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Sister Cities holds celebration

Next month, 11 local high school students will head to Warsaw, Krakow, Cologne and other historic cities in Germany and Poland as part of a cultural exchange sponsored by the Fountain Hills Sister Cities group. The trip will mark the end of a year of exchange between students in Fountain Hills and two of its sister cities, Dierdorf, Germany, and Zamosc, Poland.

To thank the host families and everyone involved, Sister Cities Board Members Bogumil Horchem, the Honorary Consul of the Republic of Poland

for Arizona, and his wife, Elizabeth, laid out a feast of traditional Polish dishes and pastries at their home on Saturday, April 8.

A crowd of about 40 people attended, including students and families, teachers, members of the Fountain Hills Sister Cities commission and corporation, Fountain Hills School Superintendent Patrick Sweeney and Mayor Linda Kavanagh and her husband, Sen. John Kavanagh.

Special recognition was given to past Sister Cities President Jackie Miles and Jennifer Ray, dean of students at Fountain Hills High School, who has been taking local students on exchanges for 20 years.

Student Michal Suchanek gave details of the upcoming trip. He received a gift for his efforts in recruiting fellow exchange students. Earlier this year, families in Fountain Hills welcomed 25 students from Dierdorf and Zamosc into their homes for 19 days. Sister Cities provided the funds for the students to go to the Grand Canyon and Sedona, go horseback riding and kayaking, create a joint art project and more.

One of the host families who attended the party, the Scherfs, said the exchange has been fun and reward-



From left, FHHS student Mikayla Anderson, Fountain Hills Mayor Linda Kavanagh, FHHS parent Greg Merica, Fountain Hills Sister Cities Board Member Estelle Mackey and FHHS student Gabriel Anderson enjoy the recent Sister Cities celebration.



Elizabeth Matej-Horchem, right, gives roses to past Sister Cities President Jackie Miles in recognition for her dedicated service to the program.

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"We would do it again and again and again," said Nicole Scherf, whose son, Kane, is traveling with the student group in May. "We have two younger kids and they loved it because it was like having two more brothers. Now, Kane will have a group of friends there when he goes."

The student exchange is just one of many activities organized through the town's Sister Cities pro-

gram. Currently, the town has four sister cities including Ataco, El Salvador, and Kasterlee, Belgium.

Created by President Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1956, Sister Cities International's mission is to promote cultural, economic, educational, technological and other ties with communities across the globe. For more information about the group, go to fountain-hillssistercities.org.