



OUR CORNER OF THE WORLD

LOUISVILLE SISTER CITIES MONTHLY

Montpellier / Tamale / Quito / La Plata / Mainz / Jiujiang / Leeds / Perm / Adapazari



AT-A-GLANCE

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March - a Celebration of Women

March is Women's History Month in the U.S. and March 8 is International Women's Day. In the US, March was designated in 1987 through a series of presidential proclamations to celebrate and recognize the achievements of women throughout history and in various fields. International Women's Day (March 8) had a long history dating back to 1911 and recognizes the social, economic, political and cultural contributions of women to the world.

Thanks to our Sister Cities colleagues who contributed to this issue, we get the opportunity to learn about the women trailblazers and changemakers that have contributed to our respective communities despite the challenges of their times.

I hope you enjoy learning about these women as much as we did. Please share with us your stories and ideas on this and future issues. Thank you for your friendship and support!

The World Affairs Council Team



Reflections from Louisville

This month we celebrated both International Women's Day and continue to honor Women's History Month. For this edition of our monthly newsletter, we wanted to highlight the perspectives and experiences of our Board Members and other supporters.

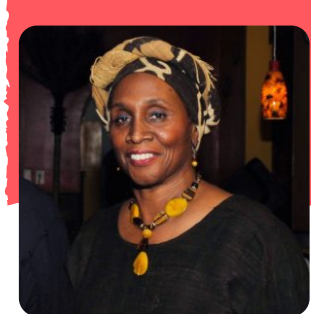


"The Honorable Ruth Bader Ginsburg is often quoted: "Women belong in all places where decisions are being made."

Throughout my educational and professional career, I have seen men make decisions that disadvantage women. Now, when I find myself in spaces where decisions are made, I'm committed to speaking up.

Even for the most courageous women, speaking up can be scary and takes confidence. Studying, living, and traveling abroad built that confidence for me. Also, learning about other people and cultures contextualizes my perspective in a way that strengthens it."

- Kristen Wallitsch



There was a time in my life when I felt that my being Black, and a woman was an obstacle in my trajectory professionally. Many decades ago, I worked for a company where I was the first to implement a vision and a project from bricks and mortar into a thriving social services program.

Later during my tenure in the organization, I decided to pursue a doctorate degree. I ask my supervisor, a white male, who seemed to be very excited about me and the success of the program for a reference. He seemed to be excited to do so. I was accepted into the program. Later, I went to the school and looked at his reference. I discovered that my supervisor had submitted a negative reference.

I obtained a doctorate in leadership education in 1999. It seems that the reference given was intentionally motivated to prevent me from obtaining entrance into the program. In my opinion his actions were both racist and sexist. "

- Dr. Renee Campbell



"As an educator, I have found both challenges and opportunities in higher education. Opportunities have sometimes been around the fact that I'm an African American female and fulfill, in the minds of some, two boxes. These two characteristics are wonderful and I am proud of both. However when I begin to perform in a certain way these two characteristics can cause people to question my ability and scare others. My role as an educator is based on certain beliefs tied to my race, gender, and world view.

As a leader in education at my institution, I try to challenge those rules and help others challenge those rules as well. There are also rules about minority women in leadership roles. I have seen several times that women of color are held to certain invisible standards that men are not held to. The challenge and opportunity is to know what those rules are and go around them, challenge them as often as possible, and to break them when can."

- Gloria Murray

Spotlight: Women Leading the Way

To celebrate Women's History Month we are highlighting two exceptional leaders from our Sister Cities in Germany and Ghana.



Mainz, Germany

Sister City with Louisville since 1994.



Picture: @feinkorn, Gaby Gerster.

Karin Schmidt-Friderichs, known as KSF, is a leading entrepreneur and publisher who was born in Mainz, Germany, and lives there with her husband with whom she has two daughters.

After studying architecture in Hamburg and Stuttgart, KSF changed jobs, trained in marketing and PR and, together with her husband Bertram, developed the print shop into the publishing house "Hermann Schmidt" in 1992. They specialize in books in the field of graphic design and typography.

As an entrepreneur, she has long been a volunteer for Börsenverein and Stiftung Buchkunst (Foundation Book Art). In 2019 she became only the second woman to be elected chairwoman of the German Publishers and Booksellers Association.



Tamale, Ghana

Sister City with Louisville since 1979.



Picture courtesy of Osman Mubarik Abu

Fatima Abdul-Majeed, a vibrant resident of Tamale, is a professional teacher, spoken word artist, women empowerment advocate and peace ambassador.

Fatima has worked for over six years in the community development sector focusing on the empowerment of young girls and women in rural communities. She has also been featured by DW Africa media house about her recently released spoken word which was centered on women empowerment in the rural community. She is inspired by the commitment of rural women in confronting economic challenges and oppression as her quota for sustainable development goals.

Volunteering is something that Fatima cherishes because it enables her to make an impact in her community and where she finds herself. She also likes traveling, reading and challenging herself to know more from others with different expertise.



Dancing into History: Perm Ballet School



Perm, Russia

Sister City with Louisville since 1994.

Perm is famous for its ballet school that is ranked third after those in Moscow and St Petersburg. The story behind the establishment of the Perm Ballet School belongs to an outstanding woman Ekaterina Heidenreich.

She was born in 1897 in Kiev. As an orphaned child she was brought up by her grandmother who later moved to St. Petersburg. From 1905 to 1915, Ekaterina studied at the glorious St. Petersburg Ballet College and was one of the favorite students of the famous ballerina Agrippina Vaganova, then the headmistress of the College. After graduation in 1915, Ekaterina was enrolled as a ballet dancer at the world-famous Mariinsky / Kirov Theater where she worked until 1936. In 1936, because of heart disease, she had to leave the theater, and from that moment she devoted herself entirely to teaching.



Picture: Courtesy of Perm Sister City

In 1942, Ekaterina Heidenreich was arrested on denunciation, sentenced to 10 years and transported to the Usolsk labor camp located in Perm region (in those years named Molotov region). During World War II, the Leningrad Ballet School was relocated to Perm. In 1943, thanks to the efforts and authority of Agrippina Vaganova, Ekaterina Heidenreich was released from the camp and was allowed to resume teaching at the Leningrad Ballet College located in Perm.

In 1944 when the besiege of Leningrad was lifted, the college returned to Leningrad, but Ekaterina Heidenreich, deprived of the right to leave the Perm (Molotov) region, remained in to lead the choreographic studio. In 1945, when the studio was transformed into a ballet school, Ekaterina Heidenreich became its first Artistic Director. In 1956, she was rehabilitated and was allowed to return to Leningrad.

It is noteworthy that strong women have been Artistic Directors of the Perm Ballet School since the original founding by Ekaterina. Today graduates of Perm Ballet School work at various theatres across the world – in Europe, Asia and in America.



Picture: Courtesy of Perm Sister City

Doing Good in Tamale: Hope Clothes Line Project



Tamale, Ghana

Sister City with Louisville since 1979.

Dr. Renee Campbell always dreamed of visiting Africa. That dream came true in June of 2005 when she visited Tamale, Ghana, located in the northern region of West Africa. At that time a domestic violence law was only something that was being advocated in the Parliament of Ghana. One year later, Ghana passed a domestic violence law.

Family domestic violence issues are a challenge in every nation, including Ghana. One day while talking to Rebecca Kukua, a native of Tamale and a social services advocate, Dr. Campbell told her about a project she helped to spearhead in Louisville called the Clothesline Project, an art-therapy and advocacy program for women who have experienced domestic violence. Rebecca Kukua was excited that this tee-shirt decorating project could help abused women in her village and give them a voice about the violence they experienced. There was no time during that visit to gather the women and introduce the project so Rebecca decided to work with the women's group of the village and plan a session during Dr. Campbell's next trip.

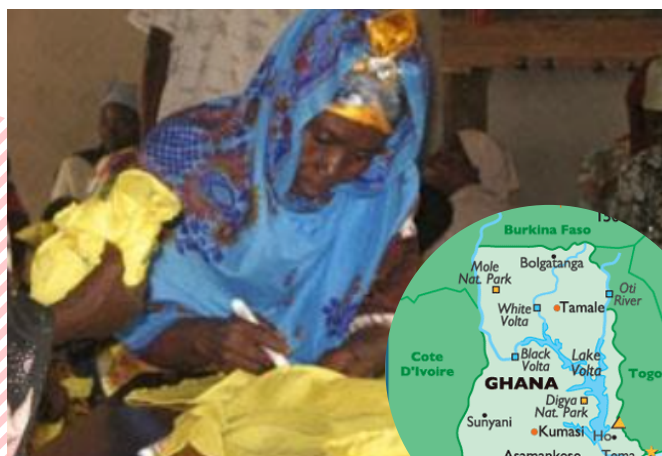


Pictures courtesy of Dr. Renee Campbell

Six months later the first Clothesline Project and shirt decorating session in Ghana called the Hope Clothesline Project was spearheaded and implemented by Dr. Renee Campbell and Rebecca Kaukua.

The Clothesline Project consists of sessions where women can express their own pain by painting words and imagery on tee shirts in a safe, secure and private environment. The shirts are then displayed on a clothesline as a public display of how widespread abuse is. The project alerts perpetrators that victims will not keep silent and gives women who might not ordinarily have a voice to tell about the violence that has happened to them.

The women's Hope Clothesline Project became a reality when one day, during a hot summer in December 2007 in Tamale, Ghana, a group of fifty women spoke out about the devastating violence that had been done to them. In a crowded hut women who could not write drew their feeling about the abuse they experienced. The women held hands with each other and screamed with joy about what they did that day. They chanted as they held hands. "We are strong and vibrant women with the innate capacity to heal."



Celebrating International Women's Day



Perm, Russia

Sister City with Louisville since 2004.

Sister Cities Lunch and Learn

The World Affairs Council of Kentucky and Southern Indiana hosted, in partnership with the Office for Globalization and Office for Women, a panel on "Women in Leadership" featuring leaders from Louisville and Perm. Russia.

This was a dynamic discussion about the unique challenges that exist in both cities and the opportunities that exist as well. You can watch a recording on our [Facebook page](#).



Montpellier, France

Sister City with Louisville since 1962.

Celebrating Local Women

The City of Montpellier hosted an event to follow live on [Facebook](#). A dynamic set offering, in turn, interviews, testimonies, conferences and artistic proposals. Michaël Delafosse, Mayor of Montpellier and Fatma Nakib, deputy mayor attended. There were presentations of the actions of Montpellier associations committed to the promotion and defense of women's rights. The second conducted by the association « Femmes et Science », focused on professional equality between women and men



Picture: Courtesy of Montpellier Sister City



Jiujiang, China

Sister City with Louisville since 2004.

International Women's Day

To celebrate International Women's Day, Jiujiang hosted a series of events. These included an online art performance, Chinese Calligraphy Exhibition, and other activities carried out by the Jiujiang Women's Federation and other relevant departments.



Picture: Courtesy of Jiujiang Sister City

WAC Team

Our work at the World Affairs Council is facilitated and supported by a group of passionate individuals that believe in the power of global exchange, dialogue and learning. They comprise of capable professionals at the staff level, supported by a strong and active board of directors and committee members who are community leaders and seasoned professionals.

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