



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

STUDENT CULTURAL EXCHANGE WITH SAN CASCIANO, ITALY

Sister Cities of Morgan Hill Offers Great Program for High School Students

Morgan Hill, Calif., (Jan. 10, 2019) – Sister Cities of Morgan Hill (www.morganhillsistercities.com/) is gearing up for this summer’s high school student exchange program with one of its sister cities, San Casciano, Tuscany, Italy. Morgan Hill families with teens between the ages of 15-17 are invited to contact amywhelan7@gmail.com for details about hosting an Italian student for approximately two weeks in late July 2019.

The program is comprised of two phases that alternate between hosting Italian students for two weeks in late July 2019, then traveling to San Casciano for two weeks the following summer, July 2020, for chaperoned and guided travel with great opportunities to explore central Italy.

Sister Cities hosts monthly, public meetings every fourth Thursday of the month, 7:00 p.m., at the Morgan Hill Centennial Recreation Center. The next meeting is scheduled for January 24, 7 p.m., in a meeting room in the senior center. All are welcome to sit in and learn about the group and the student exchange programs before joining.

Sister Cities developed the San Casciano Exchange Program to give Morgan Hill teens a chance to learn about, share, and explore an international experience, as well as form life-long friendships and memories. The program was launched in the summer of 2018 with the first group of teens who traveled to San Casciano, experiencing a long list of fun group activities and seeing the local lifestyle first-hand.

“While the exchange is still relatively new, I believe we are at the start of something that will one day be a great asset to Morgan Hill’s reputation as a vibrant, local community with a wealth of opportunities for families,” said Pier Antonucci, San Casciano Exchange Program chairperson for Sister Cities. “The group of teens who join the program early will be a big part of shaping the program’s entire future. I know Sister Cities and San Casciano have a lot to offer, and I hope there are families out there who would like to become a part of it. We are very excited to move it forward at last.”

Exchange Programs in Morgan Hill

Morgan Hill already has a very popular and respected educational exchange program with another of its Sister Cities relationships based in Mizuho, Japan. The Mizuho Morgan Hill Student Exchange Program (MMHSEP) has a long history of sending and receiving middle school-aged children between Morgan Hill and Mizuho. It, too, alternates between Morgan Hill kids traveling to Mizuho one year and then hosting Mizuho kids the following year. The group is

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now getting ready to host students from Mizuho, Japan, in the summer of 2019. MMHSEP can be reached at mizuhoexchangemh@gmail.com.

The San Casciano Exchange Program aims to build on the Mizuho team's diligent success and extend the international travel experience to older teens. Like the Mizuho program, the San Casciano team will also encourage a direct connection and friendship between families of the two cities before and after the travel time frame itself.

"The Mizuho program is very well regarded, and students return from the experience with some of the greatest, life-long memories," said Amy Whelan, president, Sister Cities of Morgan Hill. "The Mizuho exchange is such a highlight for Morgan Hill, and we are very pleased to expand what we can offer for older teens wishing to experience Italy and show off Morgan Hill."

About Sister Cities of Morgan Hill

Sister Cities is an all-volunteer membership organization formed in 2002. It currently hosts relationships with six international cities: San Casciano, Italy; Seferihisar, Turkey; San Martin de Hidalgo, Mexico; Ameca, Mexico; Mizuho, Japan; and Headford, Ireland. Morgan Hill's Sister City program is modeled on Sister Cities International (www.sistercities.org/), a world-wide organization fostering connections between cities, counties, or states. Connections between cities are usually based on shared similarities that can expand into a more thorough cultural exchange. Most Sister Cities organizations are comprised of volunteers, with the support of their local, elected officials. Sister Cities of Morgan Hill is under the fiscal sponsorship of the Morgan Hill Community Foundation, www.morganhillcf.org.

About San Casciano

San Casciano in Val Di Pesa is a comune in the Province of Florence, Tuscany. It is part of the Chianti region and offers many cultural highlights of its own, as well as being centrally located in one of the most popular and picturesque regions of Italy. It is the birthplace of Machiavelli and surrounded by an atmosphere of the Renaissance, closely situated 10 miles from Florence. San Casciano was chosen as a Sister City with Morgan Hill because of its similarities in geography, agricultural output, and residential size.

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