

Information on Narok, Kenya (shared by Neighbors Abroad)

Narok is the capital city of the Narok County region of Kenya, home to the Maasai Mara in southwest Kenya. The Maasai are an indigenous community who have lived sustainably with nature and wildlife for millennia. They are pastoral and primarily herd cattle. Narok City has a population of approximately 45,000. The wildlife area, Maasai Mara National Reserve, the seat of the annual Great Migration of wildebeests, is not far from Narok City and is managed by the County government, thus the County is the lead for tourism and wildlife conservation. Narok City is also home to Maasai Mara University, known for its conservation, tourism, and wildlife programs. Through the NGO Oliveseed Foundation, members of the Palo Alto community have had a relationship in the Maasai Mara since 2017, working on pillars of literacy, community empowerment and sustainability.

The City of Narok formed a committee to explore a Friendship City agreement with Palo Alto in March 2023 and are hopeful to see approval of the relationship. The local head of Oliveseed, Barb Mackraz, has formed a committee here in Palo Alto to work within Neighbors Abroad and facilitate the relationship. Ms. Mackraz has joined the Board of Neighbors Abroad and will co-chair the Narok committee with Barbara Newton, an existing member of the Neighbors Abroad Board. Ms. Mackraz is the Founder & CEO of the Oliveseed Foundation (based in Palo Alto); Co-founder, Oliveseed Kenya Trust; Longtime Palo Alto and member of Neighbors Abroad.

Narok, through Oliveseed, is already in the planning stages of student exchanges through Hidden Villa, which Neighbors Abroad could support without bearing the burden of running. The areas in which Narok wishes to connect with Palo Alto are sustainability and literacy. Regarding sustainability, Narok looks forward to joining the connection already established and running between Palo Alto and its 8 Sister Cities and Sibling City in promoting and sharing knowledge regarding sustainability practices. A representative of their government joined the first SustainCity Summit with Palo Alto's other Sister Cities in October 2023. Regarding literacy, Narok envisions extending its current youth writing projects to Palo Alto youth and perhaps beyond into the youth of our other Sister Cities and the Sibling City, with cross-cultural essay and story projects. On the next page, there are two images of posters celebrating the people of Narok and a photo of children at a school and priorities carried forward through Oliveseed.

Such a relationship will comport with Neighbors Abroad's mission of fostering Palo Alto's domestic and international engagement throughout the world, creating the first relationship with a city in the continent of Africa as well as the country of Kenya. Different from a Sister City relationship, a Friendship City Agreement would be limited to three years, subject to Council renewal. The Agreement allows for a test of time, and if the relationship waivers, the agreement would not be renewed.

Here are images from a recent presentation from Oliveseed Kenya Trust about Narok and the efforts being led by Oliveseed.

Images:





Map of the Narok Region:

