



## Minutes

CA International & Multicultural Advisory Committee (IMAC) Meeting

January 8, 2019 \* 7:00-9:00 pm

Vision Room (Board Room) @ CA Headquarters

**In attendance:** Bob Anantua, Magda Castro-Lewis, Sue DiPaula, Lucie Geinzer, Marcy Gitt, Farida Guzdar, Joan Holloway, Valerie Montague (Chair), Alice Pham, Gabriel Pomary, Linda Potsiadlo and Sarah Zhou

**CA Staff:** Laura Smit

**1. Welcome** - Everyone introduced themselves and their village.

**2. Chair's Report** – Valerie Montague

- Since Chao Wu resigned from the CA Board when he was elected to the School Board, the new representative from River Hill may replace him as liaison to the IMAC.
- Valerie went to the World Languages Cafe and noted the need for more Spanish hosts for the three levels: beginner, intermediate and advanced.

**3. Program Manager's Report** - Laura Smit

- Laura stated that she would like us to start shifting the focus away from running our own CultureFests as we have done for the past 5 years, to supporting school multicultural programs and events, which have a built-in audience of parents and students.
- She noted that she would like us to start with the high school level, but be open to the middle and elementary school events. IMAC volunteers would be needed to help staff our table at events to assist Laura and Grace Chang. Please let Laura know of any school or community multicultural events in which we could participate.
- Magda Castro-Lewis suggested that we also reach out to the PTAs to find out about upcoming multicultural events.

**4. Approval of Nov 13, 2018 Minutes**

- There were two corrections to the minutes. On page 1, under Program Manager's Report, the second sentence of the second bullet and the third bullet should be combined: "When other locations, like village center activity rooms were mentioned, Valerie told us CA has to pay to use those rooms while the library is free, and we highly value our collaboration with the library." On page 3 under Tema, fourth line of the third bullet, "collage" should be "college."
- The minutes were unanimously approved with the above corrections.

**5. Plans for 2019 Multicultural Programs and Events**

- Sister Cities Cuisine classes - Haiti Cooking Demo, Friday, February 8
  - Yiamme Catering will be in charge of the Haiti Cooking Demonstration at the River Hill Village Center in Claret Hall. The cost will be \$60 per person. The event, from 6 to 9 pm, will include a cooking demonstration, recipe cards to be

given to all attendees, a 3-course meal and non-alcoholic beverages. The caterer needs a minimum of 20 attendees. Bob Anantua wants to create more atmosphere by displaying Haitian artwork and playing Haitian music.

- Since this event was intended to be a fund-raiser, Marcy Gitt suggested asking people for an additional donation to the scholarship program, either ahead of time or at the cooking classes.
- The next cooking demonstration may be in April at the Elkridge Furnace Inn and feature French cuisine. For Chinese cuisine, the venue may be Zen Garden. For Spanish cuisine, Tio Pepe in Baltimore, Jaleo in Bethesda, and La Tasca were mentioned as possible venues. Magda, Marcy and Farida Guzdar volunteered to investigate. There are two possible caterers for Ghanaian cuisine that Laura will be contacting via the Tema Committee.
- Valerie noted that an organization in New York holds these events in the homes of people native to the culture of the food, but due to liability issues, we cannot do that.
- *2nd Explore Columbia's Sister Cities Event - Sunday, March 24, 1 to 5 pm at Columbia Mall*
  - There was discussion about changing the name of the event, but the consensus was to keep the same name for "brand recognition".
  - The Mall in Columbia was sold to a new company. Next week Laura Smit and Grace Chang will meet with mall representatives to view the Lord & Taylor Ct, which has had some changes, and to determine where the changing room will be for performers at our event.
  - New events could include a Sister Cities fashion show and a demonstration of musical instruments from the countries of our Sister Cities. There will be a drumming circle like there was last year, provided by Kwame Ansah-Brew and his Performing Arts Center for African Cultures.
  - We need more publicity this year, and may want to publicize more heavily to the schools via the principals and the PTAs.
  - Help will be needed with the Sister Cities tables. Volunteers can sign up at the February 20 IMAC meeting.
- Supporting School Multicultural Fairs - see above under Program Manager's Report

## **6. Reports from Sister City Subcommittees**

- **Liyang, China - Sarah Zhou for Hui Dong**
  - The Liyang Sister City Committee will meet on January 10 at 7pm.
  - Four Liyang middle school students with two teachers will visit Columbia from January 24 to 31, provided their accompanying teacher can get her visa on time. Jun Han, who is coordinating the visit, is looking for host families for the students, who are 14, and their teachers. [Note: Visa was approved but they are now coming Feb 6 to 15]
  - Liyang has requested that CA sign an "official educational exchange program" between the Liyang Bureau of Foreign Affairs and CA. This would be under the umbrella of the formal Sister Cities Agreement between Columbia and Liyang. Jun Han says that this agreement needs to be signed to facilitate the political and financial support by the Liyang government for high school exchange programs between Columbia and Liyang.
  - On Dec 14, Laura, Grace, Barbara Kellner and Jun Han met with

representatives of Howard Community College's (HCC) English Language Institute (ELI) and the World Languages Dept (which runs the StarTalk program where U.S. high school students learn Mandarin and get college credit). They discussed the possibility of the ELI offering an English class for the Liyang high school students the last two weeks of July, and arranging for interaction with the American StarTalk students. CA would be arranging the hosting, perhaps with some StarTalk families.

- An improved itinerary for the trip to China proposed for October 2019 will provide participants with more exposure to local people's life in Liyang.
- The Liyang Committee is working on finding performers for the March 24 event at the Mall.
- **Cergy-Pontoise, France** – Laura Smit for Jean Salkeld
  - Laura went to the post-art exchange meeting and saw photos of the trip. She reported that, after some trepidation during the first few days of the exchange, all the artists and their spouses were very happy with the whole experience. All are in touch with their host families and are eager to host the French here for the next exchange that will take place in Columbia.
  - Jean Salkeld sent a Happy New Year message in French to the CAJA.
  - Laura is worried about the French high school exchange in the summer due to recent demonstrations of the “Gilets Jaunes” in Paris every Saturday.
  - Laura is contacting the ballet company that provided the Can-Can dancers for the 2018 “Explore Columbia’s Sister Cities” event at the Mall.
- **Cap-Haitien, Haiti** - Bob Anantua
  - The Cap-Haitien Committee has not met in a few months, but will meet January 17.
  - The unrest in Haiti from last July has decreased, especially outside of the capital, Port-au-Prince, and Bob is cautiously optimistic that they will be able to run the Build Haiti Foundation’s Global Leadership Program (GLP) in July of 2019.
  - The GLP will be promoted in monthly information sessions at CA from January through May.
  - The committee plans to support the upcoming Sister Cities event at the Mall.
  - The committee is excited about the Haitian cooking demonstration on February 8. Laura suggested creating a handout for the event about the history of Haitian cooking.
  - Bob plans to visit Haiti from January 28 to February 3 to prepare for this summer’s GLP activities.
  - A reception for a Haitian art exhibit, entitled “Haiti Through the Eyes of Its Artists”, will be held on January 16 from 4 to 6 pm at McDonough School in Owings Mills. The reception is open to the public.
- **Tema, Ghana** – Gabriel Pomary
  - A Ghana Study Abroad Program for Howard Community College (HCC) students is being planned for 2020. The trip is being organized by an English professor, Rick Leith, along with Nana Owusu, director of the HCC Library, who is Ghanaian. Under their proposal, which has received initial approval from the International Program office, students will take a class during the Spring 2020 semester and then travel to Ghana during Spring Break. It was suggested that it should be publicized that this trip is a direct result of our

Sister City relationship with Tema. Rick and Nana will be traveling to Ghana in 2019 to develop the Study Abroad program, itinerary and budget. Gabriel Pomary is helping to put together the trip.

- Nana Owusu is going to Ghana before June 2019 and will investigate the feasibility of adopting the Central Library in Tema and other libraries as well.
- Valerie noted that this year is the 400-year anniversary of the first slaves from Ghana arriving in the U.S. and that Ghana's tourism agency is promoting this to encourage African-Americans to visit.
- **Tres Cantos, Spain** – Magda Castro-Lewis
  - Nothing to Report.
  - Laura said she would follow up with Flor Orjales, the Spanish artist who came here in 2017 during Columbia's 50th Birthday, and was also in France for the French Art Exchange. She had said she was going to talk to the director of the Casa de la Cultura to see if they could organize a Spanish Cuisine and Wine Exchange.

## 7. Columbia Association Developing New Strategic Plan

- CA is working with Griff Strategic Leadership to engage internal & external stakeholders on issues related to CA. Valerie asked for input from IMAC to the CA Strategic Plan. She will attend the CA Advisory Committee Chairs' Focus Group with CA's Strategic Plan Consultants on January 29.
- Laura passed out a discussion guide with questions similar to those CA has sent to members. These questions were discussed briefly at the IMAC meeting.
- Due to a lack of time, Valerie suggested that Laura send out the questions via SurveyMonkey so IMAC members can give their input. Valerie asked that people respond by July 25. She asked members to focus on the following questions:
  - How well is CA's value "We're inclusive - We celebrate diversity" delivered to the community?
  - How could CA be more effective in meeting the needs of the diverse Columbia community?
  - What top two positive changes have you seen in CA in the last 2 years?
  - If CA didn't exist, what would you and the community miss the most?
  - Five years from now, if a news story were written about how successful Columbia and CA have been, what should be the highlight of the story?

## 8. Next IMAC Meetings - 3rd Wednesday

- IMAC meetings were supposed to be the 1st Wed of the month, every other month. However, the past 3 meetings have not been held on the 1st Wed for a variety of reasons.
- It was agreed that we will continue to meet bi-monthly, but on the **3rd Wed** of the month. The meeting dates are: **February 20 (postponed due to weather); April 17; and June 19.**

## Upcoming events & programs

- Haitian Cuisine Class, February 8, 6 pm at River Hill Village Center
- Explore Columbia's Sister Cities, Sunday, March 24, 1 - 5 pm at Columbia Mall
- World Languages Cafe: January 22, February 26, March 26
- International Book Club: January 9, February 13, March 13

Respectfully submitted,

Sue DiPaula, IMAC Secretary