



Baltimore Sister Cities
Esprit de Corps

NEWSLETTER

For our volunteers, committee members, and leaders



President's Message



To my BSC Family and Colleagues:

This year has by no means been easy, but I am proud and inspired by my BSC

friends and colleagues. Thank you for your consistent and persistent will and effort in walking the walk, not just talking the talk. Your hard work and time commitments are extremely valued and appreciated. The amount of hard work and dedication it took to execute such powerful and moving Webinar Forums on both Food Inequities and our efforts in supporting the AAPI communities was powerful and truly inspiring! I am excited this year that we are lifting one another, collaborating across committee lines with one mission, one focus, and one goal. As we start to see a peek of sunlight amidst the cloud of COVID, stay diligent, keep your safe habits up, and show yourself kindness and patience. For those of you inundated in pressures from work and life, remember to take moments, be still and be mindful.

God Bless All of you and Thank You for making BSC a stellar organization.

Warmly,
Geri

Strategic Planning Meeting

BSC will hold a virtual Strategic Planning Meeting on June 30 at 6:30 pm. We will develop our strategic growth initiatives through the lens of diversity, equity and inclusion. Nancy Taylor (director-strategicgrowth@baltimoresistercities.org) will lead the meeting. Please send her any thoughts you have about the subject and stay tuned for further information.

Diversity Webinar Series: 'Our Home Too' Forum in Support of AAPI Communities



On May 27 BSC hosted a webinar forum in support of Asian American and Pacific Islander ('AAPI') Communities. This was the third in our Diversity Webinar Series following the 'Food Resilience in Maryland' webinar on May 6 and the 'Raising the Curtain on Race' webinar last August 25. The lead organizers for this webinar were BSC's Asian committees (BCSCC, BKSCC and BXSCC). In addition there was great support from BRSCC (Rachel Sengers, who provided her expertise with Zoom and web technology in general, and Teresa Leslie, who served as the webinar moderator). The Mayor's Office of

Baltimore-Odesa Sister City Committee ('BOSCC')

At the May 19 BSC board meeting the BOSCC was formally reactivated after 10 plus years of inactivity. BOSCC is our 2nd oldest committee (1974). Committee Chair, Karina Mandell; Vice Chair, Mark White; Treasurer, Adam Julian and Secretary, Chrissy Weber plan to work with Baltimore's Ukrainian community and with The Associated (Jewish Charities) to rebuild this committee. The Associated has maintained an active charitable relationship, including a liaison office in Odessa, for many years. Karina (chair-odessa@baltimoresistercities.org) would appreciate any referrals for potential new members as they rebuild this committee.

Rachel Sengers Chair, Baltimore-Rotterdam



We try to highlight at least one of our key members in each issue of Esprit de Corps. This time we chose Rachel Sengers who has managed

the Baltimore-Rotterdam Committee ('BRSCC') since 2016. In addition to this demanding job (see adjacent article on 'Baltimore-Rotterdam Architecture Webinar Series'), Rachel created and manages the BSC web site and is the resident expert on Zoom, Eventbrite and many other technical services used by BSC. The following is a collection of quotes about Rachel from BRSCC members and partners on both sides of the Atlantic:

"Rachel has the most amazing ability to connect a world of causes and events at the scale of our community and build coalitions of action minded contributors. SUCH A JOY TO WORK WITH."

Immigrant Affairs ('MIMA') and the Towson University Asian Arts and Culture Center were event partners. Notably this event took place during AAPI Heritage month. Anyone who missed the webinar can view the recording at: <https://youtu.be/XI38KYsLbpA>

As a lead in to the 'Our Home Too' webinar our three Asian committees published a 'Message to the AAPI Communities' in April that is reproduced in its entirety below.

Our Message to the Asian American and Pacific Islander Communities

April 2021



Baltimore Sister Cities (BSC) stands united and in solidarity with members of the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities in Baltimore and in all parts of the United States. Especially as home to three Sister City relationships in Asia (Changwon, Korea; Kawasaki, Japan and Xiamen, China), BSC deplores the events of the past year targeting members of AAPI communities. We are outraged at this senseless violence and abhor the pain and hurt inflicted on our AAPI colleagues and friends.

BSC makes this statement with awareness that anti-Asian violence is woven into the very history of our country. The Chinese massacre of 1871, the attacks on Filipino American farmworkers in the 1930's, the angry

"Rachel has the ability to see connections everywhere: between people, between causes, and between the activities BSC undertakes. This always takes BRSCC initiatives to the next level."

"Rachel, for me, is a superb networker! With her enthusiasm and open mind she makes it possible for other people to seek (new) possibilities and to connect people and projects."

"Rachel is an untiring, inspiring and trusting leader that support this team's initiatives by empowering each member."

"Working with Rachel is productive! Her skill-set is surprisingly broad. This, combined with a wide network, often provides the appropriate resources one needs to develop projects and push forward ambitions."

"I find Rachel's dedication and passion for Dutch culture inspiring. The areas where she connects people, businesses and causes in the USA and NL continues to expand. She is also a friend, someone who I feel I can turn to for support and if she can help, she always does, and then some."

"Rachel is a lovely and talented person with a vision for BRSCC. She works tirelessly to bring that to life. She knows who to reach out to and help at the right time. I admire her for her strength and energy."

"Rachel's passion and indefatigable commitment to the Dutch and American connections, keeps our community vibrant. Adding to that, her always-ready involvement with the entire BSC community, is a special gift to us all."

"Rachel has the rare ability to be a leader and a worker at the same time. She has a wonderful talent to motivate others, yet isn't afraid to do much of the legwork herself -- leading by example is her style."

incarceration in prison camps of Japanese Americans during WWII, and the violent arson by the Ku Klux Klan of Vietnamese American fishing boats in the 1970's, were all emboldened by dehumanizing stereotypes and prejudice perpetuated towards Asians who immigrated into the American landscape. This normalizing of racism has continued in language like "Kung Flu" and "China Plague" in recent months.

BSC is committed to fighting prejudice and to creating dialogues on all forms of discrimination. It leads with a purpose of promoting cultural interchanges that can foster new and more culturally aware engagement. It is not what we say in the short-term, but what we remain dedicated to that has lasting effects. BSC has vowed to send a strong message by providing an opportunity for an open dialogue of discussion with a distinguished group of panelists that will shed light on violence against AAPI communities. Within the next few weeks we will be announcing a live event and webinar discussion to educate and create awareness of AAPI issues and their long term effects.

Spring 2021 Baltimore-Rotterdam Architecture Webinar Series

During the spring semester 2021, Morgan State University School of Architecture and Planning (SA+P) continued to operate remotely due to the global Covid pandemic. Despite the fact that the architecture discipline has traditionally preferred a hands-on approach inspired by the "learning by doing" ideology, Morgan students have been able to explore different contexts provided by this dramatic turn of events.

In collaboration with the Baltimore-Rotterdam Sister City Committee ('BRSCC'), Cristina Murphy, Assistant Professor at SA+P, organized a webinar series this spring revolving around the topics of social and environmentally sustainable

Diversity Webinar Series: 'Why Are People Hungry? Food Resilience in Maryland'



On May 6 the Baltimore-Luxor/Alexandria Committee (BLASCC) hosted this webinar on food insecurity in Baltimore and Maryland.

One in four Baltimore residents received food stamps before COVID; now one in three city residents need this life-sustaining support. Food insecurity – the household-level social and economic condition of limited access to food – existed in Baltimore long before the pandemic. COVID made it worse and made it more public.

Program moderator Teresa Leslie, Vice Chair of the Baltimore Rotterdam committee, acknowledged that food insecurity is a national and international issue. She addressed the need to rebuild food sovereignty and food security, when all members of a household have enough food for an active, healthy life.

The City of Baltimore, where Holly Freishtat is Food Policy Director, has 19 agencies addressing food systems. The city expects reimbursements from FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) for nearly \$23 million worth of emergency food distribution during the pandemic, including home delivery, outdoor distributions, and 788,000 boxes of produce meat, dairy and canned goods. Freishtat explained that the city is investing in farms, community organizations and resources to build

practices with speakers from the USA and the Netherlands.

The spring 2021 lectures were tailored to the students in the ARCH533 (Architectural Technology V Materials) and ARCH540 (Studio IV) courses at Morgan but also open to the public. The lectures introduced recycling technologies and circular design approaches to SA+P students. In addition, students and faculty from Rotterdam Academy of Urban Design and Planning (RAvB) were invited to actively participate in the lectures and learn more about (West) Baltimore and sustainable construction materials. Several of the lectures were co-hosted by RAvB.

Info about the webinars and links to the recordings:

<https://baltimoresistercities.org/architecture-spring2021/>

Baltimore-Changwon Participation in Enoch Pratt Library 'Imagination Celebration'



The Baltimore-Changwon Committee ('BCSCC') participated in 'Pratt Virtual Storytime Live!' on Thursday, May 6.

BCSCC's Co-chair, Kelly Nellenbach, presented the program about traditional Korean dancers

food resilience – that ability to withstand and recover from a food crisis or disruption. While panelists were appreciative of federal emergency food aid, Meg Kimmel, EVP of the Maryland Food Bank, said federal food policies can also be part of the problem, such as commodity programs designed to provide economic benefits to white farmers for particular overproduced items. While Kimmel noted that we cannot “foodbank” our way out of COVID, she said the “twin influences of COVID-19 and the national reckoning with systemic racism have made it clear that food banks have an important role to play in building an equitable, accessible, and resilient food system for all Marylanders.”

Eric Jackson, Founder and Servant Director of Black Yield Institute (‘BYI’), referred to food apartheid and the broader, historical socio-economic context of food deprivation. Food insecurity will only end, says Jackson, when we build a movement that gives people a say in producing food, controlling land and deciding which stores and resources will be available - “food aid efforts that are connected strategically to help build power, equity and sovereignty.” BYI is working to build a co-op grocery store in the Cherry Hill neighborhood of South Baltimore; BYI also engages in political education, community gardening and apprenticeship programs. He urged people to have conversations about these issues with neighbors, friends, churches and mosques, and other volunteer partners.

BSC members interested in donating or volunteering may learn more at [Maryland Food Bank](#) and [Black Yield Institute](#)

A You Tube recording of this webinar can be found at [Webinar Recording](#)

and clothing. This program is part of the ‘Imagination Celebration’, celebrating children’s creativity with special events, arts and crafts, and more throughout the month of May. Kelly introduced Korean children dress for a girl and a boy along with two Korean traditional dances. The two dances presented were a Korean Circle Dance (Ganggangsulae) and a Korean Fan Dance (Buchaechum). Ganggangsulae is a vigorous and rhythmical dance for females. On the holiday of the harvest moon, women and girls would hold hands, sing, and dance in a circle. The origin of the Ganggangsulae is uncertain, but it is likely that dances such as this were performed in ancient times at festivals. According to legend, the Korean general Lee Sun Sin during the Japanese invasion of Korea that started in 1592 used the Ganggangsulae as a tactic to deceive enemies. It was an important tactic because Lee Sun Sin had to fight 300 Japanese ships with only 12 ships. He made women dress in men’s clothing and dance Ganggangsulae from the peak of mountains to make it seem like thousands of soldiers were moving down the mountainside.

The other dance introduced was the Korean Fan Dance called Buchaechum. It is believed to be a very old dance form derived from a shamanistic dance that warded off evil spirits by means of using a large leaf rather than a fan. This shamanistic dance was developed into the Buchaechum, which is now recognized as a group fan dance performed by females. It was first recognized during the Joseon Dynasty (1392 – 1897).

The two dances can be viewed on You Tube at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PcXluW6D1fI>
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yv_cbX3FZRA

Check out upcoming events at <https://baltimoresistercities.org/events/>

(Questions or comments about Esprit de Corps and articles or ideas for future editions should be sent to the editor, Fontaine Bell, at vicepresident@baltimoresistercities.org)