



Welcome

to the Urbana Sister Cities Program

On behalf of the Urbana Sister City Committee, I invite you to participate in the Urbana Sister Cities Program. Urbana enjoys three Sister Cities International partnerships: Zomba, Malawi, Haizhu District in Guangzhou City, the People's Republic of China, and Thionville, France.

The international partnerships with our Sister Cities in Africa, China, and France continue to promote greater understanding between our cultures and peoples.

I welcome you to explore the many opportunities for involvement as we work to build new international friendships through the Urbana Sister Cities Program.

Dennis Roberts,
Chairman, Urbana Sister Cities Committee

Our goals are to:

- Develop municipal partnerships between U.S. cities, counties, and states and similar jurisdictions in other nations.
- Provide opportunities for city officials and citizens to explore other cultures through long-term community partnerships.
- Create an atmosphere in which economic and community development can be implemented and strengthened.
- Create new international partnerships which encourage communities to learn, work, and solve problems together through reciprocal cultural, educational, municipal, business, professional, and technical exchange projects.
- Collaborate with organizations in the United States and other countries which share similar goals.

The Urbana Sister Cities Program is a member of the Illinois Sister Cities Association



Sister Cities International Mission Statement

*“Promote peace through mutual respect,
understanding, and cooperation—
one individual, one community at a time.”*

Sister Cities International is a nonprofit citizen-based diplomacy network that creates and strengthens partnerships between U.S. and international communities. We strive to build global cooperation at the municipal level, promote cultural understanding, and stimulate economic development.

Sister Cities International is a world leader for local community development and volunteer action. We motivate and empower private citizens, municipal officials, and business leaders to build long-term Sister City partnerships. We believe that Sister City programs involve a healthy two-way communication and should mutually benefit the partner communities.

Envisioned by President Dwight D. Eisenhower as the ‘main cog’ for citizen diplomacy, the Sister Cities program gained formal momentum during President Eisenhower’s historic September 1956 White House conference on citizen diplomacy. With enthusiastic response to the concept, tens-of-thousands of Americans pledged their support to create a free and peaceful world.

Urbana Sister Cities Program

Urbana City Building
400 South Vine Street
Urbana, IL 61801

<http://www.urbanaininois.us/UrbanaSisterCities>

Urbana Sister Cities Program

Partners in Friendship with

Zomba, Malawi

**Haizhu District,
Guangzhou, China**

Thionville, France



Zomba, Malawi



Urbana has shared a Sister Cities partnership with Zomba, Malawi since the signing of our charter in 2008. This program was built on community ties already established with the small village of Domasi nearby. Urbana has worked in partnership with Zomba on several major grant projects.



Completed Ablution Block at Zomba Central Hospital

African Urban Poverty Alleviation Program

In 2010, the city of Urbana was chosen by Sister Cities International to participate in the *Africa Urban Poverty Alleviation Program* (AUPAP), a three-year project funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to alleviate poverty in African cities through locally identified initiatives related to water, sanitation, and health. Urbana collaborated with Zomba to address the most critical problems in these areas.

The \$115,000 project paid for the construction of new VIP pit toilet buildings at three primary schools and a large new Ablution Block—providing toilet shower, and laundry facilities for residents of the Guardian Village at Zomba Central Hospital—greatly improving the health of individuals caring for relatives in the Guardian Village compound.

Sino-African Initiative

In 2012 the Urbana Sister Cities program was invited by Sister Cities International to participate in the *Sino-African Initiative*, a tri-lateral project between Urbana, Illinois, Zomba, Malawi, and Haizhu District, Guangzhou City, China. The project improved the solid waste collection treatment program, made sewer line repairs at Zomba Central Hospital, and initiated a program of organic composting. The \$100,000 grant brought significant health and sanitation improvements to our Sister Cities partner.

Haizhu District, Guangzhou City, People's Republic of China



In 2012 a group of Urbana citizen diplomats traveled to Haizhu District, Guangzhou City, People's Republic of China, to forge a new Sister Cities partnership. This opportunity was initiated by Mayor Laurel Prussing while attending a water resource summit meeting in China.

The delegation met with Chinese municipal and party leaders in Haizhu District to discuss their participation in the *Sino-African Initiative* program. During this visit the Sister Cities representatives toured many cultural sites, viewed the city from the observation deck of Canton Tower, visited the Pearl River Water Park, and toured Guangzhou City's largest water treatment plant. Important connections were also made with professors at Sun Yat-sen University. The informal tri-lateral partnership formed between Urbana, Haizhu, and Zomba during this trip led to the successful completion of the *Sino-African Initiative* grant project in 2014.

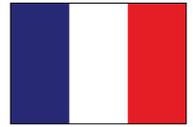
In 2015 a delegation of Chinese officials from Haizhu District visited Urbana. Tours of the city, the University of Illinois campus, and Urbana public schools' Chinese language classes provided many fruitful interactions.

The Urbana Sister Cities Committee looks forward to establishing stronger international relationships with our Chinese Sister Cities friends.



Members of the Urbana Sister Cities Committee and staff of Sister Cities International visit Sun Yat-sen University campus during the trip to Haizhou District, Guangzhou City, People's Republic of China, July, 2013.

Thionville, France



Urbana's most recent international Sister City partnership is with Thionville, France. In 2014 Urbana's Sister Cities program was invited to travel to Thionville to participate in the 70th Anniversary Celebration marking the arrival of Patton's American Third Army and the liberation of Thionville from German occupation at the close of World War II.

During these ceremonies the group observed the re-enactment of the capture of the bridge over the Moselle River by the American soldiers. Urbana Mayor Laurel Prussing read a proclamation of friendship between our communities and signed a "Twined Cities"/ Sister Cities charter with Thionville Mayor Anne Grommerch.

Reciprocating this memorable visit to France, Urbana hosted a delegation from Thionville in September, 2015. Visits to Urbana public schools, municipal departments, city parks, the University of Illinois campus, and attending a university football game were highlights of their visit.



Urbana Mayor Laurel Prussing and Thionville Mayor Anne Grommerch sign a "Twined Cities" Charter, November 16, 2014.

The Urbana Sister Cities Committee meets on the 3rd Wednesday of each month to plan its activities. You are invited to contact the Mayor's office or visit the city's web site to learn more about the programs and activities of the Urbana Sister Cities Committee.

<http://www.urbanaillinois.us/UrbanaSisterCities>