

Ashland Chamber of Commerce honors Amigo Club ENTRE AMIGOS October 2019

by Kernan Turner Ashland Amigo Club



Photo by Graham Lewis

Ashland Amigo Club founder Señora Graciela “Chela” Tapp-Kocks (right) and club president Betzabé “Mina” Turner receive the Ashland Citizen of the Year Award on behalf of the club membership at the Chamber of Commerce’s annual dinner.



photo by Kernan Turner

Standing in front of a hallway mural at the Southern Oregon University science building are University of Guanajuato exchange students Saul Isaac Sanchez Flores, 21, (left) majoring in mechatronics engineering, and Francisco Javier Landin Cabrera, 22, majoring in computer systems.

The Ashland Chamber of Commerce has named the Amigo Club as the “2019 Citizen of the Year” for helping sustain 50 years of sister city relations with Guanajuato.

The chamber presented the award at its 113th annual dinner Oct. 3 that had the theme of “Celebrating 50 Years of Sister City Friendship.”

Chamber President Mary Gardiner invited Amigo Club founder Graciela “Señora Chela” Tapp-Kocks, Amigo Club President Betzabe “Mina” Turner, and Kernan Turner to accept the award on behalf of the club membership.

“We were thrilled speechless,” Mina Turner told the club membership in an email sent soon after dinner. “We can all feel proud of the recognition bestowed on the club ... for embracing peace

and strong bonds of friendship between different peoples and cultures through such activities as student exchanges and housing, hosting Guanajuato visitors, raising money for scholarships, traveling to Guanajuato, and developing lasting personal relations.”

Before the award presentation, Señora Chela received a standing ovation, as did Leo vanDijk and his wife, Marianne, when Leo was named an Honorary Life Member “for his outstanding personal contributions” to the chamber and community for more than 50 years. The vanDijks have been active in sister city and Amigo Club affairs since the beginning.

Date Nears for fifth Annual Guanajuato Nights Dinner-Auction

The Amigo Club will close this year’s 50th anniversary observances of sister-city relations by holding its fifth annual “Guanajuato Nights” dinner-auction at 5 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 9, at the Rogue River Room at Southern Oregon University.

The popular event attracts more than 100 guests each year. It includes silent and live auctions of Mexican handicrafts, textiles, paintings, and jewelry, as well as vacation homes in Mexico and on the California and Oregon coasts, and a wide variety of gift cards donated by local merchants and wineries.

The executive chef for SOU Dining will serve dishes prepared from recipes of traditional Mexican cuisine. Several Guanajuato dignitaries will attend the dinner.

The evening’s proceeds, matched dollar-for-dollar by Guanajuato benefactor Faffie Siekman Romero, will go to the club’s endowed scholarship fund administered by the SOU Foundation. In just five years, the club has granted 9 exchange student scholarships, including seven from SOU and two from Guanajuato.

Tickets are on sale for \$60 and can be purchased at the Amigo Club website, www.ashlandamigoclub.org or by mail in the name of the Ashland Amigo Club to P.O. Box 1161, Ashland, OR 97520.

Amigo Club Awards Exchange-Student Scholarships

The Amigo Club has selected four exchange students, two from Southern Oregon University and two from the University of Guanajuato, for scholarships during the 2019-2020 school year.

The SOU students attending the University of Guanajuato this fall are Hallie “Jack” Flukinger, 18, a Spanish major and education minor, and Orianna Alter, 29, a Spanish major and mathematics minor. Two University of Guanajuato students are enrolled this fall at SOU. They are Saul Isaac Sanchez Flores, 21, majoring in mechatronics engineering, and Francisco Javier Landin Cabrera, 22, majoring in computer systems.

Guanajuato Nursing Students to Visit Ashland

A group of nursing students and faculty members from the University of Guanajuato will arrive in Ashland Saturday for three weeks of study and research as part of a student exchange program with Oregon Health and Sciences University.

OHSU provides the nursing programs offered on the Southern Oregon University campus. Since its start five years ago, the nursing student exchange has become an outstanding example of Ashland and Guanajuato sister city activity.

OHSU nursing students will earn clinical placement credits next spring through “population-cased care” in Guanajuato.

In previous exchanges, Guanajuato students have shared their research findings on obesity, senior citizens, suicide, alcohol and drug abuse, and other subjects.

The Ashland Amigo Club will offer a breakfast for its members, invited guests, and the Guanajuato nursing students and instructors at 9:30 a.m., Sunday, Oct. 20, at the El Tapatio restaurant.