On this 100th anniversary of the gift of cherry trees to Washington, DC, the Japanese government generously donated groups of twenty cherry trees to thirty-six American cities. St. Paul was chosen in large part because of the almost 60 year history of being sister city with Nagasaki. Bill Pesek, SPNSCC board member and landscape architect with the Parks and Recreation Department, arranged for them to be planted near the Mannheimer Memorial in Como Park, beginning to tie the Global Harmony Labyrinth, the restored lily pond, and the Charlotte Ordway Memorial Japanese Garden together. The trees were planted and dedicated on June 9. Honored guests included Ichiro Sawa-da, Deputy Consul from Chicago, Representative Betty McCollum, plus city council members, former Mayor George Latimer, and Mayor Coleman. Sansei Yonsei Kai performed two sakura dances. Leo Hansen performed the shakuhachi flute at the ceremony and guests greeted at the Japanese Garden by western flute player Ryusuke Jono.

Vision of Peace Shared with Nagasaki

The St. Paul Rotary Club generously donated an 8 foot tall bronze replica of the Vision of Peace statue that stands in St. Paul City Hall to the people of Nagasaki. The statue replaces the totem poles that previously stood at the entrance to the Peace Park.

On July 10, the bronze was unveiled at City Hall in a ceremony attended by Mayor Coleman which included a peace pipe ceremony. In October, a large delegation of Rotarians and Sister City Committee members unveiled the sculpture on its new pedestal in Nagasaki. The sculpture was dedicated to the memory of the friendship between Jim Aldridge and Professor Mitsuji Iwanaga. Jim was president of the SPNSCC and a Rotarian and was instrumental in initiating the high school student exchange.
Annual Hocchi

Lantern Lighting Festival

SPNSCC sponsored entertainment at the Japanese Lantern Lighting Festival at Como Park in August. A fantastic group of volunteers helped support our booth and raise money for the organization. This annual event is a cooperative venture by SPNSCC, the Japan America Society of Minnesota (JASM), and the Como Conservatory. The Festival ends with a lantern float in the Japanese Garden and in the Frog Pond. More than 4,000 people attended.

Nagasaki Commemoration

The ceremony occurs simultaneously with ceremonies in Nagasaki. Our speaker this year was SPNSCC member Jane Powers, who attended the memorial ceremony in Nagasaki in 2011. Greg Herriges provided music, and guests were invited to walk the Global Harmony Labyrinth. Chris Rossow read the children’s book, On That Summer Day by Hideaki Yukai.

Como Garden Podcast Project

With the leadership of SPNSCC member Kristen Mastel, we worked with the Minnesota Historical Society to produce a podcast about the history and meaning of the Japanese Garden at Como. This podcast is available online at www.mnhs.org, search for “Ordway garden podcast.” The garden reopens in Spring 2013.

2012 Events

• January – The SPNSCC board worked with Mirja Hanson to create a new strategic plan.
• March 2– Students from the University of Minnesota and Nagasaki University of Foreign Studies SKYPE’d as part of Nobel Peace Prize Forum at Augsburg College.
• March 11– Sponsored Kizuna: One Year Later, commemorating the 2011 Tohoku Earthquake in eastern Japan.
• April– Interviews about the history of the Charlotte Ordway Memorial Japanese Garden for Minnesota Historical Society Podcast project began.
• May 3rd through 6th– Festival of Nations. Sansei Yonsei Kai performed and ran the Japanese food booth.
• June 9– Cherry Blossom Centennial Celebration at Como Park. Article on Page 1.
• July 11– Peace Prayer service with Native American theme.
• August 8– Nagasaki Commemoration at Global Harmony Labyrinth. Article on Page 2.
• August 19– Japanese Lantern Lighting Festival at Como Park. Article on Page 2.
• October– Trip to Nagasaki by seven SPNSCC members. Main article on page 3.
• November– First planning meeting of 60th anniversary committee.
• December 1– Annual Meeting and fundraiser with video of year in review.

Powers Shared her Experience at the Nagasaki Ceremony

A diverse group gathered in August to remember the atomic bombing of Nagasaki at the Global Harmony Labyrinth in Como Park. Our ceremony occurs simultaneously with ceremonies in Nagasaki. Our speaker this year was SPNSCC member Jane Powers, who attended the memorial ceremony in Nagasaki in 2011. Greg Herriges provided music, and guests were invited to walk the Global Harmony Labyrinth. Chris Rossow read the children’s book, On That Summer Day by Hideaki Yukai.

“WALKING THE LABYRINTH PATH IS A HEALING EXPERIENCE THAT IS INTENDED TO PROVIDE INSIGHT, COURAGE AND UNDERSTANDING IN FACING LIFE’S CHALLENGES”

- C. MCEEN
2012 Delegation to Nagasaki

SPNSCC is happy to celebrate the gift of the Vision of Peace replica which the St. Paul Rotary Club donated to Nagasaki to replace the totem pole which had disintegrated in the tropical climate. The original onyx Vision of Peace stands 33 feet tall in St. Paul City Hall/Ramsey County Courthouse. The 8 foot tall replica in bronze has been placed on St. Paul Dori (street) at the entrance to the Peace Park in Nagasaki. The relationship between the St. Paul and Nagasaki Rotary Club goes back over 30 years and includes an annual student exchange. While in Nagasaki, we laid a wreath at the hypocenter of the atomic bomb blast and toured the new Hall of Remembrance at the Peace Museum.

“All OF THESE EVENTS WERE DEEPLY MEANINGFUL AND SIGNIFICANT IN OUR SISTER CITY RELATIONSHIP”
- JOANN BLATCHLEY

Nagasaki’s famous Okunchi Festival occurred the next day and our delegation and the Rotary had front row seats for the exciting performances. Each year, four neighborhoods prepare a show with costumes, floats, acrobatics, dances, music, and procession. Strong men take turns carrying floats, which weigh 300 pound each while others may twirl the massive boats around and around. The next day, the various groups process through town and put on spontaneous performances in front of sponsoring businesses.

The delegation met with various members of the Nagasaki - Saint Paul Sister City Committee, once in a traditional Nagasaki restaurant, another time for lunch with members and also Junshin students who had visited in 2010. Our final meal, after a wonderful day of sight-seeing led by Chizuko Miyazaki, was at a restaurant on top of Mt. Inasa overlooking the city at sunset. It all was a wonderful treat!

Looking Ahead...

The delegation discussed upcoming visits to Minnesota by the Junshin singers in 2013 and 2015, a possible exchange between the Nagasaki Symphony Orchestra and the Saint Paul Civic Symphony, a student art exchange, and other plans we hope will materialize for our 60th anniversary year of 2015.

We are also hopeful that Kouji Matsuda, the tenth generation of Matsudas to be landscape architects, will be able to visit for the reopening of the Japanese Garden at Como in Spring 2013.

Many of the events we now sponsor, like Lantern Lighting Festival and the August commemoration ceremony will continue. We hope to design a Sakura Festival under the newly planted cherry trees with Como Park and look forward to the reopening of the Japanese Garden, where people can learn more by listening to the podcast we developed this spring and summer. But at our heart is the fostering of international peace through person to person relationships.

Interested in getting involved with helping to plan events? Contact Jo-Ann at spnscc@gmail.com.

Nagasaki Delegates Meet with the Matsuda Family in their home in Nagasaki, Oct. 2012
Masami Matsuda, designer of the Como Ordway Memorial Japanese Garden, passed away in Nagasaki, Japan, in early February at the age of 89 years. Mr. Matsuda created gardens all over the world for both private and public spaces.

In creating and recreating the Japanese Garden at Como, he was involved in every step, even planting trees and shrubs. He was so devoted to perfection that he would spend hours determining the exact location of every stone.

The Japanese Garden is an enduring symbol of the friendship between St. Paul and Nagasaki, the first Sister City relationship between Japan and the United States after World War II. Beginning in 1970, Mr. Matsuda made seven trips to St. Paul over a period of almost 30 years and deeply valued the connection.

Mr. Matsuda has been honored by the City of St. Paul, Governor Perpich, the Rotary Club and SPNSCC. A permanent memorial is being planned for installation at the Garden in 2015, the 60th year anniversary of the Sister City relationship. He was featured in the Como Garden Podcast, article on Page 2.

Akiko Sako

Akiko Sako, age 81, of St. Paul passed away peacefully at home on May 5, 2012. Preceded in death by husband, Yoshi and son, Richard. Beloved mother to sons, Edward and Eugene; daughters-in-law, Jenni, Emi and Hiroyo. Grandmother to Christine, Trevor, Nicholas, Andrew, Leanna and Kristin. After arriving from Japan in 1955 and raising a family, Akiko immersed herself in numerous Twin Cities organizations aimed at improving relations and a cultural understanding of her native country.

Akiko was a very active member of SPNSCC and will be missed. As there were many organizations, she asked that any donations in her name be made to the charity of choice. At her request, no public memorial service is planned.

Soichi Masuda

Soichi Masuda, a former Nagasaki Rotary exchange student, passed away on November 4, 2012 at the young age of 50. Many of us have known Soichi most of his life and several exchange students have stayed at the Masuda house through the years. Soichi was a successful businessman and was able to touch many people throughout the world in his business, family and social travels.