President’s Letter

Dear Ambassadors of Peace

In a world faced with fear and chaos it is good to know that Sister Cities has a clear message and mandate: Promote Peace through People. Whether we are in total isolation or social distancing we can still promote peace. We do this by our constant interaction with our other Sister City Committees around the globe. Yes, we yearn for the personal one on one interaction but at a time like this, we also need to find what make us more alike instead of what is different. A wonderful highlight of that this month was an amazing student exchange. Student ambassadors from the #AcademyOfInternationalStudiesAtRosemont spent their morning video chatting with students from #China. The conversation was centered around the serious topic of #coronavirus, however, laughter & cheers filled the room throughout the hour-long chat. The Rosemont students were very impressed with the optimism the Chinese students had, despite being under quarantine for more than a month. This was the first time something like this had taken place through the partnership Norfolk Public Schools has with Norfolk Sister Cities.

The project, Rosemont Ambassadors Embracing China, is just the beginning of many more opportunities Norfolk Sister Cities hopes to bring to the students of NPS. Perhaps my favorite line was “we thought we were going to cheer them up and instead they cheered us up” Norfolk Sister Cities is truly all about bridging divides and forming friendships. Speaking of friendships, we hope you will be our friend and join our March Membership Madness. We cannot fulfill our mission without your support. Please renew your membership this week. http://www.norfolksistercities.wildapricot.org/Membership-Application-New-&-Renewal

With your support we can continue the world class programming we are known for. There are many benefits being a member of Norfolk Sister Cities so please join. http://www.norfolksistercities.wildapricot.org/Membership-Application-New-&-Renewal

In the ninth grade I took Latin and learned an old Latin phrase: Si vis pacem, para bellum, which translate "If you want peace, prepare for war". I disagree and say, “if you want Peace, make Friends!” Help us make Friends and preserve Peace.

Please join http://www.norfolksistercities.wildapricot.org/Membership-Application-New-&-Renewal

Gary Bonnewell
President, Norfolk Sister City Association

2020 Young Artist Showcase

January 23 was the reception and awards ceremony at the Kroc Center for our annual showcase. All six case prize winners were in attendance in addition to 70 students and their families. We received 137 submissions from all from all five Norfolk Public High Schools and seven middle schools.

For the competition, students ages 13-18, could enter either a 2D artwork piece or a photography submission. These two categories were judged separately, and winners were chosen from both. This year’s theme is One World: Out of Many, We are One. This year’s 2020 winners for Photography were: 1st Place – Caroline Ervin, Granby High School, 2nd Place – Alexandrea Davenport, Granby High School, 3rd Place – Alana Lovick, Booker T. Washington High School. The following students won awards in 2D artwork: 1st Place – Natalie Eden, Lake Taylor High School, 2nd Place – Amanda Newell, Booker T. Washington High School, 3rd Place – Brittany Clark, Norview Middle School; Honorable Mention – Deon Mack, Norview High School.

The first-place winners will have their work sent to Sister Cities International in Washington, DC for the next round of judging. The grand prize winner receives $1,000 cash prize.

The Norfolk Sister City Association would like to thank our esteemed local judge Dr. Christy Frederick, Norfolk State University for her hard work. Hampton Roads Ventures provided a grant that covered the cost of the exhibit and funding for prizes. We wish our finalists the best of luck as they advance into the competition.
Alive! Night of Philosophy

Slover Library, **January 25** – Norfolk Sister City Association participated in this 12 hour event presented by the Cultural Services | French Embassy in the US, Old Dominion University and the Slover Library Foundation. Norfolk was one of just seven U.S. cities (including Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, Miami, New York, and San Francisco) to participate in this world-wide event. Night of Philosophy and Ideas, a 12-hour night-long marathon of ideas, philosophy, music, and art. Scholars, performers, artists, and writers will gather to discuss "being alive," including human resiliency, sea-level rise, wellness, and ecological solutions in Hampton Roads and beyond.

Thank you Juli Davenport of our Toulon Committee for sharing her experience with the study of French and her life’s journey of faith across the globe.

Kochi Committee provides a Young Global Citizens Program

103 6th grade students at the Academy of International Studies at Rosemont enjoyed a YGC program on **January 29**. Thank you to our volunteers and five Board members who helped!

Engage Norfolk

It was our pleasure to participate in the 4th annual Engage Norfolk civics fair. The fair was held at Norview High School on **February 9**. We were one of more than 100 organizations to participate. This year’s attendance topped 1,000. Thank you to our fabulous table volunteers, Harry Acuna; Mina Barberis; Kenny Bullock Risë Flenner; Gloria Hagans; Youlander Hilton; LaWada Porch; Luba Seliavski; and Harry Zhang.
Tema Committee Delivers a Young Global Citizens Program

73 7th grade students at the Academy of International Studies at Rosemont enjoyed a YGC program on February 19.

Kaliningrad Committee delivers a Young Global Citizens Program

It was the 8th graders turn to experience a YGC program as 65 of them at the Academy of International Studies at Rosemont learned about Russia in general and Kaliningrad specifically on February 27.

Experiencing Ghana

Hats off to our Tema Committee for producing our 6th annual Experience Ghana event. Thank you to the Murray Center for their ongoing support and to the professional staff at Taste N'See Catering.
Thanks to the creativity and networking skills of our Ningbo, China Sister City Committee Chair, Harry Zhang, 24 8th grade students at the Academy of International Studies at Rosemont spent ninety minutes interacting with their peers across China. Questions were offered back and forth. In addition to sharing what life was like living with COVID-19, the students discussed favorite movies, music and TV.
Updates and Upcoming Events

- It is with deep regret that we announce the cancelation of this summer four outbound exchange programs. Given the current global health crisis, we had no choice. We anticipate continuing next summer with four inbound changes with our sister cities in England; France; Germany and the Philippines.

- We are uncertain if we will be able to host a midsummer membership social. Please check our website for updates.

- Soiree en Blanc plans are on hold until we get a better understanding of how well Virginias is doing with our fight against COVID-19. We hope to decide by June. Please check our website for updates.

- Our Annual International Luncheon is set for Sunday, October 4, Noon at Norfolk Yacht & Country Club.