

Sister Cities Annual Report Carora, 2013

2013 was another special year in our Milwaukee-Carora Sister Cities relationship. Below, please see some of our activities, including the planning of our upcoming Sister Cities delegation planned for January, 2014.

Jessica Luna is a Venezuelan student activist based in Caracas. She studies agrology and her main volunteer work is in urban gardening and the cooperative movements in low-income neighborhoods of Caracas. She visited with local faculty at UW-Milwaukee, as well as tours with the Riverwest Coop and Growing Power. She also delivered a public presentation, free of charge, of her work in Venezuela (on August 23, 2013, at Brewing Grounds for Change).

Erik Sperling, current law student at Georgetown University and Co-Founder of the Sister Cities relationship, was invited to monitor the April, 2013 elections in Caracas, Venezuela. He was also able to visit Carora while on that trip and meet and discuss with folks we have been working with there since 2007. MCSCC also hosted a Venezuelan election party in April of 2013, complete with traditional Venezuelan food, Venezuelan television via the internet, and skype video calls with Venezuelan friends in our Sister City. This was very enjoyable, and we look forward to doing more.

The Milwaukee-Carora Sister Cities Committee is partnering with Peace Action Wisconsin, Edward Mercado of Waya Tour, and the Venezuelan Consulate of Chicago to facilitate a Sister Cities trip to Venezuela in January, 2014.

This delegation, comprised of delegates from the cities of Milwaukee and Madison, will visit Milwaukee's Sister City of Carora and Madison's Sister City of Sanare. The goal of this delegation is not only to facilitate, in the tradition of Sister Cities International, a people-to-people connection across cultures, but also to facilitate lasting relations and partnerships between these four cities.

Throughout this trip, delegates will experience and learn about the rich traditional culture of Lara State, including music, poetry, and crafts. Delegates will also learn about new advancements in education, health care, and nonprofit initiatives in Carora and Sanare. Further, this delegation will seek to economically connect these four cities for mutually beneficial future exchanges of goods and services. We believe that this trip will benefit not only all individuals involved, both Estadounidense and Venezuelan, but will also benefit these participating cities at large. (Please see the attached itinerary, flyer, and application for this upcoming delegation.)

A highlight of this trip will be meeting with our counterparts in our Sister Cities that are charged with maintaining the Sister Cities relationship on their end. We look forward to sitting down with them and discussing more projects, moving forward. Edward Mercado and Omar Sierra (of the Venezuelan Consulate of Boston) recently went to Carora in June to touch base with these folks and work with them regarding our upcoming delegation. The Venezuelans are excited to host us!

We look forward to harnessing the success of our upcoming delegation and using it to build more bridges, and to ultimately expand our Sister City relationship.
On behalf of the citizens of both Sister Cities, I thank the City of Milwaukee for continuing to support this work.

Sincerely,
/s/

Mike Helbick
President, Milwaukee-Carora Sister Cities Committee

/s/
Daniel Pneuman
President, Peace Action Wisconsin