



ALBUQUERQUE

Sister Cities Foundation



July 2025

August 15th Obon Festival at ABQ BioPark. The Sasebo Committee will be participating in the festival. See <https://www.cabq.gov/artsculture/biopark/zoo> for more information.

September 4th-5th ASCF Chihuahua Delegation to attend the State of the City address by the Mayor of Chihuahua and other key meetings

September 16th to 22nd US-Japan Summit and Sasebo visit - still time to join. Contact Pam Feather, ASCF President by text at 505 980 5886 if you are interested.

September 16th- 19th- US-Japan Summit in Osaka, Japan See Page 11 for more information

September 19th-22nd Trip to Sasebo, Japan If you would like more information contact Kazumi KawaKubo-Todman by text at (505)-948-0205

October 3rd ABQ Engaged in a Divided World Conference at UNM 8:30am to 2:00pm. This is open to the Public. Contact Pam Feather, ASCF President by text at 505 980 5886 if interested.

October 25th-27th China-US Sister Cities Conference in Hangzhou, China

October/November Lanzhou China Delegation (Dates TBD) A member reception will be held. Look for an ASCF email with information.

January ASCF International Tea Date and place to be determined.



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Lanzhou Gansu International Fellowship Program

by: Lin Ye

The Program is sponsored by the Gansu provincial government for its international sister cities and local governments abroad. Undertaken by the Foreign Affairs Office of the People's Government of Gansu Province, the Program aims to enhance and deepen the exchanges and cooperation between Gansu and its sister cities and global partners in sectors such as economic and trade, science and technology, education, and culture. Since its inception in 2006, the Program has been successfully held for 16 sessions, with 359 international delegates from 63 countries participated. During the Program, delegates will get chance to better understand China and Gansu through learning Chinese culture, language, social conditions and modern development in classrooms and outdoor visits, so as to further enhance the mutual understanding, friendship, communication and cooperation between Gansu and the delegates' home countries. Since 2018, ASCF send 6 members to attend it.



Rachel Snyder in an interview



Rachel Snyder in a group tour

Fostering Global Partnerships and Community Connections

By Alana McGrattan

The Sister Cities Annual Meeting was held this year at the Albuquerque Museum on June 1 st in the Ventana Salon. Featured at the meeting was a tribute to Dr. Harold Bailey, former Chair of the Lusaka committee who initiated our Sister Cities relationship with Zambia. He was an inspiration to many in Sister Cities and his passing was a great loss to the organization. Diedre Gordon, who is the present Chair of Lusaka noted his accomplishments and welcomed others to share their tributes. Viktoriia Salova, our “Artist at Risk” grant designee displayed some of the work she was able to accomplish since she has been our guest in January of this year. President Pam Feather held the voting procedure for 2025

1. President. President Pam Feather will continue her two-year term until the 2026 Annual Meeting.
2. First Vice President. Two-year term. Although it remains vacant for now, candidates for this position are taken in the even years, same as for President.
3. Second Vice President. One-year term. Candidates were Alana McGrattan and Samia Assed. 25 votes for McGrattan. No votes for Assed. McGrattan was elected.
4. Third Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, one-year term as a group. Candidates were Dave Bagley for Third Vice President, Ramona Zamir-Gonzales for Secretary, Richard Buckler for Treasurer. All candidates were elected

Several Chairs gave updates on upcoming trips and events. There are upcoming visits to Helmstedt (June 1-20) and Sasebo (September 14 – 22). We will be celebrating our 60 th anniversary with Sasebo in 2026. We are re-establishing the Sister Cities Partnership with Gijon Spain and Albuquerque. There were refreshments and a raffle to provide hospitality to the occasion.

Conclusion

The Sister Cities Annual Meeting stands as a testament to the enduring value of international friendship. By sharing challenges, celebrating successes, and nurturing new ideas, participating cities continue to build bridges that transcend borders. The collective energy and optimism on display promise a future rich with opportunity, understanding, and collaboration. As we look to the coming year, the lessons learned, and partnerships forged at this gathering will serve as a catalyst—empowering communities to thrive together in an increasingly interconnected world.



**Arts & Culture Director Dr.
Shelle Sanchez with President
Pam Feather**



Sister Cities Annual Meeting



**Diedre Gordon paying tribute to
Dr. Harold Bailey, former Chair
of the Lusaka committee**



**City of Albuquerque
International Liaison
Alan Armijo**



**Kazumi Kawakubo-Todman
Sasebo, Japan Chair with Artist,
Viktoriia Salova**

ASCF Chihuahua Chair Yuri Morales-Mangone and CoChair Aimee Gonzalez Estrada represented ASCF as one of the local partners for the scholarship below

IMEBecas2025 Call for Applications is Now Open!

Are you a mexican student about to begin college or university in USA ?

Apply for IME BECAS, a program from the Government of Mexico through the Institute for Mexicans Abroad (IME), which provides seed funding to support your higher education.

This support is made possible thanks to the generous contributions of local partners of the Consulate of Mexico in Albuquerque, New Mexico.



You could receive a \$1,000 USD scholarship to continue building your academic and professional path.



Check out the full call for applications here:



<https://lnkd.in/gNSGJQGD>

Apply at: <https://lnkd.in/gN5GJQGD>

Helmstedt Trip June 1-20, 2025

By Nathan Young

The Albuquerque delegation, led by Helmstedt Chair Nathan Young, arrived in Helmstedt and settled in with their host families on June 8th after two nights in Berlin. On Monday morning they started their program by being guest at the annual Schützenhaus “hangover” Breakfast and welcome party. During the Breakfast they informally met with Helmstedt Mayor Wittich Schobert and other city and county officials. Following the breakfast, in the afternoon, the group had individual free time with their host families. Spending time with their host families was one of the most enjoyable activities during the visit. The official meeting with Mayor Schobert at the Helmstedt city hall or Rathaus was on Wednesday June 11th. During the meeting they learned more about Helmstedt’s history and some of the current events. For example, a new Amazon distribution Center was recently opened near Helmstedt. The mayor also emphasise how it is important that we continue to have citizen to citizen activities between our two cities. There was an enthusiastic conversation during the visit on creating a Sister City program that would involve our cities youth with a focus on soccer. This program could potentially include students from our Ukrainian Sister City Kharkiv. The Mayor of Helmstedt expressed his support and by chance the Helmstedt Albuquerque Chair Carsten Flores is a seasoned soccer coach. More news to follow as it develops. Diego Lucero, Deputy Director of the Arts and Culture, Nan Masland, Balloon Museum Director and Lynn Newton represented the City of Albuquerque during the trip. After the meeting with Mayor Schobert, Helmstedt arranged for the group to have a private walking tour of the old town. One of the highlights was for the group to enter and climb up to the top level of the best-preserved gate tower in the region- the Hausmann tower. From the top of the tower the group had amazing views of Helmstedt. During their time in Helmstedt they toured with their host families and friends to surrounding historical towns such as Quedlinburg and Celle. Helmstedt organized for the group to have official tour guides for most places that they visited. They also visited the former border sites of Hötensleben and Marienborn. Hötensleben is just outside of Helmstedt and has one of the best-preserved sections of the former wall and border between what was once East and West Germany. Marienborn is a preserved memorial that was once referred to as Checkpoint Alpha. Historically this checkpoint was one of the most important and was widely used for vehicles going to and from West Germany and Berlin. The Albuquerque delegation concluded their visit on Friday with a wonderful farewell party at Birgit and Carsten Flores home. They surprised the group with amazing local Turkish cuisine. The Albuquerque group also traveled before and after their time in Helmstedt to Berlin, Trier, Ulm, Munich, Rothenburg ob der Tauber, Neuschwanstein Castle, and Salzburg and its surrounding areas.



**Albuquerque-Helmstedt
delegation**



Albuquerque-Helmstedt delegation



**Helmstedt's Chair Nathan Young with
Helmstedt's Mayor Wittich Schobert and
Chair Carsten Flohr**



**Helmstedt Chair Carsten Flohr, Lynne Newton Abq International
Balloon Museum Curator, Nan Masland Director of ABQ International
Balloon Museum, Diego L. Lucero Deputy Director for ABQ Arts and
Cultural Department, Nathan Young ABQ-Helmstedt CHair**

Rehovot, Israel

Rehovot, Israel goodbye to Leora Jaeger-Siegel as previous Co-Chair and welcome to Andrew Tafoya Leverett as new Co-Chair Pam Feather, President

I would like to thank Leora Jaeger-Siegel for her time as Rehovot Co-Chair. She has brought a wealth of knowledge to ASCF. I wish her well in her current endeavors. ASCF will miss her.

Again, thank you!

Please welcome Andrew Tafoya Leverett, ASCF new Rehovot Co-Chair. Enjoy reading his BIO.



Andrew, born and raised in Albuquerque, is a bilingual educator with more than 8 years of classroom service in and out of New Mexico. Since childhood, Andrew has loved travel, and has had the great privilege of visiting more than 40 countries. He briefly studied abroad in Costa Rica, before graduating from the University of New Mexico with a bachelor's degree in Secondary Education. Post graduation, Andrew moved to Netanya, Israel serving as a teacher while also attending the Levinsky College of Education in Tel Aviv where he received an Elementary Teaching Certificate.

Later, Andrew moved to Plasencia, Spain where he also served as an English teacher in two different high schools in the surrounding area before returning to the classroom in Albuquerque. During the pandemic of 2020, Andrew found himself returning to Israel to pursue a graduate degree in Diplomacy and International Relations at the University of Haifa. Since returning to New Mexico, Andrew has become increasingly involved with organizations in Albuquerque geared toward urban renewal, multi-lingual education, and environmental protection and preservation. Passionate about education and fostering international connections, Andrew is honored to take on the role as co-chair of Rehovot. He wishes to cultivate deeper relations between Rehovot and his hometown of Albuquerque, while striving to focus on particular areas such as renewable energy production, rainwater harvesting, reforestation, and holistic urban renewal. He is a believer in Tikkun Olam and the power of collaboration. Andrew has a love for gardening, tree stewardship, and is a proud dog father of Edna and Güero.

Reflections on the Sister Cities International Annual Meeting:

July 21 – 23, 2025 Ft Worth, Texas

By Richard Buckler, ASCF Treasurer and SCI New Mexico State Representative

“Welcome to the World’s largest “Honky Tonk,” said former Ft. Worth mayor Kenneth Barr, a theme also echoed in a video greeting from Ft. Worth’s current Mayor Mattie Parker. Dozens of the over 125 delegates attending the Sister Cities International (SCI) annual meeting events from across the United States applauded and promptly voluntarily formed several lines on the dance floor, ready to learn Texas style line dancing. Already the atmosphere was charged by live country western bands bringing the house down. Wonderful BBQ and ice cream topped cobbler dessert, along with local beverages, had been consumed freely, but now—the payback. Can you dance for your food! What a great way to kick off a conference at the Ft Worth Stockyards.

But why hold the SCI Annual Meeting in Ft. Worth in the first place?

Well, Ft. Worth is the hometown of the current SCI Chair Carlo Capua. As one of Fort Worth’s first social entrepreneurs, Chair Capua co-founded Z’s Café, creating 165 jobs for low-income men and women over 13 years and feeding 150,000 people during the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2018, he was named Businessman of the Year by the Fort Worth Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. He is past president of the Rotary Club of Fort Worth and for the past year has assumed the Chair of the national board for Sister Cities International. Then, there is the historic interest Ft. Worth holds in post-civil-war stories. In the 20 years following 1866 over 5 million head of cattle moved from southern Texas through Ft. Worth and on to Abilene, Kansas—an arduous 800 miles through Oklahoma Territory along the Chisholm Trail, where the price per head of beef that reached Kansas rose from \$4 to \$40 per head. One notable movie with a New Mexico focus, **Chisholm (1970)**, features John Wayne as a cattle baron who teams up with Billy the Kid and Pat Garrett to fight the Lincoln Country land war. In essence, the Ft. Worth Stockyards was the perfect setting for all of us to reset and think outside the box. To help set the mood for the conference, earlier on that first day, organizers arranged for the delegates to enjoy the reenactment of “long horn” cattle pitter-pattering down the same street used in those wild west days, drumming a steady beat rivaling even the best of the country western bands playing in local clubs and restaurants later that same night. With this Ft. Worth Stockyard backdrop, delegates were able to focus for two and a half full days on learning about the best practices in sister city programs across the nation. Topics of discussion ranged from sports diplomacy to working with local government to even how to solicit the help of Embassies, Consulates, and Honorary Consuls to further the cause of world peace, one friendship, one community at a time. We learned that nationwide over the past two years SCI has seen an over 50 percent increase in city membership. Currently, approximately 425 U.S. cities are partnered with over 1800+ international cities. What a network!

For Albuquerque, that network includes Cincinnati, Ohio, who has had a partnership with Kharkiv, Ukraine since 1989. Under the leadership of their president of that committee—Bob Herring, Cincinnati has been able to help supply the Red Cross in Kharkiv with much needed supplies and humanitarian aid. Yet, President Herring met with Albuquerque's delegation to share best practices and wants to support Albuquerque's efforts to provide computers for "subway/underground" schools in Kharkiv, as well as promote possible sports diplomacy projects in soccer in the coming year that could bring some relief to war weary youth.

Passionate sponsors are needed for such big dreams. But perhaps it is such passion that is so characteristic of the SCI network, especially as so many of us are volunteers, passionate about helping the less fortunate. As citizen diplomats we are happy to be part of the bigger picture that President Eisenhower saw 69 years ago, a mosaic that can connect all segments of society across the world in people-to-people relationships, creating a synergy that is famously coined by the phrase "it takes a village."

Andrew Tafoya Leverett Rehovot Co-Chair

At the Fort Worth Conference, I had the privilege to attend and be a part of several informative sessions on protocol and best practices. I learned about Sports Diplomacy and the way in which it can be an instrument for peace as well as a vehicle for economic investment. I learned of the challenges and successes in the realm of city-to-city relations and citizen diplomacy. Yet, what I'm most proud of is the fact that I made many memorable connections during this trip through the various conversations I had and thought-provoking ideas that were shared. While I'm glad to have attended this event, I find myself eager to begin efforts toward collaboration, and in fact I am looking forward to the next conference to report back on the progress I have made.

Fabiola Melendez Albuquerque Spain Chair

Being a new chair for Albuquerque, Spain I was excited to go into the Annual meeting with an open mind. Little did I know I was going to learn so much on global diplomacy and different economic development opportunities. I had the honor to meet different City officials from all around the nation. Everyone had amazing individual perspectives. Every amazing individual has already worked on amazing projects and many shared that they want to continue their passion with having their future program ideas in mind. This definitely planted different seeds in my head on how to help make Albuquerque City to City interaction. Not only did I have the privilege of meeting Mary Jean Eisenhower, President Dwight D Eisenhower's granddaughter, I was able to have a moment and spoke with her. I was able to thank her and her grandfathers legacy in helping create healthy global city to city interactions over the decades. I was able to witness that legacy still happening with the annual awards. It was filled with amazing different projects. Thank you for giving me this amazing opportunity and opening my eyes to more amazing global diplomacy.



**Sister Cities International (SCI) annual
meeting attendees**



**Carlo Capua, SCI Chair with Mary
Jean Eisenhower**



**Andrew Tafoya Leverett, Fabiola
Melendez, and Richard Buckler**



**Richard Buckler with Mary
Jean Eisenhower**



Annual SCI Business Meeting

Youth Development Lead Represents Albuquerque at World Economic Forum HQ for Next Gen Changemakers

By Celeste Nuñez Salcido

Celeste Nuñez Salcido, Albuquerque Sister Cities Foundation's Youth Development Lead, recently represented the city and state on the global stage at the Global Shapers Annual Summit in Geneva, Switzerland July 9 -11, 2025, hosted by the World Economic Forum (WEF). Over the course of three days, more than 500 young changemakers from over 150 countries convened at the WEF headquarters to share insights, strengthen global collaboration, and scale local impact. Celeste attended as the Curator of the Global Shapers Albuquerque Hub, a youth-led initiative focused on driving social impact through community-based projects. The Global Shapers community, born as an initiative under the WEF, brings together young change-makers who are passionate about building a better world through hub projects.

For Sister Cities Albuquerque, this milestone is a continuation of ongoing collaboration with the Global Shapers Community. In 2023, the Albuquerque Hub partnered with Sister Cities to organize a Youth Panel at the "ABQ: Engaged with the World" Conference, elevating the voice of the next generation in global dialogue. Celeste's participation in the 2025 summit marks an exciting next chapter in youth diplomacy. Below are some key highlights from her time in Geneva:

U.S. & Regional Collaboration

Celeste helped strengthen ties with fellow U.S. and West region hubs, where many communities face similar domestic challenges like navigating a new order for global engagement. She also pledged the ABQ hub to a national U.S. project called Shred the Debt.

Strengthening Ties with Mexico—and Sister Cities

Celeste deepened engagement with Mexican Shapers—strengthening ties that directly support her work in international trade and diplomacy. One especially meaningful connection was with a Shaper from Guadalajara, one of Albuquerque's official Sister Cities. This interaction highlights the ongoing collaboration between young professionals in ABQ and GDL, demonstrating how city-to-city relationships can grow through shared values, youth leadership, and cross-border engagement.

A Global Full-Circle Moment

Celeste also reunited with fellow delegates from Summer Davos 2024, where she previously represented the Albuquerque Hub at the Annual Meeting of the New Champions in China. Their continued collaboration—now as curators—reflects the strength and reach of youth leadership across sectors like technology, entrepreneurship, and economic development. This momentum is moving straight into action now that Celeste has returned. Global Shapers will host an Annual Strategy Session to define goals for the year ahead, including community partnerships. ASCF has proudly committed to sponsor the hub's lunch during this reunion. Celeste

extends special thanks to Albuquerque Sister Cities Foundation for always supporting

the Global Shapers Albuquerque hub





Celeste Nuñez Salcido and other Global Shaper leaders



Global Shapers winning the Innovation Prize



Celeste Nuñez Salcido with other Global Shapers



All attendees group picture



2025
U.S.-Japan
Sister Cities
Summit

2025年
日米
姉妹都市
サミット

The 2025 U.S.-Japan Sister Cities Summit (September 16-19, 2025) is a milestone event celebrating the 170th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the United States and Japan. The summit will bring together 600+ bilateral stakeholders to inspire collaboration, explore new partnerships, and empower the next generation of global leaders. All 460 U.S.-Japan Sister City partners, elected officials, citizen diplomats, and volunteers are invited to the City of Izumisano, Osaka Prefecture under the theme “Celebrating our Legacies, Empowering our Future.”

2025 U.S.-JAPAN SISTER CITIES SUMMIT HIGHLIGHTS

- Izumisano Mayor’s Welcome Reception hosted by the Honorable Hiroyasu Chiyomatsu
- Opening Keynote by U.S. Congressman Joaquin Castro
- Opening Welcome by the sitting U.S. Ambassador to Japan (invited)
- Closing Keynote by former Secretary of HUD and former Mayor of San Antonio Henry Cisneros
- Full Day at the Osaka World Expo
- New and Milestone Anniversary Sister Cities Signings

To register please visit: <https://sistercities.org/sci-japan/registration>