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Ties That Bind

Former Orinda mayor visits Sister City of Tábor

By Laurie Snyder



Orinda's 2015-16 Sister Cities visiting student, Karel Balogh (center, right), welcomed former Orinda Mayor Bobbie Landers (far right); Lamorinda Sunrise Rotarian, Buddy Burke; and Landers' daughter, Holly, to his home in Tábor, Czech Republic earlier this month. Photo courtesy Bobbie Landers

"Spring is lovely in Tábor!" That was the verdict from former Orinda Mayor Bobbie Landers in an email sent the afternoon of Sunday, May 10 from Orinda's Sister City in the Czech Republic. "We are warmly greeted by old friends, former visiting students, the mayor, vice mayor. Every visit shows the hard work by Czech citizens to re-

turn their country to glory after years of Communism."

Landers also spent two days in Prague revisiting the Castle, as well as enjoying a Dvorak concert and relaxing with a Czech beer on the roof of a reconstructed historic home.

But it was her time in Tábor that was clearly the most memorable. While there, Landers visited with

Karel Balogh and his family.

Balogh is the newest Czech scholar to be named as a visiting student with the Orinda-Tábor Sister Cities initiative. He will attend Miramonte High School this fall. Like many high school students the world over, he helps out around the house by doing the dishes and mowing the lawn.

The Sister Cities initiative is a vitally important program, Landers explained, because it helps to foster the kinds of ties between people of differing cultures that bind – bonds that President Dwight D. Eisenhower believed would ultimately lead the world to "the dawn of eternal peace." Eisenhower launched the Sister Cities program in 1956, hoping it would nudge the world in the right direction.

Sister Cities' host families typically provide room and board for their assigned students. In Orinda's case, each student goes through a highly competitive process to demonstrate that he or she is a good fit for the program, and is fluent enough in English to do well in classes at Miramonte.

... continued on page A8

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