

Sakura Festival: Cherry blossoms, friendship, optimism



The Clark College Treble Ensemble performed "Sakura" and "Travelin' Train."

Clark College celebrated its annual Sakura Festival on April 20. Rain and cool temperatures moved the community event from underneath a canopy of cherry blossoms to inside Gaiser Student Center. The event was presented by Clark College, the city of Vancouver and Vancouver Rotary.

Clark's Sakura Festival honors the historic ties of friendship between the sister-cities of Vancouver, Washington and Joyo, Japan. Sakura, or cherry blossoms, are the national flower of Japan. Sakura represents a time of renewal and optimism.

Clark College President, Dr. Karin Edwards welcomed the community and shared highlights from a trip representing the college in a delegation that visited Kyoto and Tokyo, Japan in

March.

Vancouver Mayor Anne McEnergy-Ogle shared the history of the college's grove of cherry trees and read a letter from Mayor Toshiharu Okuda of the City of Jojo, Vancouver's sister city. Consul General Yuzo Yoshioka, representing the Japanese consul in Portland, explained that the arrival of the first cherry blossoms in Japan is a big story in Japanese media.



Several displays including Ikebana showcase Japanese culture



Dr. Edwards hosts the program



Japanese Student Club members modeling kimonos



Camas Kendo Dojo demonstration



Child and Family Studies art showcase



Portland Shishimai Kai



All ages enjoyed the lion dance



Members of the Japanese Student Club

The entertainment opened with a *koto* performance by Shigemi Getter, dressed in a traditional kimono, and followed later by Clark College Treble Ensemble under the direction of Jake Funk performed “Sakura” and “Travelin’ Train.” The college’s Japanese Club presented a kimono fashion show. Camas Kendo Dojo demonstrated kendo, a modern Japanese martial art using bamboo swords and protective armor. Portland Shishimai Kai performed the traditional celebratory lion dance of Tokyo, the *Edo Kotobuki Jishi*.



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Some braved the rain to visit the grove of blossoming cherry trees in the Royce Pollard Japanese Friendship Garden at the southwest corner of campus.

PenguinsGive at Sakura Festival

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History of Clark College Sakura Festival

Over 30 years ago, the City of Vancouver received a gift of friendship: 100 Shirofugen cherry trees. They were planted at Clark College, creating an enduring reminder of the bonds between our region and Japan. Over the years, additional cherry trees were added to the college's Royce Pollard Friendship Garden, including 200 trees gifted by SEH America were planted campus wide. The trees have grown and blossomed—as has that friendship, creating traditions like establishing a sister-city relationship between Vancouver and Joyo, Japan, in 1995 and our annual Sakura Festival in 2006.

Learn more about the history of the Sakura Festival.

View more photographs from the event on our Flickr page.

Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley