



# The Dispatch

November 2021



Welcome to the Dispatch! Enjoy this update from our Sister Cities, and now Sibling City. In this Dispatch, we share news of: the Mayor's visit to Heidelberg; a sibling city relationship with Bloomington, Indiana; the activities of Vidas y Sueños in Oaxaca Mexico; our evolving education programs; and an invitation to our holiday party on December 12th supporting our children's programs.

## [Heidelberg happenings](#)

### Mayor Visits Heidelberg

Mayor Tom DuBois, joined by his fiancée, Masako Yokota, and Bob Wenzlau with his wife, Julie Jomo, spent a weekend in Heidelberg. The visit provided the opportunity to meet with the newly formed Heidelberg Palo Alto Club (HDPAC), a sister organization catalyzed by Jeannet Kiessling. HDPAC has a focus on commerce connections between the cities, growing out of a 2019 visit of entrepreneurs from Heidelberg to Palo Alto.



The Mayor of Palo Alto joined a 60 year celebration of another of Heidelberg's sister cities, Montpellier, on a cruise on the Neckar River. The visit validated collaborations on sustainability, while the enchanting views of the Heidelberg castle framed the backdrop for the 100 vaccinated guests.

The visits were busy, and included meeting artist Giuseppe Blasotta with the HDPAC to discuss the emerging [Art in Sustainability](#) project. HDPAC has selected Water is a Right as their sustainability project. Sustainability discussions continued between Mayor DuBois and the Deputy Mayor Raoul Schmidt-Lamontain during which

transportation and city collaboration were explored. An afternoon was spent visiting the Heidelberg Innovation Park and a new magnet school created by the German American Center and located in the former American barracks. We enjoyed food prepared by a robotic chef, albeit the sausages at the beer gardens are still the go-to reason for a visit to Heidelberg.

## New Sibling City

### Introducing Bloomington, Indiana



Palo Alto has embarked on a new experiment in relations between cities, that of a “sibling” city relationship with Bloomington, Indiana. The Neighbors Abroad board, working in conjunction with the Mayor and a new nonprofit, [Sibling Cities USA](#), has agreed to host the community engagement with Bloomington via a newly formed committee. Why a US city? Over the past several years, the Mayor was motivated to bring the discovery and community building that occurs between our Sister Cities to a domestic relationship between two cities within the US. In this case, “coast to heartland” provides an opportunity to discover and work on challenges, as well as capture the same joy of culture and education that informs our current Sister Cities.

Andie Reed, a community volunteer who has been active on the planning committee during 2021, will lead the Bloomington Sibling City Committee, facilitated by Neighbors Abroad, as coordinator here in Palo Alto, as the project proceeds through the launch phase into operations. She will be supported by the continued active participation of our Mayor and other service club representatives. Neighbors Abroad will liaise with [Sibling Cities USA](#), a non profit organization recently formed in Palo Alto and led by Vicki Veenker. Sibling Cities promotes unity in America by building deep relationships between US cities in different regions of the country.

What about Bloomington? Bloomington, like Palo Alto, is a university town. The population of our cities is similar. Bloomington has many tourist attractions including art galleries, museums, and cultural centers. Downtown Bloomington has active nightlife, great restaurants, shopping, and many family-friendly activities. One beloved Bloomington event is Food Truck Friday, featuring a variety of food trucks parked at Switchyard Park every Friday from June to October. Participants enjoy food, live music, and other events such as balloon artists and body painting. There is more to discover on the Neighbors Abroad website page about [Bloomington](#).

*Our lexicon of city relations: Sibling Cities generates a new lexicon for Neighbors Abroad. We will capitalize Sister Cities as we refer to our international relations as associated with Sister Cities International. When we refer to our relations domestically we will deem them Sibling Cities, as associated with our relationship with Sibling Cities USA. Of interest, in China, our relationship with the Yangpu District is deemed a Friendship City. The Europeans speak of “twinning” of cities. There is a large lexicon that defines our relationships as well. Toward this end, we adjusted the Neighbors Abroad website to list our sister and sibling cities as “cities” in the navigation.*

## Oaxaca, Mexico Updates

Despite the pandemic, Vidas y Sueños has been very active. As part of its joint work with the Oaxaca Rotary Club and the Municipality of San Miguel Peras, which belongs to Zachila, in the state of Oaxaca, a number of families have benefited from activities and programs that have taken place during the year.

Firstly, the annual medical clinics took place in the month of June. Medical personnel, specialized in Pediatrics, Ophthalmology, General Medicine, Gynecology, Odontology and Rehabilitation / Physical Therapy, benefited 123 women and 47 men (including children).

A dental clinic was inaugurated in collaboration with Dr. Rafael Medina and Dr. Faustino Camiro, both odontologists, who provided free dental services to the children of the seven communities from San Miguel Municipality.



At the same time two programs kicked-off in the communities of Temascal, La Lobera, El Manzanito and San Miguel Peras.

The first program was Herbolaria. It is delivered once a month to parents and divided into 6 groups. The workshops are aimed to provide knowledge to handle and transform therapeutic plants into products. It is an opportunity to help with families' health and also generate income from the sale of these products. These workshops benefited 150 women and 55 men including children.

The second program is based on the Child to Child framework. Children of the parents participating in the Herbolaria learned about health and hygiene through the design and production of puppets, which were presented at the Teatro Guinol.





Another wonderful and exciting note to share is the recent visit of the Rotary Club of Los Altos, California to the Calpulli Center. Twenty people were welcome with a banner by Daniela and Esteban at the entrance to the street where the facilities are located. Sara, at only 14 years of age, stood out as an excellent host of the program that the Dance Workshop organized for the guests. The presentation of the seven work areas was also presented by the adolescents.

To the rhythm of violins and guitars, the children danced to the sounds from Tierra Caliente in the State of Guerrero. Later, during a concert the smell of copal flooded the atmosphere. Gamiliel, with his warrior attire, began by executing the rhythms of the Aztec Dance on the huehuetl, a pre-Hispanic instrument. A group of thirteen dancers appeared on stage dressed in their loincloths, plumes and shields, hand-made by their mothers.





## Dispatch Items

### Assembling Our Education Programs

Neighbors Abroad is investing time in learning about immersive and experiential learning programs that are currently in place at our sister cities around the world. We hope to bring these wonderful programs to light and encourage more international collaboration between students in our sister cities through these programs. On our new education webpage ([www.neighborsabroad.org/education](http://www.neighborsabroad.org/education)) we introduce three education programs BEAM, TaleTree and Launch FIT. We have two board members supporting coordinated education programs across our cities, Cristina Florea and Masha Maslova. We welcome Masha to the Board supporting strengthening education programs across our network of cities.

### Our Holiday Party is on December 12th at Gamble Gardens

We are happy to announce the return of our Neighbors Abroad tradition — the Holiday Party!

Please join us Sunday December 12, 2021 from 5 PM to 8 PM at the Carriage House within the Elizabeth F. Gamble Garden located at 1431 Waverley St in Palo Alto. Sustenance donated by Hobee's Restaurant and Vive Sol, and international desserts by our Sister City and Sibling City committees. Revenue from this party supports children in Oaxaca, Mexico and in Palo, Philippines, both where they live and where they study. A \$25 donation is requested. Please note that we expect all attendees to bring proof of vaccination. The event will be indoors and outdoors, so dress accordingly. Event capacity is limited.

Please register to attend at this [link](#). If you wish to pay by a paper check, then email Maria at [mmercado@neighborsabroad.org](mailto:mmercado@neighborsabroad.org).

## News from Neighbors Abroad

### Welcoming New Board Members, Tuesday Coffees and an Updated Sister City Sign

Our Board is growing. We welcome Ed Fike, the former CEO of Hobee's Restaurants. We know Ed as an avid distance runner and has completed 45 marathons. He aims to complete a marathon in each of the 50 U.S. states. In April 2019, Ed was chosen by Neighbors Abroad to represent Palo Alto at the annual Kasumigaura Marathon in Tsuchiura, Japan. His experience with Tsuchiura endeared Ed to our organization. Ed has been mentoring clients at the Silicon Valley Small Business

Development Center since 2018. In 2019, Ed joined the Santa Clara-based boutique employment law firm of Hixson & Nagatani LLP.

We also welcome Masha Maslova as a Board Member who will be working with Cristina Florea on education programs. Masha has over 10 years of experience working at the intersection of public and private sectors, and brings a wealth of non-profit knowledge and passion. She has served as the Engagement Manager at the Silicon Valley Talent Partnership where she managed SVTP's Education Portfolio and worked to advance and scale innovative project-based STEM programs across schools and districts in the Bay Area. Masha also worked for the SF-based Center for Citizen Initiatives formed to facilitate cultural and business exchanges between the U.S. and Russia. She specifically worked on a U.S. State-Department funded program designed to foster business development in Russia (built after Marshall plan, and in partnership with Rotary International) Masha has also co-founded a non-profit to benefit orphaned children in Uganda and worked on various international relations projects.

As we plan to update the Sister City sign, what could the future hold for Palo Alto's Sister Cities? Did you know that Palo Alto is home to the consulate for Denmark? The consul has been meeting with Palo Alto council members and the community, and discussion of a Sister City relationship has bubbled up. Additionally, the Kiwanis International Committee, one of our strongest partners, has been in early discussions to explore a Sister City in Africa. Evelyne Keomian's KSP program in the Ivory Coast has been supported by Neighbors Abroad.

## We Appreciate Your Support

Across this issue of The Dispatch, we hope you have found the impact of our work. We are honored to be a conduit of good impact as well as cultural engagement, and welcome your ongoing support!

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