Dear Ambassadors of Peace,

Apparent only two people don’t want 2020 to end. If you haven’t seen the Match.com commercial here is a link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YPo23RW soap For the rest of us 2021 has to be a much better year. We at Norfolk Sister City Association are sure that will be the case for us. Hopefully with the vaccine we will resume our student and adult exchanges and again welcome Open World Leadership Center https://www.openworld.gov/. Despite COVID-19, we have accomplished a great deal. We have added wonderful new board members, introduced in their own newsletter article. I am also very proud to say our succession planning is in place with Dustin Rinehart stepping up to be First Vice President and in line to be President in 2022. Equally exciting is having our Kitakyushu Committee Chair, Marguerite Inscoe as Second Vice President. With Rise Flener as Treasurer and Mina Barberis as our Secretary we have a deep bench as they say in the sports world and this will lead to a very strong performance for years to come.

The strategic plan we developed with the expert guidance of Joe Bouchard PhD. in the fall will only add to our successful efforts as it clearly guides us to attain very important goals. I feel like that 1980s song The Future’s So Bright I Gotta Wear Shades. Despite how bright the future is we lament the board members whose terms expired or had to resign this year. Dr. Gloria Hagans, Dr. Alok Verma and Peter Shaw. Their dedication will be greatly missed. They have helped forge a path of excellence and are indebted to them for their efforts.

Lastly, I’m excited to say we have a few more wonderful surprises up our sleeves, so stay tuned and watch for further developments. You may be surprised where you see NSCA in 2021.

Gary D. Bonnewell
President, Norfolk Sister City Association
ANNUAL AWARDS
COVID-19 continues to impact Norfolk Sister City Association programs. Since its inception, 2020 is the first year we had to cancel our Annual International Luncheon, set for October 4. COVID-19 did not prevent our annual awards for best program, most valued business and most valued volunteer. Our 2020 honorees are:

Best Program
Ningbo, China Sister City Committee

Global Diplomacy Award
Copy Connection

Citizen Diplomacy Award
Dr. Gloria Hagans

ANNUAL SILENT AUCTION
Another first for Norfolk Sister City Association was the migration of our annual silent auction from an in-person component of the Annual International Luncheon to a stand-alone online event running from October 4-14, 2020. Unsure what to expect, we thought perhaps if wildly successful, we would reach a gross sales total of $3,000.
Our final total as $2,639. In addition, TowneBank provided a leadership gift in support of our adjusted event. WHRO served as our media partner. Listed below are the businesses that managed to support our silent auction, despite their own COVID-19 challenges. Please keep them in mind when shopping!

- Albano Cleaners
- The Chrysler Museum of Art
- Baker’s Crust
- Cinema Café
- Costco
- G&W Awards
- Girl Scout Council of the Colonial Coast
- Hermitage Museum & Gardens
- Jungle Golf
- Norfolk Botanical Garden
- Norfolk Stationary

Thanks are extended to the City of Norfolk, whose support during this year has enabled Norfolk Sister City Association to maintain our relationships around the globe.

ANNUAL MEETING 2020
Closing out the year as much of it went, we hosted our first Zoom Annual Meeting on December 17. Attendance was half of the 2019 Annual Meeting, but our important business was completed. Our devoted membership voted in five new Board members.

Maritsa Alger: Her lifelong passion has been in the area of education. For 32 years, Maritsa has served children and communities to support growth and development as a teacher, teacher specialist, assistant principal, principal, executive director and a school board member. As a first generation daughter born of an immigrant father from Cuba and mother from Puerto Rico, it was an important value to gain an education and use it to further advance others.

As a principal in Norfolk for 15 years, Maritsa was able to turn a school around bringing it from failure to full accreditation. Collaborative teamwork and culture building was key to the success of the school. She became President of the Elementary School Principals Association of Norfolk and worked closely with administrators across Norfolk. As President of the Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals, Maritsa had the opportunity to visit the general assembly and to lobby each year in the area of education. After retirement, she was appointed to serve as a Newport News School Board Member, and later to serve Norfolk’s acting executive director during school reopening since the closing of schools on March 13. Maritsa assumes the position of Chair for our Education Committee. She also serves as a At Large member of our Executive Committee.

Becky DiRosa: She holds a bachelor of science degree in secondary education with an emphasis in history from Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania and a master’s in curriculum and instruction from the University of Virginia. Becky served thirty-two years with the Norfolk Public School System. For twenty-years at Norview High School, she taught a variety of social studies courses including, world history, American history and Ethnic Studies and participated in a multiple focused committees and was the girls varsity soccer coach for five years. Becky finished the last twelve years at Azalea Gardens Middle School teaching United States History, World Geography, World History, Civics and Economics and serving on a variety of focused committees. Becky is a member of The Azalea Gardens PTA.

Becky DiRosa:

Norfolk’s Sister City Association is the only distributor of this amazing, special edition Olive Oil. Get yours today and start your dream staycation! This is the perfect unique Valentine’s Day gift! $25 for a half liter bottle or $35 for a liter bottle!