



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

SAN CASCIANO CULTURAL EXCHANGE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the San Casciano Exchange Program?

- Launched in 2018, it is an exchange between San Casciano, Italy, and Morgan Hill teens. 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 directly supports the nonprofit's mission, to promote peace through mutual respect, understanding, and cooperation, one individual, one community at a time.

What criteria is Sister Cities of Morgan Hill looking for in participating students?

- Fundamentally, a Morgan Hill teen between the ages of approximately 15-17 who is hard working, flexible, and open minded to an international experience. Participating students are not required to speak Italian already, but are encouraged to learn a couple basics. Please note, not all applicants may be accepted into the exchange program. An applicant could be declined for any reason, such as a poor academic or social history, signing up past the deadline, or the program is full for a given year.

How many students can participate for the travel portion of the program?

- The program can accommodate approximately 6-7 students. For hosting in the summer of 2019, we are looking for about 2-3 new host families with teens interested in traveling in the summer 2020.

What makes up the exchange program?

- The program is made up of two phases. The first phase is traveling to Italy one summer, the second is hosting an Italian teen the following summer. July 2018 was in the inaugural trip to Italy when Morgan Hill teens traveled to San Casciano for the first time. Participants were housed with local Italian families during their stay and participated in many excursions and activities. Many of those same students are now scheduled to host Italian teens in the second phase. It is slated for the summer of 2019, approximately July 19 – Aug 4, and will give those first phase participants, plus other interested families wishing to join the program, a chance to host an Italian teen also between the ages of 15-18 during the summer. Italian students attend high school for 5 years, so some of the participants are slightly older than American students. Also, all of the Italian students are studying English and speak English fairly well already, so there is rarely a significant language barrier.

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What is the approximate cost to hosting families?

- It is difficult to pinpoint an exact price. Hosting includes covering meals for students while in the home or dining out, plus costs associated with any family excursions and some group excursions. It is Sister Cities' goal to fund some of the group excursion costs, but families may need to cover some foreign student costs when necessary.

Will Sister Cities of Morgan Hill host fundraisers to help participants with costs?

- Not this time around. Possibly, there may be a fund raising program in the future.

Comparing the San Casciano Cultural Exchange to the Mizuho Morgan Hill Student Exchange

What is the Mizuho Morgan Hill Student Exchange Program?

- 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 also now getting ready to host Mizuho students in the summer of 2019.

“The Mizuho program is very popular, and students always return from Japan with some of the greatest memories that will stick with them for life,” said former Morgan Hill Mayor Steve Tate. “The Mizuho exchange is such a highlight for Morgan Hill, and I am particularly pleased to see something similar for more teens wishing to experience Italy and show off what Morgan Hill has to offer. The Italian exchange will have some key differences in this early stage of program development, but still offers great benefits as it kicks off and expands in the future.”

What are the similarities and differences between this program and the Mizuho exchange?

- There are three main differences. (1) The Mizuho program has a specific educational component in that participants go to the local school, as well as sight-seeing and group activities. Teens traveling to San Casciano will not visit a school in Italy since none will be in primary session. It is mainly a cultural exchange to give teens a chance to sight see and learn about Italian life from the host family. (2) The San Casciano program does not have a fund raising program in place to help participants earn money to cover the cost of the trip or hosting. Later years may possibly have fund raising opportunities to offset expenses. (3) The Mizuho program is designed for middle school kids and San Casciano is for high school aged kids, approximately 15-17 years old.
- The similarities are that participants will reside with a host family that is committed to entertain and showcase what living in an Italian family is like. Families will also have a chance to connect

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with the hosting family before travel, to get to know each other before the departure date.

About Sister Cities of Morgan Hill

Sister Cities of Morgan Hill, www.morganhillsistercities.com/. Formed about 15 years ago and 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 program is modeled on Sister Cities International, a world-wide organization fostering connections between cities, counties, or states. Most Sister Cities organizations are comprised of volunteers, with the support of their local, elected officials.

About San Casciano

San Casciano in Val Di Pesa is a town within 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, surrounded by an atmosphere of the Renaissance, and closely situated about 10 miles south of Florence. San Casciano was chosen as a Sister City with Morgan Hill because of its similarities in geography, agricultural output, and residential size. More about San Casciano can be found at www.sancascianovp.net/ (in Italian) and https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/San_Casciano_in_Val_di_Pesa.

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