

GRSCI *overview*

GRAND RAPIDS Sister Cities International

- About GRSCI (Why/Where/Who)
- What's next? (Strategic Growth)
- How to Support!
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About GRSCI

GRSCI is a 501-C3, non-profit organization whose mission is to build relationships between Grand Rapids and her Sister Cities by promoting understanding and mutual respect through exchanges in culture, art, education, community and economic development.

MISSION STATEMENT



(Why) GRSCI

GRSCI is the local organization of a global movement founded by President Dwight D. Eisenhower (after World War II) to cultivate understanding and peace through relationships between people—not just governments.

GRSCI upholds this mission in our community through mutual respect, understanding, and cooperation—*one individual/relationship at a time.*

Part of the Kent County
Welcome Plan!



(Where) GRSCI Sister Cities

GRSCI maintains formal relationships with:

- Omihachiman (**JAPAN**)
- Perugia (**ITALY**)
- Bialsko-Biala (**POLAND**)
- Ga District (**GHANA**)
- Zapopan (**MEXICO**)
- Gangnam Gu (**S. KOREA**)

These relationships connect our City of Grand Rapids to communities around the world and also reflect the diversity and global reach of our community.



(Who) GRSCI Board of Directors

All our volunteers and members help us keep organized and make these relationships possible!

(Exec Committee)

Katherine Lee Baker
Emily Smith
Kelli Jo Peltier

(Directors At Large)

Rachel Bartels Gray
Cara Glass
Veronica Quinto-Arranda

Omihachiman (Japan)

Benjamin Thompson
Mayumi Balfour

Perugia (Italy)

Denise Taylor
Leonardo Tombelli

Bialsko-Biala (Poland)

Max Golczynski
Natalie Lewandowski

Ga District (Ghana)

Michael Crankston
Tatum Hawkins
Laura Moody

Zapopan (Mexico)

Amanda Cisneros
Alejandra Guillen
Omar Cuervas

Gangnam-Gu (S. Korea)

Zachary Schutte
Joseph VanArendonk

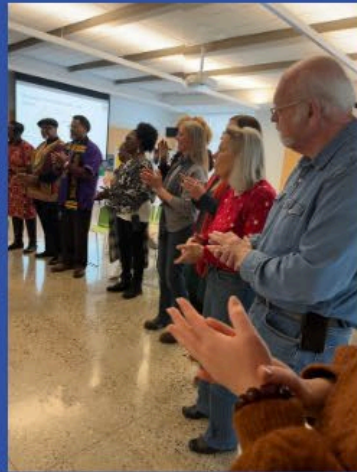
Dnipro (Ukraine)

Anna Kovalenko
Christian Bell

Vaughan (Canada)

Sasha Ahmed
Molly Grimes





What's Next for GRSCI

After years of planning and developing strong *business* cases, GRSCI is finally seeking to formalize relationships with our communities in:

- Dnipro (**UKRAINE**) - Official “Friendship City”
- Vaughan (**CANADA**) - Official “Inquiry City”

These two existing and inspirational relationships have already become a significant part of our community in Grand Rapids and we are eager for what the future holds as we grow and learn together.



(Why) Dnipro, Ukraine

Established as Friendship City in 2023 by Mayor Rosalynn Bliss, Dnipro serves as a regional anchor within Ukraine supporting communities through industry, infrastructure, and education.

- *One of Ukraine's largest cities and a major civic center*
- *Legacy manufacturing, engineering, and technical education*
- *Key logistics and infrastructure hub by Dnipro River*
- *Demonstrates civic resilience amid ongoing conflict*
- *Former USA Ambassador to Ukraine*

Bridget Brink is from Grand Rapids, Michigan!



(Why) Vaughan, Canada

Established as Inquiry City in 2023 by Canadian Consulate Representative Agent General Earl Provost, Vaughan is the fastest growing municipality in Ontario and serves as regional econ driver.

- *One of Canada's fastest growing cities; part of GTA*
- *Hub for manufacturing, logistics, small business growth*
- *Investing in transit, housing, planned urban development*
- *Demonstrates civic resistance amid ongoing tariffs*
- *Shares Grand Rapids' scale, growth challenges and regional leadership role!*





How to Support?

As City Officials:

- Authorize and affirm existing civic relationships!
- Support our international communities!

As Community Members:

- Participate locally and support mission-aligned organizations and community members!
- Help host delegations in Grand Rapids!
- Advance peacekeeping and citizen diplomacy!



(When) Action Timeline

FINAL STEPS (∞)

- Relationship maintained through GRSCI committees
- Ongoing community engagement and civic collaboration
- Annual review to ensure sustainability and mutuality

NEXT STEPS

- Joint presentation to City leadership and officials
- Public vote by City Commission (and reciprocal vote abroad)
- Draft agreement prepared for Mayoral signature

FIRST STEPS

- Community interest with development of business case
- Inquiry Committee formed with broad civic support
- Fit and readiness reviewed and approved by GRSCI



VOTE YES ON CITIZEN DIPLOMACY!

We need your VOTE of the confidence in the communities you represent and people you serve!

- *Thank you for supporting GRSCI!*
- *Thank you for your commitment to shared values of peacekeeping and partnership!*
- *Thank you for leadership that empowers the people!*



Questions!

Thank you for your support!

Join us in making an impact through diplomacy, peacekeeping, and cross-cultural leadership—right here in our community!



Resources

Please check out the following slides as resources!

Find us online:

<https://www.grsistercities.org/>





SisterCities
INTERNATIONAL





Government 101



