



Media Release
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Visit Coventry, Rhode Island, USA

Selwyn residents have the chance to visit Coventry in Rhode Island as applications to travel to Selwyn's new American Sister City are now open.

Selwyn District Council's Sister City Committee have organised the trip to create an opportunity for locals to experience America and strengthen the relationship between the two districts. The trip will take place in October. A visit to Boston and two days in New York are part of the travel itinerary.

Participants need to pay for their own travel expenses, travel insurance, visas and spending money, but some free accommodation is provided through homestays organised by Selwyn's Sister City, Coventry. The estimated cost for the trip is \$5,000 per person.

Selwyn District Council Sister City Committee Chairperson Allison Rosanowski says the trip is a wonderful opportunity for residents of Selwyn. "There is plenty to do and homestay hosts will showcase the cultural and historical highlights of their region."

Locals who join the trip will enjoy Rhode Island's national parks, hiking trails and the opportunity to visit the Fryeburg Agricultural Show in Maine and historical mill sites near Coventry such as the Mass and Slater Mill Museum. The trip to Boston includes visiting Harvard University. There will also be a visit to Cape Cod Marine Park and Newport, a popular holiday spot which is home to many large mansions such as 'The Breakers', owned by the Vanderbilt family and 'Beechwood' owned by the Astors.

People who join the trip also have the opportunity to lengthen their stay at the end and travel around other parts of America at their own cost.

The Coventry Sister City Committee will visit Selwyn in March 2016 and residents who travel to Coventry are expected to reciprocate hospitality including homestays.

Mrs Rosanowski is expecting the trip to Coventry will happen every two years in the future. "People can also consider taking part in the next visit if they cannot join this one."

Three places are available on the trip for active, fit adults who live or work in the Selwyn District, with applications being considered by the Sister City committee and Council staff. Participants must be over 18 and be fit to travel. Applications close on 20 February 2015.

Application forms are available by phoning 347 2830 or emailing bernadette.ryan@selwyn.govt.nz

Background information

Coventry, Rhode Island has a population of around 35,000. It has many old homes, farmhouses, churches and cemeteries. Originally an agricultural town, in the nineteenth century several small textile mills were established in the town, a number of which still survive today. Modern Coventry has two distinct parts, a semi-rural western half and the suburban eastern half which is growing quickly.

It is situated 20 minutes from Rhode Island's capital, Providence. Rhode Island is a State in the New England region of the USA. Rhode Island is not actually a separate island but it does have several large bays and inlets, and a number of small islands, which gives it the title of 'The Ocean State.' It has a population of just over 1 million. Health services, tourism, and manufacturing are some of the largest industries in the state.

Rhode Island has a rich history and the state contains around 20% of the country's historic landmarks. It was the first of the original thirteen colonies to declare independence from Britain in 1776.

Selwyn also has Sister City relationships with Yubetsu-cho (Hokkaido, Japan), Akitakata-shi (Hiroshima, Japan), Shandan (Gansu Province, China) and North Toraja (Indonesia).

The most recent Sister City visit was last year when Selwyn residents visited Yubetsu and Akitakata. One of the highlights was visiting the Peace Memorial Park in Hiroshima.

Malvern Community Board Chair Jenny Gallagher went on the 2014 Japan trip and says staying in home stays was a great opportunity to learn about other cultures. "The highlight for me was learning about the culture and the way they lived. The hosts made me feel very welcome and organised day trips for us to visit historical places, and that was a great experience."

Ends

The Rhode Island Statehouse in Providence, Rhode Island, is a short drive from Coventry. Photo credit: Jimmy Emerson.

The Breakers in Newport is a 30 minute drive from Coventry and was the summer home of the Vanderbilt family. The sea front mansion is built in Italian Renaissance style. Photo credit: Tony Kent.

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