



**Friends of Hiratsuka & Sister Cities Lawrence  
Hiratsuka Youth Exchange – Summer 2024**

**Trip Dates: June 28 – July 7**

**Application Packet**

**This exchange opportunity is not sponsored by, associated with, or directed by Lawrence USD 497, or its officers or employees. This is a program sponsored by the City of Lawrence, the Lawrence Sister Cities Advisory Board, and the Friends of Hiratsuka.**

Sister Cities Lawrence and the Friends of Hiratsuka are pleased to announce plans for the annual youth exchange with Hiratsuka, Japan, for the summer of 2024.

Sister Cities Lawrence and the Friends of Hiratsuka sponsor these trips to help citizens of Lawrence learn about contemporary Japanese society and promote understanding between two cultures. The motto of International Sister Cities, “promoting peace through mutual respect, understanding, and cooperation –one individual, one community at a time” expresses our mission statement. It is hoped that this exchange will help create lasting cultural understanding, interest, and family-to-family relationships that will be sustained over time.

A group of 20 students from the secondary schools in Lawrence will be selected to visit Hiratsuka. The Hiratsuka visit includes an itinerary designed to introduce students to Japanese culture. Participants will be provided with opportunities to observe many facets of everyday Japanese lifestyle. Those students chosen will have the opportunity to learn about many different aspects of daily life including education and history of Japan.

The city-to-city exchange is reciprocal. A few weeks after the group trip to Hiratsuka, approximately twenty students from Hiratsuka will visit Lawrence.

Families who send a student to Hiratsuka will be expected to host two Hiratsuka students in their home for a five-day period during this reciprocal trip. This part of the exchange is of inestimable value to the students from Hiratsuka. Questions about this issue can be discussed at the selection interview.

### **Eligibility Requirements:**

- *Students should be in the 7<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade in a Lawrence school.*
- *Selected participants **MUST** attend a series of orientation sessions to become familiar with the Japanese language, history, and culture before departure.*
- *These monthly meetings are required and missing two or more meetings is grounds for termination from the program.*
- *Students/families selected must be willing to host two Hiratsuka students in the summer of 2024, and provide associated logistical support.*
- *Students/families will be required to make periodic trip payments for the Trip Fee, in accordance with an established payment schedule established by the trip coordinator, or they may be removed from the trip.*
- *Withdrawing from the trip after having accepted participation in it may result in forfeiture of funds paid according to the policy of Sister Cities Lawrence.*

### **Costs:**

The cost of the students' participation in this exchange is subsidized in significant fashion through the generosity of support from the City of Hiratsuka, the City of Lawrence, and dues and donations made to Sister Cities Lawrence.

The Trip Fee for the 2024 Hiratsuka exchange is estimated at this time to be between \$ 2,500 - \$2800.

Students and families are also responsible for additional incidental expenses: passport fees (about \$ 150), Sister Cities Lawrence annual dues (\$35/yr), souvenirs, snacks, gifts. (group meals, group transportation, and group participation expenses in Hiratsuka and Lawrence are largely covered by of the Trip Fee, the City of Hiratsuka, and the City of Lawrence)

***For more Information***

***Email: [hiratsukayouthexchange@gmail.com](mailto:hiratsukayouthexchange@gmail.com)***

## Student Application Packet How Do I Apply?

1. Complete the attached application. Make sure to have your parent/guardian review trip requirements, commitments and co-sign this application.
2. Write a detailed essay explaining: **1)** Your interest in being part of an exchange to Japan. **2)** What you hope to learn from this cultural and educational exchange. **3)** Why you would be a good candidate. **4)** Describe how you propose to relate, upon your return, your experiences in Japan to classmates and the community. Include hobbies, interests, honors received, previous travel experience, and foreign language exposure.
3. This essay should be no less than 150 words and should not exceed 500 words. **Include this essay with your application. If selected, upon your return, you will be required to present your experience to the Board and community members.**
4. Obtain **TWO** letters of reference from adults who will explain why you would be a good selection for this trip. These adults should not be members of your family, but someone who knows you well, (teachers, youth or church leaders, counselors). It should include information about how you get along in groups and what contributions you can make to the group. **Include these letters with your application.**
5. Participate in a brief, personal interview with the selection committee. **Interviews will be scheduled the weekend of October 14 , 2023 and the week following.**
6. A limited number of need based scholarship may be available. Applications will be made available upon request. Scholarship award determinations are normally made within 30 days of the selection of participants.
7. Completed applications, essays, all forms and letters of reference must be returned no later than **October 6, 2023.**

**Returned by mail to:**

Friends of Hiratsuka  
C/O Watkins Community Museum,  
1047 Massachusetts St.  
Lawrence, Kansas 66044

Or:

**SCAN and Email:**  
**hiratsukayouthexchange@gmail.com**

**Or Scan QR Code and Submit online**



All applicants will be notified of your selection status by **October 22, 2023**. Selected applicants will receive a packet of forms that will include dates and times of future meetings and payment schedule.

APPLICATION  
HIRATSUKA – 2024



**Part 1:**

**Sister Cities Lawrence Student Exchange Application  
and Information Data Sheet**

Student Applicant's Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ First Name \_\_\_\_\_

Middle Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender (circle): Male / Female

Student's Email Address, if any: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Current Grade Level (circle): 7<sup>th</sup> 8<sup>th</sup> 9<sup>th</sup> 10<sup>th</sup> 11<sup>th</sup> 12<sup>th</sup>

Student's Current School: \_\_\_\_\_

**A) Parent/Guardian residing at the student's primary address (this will be our main contact):**

Circle One: Father / Mother / Step / Other

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ First Name \_\_\_\_\_

Residential Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone numbers:

Home phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Work (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Cell (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred contact: Home / Work / Cell

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**B) Parent/guardian residing at the student's address:**

Circle One: Father / Mother / Step / Other

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ First Name \_\_\_\_\_

Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone numbers:

Home phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Work (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Cell (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred contact: Home / Work / Cell

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**C) Parent/guardian NOT RESIDING at above address:**

Circle One: Father / Mother / Not Applicable

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ First Name \_\_\_\_\_

Residential Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone numbers:

Home phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Work (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Cell (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred contact: Home / Work / Cell

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature: Student Applicant**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature: Parent or Legal Guardian**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Part 2: For all applicants

### To be reviewed and signed by a primary parent/guardian of student applicant:

I understand I will be required to sign a general waiver of liability to the City of Lawrence, the Friends of Hiratsuka and Friends of Eutin, the Sister Cities Lawrence Governing Board, chaperones and teachers for these programs, and other families involved in these exchanges. I give permission for my student to participate in this exchange program with Sister Cities Lawrence.

\_\_\_\_\_Parent initials

I understand that in the event my student violates alcohol, drug, or behavior policies, or otherwise engages general conduct requiring that he/she be removed from a sister cities exchange program, I agree that at the sole discretion of the teachers/chaperones, my student may be returned to the Kansas City airport on a basis which is earlier than the expected plan. I understand and agree, that in such event our family will pay for this additional air-fare and any other incidental costs associated with this earlyreturn.

\_\_\_\_\_Parents Initials

I understand that this international exchange opportunity is underwritten in substantial ways by the City of Lawrence, the Sister Cities Lawrence Governing Board. In part the additional private fund raising occurs through the collecting of modest annual voluntary dues from those who support and have benefited from the exchange programs.

We understand that if my student is selected to participate in this program, that our household will become dues paying members of Sister Cities Lawrence (if not already) and will receive future news and dues solicitations from Sister Cities Lawrence.

\_\_\_\_\_Parents Initials