



Sebastopol World Friends

Sister City Exchange Program with Takeo, Japan

Sebastopol World Friends (SWF) was founded in 1985 after Sebastopol and Takeo, formerly Yamauchi, signed a Sister City Charter. Since then, the program has organized alternating student exchanges of approximately 10 to 11 days between the two cities. Many local families have had the unique opportunity to gain a first hand perspective on Japanese culture. As generations of family connections between the two cities have grown over time, it truly brings to life SWF's motto, *"World Peace, One Friend at a Time!"*

STUDENT AMBASSADOR ELIGIBILITY

7th and 8th grade students who attend a Sebastopol school or reside at a Sebastopol address are invited to apply for the 2019-2020 Takeo Student Exchange Program.

Qualities SWF will be looking for include but are not limited to:

- Interest and enthusiasm for other cultures and world travel
- Confidence and self discipline
- Good social and communication skills
- Good behavioral reputation at school and in the community (a reference by an academic teacher will be required)
- Flexibility and open mindedness
- Ability to work with others in a group setting
- Commitment of student and family to the philosophy and intent of SWF's student exchange program

APPLICATION PROCESS

Applications must be **emailed or postmarked by Monday, November 5**. Applicants will subsequently be interviewed by SWF. Final results will be notified to all applicants by early December.

REQUIRED TIME COMMITMENT AND FAMILY PARTICIPATION

Once selected, each student will be paired with one or two Japanese students of the same gender. We ask all participants to commit fully to the program for the duration of the program as described below. It is approximately 18 months.

Hosting

Family meetings will be held from December 2018 through March 2019 to prepare for the hosting of Takeo students in Sebastopol in March-April 2019. Their stay in Sebastopol is for 10 days.

Parent participation and assistance will be requested in all aspects of hosting. In addition to caring for an exchange student/students in their home, each family is asked, to the extent of their ability, to assist with some driving, chaperoning, and organizing gatherings such as welcome and farewell parties. Host families are requested, at least one time during the visit, to drive on one of the group activity days. A copy of driver's license and auto-insurance coverage will be collected from each family before the arrival of the guests. Background check of all adults living in the hosting household will be conducted as requested by SWF's insurance policy.

Traveling

After hosting, meetings will be held regularly to prepare Sebastopol students for student ambassadorship and travel. Meetings will include some education in Japanese culture, basic language skills, and team building.

Sebastopol students will travel to Takeo in spring of 2020. Although efforts will be made in scheduling the travel dates to minimize the number of school days that the Sebastopol students will have to miss, it is likely and inevitable that they miss some school days. Students are responsible for communicating with their school and teachers about missing schoolwork.

COST TO PARTICIPANTS

Participating families can decide how much fundraising they would like to do as a group to offset the cost of hosting and/or traveling. Limited financial assistance will be available.

NEW THIS YEAR: The City Council Scholarship

Thanks to the generosity of some of the Sebastopol city councilmembers, we have a full scholarship available for one selected participant in this upcoming cycle. If you are interested, please indicate on the application form. (Some of the expense items listed below are not covered by the scholarship. Please contact us for more details.)

The amounts in the table below are approximate estimates and subject to change.

| 2019 Hosting of Takeo Students Group in Sebastopol | |
|--|---|
| Sebastopol World Friends Family Membership for 2019 | \$30 |
| Administrative and hosting expenses (Examples: admission tickets; ground travel; lunches; welcome/farewell parties) | Approximately \$250-300 per participant |
| Background Check (required by SWF's insurance policy) | \$15 per adult person living in the household |
| Family hosting cost (Examples: an increase in household expenses such as food and utilities, the cost of activities you choose to do on host family days, and the cost of gifts you choose to send home with your Japanese student.) | Typically \$100-\$150 |
| Hosting Year | Approximately \$410 - \$510 (if 2 adults live in the household) |
| 2020 Sebastopol Students' Travel to Takeo | |
| Sebastopol World Friends Family Membership for 2020 | \$30 |
| Airfare to Japan and travel insurance (varies from year to year) | Approximately \$1,800 |
| Passport application fees (subject to change) | Approximately \$100 |
| Personal travel expenses (example: travel clothes, the cost of gifts you choose to send to your Japanese host family/families) | At each family's discretion Typically \$100-\$150 |
| Student's travel allowance | At each family's discretion Typically \$200-\$300 |
| Administrative expenses and other fees | Approximately \$200-250 |
| Travel Year | Approximately \$2,430 - \$2,630 |
| Overall Cost to Participants (estimate) | Approximately \$2,840 - \$3,140 |

IV. TAKEO COMMITTEE CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information or questions, please contact Meg Mizutani, Takeo Committee Chair 707-484-0245. takeo@sebastopolwf.org. Program references are available upon request.

Sebastopol World Friends 2019-2020 Takeo Student Exchange Program Application Instructions

Please read the following instructions carefully. Complete the form on the next page and send it with your essay to:

Sebastopol World Friends
P.O Box 976, Sebastopol, CA 95473
takeo@sebastopolwf.org

The application materials must be emailed or postmarked on or before **November 5, 2018**.

Applicants will be contacted to schedule an interview with the selection committee after application and references are received and complete. Interviews will be conducted and approximately eighteen student ambassadors will be selected.

Questions may be directed to Meg Mizutani takeo@sebastopolwf.org 707-484-0245.

Selection Criteria

1) Application Form (the next page)

2) Essay

Please write/type a 1-2 page essay, including the following information.

- Why do you want to travel to Takeo, Japan?
- Why should you be selected as a student ambassador to Japan?
- What, if any, is your participation in leadership, volunteer or other community activities?
- What are your prior travel experiences away from home? Examples: camp, traveling to another country, being away from your parents, etc.
- What, if any, is your prior hosting experience with SWF or other organizations?

3) Reference Forms from two individuals

Reference forms should be filled out by two individuals - one by an academic teacher or a school counselor, and another one by an adult outside your family. **The forms must be DIRECTLY submitted or emailed to SWF by the reference providers. Reference forms submitted by the applicant will NOT be accepted.** Please provide your reference providers with the instructions on the last page of this packet. Please email takeo@sebastopolwf.org if you want a PDF of the form for your reference providers.

4) Interview with SWF Selection Committee

**Sebastopol World Friends
2019-2020 Takeo Student Exchange Program
Application Form**

Student's name: _____

Parent's name(s): _____

Address: _____ Birthdate: ____/____/____

Parent's phone: _____ Email: _____

Grade in 2018-2019: _____ School Attending: _____

Need-based partial financial assistance is available. In addition, we have a need-based full scholarship for one selected applicant available for this cycle. If you are interested in applying for partial financial assistance or a full scholarship, please circle which program you are interested in. ☐ Full Scholarship ☐ Partial financial assistance

If selected, I will participate in SWF exchange-related events in Sebastopol and Takeo, including scheduled orientation, meetings, language and culture sessions, and fundraising. I understand that I will be a goodwill ambassador to our sister city and will govern my conduct accordingly.

Student's signature _____ Date _____

If selected, my child has my permission to take part in the 2019-2020 Sebastopol World Friends Takeo Student Exchange. I understand this is a family commitment and I am willing to be involved in the process over the next year and a half. I have read and understand the financial and time commitments to the program.

Parent's signature _____ Date _____

Our Takeo exchange program is packed with a variety of activities throughout the program. Some activities are conducted in groups and some activities allow for more independence. Overall, SWF looks for participants who demonstrate good judgment in their daily lives. In order to ensure safe and successful experiences for all of the participants, SWF evaluates the participants' behaviors at school throughout the program.

Please sign below indicating your approval for SWF to speak with personnel at your child's school regarding their school behavior for selection and during the program. Feel free to add any comments you think relevant on the back of this form.

Sebastopol World Friends has my permission to consult with my/my child's school personnel about my/my child's conduct. I realize that a school suspension or excessive detentions may result in me/my child not being selected for the program and/or being removed from the program.

Parent's signature _____ Date _____

Student's signature _____ Date _____

**Sebastopol World Friends
2019-2020 Takeo Student Exchange Program
Instructions for Reference Providers**

Dear Reference Provider,

The applicant is applying for the position of Student Ambassador in the upcoming cycle of the sister city exchange program between Sebastopol and Takeo, Japan. Applicants will be selected based on their application, an interview, and the reference forms.

Please help us determine if this applicant is ready to participate in the program as a student ambassador, representing himself/herself, his/her family, school, the city of Sebastopol, and the country.

The information provided by you will remain confidential and be used by the SWF Selection Committee for selection purposes only.

All references must be received or postmarked by **Monday, November 5, 2018**.

Please return your form **DIRECTLY** to the Sebastopol World Friends Selection Committee. Reference forms submitted by the applicant will NOT be accepted.

You can send us your form in one of the three ways.

1) Online (preferred)

Please fill out the Reference Form online and submit it directly to the selection committee. You can find the form on <http://www.sebastopolwf.org/reference/>. Please be advised the form is not accessible from the website. You can click on the link here or type in the link to get to this page.

2) E-mail

Obtain a paper form from the applicant and email us a scanned copy of the filled-out form to takeo@sebastopolwf.org.

3) Snail mail

Obtain a paper form from the applicant and snail mail it to Sebastopol World Friends, PO Box 976, Sebastopol, CA 95473.

We appreciate your valuable feedback. If you have questions, please feel free to contact us.

Thank you!

Sebastopol World Friends
Takeo Program Selection Committee
takeo@sebastopolwf.org
707-484-0245