

Cincinnati Receives International Award

OKI Sister Cities Coalition continues to raise global profile of Cincinnati

Cincinnati was one of fifteen cities across the United States to be recognized by Sister Cities International this year, brightening the City's international spotlight. From July 29th-August 1st, a five-member delegation representing Cincinnati and the OKI Sister City Coalition attended the 2009 Annual Sister Cities International Conference in Belfast, Northern Ireland.

"Cincinnati is known for our top-rated Arts community and through that community we are making a global presence," said Mayor Mark Mallory. "It is an honor to be recognized by an organization such as Sister Cities International for the value that we contribute through our relationships with other cities."

Cincinnati received the award for Innovation in Arts and Culture for the impressive Triangular Artworks Project. The trilateral exchange of art and culture spanned three continents and three sister cities: Cincinnati; Munich, Germany; and Liuzhou, China. The artwork creation began in 2007 under the auspices of Jan Brown-Checco. Eighteen artists, six each from Cincinnati, Munich and Liuzhou created one original two-dimensional artwork that was then exchanged with the other artists who created "re-drawings" using any material, technique, or process they preferred. Throughout 2008 and 2009, the drawings and many of the artists traveled to each of the three cities as part of an art exchange exhibition.

Beth Tu Hoffman, President of the Cin-Liu Sister City Committee, hopes to see more art projects in our sister city exchanges. "This award recognizes the values of art exchanges in creating new ways to make friends and share our cultures," she said.



"The quality of the 2008 projects recognized by the Sister Cities International jury were awe-inspiring," said Jan Brown-Checco, creator and lead artist of the Triangular Artworks Project. "I left the ceremonies feeling grateful that art has a place at the table and that others believe that artists have an important role to play in establishment of positive human relationships."

Over 400 sister city supporters, government officials, and sister city leaders from more than 15 countries attended the conference where they had the opportunity to network, exchange ideas, and build relationships. This is the first time in the history of Sister Cities International that the Annual Conference was held outside of the United States. The conference theme, "Building Enduring Peace after Conflict," explored how municipalities and communities can work together in matters of conflict resolution through community and cultural diplomacy. Additionally, there were sessions over the three-day conference that focused on economic development, youth, cultural diplomacy, as well as many other topics. For instance, at the session titled, "Economic Development Exchanges," the Cincinnati delegation learned how other city organization and businesses were working in partnership with their Sister City groups to encourage stronger economic ties between cities.

The Cincinnati delegation included Carla In photo: Patrick Madden, Executive Director of Sister Cities International; A.M. Kinney, Vice President, OKI Sister City Coalition; Carla Walker, Board Member of Sister Cities International and Mayor Mark Mallory's Chief of Staff; Jan Brown-Checco, Creator and Lead Artist of Tri-

Walker, a Board Member of Sister Cities International and Mayor Mark Mallory's Chief of Staff, Gerald Checco, Park Board Superintendent of Operations, Land Management, Beautification, and International Affairs, A.M. Kinney, Vice President of the OKI Sister City Coalition, Tu Hoffman and Brown Checco.

The OKI Sister City Coalition, Cincinnati's Sister City group, is an all voluntary, non-profit, non-governmental association which, through its Member Sister City organizations, promotes cultural, educational and charitable exchanges and encourages beneficial trade and commercial opportunities between its sister cities and the Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana region. Over the past year, the number of activities and exchanges between Cincinnati and its sister cities has significantly increased. To chart the impact OKI SCC and its Member organizations have had in Cincinnati and around the world, the first Annual Progress Report was released at the first Annual Reception and Awards Ceremony on July 10, 2009 at the Ted Berry International Friendship Park. Award recipients included: Annie and Frank Mikel, 2008 Outstanding Volunteer of the Year; "Bands from Bavaria Downtown Cincinnati Oktoberfest" and the Munich Sister City Association of Greater Cincinnati, 2008 Outstanding Exchange of the Year; and Gerald Checco and Cincinnati Parks, 2008 Outstanding Partner of the Year.

For questions and to find out how you can get involved, please visit our website at www.cincinnati-sistercity.org, send the Executive Director, Bob Stevie, an e-mail at BobStevie@CincinnatiSisterCity.org or call us at 513-241-8800.

angular Artworks Project; Beth Tu Hoffman, President, Cin-Liu Sister City Committee; Michael S. Hyatt, Chairman of the Board of Directors, Sister Cities International. Photo is courtesy of Harrison Photography, Belfast, Northern Ireland.

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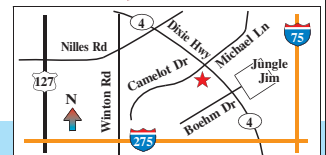
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