

ANNUAL REPORT

TO THE CITY OF OWENSBORO MAYOR and CITY COMMISSION
OWENSBORO SISTER CITIES AND REGIONS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

CALENDAR YEAR ACTIVITIES 2022

FOUNDING STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Owensboro Sister Cities and Regions encourages global understanding between our community and other world communities. The Owensboro Sister Cities and Regions organizations will assist government entities with the proper reception of foreign visitors and dignitaries by serving as the community's Office of Protocol; pursue an ongoing mission to inform and educate our community concerning our area's international cultural and business ties and their effects on our community; initiate exchange programs in education, business, professional groups, and the arts; assist government and its agencies in promoting our community's cultural heritage through our Sister City(s) and Region's relationships; encourage development and expansion of international trade relationships and assist with foreign trade missions; assist community organizations in direct relationships with similar organizations in our Sister City(s) and Regions and elsewhere in the world, where possible.

SISTER CITIES INTERNATIONAL HISTORY AND MISSION

Sister Cities International was created at President Eisenhower's 1956 White House conference on citizen diplomacy. Eisenhower envisioned an organization that could be the hub of peace and prosperity by creating bonds between people from different cities around the world. By forming these relationships, President Eisenhower reasoned that people of different cultures could celebrate and appreciate their differences and build partnerships that would lessen the chance of new conflicts.

Sister Cities International creates relationships based on cultural, educational, information and trade exchanges, creating lifelong friendships that provide prosperity and peace through person-to-person "citizen diplomacy." Since then, Presidents Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, Ford, Carter, Reagan, Bush, Clinton, Bush, Obama, Trump and now President Joe Biden have served as Honorary Chairman of Sister Cities International.

Since its inception, Sister Cities International has played a key role in renewing and strengthening important global relationships. Early partnerships included a trading relationship between Seattle, Washington and Tokyo, Japan, repairing post-WWII tensions by creating cultural and educational exchanges and, subsequently, lasting friendships. A 1974 study found that many early sister city relationships formed out of the post WWII aid programs to Western Europe. The relationships that endured, however, were based on cultural or educational reasons that developed lasting friendships. Sister

Cities International improved diplomatic relationships at watershed moments over the past 63 years, including partnerships with China in the 1970s.

In the new millennium, Sister Cities International continues to expand its reach to new and emerging regions of the world. Today, it dedicates a special focus on areas with significant opportunities for cultural and educational exchanges, economic partnerships, and humanitarian assistance. (SCI, 2016)

In July of 1994 there was a joint resolution signed by the officials of Owensboro, Kentucky and Olomouc Czech Republic to formally recognize our two cities as Sister Cities in accordance with the accepted protocols of Sister Cities International, thus making this the 29th anniversary of this partnership. The City of Nisshin Shi, Japan was formally recognized as our Sister City in October of 2006.

INTRODUCTION

During 2022, Owensboro Sister Cities and Regions participated in a total of four (4) exchanges, subject components encompassing the involvement of 48 people.

As community leaders, we must continue to promote both the understanding of our citizens and our connection to the larger global community. We will need continued financial, logistical, and volunteer support for the program to be maintained and grow even further.

Please review this report and reflect on our ability to project the City of Owensboro and our region positively in the international community. We believe that we have the most active program of the official fourteen U.S. – Czech Republic Sister City relationships and that the breadth of our program will reflect well on the Owensboro region with any additional international contacts that the city or region may make. Our program has come to the positive attention of the past Presidents and dignitaries of the Czech Republic and United States. We continue to apprise the U.S. Ambassadors to the Czech Republic and Japan of our activity through this annual report.

The Owensboro Sister Cities and Regions program touches the lives of several hundred people involved in our annual exchange activities on both sides of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. The program does an exceptional job of carrying out its charged mission with the help of passionate members. In the past, this program has been very dependent on support from government entities, as an official international link with the Sister Cities. Currently the overwhelming financial support for the program comes from individuals and donations from the businesses and institutions participating in the programs. We can demonstrate at least \$25.00 of community support for each city budget dollar allocated.

We are very appreciative of the City of Owensboro for their financial and logistical support efforts. The program represents a wonderful community partnership combining the efforts of many community institutions, agencies, businesses and individuals. There can be little doubt for the need to educate our Kentucky citizens concerning our place in the global community. Whether for citizenship education, student growth or workforce development,

there is an ever-growing demand for providing an international education, cultural experience and economic development component for the regional community we serve.

We would also like to thank the families who open their homes (and kitchens), to the hotels in lodging assistance, and to the four area school systems and four institutions of higher learning for support of our exchanges of students, teachers, and professors. There are just too many people and entities to mention individually. We also strive to make visitors feel welcomed.

Recently, communication has been made with our Sister City of Nisshin, Japan. It is the wishes of the board to reinvigorate this partnership and work with the Economic Development Cooperation to grow and strengthen the relationship.

As representatives of the citizens of Owensboro and Daviess County, we request your continued encouragement and financial support for Owensboro Sister Cities and Regions and our international efforts to promote our community.

OWENSBORO SISTER CITIES AND REGIONS – EXCHANGES/ACTIVITIES 2022

In 2022, Owensboro Sister Cities and Regions sponsored several incoming exchanges and activities with our Sister City of Olomouc, Czech Republic. This report includes participation in various activities by Owensboro Sister Cities and Regions. The following components were addressed by these exchanges and activities:

Activity: **3/25/22-6/30/22** **Ukrainian Relief Fundraiser
(50+ participants)**

Purpose: In response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, OSCAR established a relief fund to aid Ukrainian refugees who were forced to flee their homes to escape the violence in their country. The board, along with many citizens and businesses in our community, was able to raise \$24,007.26. The money raised was gifted to a school in our Sister City of Olomouc for the purpose of providing education to Ukrainian refugees, including social and leisure activities, as well as school equipment.

Activity: **May 18, 2022** **30th Anniversary /Welcome Reception
(75+ participants)**

Purpose: In honor of our visiting guests from Olomouc and the upcoming anniversary of our 30th year of dedication and opportunity between our two great cities, OSCAR hosted a reception at Brescia University. Former board members, elected officials, representatives from area universities, and many other guests were in attendance to show their support for our efforts.

Incoming Exchange: May 16-21, 2022 Olomouc Mayoral Delegation
Adrienne Carrico, Coordinator (6 in)

Purpose: The Olomouc Mayor, an architect/City Council member, the head of the Dept. of Transportation and Area Development, the head of the Dept. of Foreign Cooperation, the director of the Olomouc District Chamber of Commerce Director, and the Chief of the Regional Paramedics/City Council member visited Owensboro. Our guests toured several key locations throughout the City, including; City Hall, OMU Water Plant, Fire Stations, Western Kentucky Botanical Garden, Bluegrass and Fine Art Museums, RiverPark Center, Green River Distilling Co., and many local restaurants.

Incoming Exchange: July 3-6, 2022 Campanella Children's Choir Visit
Karen Campbell/Katherine Zboril, Coordinators (30 in)

Purpose: Members of the Campanella Children's Choir (one of the leading children's choirs in the Czech Republic), participated in a USA concert tour, visiting nine US cities. The choir performed at the City of Owensboro's All American Fourth of July event and spent a day exploring our downtown, as they participated in a scavenger hunt around Owensboro. OSCAR board members coordinated every aspect of their visit to Owensboro, from finding host families, to providing food, transportation, and activities during their stay.

Activity: August 20, 2022 Multicultural Festival
(5 participants)

Purpose: OSCAR Board members participated in the 24th annual Multicultural Festival "Building Bridges: We're Better Together". Since the inception of this festival, Owensboro Sister Cities and Regions has participated. Representing both Olomouc, Czech Republic and Nisshin, Japan, our booth displayed traditional Czech and Japanese handmade goods and volunteers provided visitors with educational information and activities.

Activity: September 21, 2022 Virtual Meeting with Zdenka
Podlipska (11 participants)

Purpose: The OSCAR board of directors hosted a virtual meeting with special guest Zdenka Podlipska (head of the Department of Foreign Relations for the City of Olomouc). Ms. Podlipska thanked the board for their hospitality during the Mayoral delegation and provided an update on the upcoming elections and a student that would be interning at Brescia University through the social work program. The Director of the Olomouc District Chamber of Commerce and the owner of TOSH Distillery in Olomouc also attended the meeting to discuss a potential bourbon connection with Green River Distilling, Co. The Kentucky Youth Chorale Artistic Director attended to discuss future choir exchanges with Olomouc.

Incoming Exchange: 10/3/22-11/23/22 CARITAS College of Social Work
Elaine Wright, OSCAR Liaison (3 in)

Purpose: The Brescia University Marilyn Younger Conley School of Social Work hosted three Czech students from the CARITAS College of Social Work in Olomouc. The students stayed at Brescia and completed social work internships with local agencies. The sites were Audubon Area Community Services Family Preservation Program, CASA of Ohio Valley, Owensboro Health Medical Group Palliative Care. Throughout their stay, the students participated in campus and community programs.

Incoming Exchange: October 14-26, 2022 Hejcin Secondary Exchange
Kelia West, Coordinator (9 in)

Purpose: This is a long-standing relationship between Owensboro high schools and Hejcin Gymnazium in Olomouc, Czech Republic. Teachers and students alternate visits. This year, it was Owensboro's turn to host Hejcin Gymnazium. Hejcin students were assigned home stays and were partnered with an Owensboro based high school student in order to participate in classroom instruction, explore various cities in Kentucky, and to learn about the United States culture. Lifelong friendships were established through this program and the students' worlds become more enriched through this intercultural exchange.

Activity: December 6, 2022 Kentucky Sister Cities State Meeting
(1 participant)

Purpose: The Kentucky cities chartered under Sister Cities International are invited to gather annually to give reports on their individual international activities during the past year and to exchange ideas for their organizations. This year's meeting was virtual. Guest speaker, Maranda Finney – Marketing Director for SCI, discussed the new toolkit feature on the SCI website and how it can benefit our program.