



MONTGOMERY Sister Cities

CONNECTING OUR COMMUNITY TO THE WORLD

December 2014 – Issue 1

Hyderabad, Telangana, India

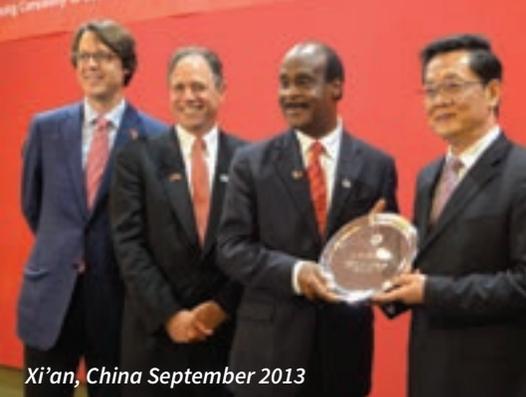
Montgomery's Newest Sister City



Morazán, El Salvador, July 2011



Gondar, Ethiopia, September 2012



Xi'an, China September 2013



Hyderabad, India November 2014



County Executive Ike Leggett led a joint Sister City and economic development mission trip to India this fall where he signed Montgomery's fourth Sister City agreement on November 14, 2014 with the City of Hyderabad. The County Executive's trip included stops in Raipur, Delhi, and Bangalore to promote economic development as well as visits to the Taj Mahal and the Golden Temple.

Hyderabad, India's sixth largest city, is the core of a metropolitan region of nearly eight million people. This South Indian city serves as the joint capital of two of India's 29 states – Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. In terms of religion, it is one of India's most diverse cities. Nearly 70% of the population is Hindu. Hyderabad's 27% Muslim population is double the country's average.

Founded in 1591, the city has a rich history dominated in the seventeenth century by the Qutb Shahi dynasty and before and during British rule by the Nizams, one of the world's

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Letter from the Board Chair *Theresa Cameron*

It is an honor to serve as chair of Montgomery Sister Cities. I believe strongly in County Executive Leggett's vision that our Sister City program can better connect our community to the world. I am excited that we recently added our fourth Sister City-Hyderabad, India.

But none of this could have been accomplished without a dedicated board of directors and staff. I especially would like to recognize our founding board president, Bill Hudnut, who County Executive Leggett tapped as the man who could get this Sister City group "off the ground." In 2008, County Executive Leggett asked former Indianapolis and Town of Chevy Chase Mayor Bill Hudnut to establish Montgomery Sister Cities as a community nonprofit and pull together a board to get this new venture moving forward.

Bill recruited a diverse and talented board, incorporated Montgomery Sister Cities, and hosted a public forum in June of 2009 that led to the selection of Morazán, El Salvador as Montgomery County's first Sister City in 2011. Gondar, Ethiopia followed in 2012 and Xi'an, China became the third Sister City on Bill's watch. County Executive Leggett joins me and all of the board members in expressing our appreciation to Bill for five years of dedicated leadership that built a strong foundation for Montgomery Sister Cities with two ancient capitals and the home of the number one country of origin of Montgomery County's immigrant population.

Just this month, the City of Indianapolis, where Bill served as Mayor for four terms (1976-92), dedicated a major city park in the downtown as Hudnut Commons complete with a larger than life statue. We in Montgomery County always think of Bill as larger than life. Congratulations to Bill with great appreciation for his five years as service as chair of Montgomery Sister Cities.



Finally, I believe our top priority in 2015 and beyond should be to help our four country committees build sustainable and meaningful Sister City relationships. With that in mind, I invite you to join County Executive Leggett and me on Tuesday January 13, 2015 from 5:30 until 7 p.m. in the first floor conference room of the Rockville Memorial Library for our 2015 annual meeting. We will have representatives of our four Sister City committees along with photos and exhibits. This is a friendraiser, not a fundraiser. We are going to have great fun. Please join all the remarkable people who make up Montgomery Sister Cities.



Meet Evelyn Gonzalez-Mills

Evelyn Gonzalez-Mills represents the heart and soul of Montgomery Sister Cities. As a Founding Board Member, Evelyn has helped shape and direct the organization for six years. She was a passionate advocate for Morazán, El Salvador to become Montgomery County's first Sister City.



Evelyn Gonzalez greets the first Sister City delegation at the San Salvador airport in August of 2010

When a delegation visited Morazán in August of 2010

to explore the possibility, she mapped out every minute and secured host families for the visitors. When County Executive Leggett led a larger delegation in July of 2011, Evelyn again went to Morazán weeks ahead of the delegation to make sure everything including the signing ceremony would be flawless. As this was Montgomery County's first Sister City, the work that Evelyn did as a volunteer established the template for all future Sister City missions. She returns each summer to Morazán and continues to be an active member of the Montgomery Sister Cities board and the Morazán Sister City committee tirelessly advocating to strengthen the bond between her two home towns.

Evelyn is a Counselor at Montgomery College and has served as the advisor to the Latino Student Union at the Takoma Park Campus, including helping the students play a leadership role in the passage of the Maryland Dream Act. In 2013, Evelyn received the Outstanding Faculty Service Award at Montgomery College. Evelyn has worked to serve Latino refugees in the Washington region for more than three decades. Most recently, she founded and serves as the President of the Association for Educational Development in El Salvador (ADEES), a local nonprofit that seeks to improve and enrich the educational experience of children and youth in disadvantaged communities in El Salvador.

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Morazán, El Salvador *Update*

When Montgomery Sister Cities held a public forum in the summer of 2009 to solicit ideas for prospective Sister Cities, by far the most popular choice was El Salvador, the number one country of origin of Montgomery's immigrant population. The Department of Morazán (the equivalent of a US state) was selected as it lies in the heart of the region where the 1980s civil war was fought. Many people fleeing the violence came to the Washington area. On July 26, 2011, County Executive Leggett traveled to the town of San Francisco Gotera and signed the county's first Sister City agreement.

One of the top priorities of the Morazán committee has been to provide educational opportunities for students beyond high school. Three Montgomery College professors from the Global Humanities Institute travelled to Morazán in 2013 to offer technical assistance in forming a community college. In partnership with the Association for Educational Development in El Salvador, the committee has sent medical equipment and educational supplies to Morazán worth more than \$20,000. The committee purchased ten computers for the start-up technical school.

Habitat for Humanity Metro Maryland organizes regular trips to build and rehab homes in Morazán's El Barrial community. Mover-Moms, a nonprofit that promotes service by busy families, organizes trips for county residents each summer. Hungry for Music raised money for instruments for children. The committee connected a company in El Salvador with a local nonprofit for a business venture.



October 23, 2014 meeting (from left) Nestor Alvarenga, Latino Community Liaison; Neftali Granados, Sister Cities Board and Morazán committee member; Karla Silvestre, Montgomery College's Director of Community Engagement; Miguel Ventura, former Governor of Morazán, El Salvador, Montgomery County's first Sister City; Evelyn Gonzalez, Sister Cities Board and Morazán committee member; Isis Salmeron, Morazán Sister City committee member; and Jorge Granados, Vice President of Morazán Sister City committee.

Former Governor Ventura visited the committee in October to provide an update on projects as well as describe the current socio-political-economic landscape. The new Governor met with committee representatives during their annual visit this summer.

The Morazán Sister City committee showcases the Salvadoran culture and cuisine at events including the annual Salvadoran Festival of COTSA, an umbrella group of Salvadoran hometown associations, as well as the World of Montgomery Festival.

The committee's annual Fiesta fundraiser will be on October 24, 2015. For more information about how you can get involved, please contact Nestor Alvarenga at nestor.alvarenga@montgomerycountymd.gov.

Gondar, Ethiopia *Update*

Diaspora members from nine African countries competed to be selected as our Sister City in an open process organized by the County Executive's African Affairs Advisory Group that engaged hundreds of county residents. After nine months of review and effective lobbying by the Montgomery College Ethiopian Students Association (MCESA), the advisory group selected Gondar, the ancient capital of Ethiopia. On September 27, 2012, County Executive Leggett signed a Sister City agreement with the City of Gondar, Amhara Region, Ethiopia.

The main focus of the Gondar committee has been to collect and ship essential medical equipment to a clinic in Gondar. Montgomery College has developed a partnership with the University of Gondar. In addition, the committee has identified a potential project with the International Medical Corps (IMC) to develop a youth center in Gondar. The committee is collaborating with Gondar Development in North America group to raise money for scholarships for students from surrounding rural areas who attend Gondar University. The committee supports MCESA's "Books for Africa" project to ship books to Gondar University and surrounding high schools. Hungry for Music continues to provide support for the Miracle Art & Modeling School.

Allison Ray, a graduate student at the University of Maryland, worked diligently with the committee throughout the spring of 2014 to create and narrow



Dancers performing at the entrance to the Ethiopian tent at the 2014 World of Montgomery Festival

the committee's strategic focus moving forward. The process resulted in the development of committee bylaws, numerous capacity building materials, and committee working groups on Health, Education, Youth Development, and Fundraising & Grants.

The Gondar, Ethiopia Sister City committee continues to showcase the Ethiopian culture at high visibility county events including the World of Montgomery Festival, Ethiopian Festival, and Pan African Cultural Festival.

The committee is organizing a fundraiser for April 10, 2015. For more information about how you can get involved, please contact Daniel Koroma at daniel.koroma@montgomerycountymd.gov.



Xi'an, China Update

County Executive Ike Leggett led a joint Sister City and economic development mission to Xi'an, China in September of 2013. The formal Sister City agreement with Xi'an was signed in 2014. Perhaps best known as the home of the Terracotta Warriors, Xi'an is a major educational and high technology hub in the northwest of China.

The Northwestern Chinese American Association of Greater Washington (NCAAGW) has led the Xi'an-Montgomery Sister City relationship. NCAAGW members met with Xi'an representatives at the US-China Sister Cities Conference in Washington in March of 2014. NCAAGW members traveled to Xi'an for discussions aimed at coordinating cultural, educational, and economic exchanges.

On August 12, 2014, NCAAGW hosted an event at the Rockville Memorial Library with County Executive Leggett to celebrate the formal signing of the Sister City agreement. Shaanxi Hometown Association and Shaanxi International Chamber of Commerce were established to facilitate exchanges between Xi'an and Montgomery County. NCAAGW facilitated a ten day trip to Xi'an by ten teenagers from Montgomery County in July of 2014.

Xi'an University professors visited in December of 2014 as part of the university's partnership with Montgomery College's Global Humanities Institute. The Institute collaborated with the Arts Departments of Montgomery College to organize an art exhibit with Xi'an University and the University of El Salvador that was on display this fall at the Cultural Arts Center of Montgomery College's Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus.

The Northwestern Chinese American Association showcases the Chinese culture at events around the region. NCAAGW's Power Drum Team performed in the opening ceremony of the World of Montgomery Festival. Other notable events in 2014 included an art exhibit of the works of Dali Sun in June at the Nova Arts Center, a Taiji demonstration at a Bethesda Big Train baseball game in July, an October 11 concert, and an opera performance on November 15 by famous Xi'an actress Aiyun Qi.

For more information about how you can get involved, please contact Diane Vu at diane.vu@montgomerycountymd.gov.



Northwestern Chinese American Association of Greater Washington hosted Xi'an Sister City Celebration at Rockville Memorial Library on August 12, 2014

Global Humanities Institute



At the October 23 opening reception for the exhibit (from left): Karla Silvestre, Montgomery College's Director of Community Engagement; Sanjay Rai, Montgomery College's Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs; Miguel Ventura, former Governor of Morazán, El Salvador; Vilma Herrera, Counselor for Cultural Affairs at the Embassy of El Salvador; and Rita Kranidis, Program Director of Montgomery College's Global Humanities Institute

Montgomery College's Global Humanities Institute was created in 2012 with the support of a challenge grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). The NEH Bridging Cultures initiative aims to "engage the power of the humanities to promote understanding and mutual respect for people with diverse histories, cultures, and perspectives within the United States and abroad." The grant enables Montgomery College to focus on how it teaches the humanities in ways that reflect the complexities of our global society. The College has created an interdisciplinary course on Global Humanities and is working to provide learning opportunities for all within and beyond the classroom while facilitating education abroad for faculty. Gaining expertise beyond the classroom will better prepare students and faculty for the global marketplace of the 21st century.

Conveniently for our Sister Cities program, the Institute is focusing on creating partnerships in China, India, and El Salvador. College representatives have been a valuable presence on all four of the county's Sister City missions.

The Global Humanities Institute and Arts Departments of Montgomery College organized a collaborative art exhibit with Xi'an University and the University of El Salvador that was on display from October 23 through November 14, 2014 at the Cultural Arts Center of Montgomery College's Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus. The exhibit, entitled "Identity: Contemporary Interpretations of History, Place, and Culture," featured artists from Xi'an University and the University of El Salvador. Former Morazán Governor Miguel Ventura joined Vilma Herrera, Counselor for Cultural Affairs at the Embassy of El Salvador at the October 23 opening reception. Xi'an University professors visited Montgomery County in December of 2014.

For additional information about Montgomery College's Global Humanities Institute, please log onto <http://cms.montgomerycollege.edu/globalhumanities> or contact program director Rita Kranidis at rita.kranidis@montgomerycollege.edu.

Hyderabad, Telangana, India

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richest families. We visited the historic sites of Charminar, the tombs of Qutb Shahi, Golconda Fort, and Mecca Masjid, one of India's largest mosques. Known as the city of pearls, Hyderabad is now often referred to as Cyberabad in recognition of its technology industry. It has also become an important center of India's film industry. The cityscape is dominated by Hussain Sagar, one of Asia's largest artificial lakes.

The GMR corporation hosted a fabulous signing ceremony at the elegant Taj Krishna Hotel. The delegation met with a Rotary Club and visited temples, museums, an elementary school and two rural schools, Mahavir Hospital, and Thakur Hari Prasad Institute serving people with developmental disabilities. The Montgomery College delegation visited the University of Hyderabad.

Of all the people who made this such a successful Sister City trip, six stand out for special appreciation: Sanjay Rai, Montgomery College's Vice President for Academic Affairs, was our go-to-guy right from the start who guided us masterfully through the city selection process and across India. Maryland Delegate Aruna Miller, a native of Hyderabad, was an ever helpful advisor and gracious host. Ram Konda, chair of the Capital Area Telugu Society, had the contacts with city government that allowed him to seal the Sister City deal and make this all possible. Mirin Phool, president of the Kaur Foundation, made so many helpful contacts that enriched our trip and who with Dr. Sudhir Sekhsaria took us to the magnificent Golden Temple. Diane Vu, the Asian liaison in the Office of Community Partnerships, worked tirelessly on the endless details that made our trip a smashing success.

The city's dynamic young Mayor, Mohammed Majid Hussain, promised to bring a delegation to Montgomery County. His main interests are in improving infrastructure, transportation, and water resource management.

We are hoping for a robust series of cultural and educational exchanges with Hyderabad as well as economic development deals and sharing governmental best practices. If you are interested in volunteering to support follow-up activities with Hyderabad, please contact Diane Vu at diane.vu@montgomerycountymd.gov.

Rockville Sister City Corporation

On October 13, 1957, the Rockville Mayor and Council approved a resolution establishing a Sister City relationship with the City of Pinneberg, Germany. On November 8, 1957, the Pinneberg Mayor and Council approved a resolution establishing a Sister City relationship with Rockville.



Jiaxing delegation visited Rockville in December 2014

The mission of the Rockville Sister City Corporation (RSCC) is to promote the exchange of information between people of different cultural and ethnic origins, especially among the youth. RSCC organizes exchanges for people interested in business, arts, culture, health, science, education, sports, music, and tourism.

In 1958, the City of Pinneberg sent 210 rose bushes to the City of Rockville. They were planted at the Rockville Civic Center in the Rockville Friendship Garden. Rockville established "Pinneberg Avenue" in the Twinbrook neighborhood. Pinneberg also named a street "Rockvillestrasse."

In early years of the relationship, a Rockville Sister City Committee kept the contract. In 1984, a Rockville Sister City Task Force was formed. Then the Rockville Sister City Corporation was formed as a Maryland nonprofit on June 30, 1986.

Through the years, visits from Pinneberg have included firemen, policemen, and student, music and sports groups. The RSCC and the German American Society in Pinneberg have close contact and coordinate exchanges.

In September 2009, the City of Rockville established a Friendship Sister City Relationship with Jiaxing, Zhejiang Province, China. There have been several exchanges and visits between Rockville and Jiaxing including a visit to Rockville by six representatives of Jiaxing in December of 2014.

For more information, please visit www.rockvillesistercities.org or contact Brigitta Mullican, President, 301-230-0890; rockvillesistercities@gmail.com.



WORLD OF MONTGOMERY Festival

The annual World of Montgomery Festival celebrates Montgomery County's spectacular diversity with food, entertainment, and cultural enrichment. The KID Museum, in collaboration with our Sister City partners, provides an authentic introduction to China, El Salvador, Ethiopia, and India. If you want your child to experience what it means to be a 21st century global citizen, this is the place to be. The festival is funded by the generous sponsors of the Fund for Montgomery. For additional information about Montgomery County's annual World of Montgomery Festival, please log onto <http://worldofmontgomery.com/>.

To become a sponsor, performer, vendor, or participant at the Seventh Annual World of Montgomery Festival in October of 2015, please contact Bruce Adams at bruce.adams@montgomerycountymd.gov.



Performers at the Sixth Annual World of Montgomery Festival at Westfield Wheaton on October 19, 2014

Fund for Montgomery
A fund of The Community Foundation for Montgomery County



CALLING ALL GLOBAL CITIZENS!

Join County Executive Ike Leggett and the Board Members of Montgomery Sister Cities at the

Annual Meeting

Connecting Our Community to the World

Tuesday, January 13, 2015

5:30 to 7 p.m.

Rockville Memorial Library

First Floor Conference Room

21 Maryland Avenue, Rockville, MD



Montgomery County's edge in the 21st century global marketplace is that we are a talent magnet for people from across the country and around the world. Join us on January 13 as we celebrate the diverse cultures and cuisines that make Montgomery special. To strengthen your cultural competence as a 21st Century Global Citizen, come and learn more about Montgomery's wonderful Sister Cities in Morazán, El Salvador; Gondar, Ethiopia; Xi'an China; and Hyderabad, India.

“World of Montgomery at Strathmore”

One thing Montgomery Sister Cities learned in China was that some of these cities are a lot better at gift giving than we are. Our elegant embossed silver plate paled in comparison to the magnificent boxed model of a horse drawn chariot complete with Terracotta warriors given to the County Executive by the Mayor of Xi'an. So we called on Washington Grove silkscreen artist Joseph Craig English to produce a suitable gift for our Sister Cities by portraying the extraordinary talent of the county's diverse population. County Executive Leggett suggested The Music Center at Strathmore as a backdrop. Craig came up with the idea of representing our diversity through the faces of musicians in an orchestra, a terrific idea as an orchestra demonstrates the great success achieved when people work in concert with each other, a perfect metaphor for Ike Leggett's brand of community leadership. Eliot Pfanstiehl, the guru of all things Strathmore, hooked Craig up with Maryland Classic Youth Orchestras. Craig was given permission to take a zillion photos of the young musicians and then headed for his studio. The final piece was a product of 32 hand cut and printed stencils (one for each color). To see Craig's remarkable process, go to his Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Joseph-Craig-English-Studio/564179423608867>.



County Executive Ike Leggett presenting the original Joseph Craig English “World of Montgomery at Strathmore” silkscreen print to Mayor Mohammed Majid Hussain in Hyderabad, India on November 14, 2014

For a beautiful giclee reproduction of the “World of Montgomery at Strathmore” print, please contact Bruce Adams at bruce.adams@montgomerycountymd.gov. This is a perfect gift for the Montgomery County activist on your list. Proceeds will support Montgomery Sister Cities. We have a limited edition of 100 framed 18x24” giclee reproductions available for \$450 each; 11x14” giclee reproductions are \$120 framed or \$75 with just a mat.



Become a Global Citizen: Support Montgomery Sister Cities

For an annual contribution of \$20 or more, you will receive an official Montgomery Sister Cities pin and quarterly email newsletters on our programs and progress. As Montgomery Sister Cities is a 501(c)(3) community nonprofit, your contribution is tax deductible. **Please fill out this form and mail it with your check made payable to “Montgomery Sister Cities” to:**

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