

## **Longmont Sister Cities Association Student Exchange Information**

**The Sister City Concept:** In 1956, President Dwight D. Eisenhower proposed the people-to-people concepts that lead to the development of Sister Cities International. It was President Eisenhower's belief that strong relationships established between cities in the United States and cities of the world would lessen the potential for world conflicts. Based on this concept, in 1991 local Longmont businesses and city government joined together to establish Longmont's first sister city relationship with Chino, Japan. Longmont's second sister city relationship with Ciudad Guzman, Mexico was formed in 1998.

**Student Exchange Program:** The purpose of the Longmont Sister Cities Association's Student Exchange Program is to provide an opportunity for Longmont students and families to develop cultural understanding with the people of Chino, Japan and Ciudad Guzman, Mexico through family living experiences.

**Who is eligible to apply?** Student applicants must reside in the St. Vrain Valley School District attendance area or attend school within the boundaries of the school district and must be currently enrolled in 8<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> grades. Students may attend public, private or charter schools or be home schooled. Students must also expect to live in the St. Vrain Valley School District area following their summer travel.

**Student's Time and Commitment:** A good deal of time is required. The actual exchange has students traveling to Japan or Mexico in mid-July for a ten-day home stay and students from Chino and Ciudad Guzman visiting Longmont in early August for another ten days. Once selected, all Student Ambassadors are required to attend weekly orientation sessions and fundraisers prior to departure; participate and play an active role in the Longmont Sister Cities Association and its activities; work at organization fundraisers; and in general promote the program. Attendance at orientation sessions and other informational meetings is critical. Missing more than two orientation sessions will be grounds for dismissal from the program. Upon return the Ambassadors are required to participate in the activities scheduled for the Japanese and Mexican students visiting Longmont; assist in preparation of a presentation to share with the community; give talks about the exchange experience in schools and the community; and stay active in the Longmont Sister Cities Association for at least one year. An estimated 2-6 hours per week commitment is expected.

**Student Responsibility Abroad:** Students selected to participate in the Longmont Sister City exchange program serve as ambassadors and representatives of Longmont, Colorado and the United States. While participating in the exchange students must be respectful of their host families and must be willing to be helpful with the household and family duties and to assume the same responsibility as other members of the family. Students are expected to participate in all scheduled activities in their sister city.

**Cost:** Travel costs to Japan are approximately \$2,000, and \$800 for Mexico per student. This cost does not include spending money or gifts. Costs may fluctuate depending on currency exchange rates and airfare at the time of travel. Parents, with the help of Sister Cities Board members, will develop fundraising opportunities for ambassadors in spring and early summer so that each ambassador can raise some of his/her own money for travel. All funds raised through the Sister Cities fundraisers must be used for Sister City activities. There should be a direct relationship between effort expended and reward. A strict accounting system will be established to record participation in fundraising. Financial aid may be available, and if so, will be granted based on financial need. Financial aid must be used for travel expenses. Applications for financial aid will be available upon student selection.

**Responsibility of Parent(s)/Guardian(s) of Exchange Students:** The Longmont Sister Cities Association expects the support of parents and guardians. Membership in the organization is required for the families of the students selected for the program, as well as participation in the organization's activities, including home-hosting ambassadors from our Sister Cities. Family membership fee is \$15. The foreign students generally arrive in the first week of August for a ten-day stay. Many activities are planned for the students during their stay in Longmont. It is expected that most of our home hosts will be the families of our ambassadors; however, if this is impossible for your family, we will request your assistance in finding an appropriate home stay family. Parents should be aware of the need to have their son/daughter available for meetings and speaking engagements upon their return, as well as helping in the organization's major fundraising activities. Obtaining a passport, as well as travel and health documents and/or insurance is the responsibility of the ambassador and his/her family prior to departure. Families planning summer vacations should consider taking them in late May or early June, but not in July when vital information is shared and final planning and preparation takes place during orientation meetings.

**Selection Process:** All applicants must participate in a family orientation meeting with at least one parent scheduled for *Sunday, January 29, 2012* and an individual interview scheduled for *Saturday or Sunday, February 4 or 5, 2012*. You will need to bring with you to your interview a copy of your school attendance record and the signed Program Expectations form that will be given to you at the family orientation meeting. The interview panel will make the final selections, and students/parents will be informed of their status within one week of the individual interviews. The selected ambassadors and at least one parent will be expected to attend a meeting scheduled for Sunday, February 12, 2012 for more specific information and to begin planning fundraising, orientation sessions and other activities.



5. What specifically do you want to learn about Japan or Mexico?
  
6. Have you ever been involved in any Sister Cities activities? If yes, please tell us about them.
  
7. Describe any international travel experience you have had.
  
8. Have you ever spent a week or more away from your family? (i.e.: camp, other exchange trips, etc.) Please tell us about your experience.
  
9. Some of the areas that will be taken into consideration for selecting student ambassadors will include: social presence, willingness to participate, academic standing, follow-through, communication skills, a flexible attitude, a sense of humor, leadership abilities, reliability and independence. Write a paragraph about yourself that describes how you have demonstrated these characteristics. Also include in this statement any other information about you or your family that you would like us to know. (Please attach page.)

**Please note:** *The Longmont Sister Cities Association Selection Committee makes the final decision as to which students will be selected. The LSCA Board of Directors, in its sole discretion reserves the right to revoke the selection of any ambassador prior to departure or to make an early return to Longmont at his/her parent's expense, due to nonparticipation or misconduct. Misconduct is any activity deemed inappropriate by the chaperones.*

**Students Statement of Commitment:**

If selected as a Student Ambassador for the 2012 LSCA Student Exchange Program, I am willing to become a member of the Longmont Sister Cities Association and commit to active participation from the time of selection for a minimum of one year. I understand there are expectations regarding attendance at orientation and language/culture classes, fundraising activities, scheduled events following the exchange, participation in school and community presentations and participation in LSCA activities. I also understand my behavior is expected to be responsible, mature, supportive and participative.

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Signature

**Parent Statement of Support:**

Please write a brief statement of support for your son's/daughter's involvement with the LSCA Student Exchange Program.

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Parent(s) Signature

Two recommendation forms must be included with this application (see attached form):

- One from a teacher
- One from a non-teacher, unrelated adult

Please ask the persons completing the recommendation forms to give them to you in a sealed envelope, then mail or hand deliver the entire application packet to:

Office of the City Manager  
350 Kimbark Street  
Longmont, CO 80501

***Application Deadline is Friday, January 20, 2012. This is NOT postmark date. The application may be mailed or hand delivered, but must be in the City Manager's Office by 5:00pm on Friday, January 20.***

**Recommendation Form**  
**Longmont Sister Cities Association**  
**Student Exchange Program**

You have been asked to submit a recommendation for a student who has applied to become a Student Ambassador for the Longmont Sister Cities Association student exchange program. Students will be selected to travel to Ciudad Guzman, Mexico or Chino, Japan for a 10 to 14-day stay. They will be home-hosted by a local family. Hopefully, they will host a foreign student in their own home for ten days following their return from Japan or Mexico. Students must not only be capable of adapting to new situations and cultures, but are also expected to help raise funds and attend language/culture classes prior to departure, and make presentations to their schools and other community organizations during the school year following their return.

The performance of these students affects the entire delegation traveling to another country, the family they stay with, and the impression they leave with our Sister City partners both in Longmont and abroad. Therefore, we value your comments. All information will be confidential and available only to the selection committee members.

Student's name \_\_\_\_\_

Name of person writing recommendation: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to the student: \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you known this student, and in what context?

What are the first words that come to mind that describe this student?

In the following, please circle the appropriate number, with 1 being “no basis” and 5 being “best ever”, based on your observations. Any additional comments or specific demonstrations of the traits will be helpful.

Scale: 1= “no basis”, 5=”best ever”

**Maturity:**                    1                    2                    3                    4                    5

Specific Example/Comments:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Communication Skills:** 1                    2                    3                    4                    5

Specific Example/Comments:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Academics:**                    1                    2                    3                    4                    5

Specific Example/Comments:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Motivation:**                    1                    2                    3                    4                    5

Specific Example/Comments:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Adaptability:**                    1                    2                    3                    4                    5

Specific Example/Comments:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Sense of Humor:**                    1                    2                    3                    4                    5

Specific Example/Comments:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Self Confidence:**                    1                    2                    3                    4                    5

Specific Example/Comments:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Congeniality:**            1                    2                    3                    4                    5

Specific Example/Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Leadership:**            1                    2                    3                    4                    5

Specific Example/Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Consideration of others:** 1                    2                    3                    4                    5

Specific Example/Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Independence:**            1                    2                    3                    4                    5

Specific Example/Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Reliability:**            1                    2                    3                    4                    5

Specific Example/Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Other Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your honest appraisal of the student's abilities and characteristics.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Please return this Recommendation Form to the student applicant in a sealed envelope before the deadline, Friday, January 20, 2012.**