

CHARLOTTESVILLE

SISTER



CITIES

COMMISSION

REPORT TO THE MAYOR AND CITY
COUNCIL

JULY 17, 2023

ACTIVITIES OF THE CHARLOTTESVILLE
SISTER CITIES COMMISSION

2022/ 2023

OUR SISTER CITIES:

- Poggio a Caino, Italy, Charlottesville's first sister city on 1976.
- Pleven, Bulgaria, Sister city since 2004, in non-active status
- Besançon, France, Sister Cities since 2006
- Winneba, Ghana, Sister cities since 2010
- Huehuetenango, Guatemala, Friendship city since 2021, in exploratory phase.

COMMISSION MEMBERS:

- Alicen Brown, K-12 Education
- Claire Denton-Spalding,
- Nana Ghartey, Winneba
- Michael Grinnell, Treasurer
- Kimberly Hayes, Business
- Edward Herring, Chairman / New City Committee Chair
- Stella Mattioli, Poggio a Caino
- Sylvia New Strawn,
- Elizabeth Smiley, Secretary / Besançon
- Vivien Wong, Youth
- Higher Education, Open
- Maxicelia Robinson, Staff Liaison

BESANÇON, FRANCE:

This year saw the resumption of long awaited in-person exchanges. City Representative Elizabeth Smiley traveled to Besançon in early April to renew links with the Besançon city administration and school officials.

CSCC Business Representative Kimberly Hayes accompanied Ms. Smiley on the visit.

BESANÇON, FRANCE:

Her travel was timed to coincide with a Charlottesville High School student delegation visit, chaperoned by CSCC Commissioner Edward Herring.

One highlight was a dinner offered by CSCC to all our key Besançon contacts in the Mayor's office, School Administration and Partner Schools.

BESANÇON, FRANCE:

During the visit, a group comprised of Sister City Commissioners, Charlottesville teachers, and CHS students were warmly welcomed in Besançon and honored with a reception at the Victor Hugo Birthplace museum. Besançon Representative Elizabeth Smiley presented Deputy Mayor Sadia Gharet with letters from Mayor Snook.

BESANÇON, FRANCE:



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Member-At-Large Edward Herring read the French version to the audience and translated the French/English presentations for the group. Edward also introduced the participants from CHS and offered greetings on behalf of the Charlottesville City Schools.

POGGIO A CAIANO, ITALY:

Poggio representative Stella Mattioli worked to organize and develop more Sister City activities through personal visits to the city and the furthering of programmatic engagement.

POGGIO A CAIANO, ITALY:

After the Poggio elections on May 15, Ms. Mattioli worked to establish new contacts with the elected mayor and city to assure the continuance of a strong relationship between the cities.

POGGIO A CAIANO, ITALY:

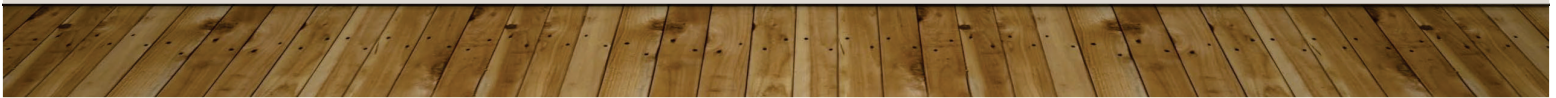
A music group from Poggio a Caiano participated in a local music contest and won the opportunity to perform a concert in Charlottesville.

The CSCC worked with Charlottesville partners to organize the event which took place on December 3rd at The Front Porch.

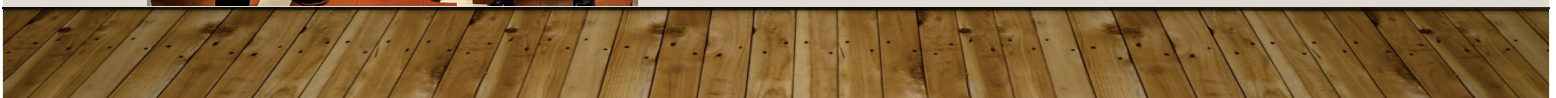
POGGIO A CAIANO, ITALY:

Members of the Charlottesville High School Choir led by Teacher Will Cooke performed in Poggio on June 15, 2023.

The CSCC assisted with travel funding.



POGGIO A CAIANO, ITALY:



WINNEBA, GHANA:

The Sister City relationship between Charlottesville and Winneba continued to grow and strengthen this fiscal year.

In January and May of 2023, the Charlottesville-Winneba Foundation organized two group trips to Winneba, allowing three dozen Charlottesville-area residents to experience the city.

WINNEBA, GHANA:

The CSCC provided Travel Scholarships to assist in enabling two Charlottesville residents to participate.

These were the 10th and 11th Sister City delegations from Charlottesville to Winneba since this Sister City relationship was initiated in 2010.

OTHER COLLABORATIONS WITH WINNEBA:

1. The UVa School of Architecture's ongoing environmental conservation partnership in Winneba.
2. The Helen Project International Entrepreneurship Program, along with other initiatives supported by the CSCC.

OTHER COLLABORATIONS WITH WINNEBA:

3. The Commission joined in the funding of a shipment of medical supplies, toys, and other donated items from Charlottesville to Winneba.
4. Charlottesville and Winneba maintain a close relationship due to the efforts of the commission members and a close relationship with the Charlottesville-Winneba Foundation.

OTHER COLLABORATIONS WITH WINNEBA:



HUEHUETENANGO, GUATEMALA:

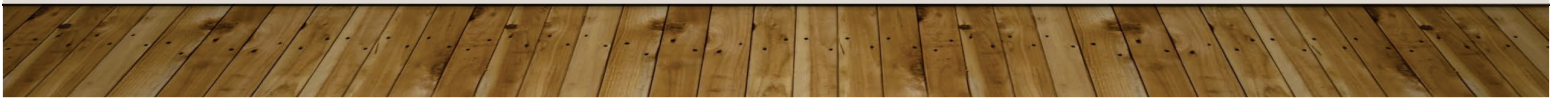
The relationship between Charlottesville and Friendship City Huehuetenango continued to be in the exploratory phase.

The CSCC committee dedicated to this process worked closely with the Ixtatan Foundation to proceed with activities to further determine if the cities are ideal for becoming Sister Cities.

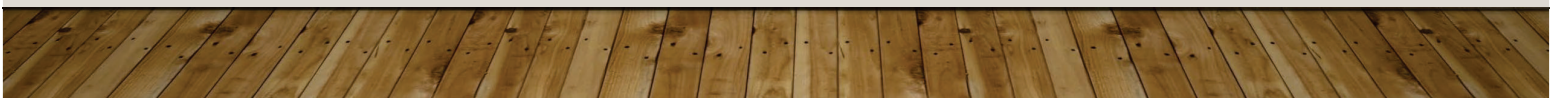
HUEHUETENANGO, GUATEMALA:

The exploratory process began when CSCC Commissioner Edward Herring, chairman of the New City Committee, visited Huehuetenango in February, 2023.

The trip was organized by the Mayor of Huehuetenango and their Sister City Commission.



HUEHUETENANGO, GUATEMALA:



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HUEHUETENANGO, GUATEMALA:

The results of the visit and the ongoing review of the initial assumptions that began the Friendship process is in progress.

It is anticipated that the CSCC will have a next-step recommendation ready for presentation to the Charlottesville City Council in August 2023.

TRAVEL SCHOLARSHIPS PROVIDED PARTIAL FUNDING ENABLING SEVERAL OPPORTUNITIES:

1. Six Charlottesville residents the opportunity to join in planned trips to Charlottesville Sister Cities.
2. A sponsorship for Charlottesville High School's CERN program expanded opportunities for the young citizens of Charlottesville to be directly involved in furthering the Besançon relationship.

TRAVEL SCHOLARSHIPS PROVIDED PARTIAL FUNDING ENABLING SEVERAL OPPORTUNITIES:

3. The CSCC's Outreach Committee has made strides this year in creating a more effective process for reaching citizens of Charlottesville to promote engagement with Sister Cities and CSCC activities.

SUMMARY:

The Commission's grant program experienced a significant rebound in activities, international travel and activity between the Sister/Friendship Cities.

Relationships between the citizens of Charlottesville and those of Besançon, Huehuetenango, Poggio a Caiano, and Winneba continued to develop.

CONCLUSION:

With international travel now returned, the CSCC continues its vital role in connecting the citizens of the Charlottesville with those of the world, particularly those is Besançon, Huehuetenango, Poggio a Caiano, and Winneba.

NEXT STEPS:

The Commission's wishes to return to the City Council in August to present an update on our review of Huehuetenango with our recommendation for the next step in the Friendship process.

COMING UP: 2023 – 2026

Visit by Delegation from Winneba on July 25, 2023

Creation of "Annual Sister Cities Week" in Charlottesville

Visit by Delegation from Huehuetenango (TBD)

COMING UP: 2023 - 2026

Visit by Delegation from Besançon to Charlottesville (2024)

Travel - Delegation to Huehuetenango (2024)

Travel - Delegation to Besançon - 20th anniversary of partnership (2026)

