



**To promote peace through mutual respect,
understanding, and cooperation,
one individual, one community at a time.**

About Morgan Hill Sister Cities Association

We are an all-volunteer, 501(c)(3) membership nonprofit funded through member dues and local donations. Members are committed to promoting peace through mutual respect, understanding, and cooperation, one individual, one community at a time.

Our Mission – Promote Peace Through People

Morgan Hill Sister Cities creates relationships based on cultural, educational, information and trade exchanges with cities and citizens of other nations to promote peace through people.

How To Reach Us

- The MHSC website: <https://morganhillsistercities.com/>. Find out more about our activities, programs, recent news, history, and how to reach our membership coordinator.
- Meetings are held the fourth Thursday of every other month, 7 p.m., at the Centennial Recreation Center, 171. W. Edmundson Ave. Those interested are welcome to attend a meeting before deciding to join. Every other month generally means January, March, May, July, September, and a year-end get together.
- The MHCS regularly appears in local newspapers, attends civic meetings and public events, and makes presentations to various groups throughout the year.

What We Do

- **Travel and Hosting**
Travelling to and hosting dignitaries and citizens from other cities to initiate and maintain cultural bonds. It is both an enjoyable and fundamental activity for any Sister City. All travel is self-funded and organized through association members' efforts who often combine their own individual traveling goals with the opportunity of starting and cultivating Sister City relationships on behalf of the nonprofit and City of Morgan Hill. In return, traveling members enjoy the hospitality of a foreign civic administration and its citizens.
- **Student Exchanges**
MHSC offers programs for middle and high school age Morgan Hill. Middle school students participate in a summer exchange with Mizuho, Japan, while high school students are paired with teens from San Casciano, Italy. Both programs alternate between hosting foreign students one summer and Morgan Hill students traveling the following summer. The Mizuho program has been available since 2008, and is a staple of the education opportunities available in Morgan Hill.

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What We Do *cont.*

- Cultural Exchanges & Events
At various point throughout the MHSC history, association members have organized product exchanges, such as showcasing quilts from Japan, art displays at the local community & cultural center for donated commemorative items from all of Morgan Hill's Sister Cities, themed events celebrating cultural highlights, such as the annual Haru Matsuri festival in April.
- Community Activities
Our members regularly participate in local events, including the local 4th of July celebrations, which began in 1876, making it one of the oldest July 4th celebrations in the state. The association takes every opportunity to promote and highlight its own efforts, plus the features that make each one of its Sister City relationships special.

Sister Cities International

Morgan Hill's Sister City program (MHSC) is modeled on Sister Cities International (www.sistercities.org/), a world-wide organization fostering connections between cities, counties, or states. Sister Cities International now boasts a network of almost 500 member communities with over 2,000 partnerships in more than 140 countries as of January 2019.

The late President Dwight D. Eisenhower launched the concept of Sister Cities in 1956 at his White House conference on citizen diplomacy. His **vision** was promoting friendship directly between "common" people of different nations. The **purpose** was to leverage better awareness leading to personal respect and friendship. The ultimate **objective** is to limit and eliminate collective animosities and hostilities that are the abstract seeds of wars among people of different cultures.

Our History

The MHSC organization was formally established in 2002, under the leadership of the City's then Mayor, the late Dennis Kennedy. His administration provided the vision, organization, and initial connections for funding. Since that beginning the nonprofit has successfully activated sisterhoods with six cities as of January 2019. The first relationship, with San Casciano in Val di Pesa, ushered in several to follow: Mizuho, Japan, San Martin de Hidalgo, Mexico, Headford, Ireland, Seferihisar, Turkey, and Ameca, Mexico.

Each relationship is distinct and includes an array of activities. All have included formal visits between Morgan Hill representatives visiting the Sister Cities and reciprocally hosting delegations from those cities. As often as possible, delegations included elected officials from Morgan Hill and the Sister City.



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Timeline

- 2000** The late Honorable Dennis Kennedy initiates the idea to introduce Morgan Hill to the Sister City international program.
- 2002** Morgan Hill Sister Cities (MHSC) formally establishes its nonprofit status under the fiscal sponsorship of the Morgan Hill Community Foundation (<http://morganhillcf.org/>). Formal contacts are established with San Casciano, Italy, and with S. Martin de Hidalgo, Mexico. Mayor Dennis Kennedy visits San Casciano to cement the relationship.
- 2003** A relationship proclamation is signed in June with a delegation from San Casciano Val di Pesa visiting Morgan Hill. Mayor Kennedy traveled to San Martin de Hidalgo the same year, and a second proclamation establishes the Sisterhood with San Martin de Hidalgo.
- 2004** MHSC hosts fund raising events and several activities that lead to establishing contacts for additional Sister Cities. The group also hosts a formal delegation from San Martin de Hidalgo.
- 2005** Diligent work takes place for initiating a Sisterhood with the cities of Headford, in Ireland, and Mizuho, in Japan. Continuing its work with established Sister Cities, MHSC raises funds to provide a badly needed van intended for social services in the San Martin de Hidalgo community.
- 2006** Headford and Mizuho formally become Sister Cities of Morgan Hill. Reciprocal visits take place. Sister Cities hosts "Headford in Harmony" in October, and a delegation visit with Mizuho in November.
- 2007** The Guglielmo Winery and family give a significant contribution to MHSC for its growing initiatives. A Morgan Hill delegation visits Mizuho again in November. The Morgan Hill Library renovation includes block benches referencing the four Sister City relationships.
- 2008** The Mizuho Morgan Hill Student Exchange Program begins for middle school students, offering a great opportunity for local students who exemplify the Sister Cities mission in action. MHSC hosts "Together Under the Tuscan Sun" in June.
- 2009** A formal delegation from Mizuho visits Morgan Hill and participates in the July 4th Parade and Celebration. MHSC regularly participates in Morgan Hill's July 4th activities.
- 2010** San Martin de Hidalgo's delegation visits Morgan Hill, also for July 4th Parade and Celebration. Also, a quilt exchange project showcasing exquisitely made local quilts is launched with both San Martin de Hidalgo and Mizuho.



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- 2011** San Martin de Hidalgo again participates in the July 4th Parade and Celebration. Mizuho sends a delegation in September to coincide with the Mizuho Morgan Hill Student Exchange Program. MHSC sponsors the event free community cultural festival and concert, “Breaking the Sound Barrier” in September at the Downtown Amphitheater.
- 2012** The city of Seferihisar in Turkey becomes the fifth Sister City of Morgan Hill.
- 2013** A Morgan Hill delegation met with representatives from San Martin de Hidalgo in Guadalajara, as part of a member-organized cruise to Mexico. A second delegation traveled in January for the presidential inauguration for former president, Barack Obama.
- 2014** A Morgan Hill delegation visits San Martin de Hidalgo for an extended exchange. The association begins work on organizing two significant fund raisers: “Under the Tuscan Sun” and “Morgan Hill Around the World.”
- 2015** Two separate Morgan Hill delegations visit Seferihisar, Turkey, and Headford, Ireland.
- 2016** Morgan Hill hosts a delegation from Turkey and MHSC travels to San Casciano.
- 2017** MHSC and administrators from San Casciano’s local government agree to and arrange a detailed exchange program for high school students.
- 2018** MHSC inaugurates its newest student exchange with San Casciano, Italy. In July seven students and two chaperones travel to San Casciano as guests of local families. Modeled after Mizuho’s exchange program, the San Casciano program also alternates every year between traveling to and hosting Italian students from San Casciano. Also during the summer, Mayor Steve Tate and a Morgan Hill delegation travel to Mizuho to celebrate the long success of the relationship and its expansive programs.
- 2019** Italian students who served as hosts in 2018 travel to Morgan Hill. MHSC introduces its newest Sister City, Ameca, Mexico. Formally signed as a proclamation in November 2018, the association announces and promotes the latest addition, ushered in with the help of the Rotary Club of Morgan Hill. A formal delegation is scheduled to visit to Ameca in September. A formal delegation also visits Seferihisar, Turkey, in June.
- 2020** The world really is connected and nothing showcases that more than a global pandemic! 2020 and 2021 were quiet years when the members continued to meet virtually. Nothing like friendships to keep us all going when we need it most!
- 2022** Member Emmie Turan led a group of lucky residents through Turkey in Fall 2022. Emmie runs [Mission View Wines](#), and always has great things going on.
- 2023-2024** Keeping as active as possible! Emmie is prepping for a return to Turkey in Fall 2024.
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