



Baltimore Sister Cities

Esprit de Corps

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

For volunteers, committee members, and leaders



SOS, SAVE OUR SISTER

Baltimore Sister Cities, Inc. (BSC) is excited and honored to announce that its member organization, the Baltimore Xiamen Sister City Committee (BXSCC) has arranged for the shipment of 50,000 surgical masks from Xiamen, China, to the City of Baltimore. BXSCC continues a long tradition of Chinese immigrants coming to the aid of the United States, from those who were critical to the construction of the transcontinental railroad in the 19th century to those who served in America's wars and to those now helping Baltimore get to the other side of this pandemic.

When BXSCC Chair Xin (Cindy) Wang began receiving requests for PPE (personal protective equipment) within Baltimore and from the State of Maryland, she saw a chance to help and reached out to the Xiamen Foreign Affairs Office as well as possible PPE providers in Xiamen. With confirmation from Xiamen that the City could indeed provide masks, Wang began working with Hosea Chew, Director of Administration for the Office of Mayor Bernard C. "Jack" Young, and the Chinese Embassy. Other Xiamen Sister Cities began receiving smaller PPE shipments and Wang began fielding daily calls about shipment logistics to Baltimore with freight forwarders, lawyers, Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and customs officials.

The City of Xiamen is covering the cost of the masks themselves as well as shipment to John F. Kennedy Airport in New York. The City of Baltimore is clearing the masks through customs and shipping them from New York to Baltimore. Baltimore Sister Cities, Inc, as the importer of record and a 501c3 nonprofit organization, is exempt from import duties and will be donating the masks to the City of Baltimore.

Twenty-five boxes of surgical masks – 551 pounds – arrived in Baltimore on May 28. They will be stored at Baltimore's Emergency Operation Center and distributed based on requests from hospitals or other institutions in need.

A View of the world from a different angle



**Jin Park, PH.D. CPA,
BSC Treasurer**

First of all, I wish all of you remain sound and in a healthy condition in this unprecedented pandemic situation. The year 2020 is my 2nd year as a BSC treasurer. The BSC treasurer position as an executive officer of BSC offers me a great service opportunity to contribute

my accounting expertise and skills to the community. The primary tasks of a BSC treasurer include preparing adequate financial reporting, drafting an annual budget, and filing IRS tax returns. As a full-time accounting professor at Towson University and also an active license holder of Certified Public Accountant (CPA), it is my pleasure to provide this voluntary community service for BSC. Hopefully, my service as a BSC treasurer would benefit BSC and each city committee by supporting and facilitating various events and programs. The Baltimore Sister Cities (BSC) Inc. has been a well-known nonprofit organization in the Baltimore Metropolitan Area that prioritizes the value of diversity and inclusion. It strongly encourages mutual exchange between the City of Baltimore and foreign cities. I was born and grew up in South Korea, so I am very glad that the Changwon city in South Korea recently established a new sister-city relationship with Baltimore. I believe that mutual exchanges between Baltimore and foreign cities would have a positive impact on our society by providing citizens with various opportunities to experience other cultures and explore new businesses and educations. More importantly, such opportunities would make people view the world from a different angle and broaden the tendency of acceptance in their minds.

The year 2020 is such a challenging period with a high degree of uncertainty. I sincerely hope that everyone stays safe, and our valuable BSC events and programs will continue to flourish in the near future.



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Getting to know you: Baltimore-Gbarnga

Sister City Committee – Tambi Taylor, Chair



History of Gbarnga



- Established and named by the American Colonization Society (ACS)
- Rev Robert Finley, James Monroe, Daniel Webster, Francis Scott Key, Henry Clay, Bushrod Washington (nephew of George Washington)
- ACS was established to send free African Americans to Africa as an alternative to emancipation in United States (*Library of Congress*).
- In 1821, after protracted negotiations between ACS and local chiefs, Cape Mesurado was acquired and is the current site of Monrovia, Liberia.
- Liberia declared its independence July 26, 1847, and was formerly recognized by the US as a country in 1862.

- Three presidents of Liberia were from Maryland.
 - 1 - Daniel Bashiel Warner-Baltimore County, Maryland
 - 2 - Stephen Allen Benson-Cambridge, Maryland
 - 3 - Garretson W. Gibson-Baltimore, Maryland

Current BGSCC Initiatives

- Collaborative Agreement with Morgan State University –Health Policies Initiatives, working towards a memorandum of understanding
- Education
- Linkage program partnering with Maryland Sister States
- Community Partnerships
- St Paul De Vincent Catholic Church House of Ruth
- Agri-Business
- Cocoa Bean Project
- Starbucks' Project (African Coffee Series)
- Trade Initiatives-Liberia eligible for preferential Trade benefits under the African Growth and Opportunity Act
- Exports to US are rubber, wood, art, antiques, palm oil and diamonds

A Message from Tharwat Abouraya, BSC, Inc. President

Hi everyone.

If you've recently been laid off and you've volunteered with a Baltimore Sister City Committee in the past six months, please get in touch and let me know how I can help you. Can I put you in touch with a contact? Can I write a recommendation for you? Do you want your resumé or a good word sent to someone?

Please let me know if there's anything I can do because we're all in this together.



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BRSCC International Business Webinar Collaboration, focused on COVID-19

Rachel Singer, Chair BRSCC

In February 2020, during BRSCC's "strategy circle" exercise, we determined a key goal was to facilitate business development between Baltimore and Rotterdam regions which later was made coronavirus-themed.

On May 13, BRSCC, together with the DC Chapter of Netherland-America Foundation (NAF-DC) and Netherlands America Chamber of Commerce – Washington Metro (NACCWM), hosted the "**Supporting & Developing Business During COVID-19 in the DC Metro Region**" webinar. It targeted Dutch companies doing business or interested in doing business in the Maryland/DC region. It was a panel-driven presentation and discussion focused on current business conditions and on support options for companies who are trying to mount the current challenges.

The panel addressed current economic trends and conditions, discussed logistical challenges for primary/ secondary industrial and consumer products and addressed these short and long term supply chain disruptions and changes, identified how the state helps international companies in Maryland through a variety of initiatives, such as loans, incubation programs, soft landing programs, and with hands-on support in finding trading partners, supply chain solutions and office space, presented on support programs available to Dutch companies expanding into America, and to American companies expanding into the Netherlands, showed how specialty business development companies can function effectively as remote offices for companies that need expert support with corporate, business and supply chain development initiatives.

Reps from over 40 different organizations came away with a greater understanding of the current risks to doing business in

our region, as well as with ideas on how to address these risks.

Key to the success:

- BRSCC partnered with 2 other Dutch organizations that have name recognition in business and governmental sectors, and larger member lists.
- Netherlands is a priority country for MD Dept of Commerce for business development. Andrew Kreinik and BRSCC have been working closely on efforts like this webinar. Netherlands Embassy is also keen to promote business development. Mentioning both as partners on the event page helped elevate the authority of this webinar and attracted more attendees.
- American Enterprise Institute provided the Zoom webinar account for use, and NAF hosted the event registration and communication.
- Having a speaker talk about Port of Baltimore seemed to be a draw for the attendees.
- Promotion: BRSCC did big social media campaign; our event partners and Maryland and NL Embassy promoted it; Colleen Fisher did email blast to MD-DC Export Council.

Challenges:

- technical glitches with audio and video
- Time crunch with promotion — organizations like MD Commerce need more leeway time
- Not enough time for the host to describe each of organizations
- Spring vacation in the Netherlands made it challenging to attract Dutch businesses BRSCC encourages other Sister City committees to consider holding webinars like this, for more information contact chair-rotterdam@baltimoresistercities.org

... continued on page 6 (Speakers List & Topics)



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Baltimore Sister Cities Education Initiatives

Karen Leggett – Vice Chair & Secretary



Since its inception in 1956, Sister Cities International has worked to create global relationships based on cultural, educational, information and trade exchanges. We put those goals into action as Baltimore Sister Cities, Inc. A group is now forming to share resources and collaborate across Baltimore's Sister Cities on K-12 and higher education exchanges – especially virtual exchanges. Even before COVID-19 forced us all online, some of our committees and many international NGOs have been focused on the opportunities offered by virtual exchange – both live, synchronous conversations via Zoom or Google Meet or Skype, and asynchronous exchanges, in which people share stories and projects via email and video.

The [Stevens Initiative](#) - developed with the family of Ambassador Chris Stevens, who was killed in the Benghazi, Libya, bombing in 2012 – provides [training](#) and funding to make virtual, life-changing, cross-cultural experiences available to large numbers of young people. The Stevens Initiative works primarily in the Middle East, but its training opportunities and resources are widely available to anyone, as is the [Virtual Exchange Coalition](#) (VEC). Our Baltimore Luxor Alexandria Sister City Committee is an active participant in the VEC, which meets virtually (of course) but also live in Washington, D.C., about every six weeks to share ideas and resources.



The higher education champion for the new Education Group is Diana Zilberman; we are seeking a K-12 champion as well. The group includes representatives from each Sister City committee, but we are eager to welcome additional participants who are interested in expanding virtual opportunities to share our diverse cultures with children, teens, university students and adults in Baltimore.

The newly formed BSC Education Group is just beginning to have conversations about possible collaboration with [Maryland Sister States'](#) Education Committee, especially in areas where there is an overlap between Sister Cities and States.

If you have questions or ideas, please contact [Karen Leggett](#) or [Diana Zilberman](#).



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Frans Meuwissen, associate member of Baltimore-Rotterdam Sister Committee (BRSCC)

Frans Meuwissen is board member of Netherlands America Chamber of Commerce – Washington Metro (NACCWM) and a partner at Impact Americas Consulting, a full-service business development organization that helps businesses succeed in new markets in the Americas and EU, with a particular focus

on supporting Dutch companies expanding to the US. Their services include: sales and marketing, representative support, incorporation advice, HR support and continuous guidance.

Frans reached out to BRSCC last fall to offer to help the committee with developing business between Baltimore and Rotterdam regions, and he became an associate member.

When the pandemic hit our region this year, Frans sprang into action to quickly organize a webinar for Dutch businesses expanding to the Maryland region on May 13. He had countless discussions with our event partners, Netherlands Embassy, and others to figure out the right mix of speakers and the topics to cover, and effectively built a partnership between BRSCC, the Netherland-America Foundation's DC Chapter and NACCWM to host and promote the event.

Frans is eager to organize more business webinars in the future.

A big thank you to Frans for taking the bull by the horn and running with it.

Thanks also to BRSCC members Gary Davison for recruiting the port speaker and to Rachel Sengers for coordinating graphics, social media, and other logistics for the May 13 webinar.

Quote: Pope Francis, "Rivers do not drink their own water; trees do not eat their own fruit; the sun does not shine on itself and flowers do not spread their fragrance for themselves.

Living for others is a rule of nature. We are all born to help each other. No matter how difficult it is...



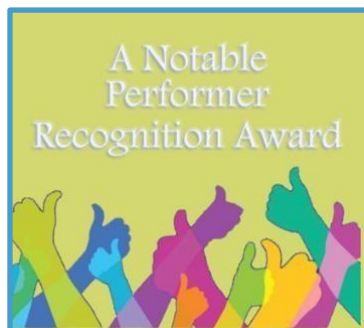
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Life is good when you are happy; but much better when others are happy because of you."



Let's continue to recognize our peers, volunteers, committee members and internal partners. Please submit the requested information including a profile photo of the volunteer being recognized to president@baltimoresisters.org by the 15th of each month, so we could publish their names and their specific contributions.
 (Please indicate category of superior performance)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Placing Baltimore Sister Cities Mission | <input type="checkbox"/> Outstanding work on a project first |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Displaying teamwork | <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrating good citizenship in the community |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Making a unique personal contribution | <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrating initiative to quality |

Please give a brief description of how this nominee provided superior performance and exceeded expectations.

...continued from page 3 - BRSCC International Business Webinar Collaboration, focused on COVID-19

Speakers:

- **Stan Veuger**, Resident Scholar at the **American Enterprise Institute** (and chair, NAF-DC) led the panel and addressed current economic trends and conditions.
- **Joe Greco**, VP Containers at **Ports America**, spoke about current logistical challenges for primary and secondary industrial and consumer products and what their organization is doing for its customers to address these short and long term supply chain disruptions and changes.
- **Andrew Kreinik**, Regional Manager Europe, Australia and New Zealand at **Maryland Department of Commerce**, identified how the state helps international companies in Maryland through a variety of initiatives, such as loans, incubation programs, soft landing programs, and with hands-on support in finding trading partners, supply chain solutions and office space.
- **Jerome Larosch**, Deputy Head, Economic Department at **Embassy of The Netherlands** – Washington, DC, presented on support programs available to Dutch companies expanding into America, and to American companies expanding into the Netherlands, with a special focus on supply chain, incorporation and incentives support programs tailored for this crisis.



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- **Martin de Groot**, Managing Partner of **NL to US**, showed how specialty business development companies can function effectively as remote offices for companies that need expert support with corporate, business and supply chain development initiatives, especially during fluctuating business conditions.