



Minutes

International & Multicultural Advisory Committee (IMAC) Meeting
March 2, 2016 * 7:00-8:30 pm
Vision Room, CA Headquarters

In Attendance: Tya Bolton, Pat Fisher, Marcy Gitt, Valerie Montague, Olutomi Iluyomade, Alice Pham, Linda Potsiadlo, Arna Rubman, Larry Schoen

Subcommittee Chairs: Bob Anantua (Haiti), Hui Dong (China)

CA Staff: Milton Matthews, President & CEO of Columbia Association (visiting); Laura Smit

Chair's Report – Valerie Montague welcomed CA President Milton Matthews and IMAC committee members.

Program Manager's Report – Laura Smit said the trip to Ghana went very well and she was glad CA Board Member Gregg Schwind was part of the delegation because he can now share his positive impressions with other Board members. She also said Columbia hopes to have a signed sister city agreement with Cap Haitien, Haiti, this summer, and that the China Sister City Planning Committee is progressing well. Several IMAC members will assist the China subcommittee.

Laura reviewed the International Exchange & Multicultural Programs (IEMP) 2015 – 2016 overview document, which outlines the role of IMAC and its subcommittees and initiatives. She said all subcommittee chairs are asked to attend the bi-monthly IMAC meetings to provide updates.

About 90 people attended the World Languages Café in February. Laura said she has started a World Languages Café MeetUp Group and it already has more than 180 members, resulting in a significant increase in Café attendance. Anyone who wants to join the MeetUp group can search for “Columbia, MD World Languages Café” on MeetUp.com. Senior citizens, especially native speakers of languages other than English, are encouraged to attend. The Cafés are held at the 50+ center in the East Columbia Branch Library.

Approval of January 6, 2016 Minutes

The January 6, 2016 minutes were approved as presented.

Summer Sister Cities High School Student Exchange

This year's summer high school student exchange will involve youth from Spain, France, Ghana and Columbia/Howard County. The deadline for applications for the European exchange participants has been extended until March 7. There are openings for both the Spain and France programs. Host families are also needed for the 10 to 12 Ghanaian high school students who are

expected to visit Columbia July 16 through 30 of this year. Host families are needed that have high school students. In addition to the typical sites and attractions, the Ghanaian students would like to visit local universities. Laura will send IMAC members via email the application that prospective host families must complete. Committee members are asked to share it with possible host families.

Reports from Sister Cities Subcommittees

- Tres Cantos (Spain) Sister City Committee
Pat Fisher suggested a Fall 2016 time frame for a Cuisine Exchange. A partner organization in Tres Cantos has been identified but, in light of recent mayoral elections there, we are unsure of the new administration's commitment to doing an adult exchange with Columbia. We hope to learn more after our partner's planned presentation to the new administration, which is scheduled for this Friday.
- Cergy-Pontoise (France) Sister City Committee
A Cuisine & Culture Exchange had tentatively been scheduled for May 14 – 22 but our colleagues at the CAJA informed Debra Paper that they don't have enough people interested to send a group in May. It will be reassessed later to see if we move this to October 2016.
- Tema (Ghana) Sister City Committee
Tya Bolton gave a report on Columbia Delegation Trip to Ghana Feb 6 – 18, 2016. As a result of meetings held in Tema during the visit we will have our first group of high school students visiting Columbia this summer. They are students from SOS Hermann Gmeiner International College (a private secondary school). We are also making plans for the future, including internships for librarians from Tema and professionals from Narh-Bita Nursing School, and, hopefully, an HCC Study Abroad program to Ghana.
- Cap-Haitien (Haiti) Sister City Committee
Bob Anantua, Chair of the Cap-Haitien Committee and President of the Build Haiti Foundation (BHF) , informed IMAC that the first meeting of the official Cap-Haitien Sister City Committee took place last week. The committee has 15 members. They elected Momina Malik as chair, and elected two Co-Vice Chairs -- Soledad Bolig and Daphney Philips. They also elected Alex Aurelian as secretary.

Bob Anantua and David Weeks will travel to Haiti in May and anticipate getting the current mayor to sign the official sister city agreement in July when they are there with the "Global Leadership Program" from July 6 – 15. The Global Leadership Program takes students and professionals to Haiti where they can experience Haitian culture and get involved in service projects firsthand. David Weeks and Bob Anantua hope to take 12 to 15 students to Haiti. For more information, see www.thebuildhaitifoundation.org. They plan to have Global Leadership Program participants witness the signing. The Build Haiti Foundation annual fundraiser and celebration of Haitian Culture takes place April 16 at Wilde Lake Interfaith Center, from 6 to 9 p.m.

- China Sister City Planning Committee – Seeking relationship with Liyang, Jiangsu Province
Jun Han, Chair of the China Committee, said several new attendees joined the committee's last meeting, thanks to Laura promoting it. Jun reported that she visited Liyang in January

and met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Liyang, Jiangsu Province. She showed them the presentation given to IMAC in January and proposed some timelines for progress. The principal of the best high school in Liyang would like to develop a sister school relationships and proposed starting a student exchange program this summer or next. They are prepared to receive 20 – 40 American students for a 17-day visit that would include a field trip to Shanghai, which is 2.5 hours from Liyang by bus. The committee's next meeting is tomorrow, March 3rd from 7pm – 8:30pm, in Room 2002 of the CA building.

Multicultural Programs

- **World Food Passport Program:** With continued low interest on the part of restaurateurs and the public, IMAC agreed to advise CA to end the program. Possible uses for the 80 \$25 restaurant gift certificates donated by restaurants were discussed. It was agreed that Laura will ask the restaurants if they can be used as prizes at multicultural events. Laura and Valerie will create a letter to the restaurants thanking them for participating and asking them if they can donate their gift certificates for future multicultural events.
- **World Languages Café:** The new location at the 50+ Center @ East Columbia Library is working well. The WLC meets at the East Columbia 50+ Center on the fourth Tuesdays of the month. The next meetings will be on March 22 and April 26.
- **International Book Club:** Next meetings will be on March 9 and April 13 at CA headquarters. Contact Laura to find out the next book selections.

Multicultural Events

- **Eastern Europe & Russia Culture Fest:** Laura said CA is still seeking performers and exhibitors for the Eastern Europe & Russia Culture Fest scheduled for Sunday, April 10, 1:30 – 4:30pm at Miller Library. Exhibitor tables are free but the exhibitors are prohibited from selling items. St. Matthews Orthodox Church will provide Eastern European baked goods. A sign-up sheet was passed around for committee members to volunteer to staff the CA table at the event.
- At its next meeting, IMAC will discuss which countries we want the next Culture Fest to focus on. Past Culture Fests have featured: East Asia, South Asia, North Africa & Middle East, the Caribbean, South America, Western Europe, and Ghana. Suggestions are: South Pacific, Australia & New Zealand or Mexico & Central America.

The next IMAC meetings will be held on May 4 and July 6.

Minutes submitted by Tya Bolton and Valerie Montague