gill, and Qin Ji

2025 Committee Members

Chair	Melissa Zhang
First Vice Chair	Jordan Oye
Second Vice Chair	William Ying
Members	Danny Chen Theresa Chen Andy Cheung Anna Fei Charan Gill Qin Ji E-Von Lai Niña Pangilinan
Council Liaison	Councillor Andy Hobbs
School Board Liaison	Trustee Alice Wong Trustee Ken Hamaguchi (Alternate)



Visits

Sport Exchange Visit

Steveston Kendo Club Visit to Wakayama City, Japan

From March 21-26, 2025, a delegation of youth from the Steveston Kendo Club visited Wakayama City, Japan to build new friendships and sharpen their kendo skills in the company of fellow kendo enthusiasts in Wakayama City.



Performing Arts Visit

Richmond Youth Honour Choir Visit to Wakayama City, Japan

The Richmond Youth Honour Choir visited Wakayama City, Japan, from August 6-16, 2025. 12 student performers and one instructor participated in the performing arts exchange. The delegation's itinerary included participating in joint camps with both domestic and international choir groups (including the Wakayama Children's Choir), attending instructor-led workshops, and performing alongside other choirs.



Delegation Visit

Dr. Iwahashi, President, Wakayama Sister City Affiliation Committee, Visit to Richmond

The City hosted Dr. Nobutada Iwahashi during his visit to Richmond to recognize his outstanding contributions to the Richmond—Wakayama Sister City relationship.

In 2025, Dr. Iwahashi also received the “Tim Quigley” Volunteer of the Year Award through Sister Cities International. The award celebrates individuals strengthening international relationships, cultural understanding, and community engagement.



Education

Richmond-Wakayama School Exchange Visit to Richmond

From November 17-24, 2025, the Richmond School Board, City of Richmond, and the Richmond Sister City Advisory Committee were honoured to welcome students from Wakayama City, Japan to Richmond for a week-long school exchange visit. The students were hosted by families from three Richmond high schools: Burnett Secondary, Richmond Secondary, and Palmer Secondary. Some of these activities included attendance at three Richmond high schools and visits to the Richmond Olympic Oval, Steveston, and Richmond City Hall. The week concluded with a Sayonara Open House to celebrate the school exchange and express gratitude to everyone for their contributions and efforts in making this exchange a special and memorable experience for all who participated.



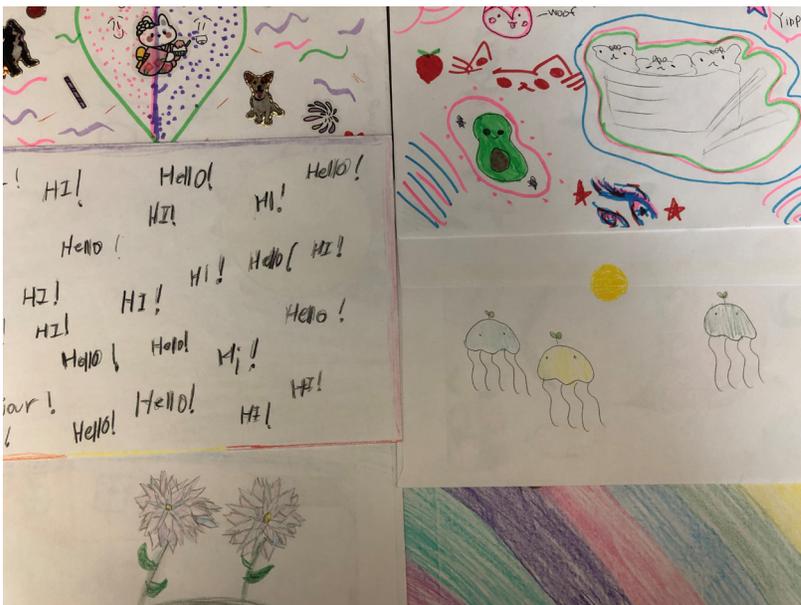


Non-Visits

Education

Pen Pal Exchange

As in previous years, the SCAC continued to work with the Richmond School District to facilitate a Pen Pal Exchange Program between General Currie Elementary School in Richmond and Hengshan Road Primary School in Qingdao, China. Throughout the year, students from both schools sent cards with personalized messages and beautiful artwork to their designated pen pal, fostering intercultural connections and understanding through a fun and meaningful writing activity that is thoroughly enjoyed by students in both cities.



Japan Bowl

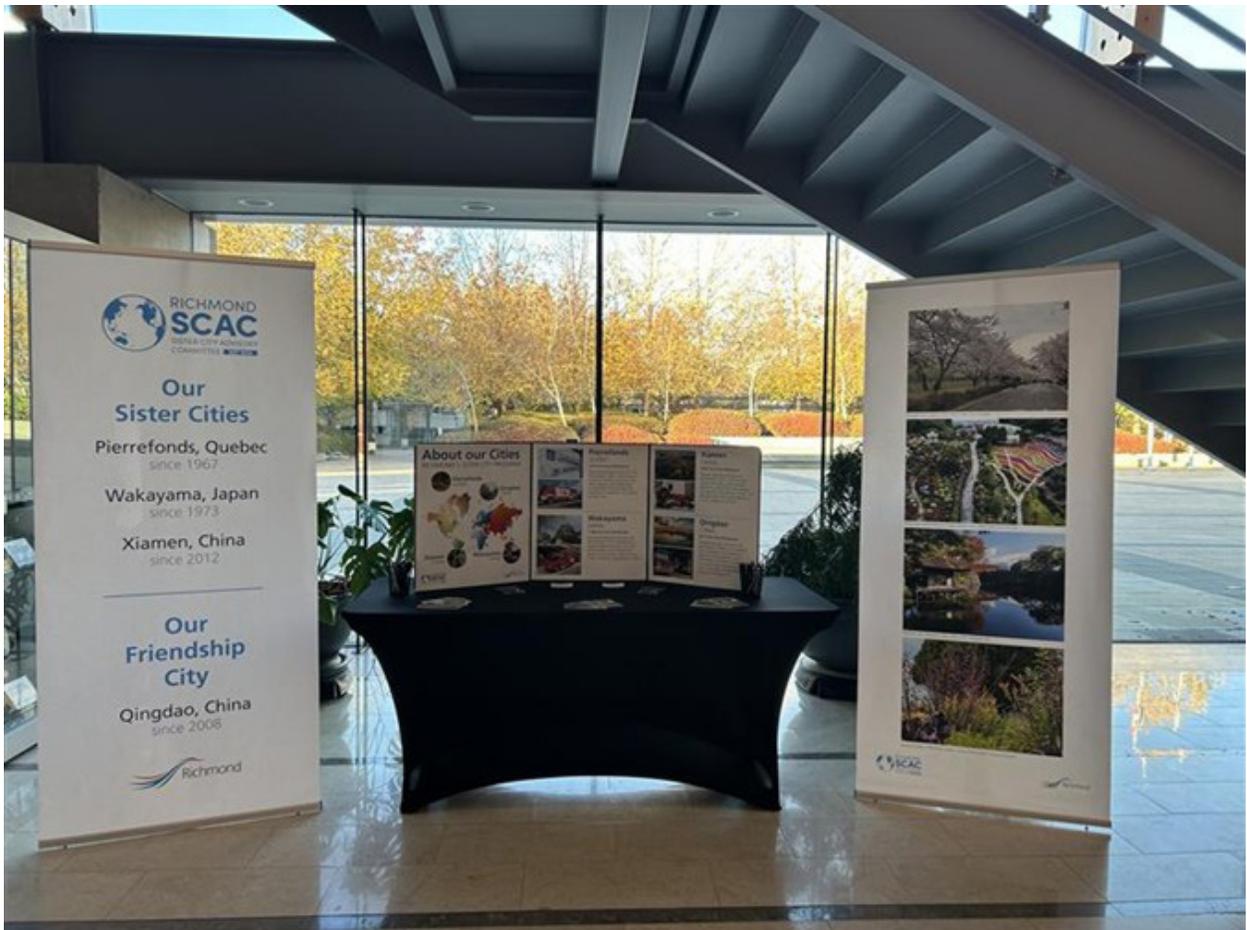
High School students from Richmond proudly took part in the 2025 Japan Bowl, an international competition that tests high school students on Japanese language and culture. Competing in teams of two to three, high school students from McMath and Hugh Boyd answered questions presented in both English and Japanese, demonstrating strong teamwork and dedication. Their participation highlighted the community's commitment to intercultural learning and offered a memorable opportunity to engage with students from across Canada and around the world.



Information Exchange

“About Our Cities” Display

This year, the development of an informative display to educate the public about Richmond’s Sister and Friendship Cities around the world was publicly shared. The display featured unique facts about each city accompanied by vibrant landscape photography. The display was installed in the Galleria of Richmond City Hall for over a week in October/November and appeared to be well-visited as the Sister City postcards, which were made available to the public at this display, were very popular!



Cultural Tea Exchange

The SCAC hosted a cultural tea exchange in December with a guest from Xiamen, China, during which the Committee learned about seven different types of tea, traditional preparation methods, and the rich history and customs surrounding Chinese tea culture, including the art of proper tea pouring. Committee members joined virtually and enjoyed tasting a variety of Chinese teas as they explored each tea's background and significance.



Arts and Culture

2025 Chinese New Year Greeting Card

In celebration of Chinese New Year, a digital greeting card for the Year of the Snake was sent on behalf of the SCAC and the City of Richmond to both Qingdao, China and Xiamen, China.



Community Engagement

Annual Photo Exhibition – Gardens

This year, the annual photo exhibition's theme was "Gardens". The photo collection highlights how each place cultivates its own sense of beauty and calm, capturing quiet paths, coastal greenery, and everyday pockets of nature discovered throughout the year in each of our Sister/Friendship Cities. This exhibition was on display in the upper rotunda of the Cultural Centre from March 28 – April 24, 2025.



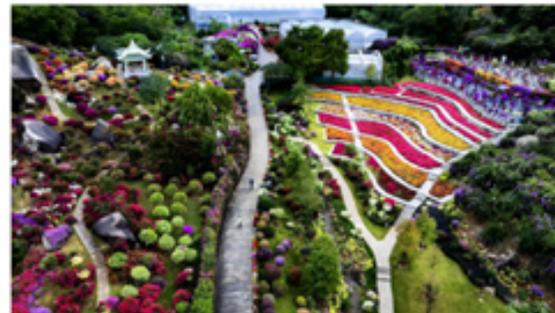
SCAC Event Selfie Stations

As part of the Committee’s community engagement initiatives, “Selfie Station” signs were developed for two of the City of Richmond’s signature community events – the 2025 Richmond Cherry Blossom Festival and the 2025 Steveston Salmon Festival. The custom signs featured cutouts that allowed for festival-goers to take pictures together to capture memories from the festivals.



Community Postcards

Custom postcards were developed this year that were distributed to the public at various engagement events and information booths, as well as provided to delegations and visitors during exchange visits. These materials supported outreach and awareness efforts by offering information on the City and Richmond Sister/Friendship Cities through a practical souvenir postcard design.



Thank You

Thank you to City Council for their ongoing support of the Sister City Program and for helping foster meaningful connections between Richmond residents and our Sister and Friendship Cities. Your commitment and engagement have been essential to our progress this year.

We also extend our appreciation to our committee members, staff, community partners, and to our Sister and Friendship Cities – Pierrefonds, Quebec (est. 1967); Wakayama, Japan (est. 1973); Xiamen, China (est. 2012); and Qingdao, China (est. 2008) – for their continued collaboration.

We look forward to another productive year together in 2026.