



December 1, 2015

To: External Relations Committee  
Milton Matthews, President

From: Michelle Miller, Community Services Director

cc: Leslie Barnett, Assistant Director, Community Services  
Laura Smit, International Exchange & Multicultural Programs Manager

Re: Backup Materials for Sister Cities Presentation

CA's International Exchange program and the Haiti Sister City Planning Committee are interested in developing a new sister city relationship for Columbia with the city of Cap-Haitien, Haiti.

Members of the Haiti Sister City Planning Committee will be making a presentation to the External Relations Committee at the December 10th CA Board of Directors Meeting. They will be providing the reasons why they are proposing that CA move forward with establishing a new sister city relationship with Cap-Haitien, Haiti.

The backup documents include:

- Background Paper
- Process for Establishing a New Sister City Relationship for Columbia
- Criteria for Selecting a Sister City (from Sister Cities International)
- Bios of Haiti Sister City Planning Committee members

## **Background on Proposed New Sister City Relationship for Columbia**

The **Haiti Sister City Planning Committee**, in coordination with CA's International Exchange & Multicultural Programs, is interested in developing a new **sister city** relationship for Columbia. The city being proposed is Cap-Haitien, Haiti.

### ***What is a sister city relationship?***

- A broad-based, officially approved, **long-term partnership** between two communities.
- Becomes official with the signing of an **agreement by officials of both cities**.
- Allows citizen volunteers of both communities to get involved in international relations, **citizen diplomacy** and projects of mutual interest.
- Increases understanding between cultures through direct, friendly, personal contact.
- Residents of both communities benefit.

### ***Why establish a new sister city relationship for Columbia?***

Columbia currently has three sister cities: two in Europe (Cergy-Pontoise, France, 1977 and Tres Cantos, Spain, 1990) and one in Africa (Tema, Ghana, 2014). Cap-Haitien, Haiti would give Columbia a sister city in the Western Hemisphere and the Caribbean. Columbia Association is a member of Sister Cities International which “promotes peace through mutual respect, understanding, and cooperation – one individual, one community at a time.” The sister cities mission is in accord with James Rouse’s vision for Columbia: creating a community which is centered around people and is racially, culturally and economically integrated.

### ***Why Cap-Haitien, Haiti?***

There is a large Haitian and Caribbean diaspora in Howard County which has intrinsic interests in Haiti and Haitian culture. A sister city relationship with Cap-Haitien would help advance understanding of Haiti and its rich cultural heritage. The Haiti Sister City Committee is composed of volunteers who have an interest in Haiti and Haitian culture. The Build Haiti Foundation, a Columbia-based nonprofit organization, has excellent connections and relationships with people and organizations in Cap-Haitien. The city is close to the United States with direct, low cost flights to its airport from Miami. Cap-Haitien is a small city of 180,000, with a growing infrastructure and tourism. It was not directly impacted by the 2010 earthquake, that destroyed much of the capital of Haiti, Port-au-Prince.

### ***Relationships between Cap-Haitien & Columbia***

The Columbia-based Build Haiti Foundation has worked in the Cap-Haitien area for eight years and has built connections to the Mayor’s Office, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), educators, government officials, the Rotary Club, and cultural arts professionals. Members of the Haiti Sister City Planning Committee, building on these contacts, have begun building connections to Cap-Haitien with a variety of Columbia/Howard County institutions: the Columbia Art Center, the Howard County Arts Council, Howard Community College, Columbia Festival of the Arts, the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Columbia and interested medical volunteers.

### ***Cap-Haitien’s Current Sister Cities***

Cap-Haitien already has two successful sister city relationships with two U.S. cities, Fort Lauderdale, FL, and Portland, ME, giving it institutional experience with the “sister cities” concept. The Columbia

Association (International Exchange Program Manager) and Build Haiti Foundation have good relationships with both sister cities groups and the sister cities organization that coordinates sister cities activities in Cap-Haitien.

### ***Existing Youth Leadership Program***

The Build Haiti Foundation's *Global Leadership Program* in Haiti has taken students from Glenelg Country School and other schools and colleges to meet with youth in Haiti for the last few summers. Programs have included an environmental sustainability workshop, workshops on public health issues and social entrepreneurship, soccer matches and engaging local and American youth in service projects. Youth exchanges between Columbia and Cap-Haitien would build on this existing program.

### ***Historical & Political Background - City of Cap-Haitien***

During the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Cap-Haitien, then known as Cap Francais or the "Paris of the Antilles," was the capitol of the French colony and a central port for the plantation economy. In 1791, slaves rebelled against the French and eventually established the first independent country in Latin America. Many of the leaders of the rebellion were from Cap Francais. Local authorities include the mayor, city council and the municipal districts. The current mayor of Cap-Haitien has signed a letter of interest in developing a sister city relationship with Columbia.

### ***Tourism, Arts & Culture***

Thanks to its beautiful beaches and historic New Orleans-style architecture and buildings, Cap-Haitien is rapidly becoming a tourist destination. The Sans-Souci Palace and mountain-top Citadelle Laferriere are now recognized by UNESCO as a World Heritage site. Royal Caribbean has built a resort, Labadie, there. Cultural institutions, such as the Haiti Arts Council, are dedicated to promoting Haitian visual arts, dance and music.

### ***Columbia - Cap-Haitien Sister City Exchange Opportunities for Youth and Adults***

**Culture:** visual arts, music, dance, theater

**Education:** youth leadership programs

**Cuisine:** experiencing local food and refreshments

**Health:** connecting medical volunteers to Konbit Sante's local hospitals and clinics

**Environment:** tree planting, sanitation, clean water

**Technology and Business:** connecting entrepreneurs

**Tourism:** Warm climate, beaches and sightseeing

### ***Next Steps***

If the Columbia Association Board of Directors approves the request to proceed with developing a Sister City relationship with Cap-Haitien, the *Haiti Sister City Planning Committee* will sunset, and a new subcommittee will be established, called the *Cap-Haitien (Haiti) Sister City Committee*. This committee would be a volunteer sister city subcommittee of *CA's International & Multicultural Advisory Committee (IMAC)*. The subcommittee would develop a Sister Cities Agreement between Columbia and Cap-Haitien and begin to develop youth and adult exchanges in coordination with the other volunteer sister city subcommittees and the Program Manager for International Exchange & Multicultural Programs.

## **Process for Establishing a New Sister City Relationship for Columbia**

1. CA receives a request from the community to establish a new sister city in a particular country (recent requests have been regarding Haiti, China and Korea).
2. CA's IEMP Program Manager, the Director of Community Services and Assistant Director of Community Services evaluate the feasibility of creating a new sister city relationship. If it is determined that it is feasible, CA will provide a packet with guidelines on establishing a new sister city relationship.
3. Person(s) proposing new sister city brings together a group of Columbia and Howard County residents interested in creating a new sister city in a particular country and establishes a "Sister City Planning Committee" for that country (e.g. Haiti Sister City Planning Committee).
  - The Sister City Planning Committee recruits members (at least 10+ people) with ties to that country and elects a Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary for the Committee. Volunteer members usually include: foreign-born residents from that country and Americans with experience and interest in the country (e.g. Peace Corps alumni, people who have studied, worked or traveled to the country, people who speak the local language, have worked with people from that culture, etc.).
  - Sister City Planning Committee meets regularly (monthly or bimonthly), inviting CA IEMP Program Manager to attend (or keeping her informed), and decides on the city they wish to propose as a sister city to Columbia.
4. Representatives from the Sister City Planning Committee make a presentation to CA's International & Multicultural Advisory Committee (IMAC) in accordance with the CA and Sister Cities International guidelines.
5. IMAC makes a recommendation to CA staff as to whether or not to proceed.
6. CA's IEMP Program Manager and the Director and Assistant Director of Community Services evaluate IMAC's recommendation and approve or do not approve the proposal.
7. Columbia Association sends a letter to the Mayor or appropriate city official of the proposed city, indicating CA's interest in developing a new sister city relationship, and requesting a written response from the Mayor or city official.

8. The Sister City Planning Committee works to develop a presentation and background paper for the CA Board requesting approval to proceed to develop the sister cities relationship. Presentation provides reasons for choosing this country and city, and background on the city and proposed exchanges and activities.
  - IEMP Program Manager works with Executive Assistant to President of CA to get the Committee's presentation on the CA Board meeting agenda for a particular date, and informs Sister City Planning Committee of the date and time.
  - Committee representatives do a 10 min presentation, with 5 mins for questions to the appropriate subcommittee of the CA Board of Directors, bringing with them members of the committee to be in the audience.
9. If the proposal is approved by the full CA Board of Directors, then IMAC and the IEMP Program Manager create an official CA sister city subcommittee of IMAC called: "[City Name] Sister City Committee" (e.g. Tema Sister City Committee).
10. CA IEMP Program Manager works with the Sister City Committee and top officials of the city to develop a partnership agreement and organize a signing ceremony for the Sister Cities Agreement, either in Columbia or in the sister city (with representatives from Columbia Association and the Sister City Committee present).
11. Once the Sister City Agreement is signed, IEMP Program Manager informs Sister Cities International of the new relationship.
12. The Sister City Committee, in coordination with CA's Program Manager, develops and plans youth and adult exchanges, activities, travel, etc. Committee and IEMP Program Manager develop relationships with partner organization(s) in the city to organize and run exchanges.
13. The Sister City Committee reports on activities regularly during IMAC meetings.
14. Plans for sister cities exchanges will be coordinated with the IEMP Program Manager and CA's other Sister City committees, so as to avoid scheduling conflicts.

Developed by Laura Smit, Program Manager for International Exchange & Multicultural Programs (IEMP) with Valerie Montague, Chair, International & Multicultural Advisory Committee (IMAC). 2015

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Promoting peace through  
mutual respect,  
understanding  
and cooperation—  
one individual,  
one community at a time.

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## Criteria for Selecting a Sister City

Many different factors should be taken into account when selecting a sister city. Keep in mind that this is only a loose guide to assist you in your search. Your community should identify those features that are most important to your community and its sister city program, and select a prospective city accordingly. Most importantly, remember the analogy of marriage. Some cities choose their partner based purely on commonalities; others find greater success and fulfillment via the adage “opposites attract.” Your choice depends entirely upon your objectives: economic development, diverse cultural exchange, humanitarian assistance, and so on.

### Overall Factors to Consider

- genuine interest on both sides
- long-term commitment to the relationship
- adequate financial support for exchanges and maintenance of the relationship
- realistic assessment of what makes a successful sister cities relationship
- focus on best results that will capitalize on existing strengths
- separation of personal beliefs from political, economic, and cultural realities
- awareness that a desire to learn from and share experiences with a sister city can, in many cases, balance the lack of any similar characteristics.

### General

- exchange goals/objectives
- population
- geographic location (mountains, desert, lake, port)
- comparison of key industries
- local ethnic population
- existing linkages (university, business, YMCA, Rotary)
- does the city have sister cities in other countries? Are they successful?
- role of the city and the sister cities committee in the relationship

**Cultural, Civic, Educational**

- museums
- theaters
- symphony/orchestra
- libraries
- civic organizations (Rotary, Lions, Kiwanis, Scouts, Women's Clubs)
- newspapers/television/radio
- sports teams (amateur or professional)
- hospitals
- primary and secondary schools
- post-secondary educational institutions (colleges, universities, technical, training institutes)

**Economic**

- socio-economic conditions
- language/cultural patterns and barriers
- market analysis of industries
- investment climate/present investment levels
- liberal versus restrictive trade climate
- if a port city, port connections
- invisible trade (education, high-tech, service, exports)
- trade exchange potential
- number of tourists
- presence of foreign businesses/factories locally
- local businesses engaged in international activity

**Political**

- history of diplomatic relations
- present degree of cooperation between U.S. and international country in political, economic, commercial, and cultural fields
- level of government bureaucracy
- diplomatic presence
- honorary consuls

# Haiti Sister City Planning Committee Members

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**JEAN-ROBERT ANANTUA** received a B.S. in Information Technology. He received additional business and project management training from Tuck Dartmouth College and University of Maryland Baltimore. Mr. Anantua is a firm believer in community service and is a very active member of the community. He has committed time and resources and founded the Build Haiti Foundation to meet some of the pressing needs of Haiti, his homeland. He believes that raising awareness about the plight of the Haitian people will serve as catalyst that will allow individuals and organizations to come together for this common cause.



**NICK ANANTUA** is a Haitian-American and was born in Brooklyn, New York. He currently resides in Laurel, Maryland with his parents and grandmother. Nick is a junior at Reservoir High School, where he is a member and officer of Alpha Achievers, and member of the National Honors Society and Black African Leadership Union. He is an honor-roll student that offers organizational prowess, creativity, and strong problem-solving skills. He plans on engaging teens in volunteering opportunities and helping establish beneficial relationships.



**ALIX AURELIEN** is a Coordinator of Community Services at Total Care Services, Inc., a social agency providing services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Lanham, MD. Prior to joining Total Care Services Inc., Alix served as Graduate Assistant at Towson University and Program Assistant at 501 (c) 3 nonprofit organization. Alix has extensive experience coordinating special events, developing fundraising campaigns, and providing administrative support. Alix was born in Haiti and moved to the United States at the age of 17. He currently resides in Burtonsville, MD with his twin brother. Alix is committed to helping Columbia develop a relationship with Cap-Haitian and eager to serve on the committee.



**LIZ BOBO** received a BA in literature and a JD from the University of Maryland. She served in public elected office representing Colombia and Howard County for more than 30 years. She focused on issues of social, economic, and environmental justice. She was the first woman County Executive in Maryland. Liz and her husband Lloyd Knowles, have traveled widely throughout the world. Last year Liz visited Haiti with a service group. They worked on environmental and agricultural issues in the central plateau. A close friend of Liz's family is a priest in Port au Prince who founded and operates an orphanage, a hospital, and several schools there. He previously served in a parish church in Baltimore which Liz's mom attended.



**SOLEDAD BOLIG** was born in Cap-Haitien, Haiti. She and her family migrated to the U.S. in the 70s. Soledad has a bachelor's degree in Human Ecology and another in Business Administration. She is currently pursuing her graduate degree in International Relations. Her professional background includes being a U.S. soldier, transportation analyst for the State of Pennsylvania, and now an analyst for the Department of the Navy. She is an advocate for Haiti's growth and development and travels there annually.



# Haiti Sister City Planning Committee Members

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**CRYSTAL CHAMPTAL** is a 3rd generation Haitian-American, whose grandfather came to America in the 1920's to start a new life here. She moved to Columbia in 2002. She has fond memories of her grandfather who was proud of his Haitian ancestry. Crystal is excited to be a part of the Haiti Sister City Planning Committee and feels that it has reconnected her with her Haitian heritage, which had been lost through the years. Crystal has worked for Columbia Association in Membership Sales for 10+ years and is a resident of the Village of Hickory Ridge. Her passion is Health and Wellness through the power of plant-based nutrition.



**KEILA FOSTER** is an AVID Coordinator with Prince George's County Schools. Keila grew up in Howard County and is a graduate of Howard High School, as well as Howard University, and The University of Mississippi. She has taught in Mississippi for two years and with the Memphis City Schools School District for seven years. Keila has participated in numerous missionary trips domestically in Arkansas, Louisiana, and Tennessee and in abroad in the Dominican Republic, Jamaica and Haiti. Her most fulfilling was during July 2015 to the town of Petit Goave, Haiti. She lives in the Village of Kings Contrivance and enjoys reading, hot yoga, learning Spanish and traveling.



**JOY GARVIN** has been living in Ellicott City, Maryland for over five years. She works in Columbia at Enterprise Community Partners and has been with their finance department for almost ten years. Her son participates in numerous and varied activities with Howard County Recreation and Parks and enjoys attending Dunloggin Middle School. She and her son enjoy traveling and spending time with friends both near and far.



**STEPHANIE LEE** earned her Master's in Social Work at Howard University and has been a Clinical Social Worker at a major hospital in Baltimore, MD for over 15 years. She has been a member of a large non-denominational church in Long Reach community for several years and her daughter is a Hammond High School graduate. Stephanie and her family have lived in Columbia MD for over 15 years.



**ALEX LILAVOIS** is a graduate of the University of Michigan's Ross School of Business with an MBA in Finance and Strategic Management and an undergraduate degree (BS) in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Florida. He holds a Project Manager Professional (PMP) certification from the Project Management Institute. Alex donates his spare time to organizations that promote education and economic development domestically and internationally. Alex is fluent in French, Spanish and Haitian Creole, and has consulted for senior level executives within the financial services, federal government, manufacturing and power utilities sectors in the U.S. and global marketplace.

# Haiti Sister City Planning Committee Members

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**MOMINA MALIK** comes from a Marketing background, she is a community activist, and has been involved in several community initiatives. In the past 15+ years, her involvement spans from serving on Multicultural boards in Southern New England, to research advisor for the Center for Philanthropy as well as an instructor for private community schools. Currently, she is an active board member and Volunteer for Build Haiti Foundation. She also serves as PTA Vice President for Howard County School System, Chairs the Talent Show, and International Day Committees as well as being a Girl Scout leader.



**FELECIA HARRIS McCRAY** has resided in Columbia, MD for the past 3 years. She holds a Master's in Industrial Organizational Psychology and has been a federal government employee for 10 years. In her free time she enjoys dining out with friends, reading and learning Mandarin Chinese.



**VALERIE MONTAGUE** chairs CA's International and Multicultural Advisory Committee. She has more than seven years of experience creating and administering international programs, and helped develop Columbia's Sister City relationship with Tema, Ghana. She also participated in the 2013 celebration in Cergy-Pointoise, France, of the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Columbia's Sister City relationship with that city. She has contributed to the success of many CA multicultural programs, including CultureFests, high school exchanges, and language cafes. She currently lives in the Village of Hickory Ridge.



**CHRISTINA PIERRE** is a Haitian-American born and raised in Columbia, and the youngest of seven siblings. Her mother is from Jérémie and her father is from Cap-Haitien. Pierre has visited Haiti several times and clear waters and the fresh food has her wanting to retire there someday. She has an associate's degree in nursing and is working towards her BSN and MSN, with the goal of becoming a midwife. She works for Columbia Association in the Communications and Marketing Department.

# Haiti Sister City Planning Committee Members

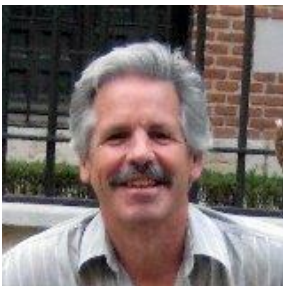
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**BERNARD PUNTE** is a retired Sales Manager for Lucent Technologies. He has been a volunteer for Joni and Friends, Wheels for the World for 10 years. He collects used wheelchairs from around the state, has them restored at prison rehab facilities, then distributes and fits the rehabbed wheelchairs to those in need in Honduras and Peru. He also collects power wheelchairs and other medical devices for COTSA and other aid groups which are focused on helping immigrants and the people of their native countries. Bernie has lived in the Village of Kings Contrivance for 24 years.



**GRETA SWANSON** is a graduate of the University of Washington. For three years, she served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Swaziland, Africa. After obtaining a law degree from the New York University School of Law, she was an attorney with the Atlanta Legal Aid Society. She has raised three daughters in Columbia, directed PTA cultural arts programs for an elementary school, and volunteered widely in the community. Currently she is a Visiting Attorney with the Environmental Law Institute.



**DAVID WEEKS** is the Chair of the Build Haiti Foundation Board and has collaborated with BHF President Bob Anantua in securing a good network of contacts in Haiti. An educator for more than 40 years, Mr. Weeks presently serves as the Director of Global Education and Community Service at the Glenelg Country School in Howard County, Maryland. He has contributed to the development of medical clinics in Thailand, Kenya and Haiti. David Weeks acts as a consultant for the Salih Self Development Center in Ghana, the Osiligi Hope Foundation in Kenya and the Hope for Sickle Cell Foundation in Nigeria.