



Sister City Affiliation Association  
Post Office Box 633  
Montebello, California 90640

**MONTEBELLO-ASHIYA SISTER CITY ASSOCIATION**  
**STUDENT AMBASSADOR EXCHANGE PROGRAM**  
**INFORMATION AND APPLICATION FOR 2024**

This cultural and educational exchange program is part of the “People to People” programs initiated by President Dwight D. Eisenhower during the early 1950s. As part of these historical programs, the Montebello Student Ambassador Exchange with Ashiya, Japan, established in 1964, will celebrate 60 years in 2024. The Student Ambassador experience allows Montebello students to travel to Japan, live in the homes of Ashiya families, and participate in Japanese cultural events. In exchange, Ashiya students come to live in Montebello; thus, the program serves to strengthen and promote better understanding and friendship between the United States and Japan.

The students selected for this exchange program act as Ambassadors for the City of Montebello and participate in numerous public appearances and speaking engagements in Ashiya, Japan. Many long lasting friendships have developed among past student ambassadors and the people working together in the Montebello-Ashiya Sister City program. But this “People to People” program also fosters friendship and cooperation between the residents of the two cities: Montebello and Ashiya.

The Montebello-Ashiya Sister City Association selects a minimum of 3 students from Montebello to represent the Association and Montebello City as ambassadors. ***Two are selected to travel to Ashiya, Japan, and at least one other will be selected to remain in Montebello to act as a host ambassador.***

**BASIC ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR STUDENT AMBASSADORS:**

1. Full time student Minimum 15 years of age to maximum of 18 years of age during the time of the student exchange visit to Japan.
2. Academic record Minimum GPA of 2.5.; a *copy* of school transcripts are required with the application. Unofficial transcripts will be accepted.
3. Residency Must reside in Montebello (zip code 90640) at the time of application and when traveling to Japan.
4. Personal characteristics Enthusiastic, sincere, friendly, cooperative, and considerate.
5. Parental approval Custodian or legal guardian signature on pp. 6 & 7 of this form provides approval for the student to participate.
6. Parent Participation Parents/Guardians must commit to hosting Ashiya student ambassadors in their home for 1 host week for 3 consecutive years.
7. Membership The student and their family must become active members of the Sister City Association (\$35 per year for association membership).
8. Health The student must be free of serious health problems or illness in order to travel. The provided Medical Release Form is required and must be signed by the parent or guardian.
9. Passport A valid United States passport is preferred at time of application. Proof of passport application is a minimum requirement at time of interview
10. Parent or guardian Parents/Guardians must be present at the time of applicant interviews.

### **APPLICATION PROCEDURES:**

Applications will be available from the Montebello City Hall, City Clerk Administration Offices, 1600 West Beverly Blvd., and from all local area high schools. Students should deliver their completed application to the City Clerk's Office, or mail to: Montebello-Ashiya Sister City Association, P.O. Box 633, Montebello, California 90640 before 5:00 P.M. on **Friday, February 9th, 2024.**

As part of the **selection process** the student applicants will be required to complete both an oral interview and essay. Students and parents will be notified as to the date and location of the interviews, scheduled for the month of **February 2024.** All applicants are required to report for the interview with their parent or guardian. Parents will be provided an orientation. Parents will be interviewed and given an orientation.

### **WHO SPONSORS THE STUDENT AMBASSADOR PROGRAM?**

The Montebello-Ashiya Sister City Affiliation Association, Inc. is a non-profit, non-partisan, community service organization responsible for the program. The Montebello City Council supports the program. The Association raises funds to help defray the cost of sending Montebello students to Japan.

### **SCHOLARSHIPS:**

Apart from travel support, the Montebello-Ashiya Sister City Association also grants awards: one in the name of *Mrs. Elaine Kirchner*, and a second award in the name of *Jay & Dorothy Nomura*, to encourage the continuing education of Montebello youth. Students selected to travel to Ashiya are eligible for \$500.00 awards and one \$250.00 scholarship for the "host" ambassador. Participating host families are eligible for the *Mrs. Yae Aihara* grant in support of their hosting an Ashiya Student Ambassador.

### **HOW LONG WILL THE MONTEBELLO STUDENT AMBASSADORS BE IN JAPAN?**

The two students selected will visit Ashiya, Japan, for three (3) weeks, during the months of July and August 2024. Each student will live with host families while in Ashiya and they will be treated as family members. English speaking members in Ashiya will typically be available, and an English speaking interpreter will be available at all official events. Prior to their departure to Ashiya, the Montebello student ambassadors and their parents will be interviewed and have a basic orientation on traveling to Japan and a review of the activities that they will be expected to participate in while in Ashiya. The 2024 Student Ambassador Exchange Program is scheduled as follows:

Montebello Student Ambassadors leave for Ashiya on Monday, July 22nd

Ashiya Ambassadors Arrive in Montebello on Monday, July 29th

Montebello Ambassadors Return on Monday, August 5th

Ashiya Ambassadors Leave on Monday, August 12th

### **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STUDENT AMBASSADORS AND THEIR FAMILIES:**

1. Montebello student ambassadors will be responsible for representing the City of Montebello and the mission of the Montebello-Ashiya Sister City Association. Student Ambassadors will be active representatives for three years following their selection. During this time, they will attend public appearances and speaking engagements. All scheduling is to be done only by officials within the City of Montebello, City of Ashiya, Japan, and/or the Montebello Sister City Association.
2. Students and their parents/guardians must become active members of the association and they must agree to be a host family for a one-week period for three (3) consecutive years. Families also agree to support the mission, programs, non-profit and non-political status of the Montebello Sister City Association.
3. Each student ambassador traveling to Japan will be required to have a valid United States Passport along with health and travel insurance; the association will cover travel and health insurance for duration of the travel. Covid-19 travel requirements are changing, Japan and United States protocols will be followed and adhered to.

4. As part of the Montebello Ambassador scholarship, the Montebello Sister City Association will provide air travel to and from Japan. The host families in Ashiya and the City of Ashiya will provide room and board; however, students must provide their own spending money.
5. While in Ashiya, students will be expected to participate in cultural events as well as to be open to learning different Japanese customs and traditions. Ambassadors should also be prepared to make public appearances, including public speaking, while in Japan. Ability to speak or understand Japanese is **not** a requirement.
6. As part of this cultural exchange, students should understand that all food consumed will be Japanese and that they should not place a hardship on their host families regarding special food arrangements, such as frequently requesting McDonalds or asking for food that is not being served by the host family. Exceptions will be made for documented allergies to certain foods.
7. Students should wear clothing appropriate to the region and occasion with attention given to the position of ambassador. For example, when meeting with the Mayor of Ashiya, it is expected that the male ambassadors wear coat and tie, and female ambassadors wear a dress. For such events, students should also wear their student ambassador sash.
8. As representatives of Montebello, the student ambassadors will conduct themselves in a respectful manner at all times.
9. Student Ambassadors are also encouraged to assist in recruiting ambassadors for subsequent years and assisting with fund raising events sponsored by the Montebello association.
10. The parents/guardians of the student ambassadors will be asked to assist with planning and implementing the “Welcome Reception,” and “Sayonara Event” for the visiting Ashiya Ambassadors. These events occur in July and August.

**RESPONSIBILITY OF THE HOST AMBASSADOR**

The host ambassador remains in Montebello to be part of the organizing committee planning the program for the Ashiya students visiting Montebello. This includes participating in Montebello City functions, attending Montebello Sister City Association meetings and events, such as the *Welcome Party, a formal meeting with the Montebello Mayor, Ice Cream Social, Montebello City tour, Beach Party, Nisei Week Grand Parade in Little Tokyo, Sayonara Event,* and other excursions.

**DISCLAIMER:**

The Montebello-Ashiya Sister City Association Affiliation, Inc. and cooperating travel agencies act only in the capacity of agents in matters of air transportation, and their liability is limited to the terms of the flight ticket. The Cities of Montebello and Ashiya are not responsible for any delays, inconvenience, accidents, expenses, or mishaps of any kind whatsoever resulting in part or entirely from the negligence of others, or from causes beyond our control.

**IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER:**

- Applications available: January 2024
- Applications due: Friday, February 9th, 2024 (mail to the PO Box or hand deliver to the Montebello City Clerk Administrative Office)
- Interview and selection of ambassadors: Scheduled for February 2024. A specific date will be announced.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

Should you or your parents have any questions about the program please feel free to email [montebelloashiya@gmail.com](mailto:montebelloashiya@gmail.com)



**STUDENT BIOGRAPHICAL DATA AND INTERESTS**

LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH THAT YOU CAN SPEAK, READ OR WRITE:

HOBBIES:

SPECIAL TALENTS OR ABILITIES:

HONORS:

CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS AND YEARS INVOLVED:

YOUR EDUCATIONAL GOALS AND PROFESSIONAL  
OR VOCATIONAL INTERESTS:

WHY ARE YOU INTERESTED IN TRAVELING TO ASHIYA, JAPAN?

**FAMILY DATA**

WILL YOUR FAMILY HAVE ANY DIFFICULTY PROVIDING HOUSING FOR A STUDENT FROM ASHIYA, JAPAN? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

IF YES, PLEASE ELABORATE

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FATHER/GUARDIAN: \_\_\_\_\_ OCCUPATION: \_\_\_\_\_

MOTHER/GUARDIAN: \_\_\_\_\_ OCCUPATION: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME OF BROTHERS AND SISTERS WHO LIVE WITH YOU:

_____	AGE: _____
_____	AGE: _____
_____	AGE: _____
_____	AGE: _____

NAME OF OTHERS WHO LIVE AT THE SAME ADDRESS WHERE THE ASHIYA STUDENT AMBASSADOR WILL STAY:

_____	AGE: _____
_____	AGE: _____

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SIGNATURE OF STUDENT APPLICANT: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE OF PARENT/GUARDIAN: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE SIGNATURES ABOVE INDICATE THAT ALL INFORMATION ON THIS APPLICATION IS ACCURATE AND TRUE, AND THE STUDENT APPLICANT AND HIS/HER PARENTS OR GUARDIANS HAVE READ ALL OF THE INFORMATION ON THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE MONTEBELLO-ASHIYA STUDENT AMBASSADOR PROGRAM.**

The application for the Montebello-Ashiya Student Ambassador Program is considered complete only if it includes the following:

- Completed application form, clearly printed or typed, with the signatures of the student applicant and parent/guardian (sign on pages 6 & 7)
- Current school transcripts (unofficial transcripts will be accepted)



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**SCHOLARSHIP AND AWARD CONDITIONS**

**ELAINE KIRCHNER SCHOLARSHIP AND JAY & DOROTHY NOMURA SCHOLARSHIPS FOR MONTEBELLO-ASHIYA STUDENT EXCHANGE AMBASSADORS**

- TWO \$500.00 SCHOLARSHIPS: One for each of the Montebello *Student Exchange Ambassadors*
- ONE \$250.00 for the *Host Ambassador*

TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR AN ELAINE KIRCHNER SCHOLARSHIP OR JAY & DOROTHY NOMURA SCHOLARSHIP:

- CANDIDATES MUST COMPLETE THE APPLICATION FOR THE MONTEBELLO-ASHIYA SISTER CITY ASSOCIATION STUDENT AMBASSADOR PROGRAM
- BE 15 to 18 YEARS OF AGE AND A CURRENT RESIDENT OF MONTEBELLO. PROOF OF ADDRESS MUST BE SUBMITTED AT TIME OF INTERVIEW (ACCEPTABLE PROOF INCLUDES UTILITY BILL WITH NAME AND ADDRESS
- ENROLLED IN HIGH SCHOOL, TRADE SCHOOL OR COLLEGE AS FULL-TIME STUDENTS, WITH A MINIMUM GPA OF 2.5
- BE SELECTED AS A MONTEBELLO-ASHIYA STUDENT EXCHANGE AMBASSADOR

**THE YAE AIHARA MONTEBELLO HOST FAMILY AWARD**

Awarded to participating Montebello host families in support of their hosting an Ashiya Student Ambassador.

**THE STUDENT APPLICANT AND HIS/HER GUARDIAN UNDERSTAND THAT IF THE STUDENT IS SELECTED AS AN AMBASSADOR, AND BY ACCEPTING THE AMBASSADOR SCHOLARSHIP AND THE HOST FAMILY AWARD, THE STUDENT’S FAMILY AGREES TO BECOME ACTIVE MEMBERS OF THE SISTER CITY ASSOCIATION AND SUPPORT THE ASSOCIATION’S MISSION, PROGRAMS AND NON-PROFIT STATUS AS SPECIFIED IN THE APPLICATION INFORMATION AND ASSOCIATION BY-LAWS, INCLUDING THE COMMITMENT TO HOST ASHIYA STUDENT AMBASSADORS FOR 1 WEEK FOR THREE CONSECUTIVE YEARS. FAILURE TO COMPLETE THESE RESPONSIBILITIES WILL RESULT IN FORFEITURE/RECOMPENSATION OF ANY EXPENSES/AWARDS.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE OF STUDENT

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE OF LEGAL GUARDIAN

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

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