

varied cultural backgrounds who live and work in, or visit, Concord--interact with each other in a variety of settings. We are in the early planning stages of this project, but are excited about its potential.

In addition to the above activities, the Council has been involved in working with local residents about rights violations, hate crimes and issues of discrimination. We are not professional mediators, but act as a resource for the community in finding mediators, sensitivity training, legal advice, etc. We are in close touch with the Police Department, the schools, the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination and do not hesitate to call in experts when we receive complaints from the public. We take no action without thoughtful consideration and discussion with those victimized, as well as the advice of police or other concerned groups.

We can be reached by email through our website cchumanrights.org or through the Police Department, or the Town House.

CONCORD-SAN MARCOS -- SISTER CITY COMMITTEE

Steven B. Bloomfield, Chair
Shirley Andrews, Secretary
Fiona Nauseda, Secretary
Nancy Kerr, Treasurer

Steering Committee: Andrew Della Volpe, Lisa Gutwillig, Sue Kurker, Seamus Vahey, Kevin Wholihan, and Ed Wholihan

Advisers: Sam Alexander, Al Armenti (former chair and co-founder), Debbie Barr, Erin Lynch, Kati Miller, Lal Minton, and Bryan Wholihan

The Concord-San Marcos Sister Cities Committee encourages peace and mutual understanding and socioeconomic development in Nicaragua, through programs of cultural exchange and economic assistance carried out in a spirit of cooperation by the people of Concord and the city of San Marcos, Nicaragua. Concord Town Meeting established the Sister Cities Committee in 1986 and reaffirmed the value of the Committee's work by a second vote in 1987. Voluntary membership of Concord citizens and voluntary support by means of financial donations and the contributions of goods and services from citizens in and around Concord sustain the committee's work.



Sue Kurker and son Kevin Wholihan with San Marcos school children

Projects in 2012

Committee chair Steven Bloomfield, treasurer Nancy Kerr, Steering Committee member Sue Kurker, and community member Fran Powell led an eight-day trip to San Marcos in late July and early August for ten Concord-Carlisle High School seniors to experience life in San Marcos and elsewhere in Nicaragua. Activities included family home-stays, athletic competitions, and community-service in San Marcos, and an excursion to the city of Estelí and a nearby village, El Limón, where the students learned about rural life through the teaching and experience of Steven Bloomfield's friend, Eric Meyerowitz, a medical student at the University of Pennsylvania.

While in San Marcos, Bloomfield and Nancy Kerr attended a meeting of the board of FUNDISMAR, established after many years of urging on the part of the Concord Sister Cities Committee on March, 30, 2012, by vote of the Nicaraguan National Assembly. Concordians had long believed in the efficacy of the founding of an independent entity with legal status in Nicaragua to receive funds, raise funds, and take on projects of significant scale. FUNDISMAR – the Foundation for the Development of San Marcos – is now a private, not-for-profit partner of the Concord Sister Cities Committee (and other potential partners outside of San Marcos) and the governing institution over the micro-bank established in San Marcos by the Sister Cities Committee, FECONDESAM, founded in 1996. During the board meeting, Bloomfield and Kerr were disappointed to find that FUNDISMAR had yet

to make a full accounting of the financial base of FE-CONDESAM, of over \$25,000, and they had not yet contemplated other projects of mutual opportunity and responsibility. The board did guarantee a full accounting by year's end, but at the end of the year a letter to Bloomfield from the board president, Javier Ruíz, indicated little progress in accounting for all of the loans or, for that matter, other FUNDISMAR initiatives. These will be agenda items for the new year.

During the summer visit, the group found that efforts to connect to the computer laboratory of the San Marcos Colegio Juan XXIII were very likely to be stymied in the future, as they had been in the past, so the Concord visitors decided to pursue a relationship of student-to-student communication with the high school they visited in Estelí. By December, a donated computer from CCHS had been installed in Estelí in order to pursue communications in English and in Spanish once the school year begins anew in Nicaragua, in March.

Sources of Funding

Donations from Concord citizens, as well as contributions of goods and services from Concord institutions such as the Concord Public Schools and Emerson Hospital, historically have sustained the work of the committee. In 2012, owing to concerns the committee had with regard to the viability of its partnership, formal fundraising did not occur for the second straight year. Only with greater reassurance of reliable governance in San Marcos, will the Committee reinstate its hopes for mutual progress and, therefore, the reinvigoration of fundraising initiatives in the coming year.

Future Directions

The implementation of mutually confident economic-development projects between Concord and San Marcos has proven to be elusive since the completion of the well in El Uval in 2010. The Committee hopes to restore some movement in this arena during 2013.

The coordination of summer youth trips has been a source of inspiration for Concordians and San Marqueños for many years. In 2013, the committee expects to cooperate with Concord Carlisle High School teachers, especially Spanish teacher Erin Lynch, to make possible another visit for experiential learning for Concord youths in San Marcos. The community-to-community

conversation enabled by these trips has become perhaps the essence of the Sister Cities relationship. The Committee website resides as: [http://www.concordma.gov/pages/ConcordMA_BComm/San Marcos](http://www.concordma.gov/pages/ConcordMA_BComm/San_Marcos).

CONCORD NANAE NETWORK

Tom Curtin (chair)
Robin Cicchetti
Sue Curtin
Kimiko Furutani
Kristina Joyce
Junko Kargula
Nancy McJennett
Shoko Miller
David Nurenberg

2012 was the twentieth year of Concord-Nanae friendship and the fifteenth year as formal sister cities. The relationship is rich and vibrant.



Nanae Visitors enjoyed many of the cultural experiences Concord has to offer.

Coordinator of International Relations (CIR) Ben Mirin added to the concordnanae.com website he started on beginning his assignment in the Nanae Town International Relations Section in 2010. By the time he finished his two years in Nanae, he had posted sixty-four videos of life in Nanae. There are timeless snapshots that include holidays, food, CCHS delegations, and ceremonies, among others. All Concordians are encouraged to explore the site. We thank Ben for his excellent two years of service to Nanae and Concord.

Assistant Language Teacher (ALT) Ben Haydock has been doing an excellent job teaching English to Nanae