



Minutes
International & Multicultural Advisory Committee (IMAC) Meeting
September 3, 2014 * 7 – 8:30pm
CA Board Room

IMAC Members Present: Sue & Steve DiPaula, Pat Fisher, Marcy Gitt, Valerie Montague, Jean Salkeld, Laura Smit, Suzanne Waller

Guests: Jean Robert Anantua, Nicholas Anantua, Esther Jean-Louis

1. **Haiti Sister-City Planning Committee** - At Laura's invitation and in preparation for the launch of the Haiti Sister City Planning Committee (approved at Aug 6 meeting), Bob Anantua (President, Build Haiti Foundation) and Esther Jean-Pierre (France Sister Cities HS Exchange chaperone of Haitian descent) made a presentation regarding the creation of a sister city relationship with the city of Cap-Haitien in Haiti. The Haitian community in Howard County, along with the Build Haiti Foundation and residents of the historic city of Cap-Haitien, are eager to establish a sister city relationship with Columbia.

This would be Columbia's first Sister City in the Americas (Columbia's other sister cities are Cergy-Pontoise, France; Tres Cantos, Spain ; and Tema, Ghana). Mr. Anantua presented an overview of the city of Cap-Haitien and its surroundings, along with reasons for wanting to create a sister city relationship with Columbia:

- There are many Haitians living in Columbia; the U.S. Census reported more than 7,000 Haitians living in Columbia/Howard County
- The Build Haiti Foundation is working both locally and in Haiti; it is a nonprofit that would assume a primary role in cultivating a sister city relationship in Haiti.
- While Cap-Haitien is not a planned community, it is home to several UNESCO World Heritage sites, and has high schools and universities
- Cap-Haitien is on the other side of the island from Port au Prince and was not damaged by the 2010 earthquake
- Columbia and Cap-Haitien have cultural, educational and youth leadership as areas of mutual interest
- Bob Anantua and David Weeks, who teaches at Glenelg Country School are developing a Global Youth Leadership Program, which would bring together youth from Columbia and Cap-Haitien.
- Tourism and commerce are growing areas of the Haitian economy

IMAC members suggested questions that should be considered when determining the potential for this new relationship:

How is Cap-Haitien similar to Columbia?

What can we learn from one another?

How will this "partnership of equals" work?

Will there be a wider range of types of cultural exchanges than we currently have?

Is there or will there be an organization in Haiti that CA can partner with?
Does Cap-Haitien have other Sister City relationships and how do they work?

2. **Caribbean Fest Planning** - Sunday, Sept 28, 1:30 – 4:30 pm @ Miller Library – Laura and Bob Anantua, along with Pat Fisher and other IMAC members, are continuing to recruit bands, performers and exhibitors. If anyone has contacts in the Caribbean, please put them in touch with Laura. We have 3 food vendors, but need country tables and musicians/performers. A sign-up sheet was passed around for volunteers to staff the IMAC/CA table. The final planning meeting will be on **September 15th at 10am** at the Miller Branch of the Howard County Library System on Frederick Road. IMAC members were invited to attend.
3. **Elections for IMAC Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary** - Outgoing Chair Pat Fisher thanked IMAC members for their support during her year as Chair and proceeded with the election. The following members were elected by acclamation: Valerie Montague as Chair, Suzanne Waller as Vice-Chair, and Debra Paper as Secretary.
4. **French Cuisine and Culture Exchange - October 9 to 19, 2014** - IMAC members were asked to help recruit participants for this exciting program. So far, Laura has received 8 applications and is waiting to hear back from another 3 people.
5. **25th Anniversary of the Tres Cantos, Spain-Columbia relationship in 2015:** A similar program to the French Cuisine Exchange called a “Spanish Cuisine, Wine & Culture Exchange” is being planned for the fall of 2015, to mark the 25th Anniversary of the Tres Cantos-Columbia Sister City relationship. Laura is interested in getting a plaque in the ground at the Columbia Lakefront before July 2015 when the Spanish students participating in the annual high school exchange program will be here.
6. **Tema (Ghana) Sister City Committee Report:** Valerie noted that a member of the Tema committee, Jim Lancaster, is in Ghana on business related to his NGO and plans to meet on September 9 with Tema government officials, the new Tema Rotary president, religious leaders, and representatives of the schools with which we have begun partnering . His meetings are being organized by Faustina Boakye, who is the sister of one of the Tema Committee members here. A large Tema delegation of 25 – 30 people is expected to visit Norfolk, VA, in November (Norfolk also has a sister city relationship with Tema). If the Tema delegation does come to Norfolk, Laura and some members of the Columbia Tema Committee can travel to Norfolk and bring back the visitors (maximum of 6 people) to visit Columbia, and sign a formal Sister City Agreement (as we currently operate under Friendship City status). Jim hopes to find out how many people are coming to Norfolk and if there are any plans for some of them to visit Columbia.
7. **World Food Passport - New Program:** The “World Food Passport” program will be launched in January 2015 during Restaurant Week in Howard County. Discussions focused on recruitment of restaurants to the program, passports that diners will be able to get stamped, stamps for restaurants, categories to group the country cuisines under, and prize diners will get for filling a passport with stamps. We considered the availability and cost of rubber stamps that would be required to mark the passports. Laura and Pat reported on their first, very successful, visit to a Dominican restaurant where the idea of the passport was enthusiastically received. The committee agreed that:

- Laura will put together a draft flyer and a series of questions to ask of restaurant managers when we present to them the World Food Passport program and ask if they would like to participate.
- IMAC volunteers can help to promote the program whenever they eat at ethnic restaurants. Ideally, each volunteer could present the program to one or two restaurants between now and December. It was noted that businesses will be more receptive to these requests if we are actually eating at their restaurants and engaging them in conversation about their food and culture.
- Categories, passport design, stamps, rewards program, and prizes will continue to be discussed via email between now and the next meeting.

8. **Cultural Arts Fair, Oakland Mills Village Center** - Will take place on Saturday, October 11th. IMAC has participated in the festival in the past. A table volunteer Sign-up sheet was passed around.

9. **Next meeting:** Wednesday, October 1, 7 – 8:30 pm in the Small Conference Room at CA