

## Salem Ota Cultural Exchange | MINUTES

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August 26, 2019 / 7 pm | 98 Washington Street City of Salem Offices *New Location*

### Attendees

Chris & Denise Granniss

Joe Salarno

Constance Arlander

Pamela Myrie

Abigail Clark

Kathleen Salas

Kira Dolan

Kyla Dolan

Erin Dolan

### Agenda topics

#### Agenda topic Japanese Student Visit Wrap up

Unanimous feedback was that host families were all wonderful and supportive! Despite a few unexpected glitches, like last minute addition of an Ota student and customs problems with a lost passport, it was an exceptionally smooth and successful year.

All daytrips went well, including the very busy State House visit; Joan lovely and Paul Tucker always give of their time to the students, and hope to visit Ota one day. Because of some bus challenges, we may consider trying a train to Boston day next year for one of the daytrips. Other ideas we may alter are swapping Canobie Lake or Science Museum (and Duck Tour) back in, instead of the Children's Museum.

Thanks go to Erik Rodenheiser and his theatre, who for the past 2 years has given an entertaining and interactive behind-the-scenes tour of all aspects of theatre productions. (We hope this will continue!)

Only a handful of families have completed the post-Ota trip surveys thus far. IF YOU HAVEN'T YET COMPLETED THIS, PLEASE TAKE THE TIME TO DO SO! For example, there has been some feedback about trying to create a more consistent morning drop off time for less confusion and challenge for families and students. We look forward to getting feedback from as many families as is possible, to continue to improve the summer program.

Next year, despite the 2020 Olympics, Ota will probably still be able to send a student group. The timing may be slightly earlier in July or even late June; we hope to get information before winter. There will however be no adult trips, either direction.

#### Agenda topic Host Family Recruitment for next year! And ongoing outreach efforts.

Some prior families we hope will return, as their vacation schedules affected their ability to participate this year. New school administrators and teachers in the district, and new contacts

(like the Kokeshi Restaurant) may be good resources to stay in touch with. Rotary and Chamber of Commerce may be organizations to generate more resources and connections. Please keep this in mind if you also have relevant contacts who were interested in our community during the student visit.

The FaceBook page and Website are getting some more traffic gradually. We would like to keep driving interest to the public Ota FB page, for example set up an alumni 'throwback' date in January for 6 months in advance of the July trip.

We would also like to create a few fundraisers and community awareness raisers to stay in touch with everyone, such as an Anime film night at Cinema Salem or Flatbreads pizza night. Feb. and March may be ideal times to generate interest before Spring recruitment happens in earnest. Again, reach out with any additional ideas and energy you have towards something like this!

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### **Agenda topic Autumn Adult Trip**

October 24<sup>th</sup> the Assemblymen trip is here for several days. This year the group is smaller (8 adults) and they will be touring local schools. This may be a good time to keep momentum in the community with local contacts interested in Ota.

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### **Agenda topic Salem State Connections**

Ota CE may be included in a Salem State Grant; we will provide details when we have them. Julie Whitlow will be invited to meet with the group to share ideas. We would love to deepen a partnership with Salem State on many levels.

**Next Meetings:** September 30 and November 25.