

THE BURLINGTON/ (BILWI) PUERTO CABEZAS SISTER CITY PROGRAM
15 BEECH STREET, BURLINGTON, VT 05404
WWW.UVM.EDU/SISTERCITY

2019 ANNUAL REPORT TO THE CITY OF BURLINGTON

Board Members:

Michael Bergeron, Peter Clavelle, Tina Escaja, Dan Higgins, Adele Hohertz-Serpan, David Hutchinson,
Jane Kramer, Patricia O’Kane, Meghan O’Rourke

MISSION

The Burlington/ Puerto Cabezas Sister City Program was established by the Burlington City Council in 1984 to support interaction between residents of Burlington and residents of Puerto Cabezas, a municipality on the Caribbean Coast of Nicaragua. While strategies have changed over the years, the sister city focus continues to be the creation of partnerships between like-minded groups and individuals in Vermont and Nicaragua.

2019 marked the first winter in many years that there was no delegation travelling from Burlington to Bilwi. In May we hosted a visit from Margarita Antonio, a long time sister city board member and community leader from Bilwi. Margarita’s visit was short but she made good use of her time, establishing connections with Burlington media makers Fran Stoddard, Gin Ferrara, and Lauren-Glenn Davitian. They shared their experiences as activists in community media.

Margarita was interviewed by Lauren-Glenn Davitian on **Channel 17 TV** and by Gin Ferrara on her local radio show, **The Upside VT**, on 99.3 WBTV-LP.

Here is a link to the interview with Gin:

<https://soundcloud.com/theupsidevt/sister-city-margarita-antonio>

Here is a link to the interview with Lauren-Glenn:

<https://www.cctv.org/watch-tv/programs/report-bilwi-interview-margarita-antonio>

Our most successful efforts continue to be connecting similar groups in Bilwi and Vermont. Mike Bergeron, teaching at the Bellcate School in Essex, has proposed exchange projects with two schools in Bilwi. Margarita and Gin are talking about radio exchanges, and in a conversation at Champlain College John Rasmussen discussed the possibility of a jointly created video between Bilwi and his students. The UVM Latin American and Caribbean Studies Program has invited Dixie to make a presentation about Creole culture on Nicaragua’s Caribbean coast when he comes to Burlington.

Our partners in Bilwi include Mujeres Creativas, Youth Teatro, Channel 22 video, and the Organization of Poets. Mujeres Creativas is currently promoting a citywide photo contest, inviting people to make images of themselves in places of local interest. Digital files of the work could be printed and exhibited in Burlington as a way of further introducing Vermonters to their sister city.

IN SUMMARY

The Burlington/ Puerto Cabezas partnership offers Vermonters a unique opportunity for exploring global issues through the perspectives of a long-term sister city relationship. Whatever someone's interest - arts, music, urban development, women's issues, media, or community gardening- we can arrange contacts with appropriate counterparts. We are always looking to expand the board and seek members with new interests. Meetings take place at board member Jane Kramer's house, 15 Beech Street, in Burlington, and we can be contacted through our web site: www.uvm.edu/sisterciy

Report submitted: Dan Higgins, Chair of the Board
September, 2019