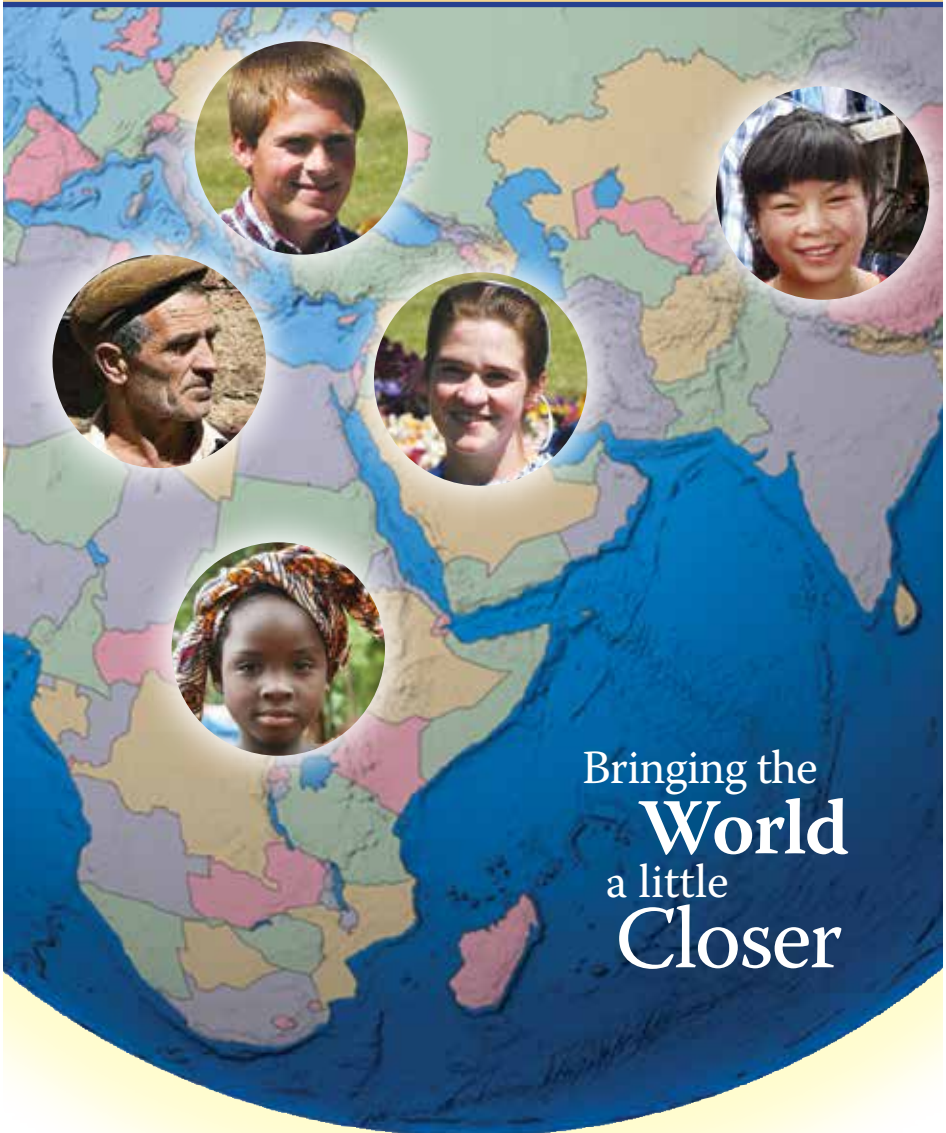




International Sister Cities of Rochester, NY, Inc.
2021 ANNUAL REPORT



Bringing the
World
a little
Closer

2020/2021. Although the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic continued to block or curtail many of the activities of the Rochester Sister Cities program, ISCOR committees nonetheless continued to be active, reshaping their programs and participating in several initiatives. Here are highlights.

–ISCOR Executive Committee

ALYTUS, LITHUANIA: The Committee sponsored essay writing and photo contests in the Alytus High Schools. Four high schools in Alytus participated in the essay contest, and, along with the Rochester School District's School Without Walls, in the photo contest. Three cash prizes were awarded in each contest, totaling over \$4,000, in June at the Youth Park in Alytus. Two of our committee members presented knitted blankets to Alytus' nursing home in August. The grateful residents presented our committee members with a landscape painting made by one of the residents. Another of the residents pulled out his accordion and played some special Lithuanian songs. The committee also donated a coffee maker to the home, which has become a social gathering place for the residents.

–Jolanda Chesonis, *Chair*

BAMAKO, MALI: The Committee has engaged with the Sister Cities International's Global Conversations group for the Africa Region, which, at our suggestion, established a Francophone subgroup to exploit US-France-Africa sister city partnerships. We are consulting with Malian Student Allahsera Auguste Tapo, Fulbright Scholar 2018-2020 and RIT MS-Computer Science graduate, on potential Bamako projects while he completes his RIT Ph. D. program. We have offered enthusiastic cooperation to a Lowell, Mass.-Bamako sister cities initiative that the two cities informed us of recently.

–Alicia Ward, *Chair*

CALTANISSETTA, ITALY: In Spring 2021, to celebrate the 55th anniversary of the Caltanissetta-Rochester twinning, Agerica Association, Caltanissetta's ISCOR counterpart, produced a virtual, on-line art exhibition at the Creative Spaces art gallery. Entitled "Bridges 2 - Roundtrip" and directed by Caltanissetta artist Leonardo Cumbo, it featured artists of both cities. Rochester was represented by four independent artists, a painter each from sister cities Velikiy Novgorod and Kraków, and by twelve photographer owners and artists-in-residence of Rochester's Image City Photography Gallery. Rochester Mayor Lovely Warren, ISCOR President Carolee Conklin, and Caltanissetta committee Chair Rosalba Pisaturo offered recorded and live remarks at the exhibition opening.

–Rosalba Pisaturo, *Chair*

HAMAMATSU, JAPAN: The HRSCC has used social media extensively for communications (Slack workspace) and display of cultural images (Instagram @hamamatsu_rochester), exchanging images of Hamamatsu's first sunrise of 2021 and some popular Instagram images from Rochester to celebrate the New Year. HRSCC had a very limited but much-appreciated annual celebration of Mardi Gras that included donation of a genuine New Orleans King Cake to the staff at Strong Memorial Hospital Emergency Department, University of Rochester Medical Center. The HRSCC produced a series of cultural videos for the Memorial Art Gallery (MAG) Asian Pacific American Heritage Virtual Celebration, April-May 2021; the videos are archived on the MAG Rochester YouTube channel.

–Jefferson Svengsouk, MD., *Chair*

KRAKÓW, POLAND: The Kraków Committee received an invitation from a Kraków law firm to offer a webinar in international business procedures and support to Rochester businesses; the committee will include in its recognition the 2023/24 50th anniversary of the Kraków-Rochester sister cities relationship. It sent photographic greetings featuring Rochester scenes to participate in a City of Kraków online exhibit "From Kraków with Love", also posted to the ISCOR Facebook page.

–Michael Leach, *Chair*

REHOVOT, ISRAEL: The committee sent 75 skull caps to Rehovot for use in the Havayot Recreation Centers during the Fall 2020. Discussions have begun to plan celebrate of the 50th anniversary of the Rochester-Rehovot connection in 2022. A draft plan includes holding a Zoom meeting among all persons who have traveled between the two cities, declaring a 50th anniversary day and associated event, and presenting celebration gifts.

–Daniel Karim, *Chair*

RENNES, FRANCE: The Rennes-Rochester committee, ISCOR board members and Rochester Global Connections took part in a virtual meeting on February 16th to welcome French agricultural delegates, including one from Rennes, of the International Visitor Leadership Program. The committee worked with the Franco-American Institute of Rennes to organize this year's sister city contest, a virtual exhibition tied to three books from the Read Across America Program – 'Fry Bread' (images of meals to share), 'Just Ask!' (artwork celebrating differences), and 'Woke' (poetry illustrating issues of equity and justice). It observed a cozy Bastille Day Picnic graciously hosted by Ray Griswold at his lake cottage on July 17th. The committee welcomed several Rennes students attending Rochester Institute of Technology, Nazareth College, and University of Rochester.

–Cathy Rappazzo and Hannah Barry, *Co-Chairs*

VELIKIY NOVGOROD, RUSSIA: Linkages board members met online with Russian delegates to reschedule a 2020 Open World Program visit. Topics include US services for the aging including response to elder abuse, neglect and exploitation. Linkages took part in SCI-GCs for US-Russian sister cities. In lieu of holiday cards, Linkages sent electronic greetings to 50+ friends in Russia. Linkages received Novgorod YouTube videos that review the history of our human service partnerships since 1998 (<https://youtu.be/RccDMDXfj-w>). Linkages and education administrators in Novgorod discussed producing online tutorials or group seminars for English language teachers in Novgorod this fall to temporarily replace its two-week summer seminar. Linkages began preparation of a PowerPoint presentation for the Linkages website to chronicle the 35 years of our relationship, 31 of which have been as a sister city.

–Paul Caccamise, *Chair*

WÜRZBURG, GERMANY: Rochester and Würzburg representatives took part in several Sister Cities International Zoom meetings focused on German/American Sister Cities. The Würzburger Residenzlauf (10k foot race) was postponed to May 2022; a group of adult Rochester runners remain "in the loop" to participate. Early discussions have begun with the Rochester City Soccer League and the Würzburger Kickers to explore team exchanges, reviving the exchanges that occurred in the 1990s. Rochester and Würzburg Deputy Mayors James Smith and Martin Heilig met via Zoom to discussed common municipal government concerns and opportunities for idea exchanges.

–Dean Ekberg, *Chair*

XIANYANG, CHINA: Holiday greetings were exchanged by both Mayors for Christmas/New Years and Chinese New Year. We are working with a teacher of the Rochester Chinese school to organize a 2022 student trip to Xianyang. On invitation from the International Office of the City of Xianyang, original images and photographs of paintings have been submitted to a Shaanxi Province art exhibit which will be shown in Xianyang, Xi'an, and Weinan beginning in October 2021. Committee chair Michael Coniff submitted images of a sample of his paintings; City photographer Nathan Miller and International Programs Liaison Michael Leach submitted photographs.

–Michael Coniff, *Chair*

The **Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic, and Waterford, Ireland**, committees have maintained communication with their contacts, seeking opportunities to resume activities.

Contact Us:

For more information about ISCOR, call (585) 428-7045
or visit www.cityofrochester.gov/sistercities

Or write to:

International Sister Cities of Rochester, NY, Inc.

James P. Smith, Mayor
City Hall, 30 Church St., Rm. 308A
Rochester, NY 14614

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