

International *matters*

Sister Cities International Annual Conference | www.sister-cities.org
Sustainable Peace Through Sustainable Communities
July 16-19, 2008 | Kansas City, MO | U.S.A.



SISTER CITIES INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE



The 2008 Sister Cities International Conference in Kansas City “Sustainable Peace through Livable Communities” addressed wide-spread environmental issues that are common causes of conflict over resources and global warming. This conference brought over 600 people to the Kansas City region including hundreds of sister city supporters, elected local government officials, corporate executives, community activists and sister city leaders from around the globe (over 40 U.S. states and 20 countries).

Representing more than 2,500 community linkages in 136 countries, Sister Cities International (www.sister-cities.org) is a citizen diplomacy network creating and strengthening partnerships between the U.S. and communities abroad.

Keynote presenters at the conference included Duane Kissick, AECOM, Dianne Dillon-Ridgley, environmen-

talist, Goli Ameri, Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs, Henrietta Fore, Administrator of the US Agency for International Development (USAID), U.S. Senator Sam Brownback, Mary Eisenhower, President and CEO of People to People International (PTPI).

Kansas City was represented in force throughout the conference as well. Mayor Funkhouser participated in the Mayors forum and discussed the vital role elected officials play in nurturing sister city relationships. At pre-conference sessions, local experts on economic development, environmental sustainability, members of Kansas City’s African and Asian sister cities shared some of Kansas City’s successful projects and over 160 Kansas Citians volunteered to welcome and assist conference attendees.

City celebrated three sister city anniversaries

The City of Kansas City, Mo., honored three of its sister city partnerships for reaching milestone anniversaries at the Mayor’s Reception event of the Sister Cities International Conference on July 17 at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art. Anniversary honorees include Ramla, Israel for 10 years of partnership, Tainan City, Taiwan for 30 years of partnership and Morelia, Mexico for 35 years of partnership. At the event, Mayor Mark Funkhouser and



representatives from each country signed a renewal of commitment for the three sister cities. The program ended with a ceremonious gong by the anniversary honorees on a traditional Taiwanese gong that was presented to Kansas City by Mayor Hsu, on May 29, 2008. Through the Kansas City International Affairs and Trade office, Kansas City utilizes sister city relationships as an economic development tool and “door opener” for local businesses.

Youth Conference



This year’s youth conference, Global Action: Taking Community Service Abroad, included over 100 youth from around the world, including the United States, Iraq and Morocco,

India, UK, Ghana. These young people worked with other youth delegates on a community service project, shared their community’s culture, gained leadership skills, and explored Kansas City’s rich culture.

As part of the International Partners for Peace program, the Iraqi Young Leaders Exchange Program (IYLEP) brought 27 Iraqi high school students, both

males and females ages 17-18, from various cities, religions, and ethnic groups Iraqi students to the United States for a month to learn leadership skills, explore U.S. government and civil society, and build relationships with U.S. students and their families. The group participated in the Sister Cities International Youth Conference and visited City Hall during their stay in Kansas City.

At city hall, the IYLEP youth were given a tour and meet with city officials including city council members Ed Ford, Jan Marcason and City Manager, Wayne A. Cauthen. Arrangements for the group were handled by Tiffany Carter, Michelle Wilson and Josh Grote, participants of the City’s youth summer employment program.