

# ANNUAL REPORT



2020



## CITY OF ATLANTA

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KEISHA LANCE BOTTOMS  
MAYOR

Greetings:

More than 50 years ago, Atlanta entered into a relationship with Salzburg, Austria, our very first Sister City. Today, our city boasts relationships with some 17 Sister Cities across the globe.

The Atlanta Sister Cities Commission (ASCC) plays an integral role in bridging the cultural and education gaps between international communities and Atlanta. The commission also provides a robust network for promoting peace and prosperity, while raising Atlanta's visibility as a global city through trade, economic development exchanges, and academic opportunities.

This past year, our global relationships have been particularly beneficial. Through ASCC, many of our Sister Cities have shared best practices and lessons learned as we all navigate a global health crisis—the COVID19 Pandemic.

I must say, and I am sure you will agree, without the ASCC Atlanta would not be the world-class city that it is today.

The City of Atlanta salutes the ASCC and its tireless efforts to cultivate relationships with our counterparts around the world.

Sincerely,

Keisha Lance Bottoms

# Atlanta Sister Cities



Ancient Olympia – Greece 1994

Brussels – Belgium 1983

Bucharest – Romania 1994

Cotonou – Benin 1995

Fukuoka – Japan 2005

Lagos – Nigeria 1974

Montego Bay – Jamaica 1972

Newcastle-Upon-Tyne – Great Britain 1977

Nuremberg – Germany 1998

Port-of-Spain – Trinidad 1987

Rio de Janeiro – Brazil 1972

Ra'anana – Israel 2000

Salcedo – Dominican Republic 1996

Daegu – Korea 1981

Taipei – Taiwan 1979

Tbilisi – Republic of Georgia 1988

Toulouse – France 1974



# About ASCC

The Atlanta Sister Cities Commission (ASCC) is an organization whose objective is to form friendship links between the Atlanta community and similar jurisdictions in other countries so that citizens can express their goodwill and common desire for friendship and the development of understanding through a variety of mutually beneficial programs.

The ASCC encourages the participation of a cross-section of citizens in the development of international relationships.

ASCC manages the process of developing Atlanta's sister city affiliations, and establishes and supports a sister city committee for each recognized link.

ASCC has a vigorous program of exchange activities with its sister cities, including educational programs, cultural exchanges, philanthropy, economic development and social development.

ASCC members' programs have been recognized by Sister Cities International and awarded for their community outreach, economic and educational development.



## Atlanta's sister cities activities contribute to the local economy through business and trade, tourism, education, and cultural programs.

Today, the ASCC oversees Atlanta's 17 sister city relationships and aims to increase the knowledge, goodwill, and understanding of the world through people-to-people diplomacy and exchanges.

It provides a platform for Atlantans to explore different cultures, expand academic opportunities, drive trade and investment, assist those in need, and ultimately raise Atlanta's visibility in the global community.

Through these strategic relationships, companies such as Sage North America and NurnbergMesse selected Atlanta for their North American operations; Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport expanded its global connectivity to Belgium, Nigeria, Jamaica, and the Dominican Republic; Georgia Tech established global campuses in France and China; more than \$80 million of medical supplies and services have been donated to treat more than 50,000 patients in Jamaica; and more than 300,000 people visit the Atlanta Christkindl Market and enjoy the rich German culture each year.

Through these programs, and many others, Atlanta's sister cities activities contribute nearly \$100 million to the local economy through business and trade, tourism, education, and cultural programs.

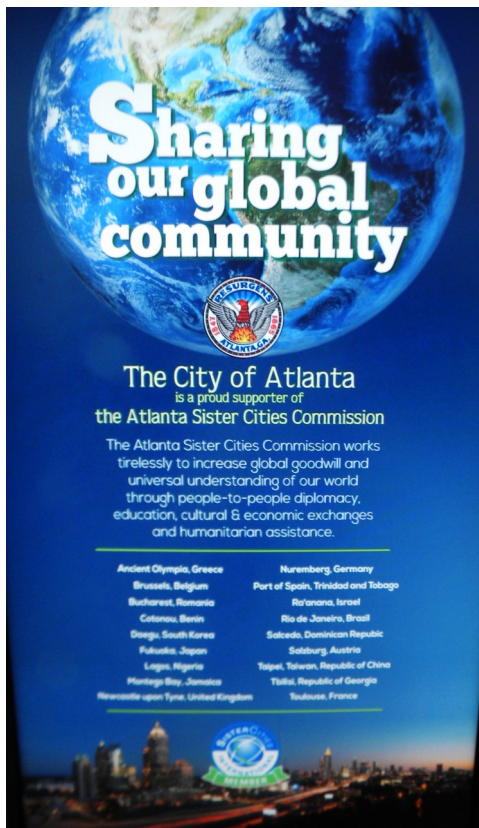
## Chairman's Letter



Matt Ohm  
Chair  
Atlanta Sister Cities Commission

I am pleased to submit to you the 2020 Annual Report of the Atlanta Sister Cities Commission (ASCC). In addition to the activities of the various committees, ASCC carries out its role and function in relation to Atlanta's Sister Cities program.

We were pleased to serve the City of Atlanta and its international community during 2020 and look forward to the continued growth and expansion of the Sister Cities program under your administration.



The Atlanta Sister Cities Commission (ASCC) was chartered by the City of Atlanta and codified in Atlanta City Ordinance No. 1979-71. The organization is managed by a Chair appointed by the Mayor of Atlanta and ratified by a majority of the Atlanta City Council.

The full 'board' of the Commission comprises the Chair, three additional Mayoral appointees and two members appointed by the City Council. In addition, the chairpersons of each Sister City Committee, or their designee, serve on the Commission.

Elections are held annually to select a Vice Chair, a Secretary and a Treasurer. Each elected officer serves a one-year term. Elected officials of the Commission are restricted to two consecutive terms in office.

The Commission is supported by members of the Mayor's Office staff who participate in monthly and special meetings, help shape the Commission's policy and act as liaison with the Mayor.

ASCC maintains a web site with annual reports, information on each of the sister cities and details of the process of becoming a sister city.

[www.atlsistercities.com](http://www.atlsistercities.com)

# 2020 Highlights

## Sister City Diplomacy & COVID-19 Virtual Summit

In an effort to stay connected with sister city partners and share best practices and challenges of navigating the COVID-19 pandemic, the Mayor's Office of International Affairs (MOIA), in conjunction with ASCC, organized in May the first virtual summit "Sister City Diplomacy & COVID-19: Looking Ahead to the New Normal".

Representatives of over 10 cities were in attendance including, Toulouse, France; Nuremberg, Germany; Taipei, Republic of China (Taiwan); Daegu, South Korea; Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Lagos, Nigeria; Ra'anana, Israel; Newcastle upon Tyne, United Kingdom; and Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.

The event was moderated by Paulina Guzman, Global Engagement Officer, who also serves as the liaison to the Atlanta Sister Cities Commission (ASCC) and its 17 sister cities.

Sister City representatives had the opportunity to share challenges they are facing with the current health crisis, and how they continue to engage in international diplomacy and promote cooperation among their communities.

One of the main areas of concern is how cities could transition back to 'normality' while still maintaining health and safety precautions. For example, Toulouse was able to reopen their nursery and primary schools, but classes are limited to 10 students. The City of Nuremberg reopened their hair salons under strict rules and safety stand-

ards established by the federal administration. Taipei focused on sanitation and disease prevention measures like disinfecting metro stations, carriages, and public equipment regularly. And Port-of-Spain continues to enforce social distancing practices in public areas like grocery stores, parks, airports, and beaches.

Beyond health and safety precautions, there has been an emphasis on equitable community engagement and leveraging resources across various disciplines. The City of Ra'anana has mobilized a network of young people who make phone calls to seniors and the elderly to offer resources and assistance as needed. Newcastle has leveraged universities and international partners to obtain information regarding successful public health standards and practices that are being implemented across the world. Daegu mentioned the donation of face masks to Wuhan (China), the first region to report COVID-19 cases. Lastly, Rio de Janeiro's representative suggested creating an alliance of sister cities for economic recovery best practices.

Following the conference, MOIA published a series of in depth reports detailing individual sister cities COVID mitigation problems. Reports can be downloaded from the MOIA site:

<https://www.atlinternationalaffairs.com/news-events>

### Sister Cities COVID-19 Reports



# Events In 2020

## 1. Vasilopita / January

Atlanta—Ancient Olympia Greece commemorated the New Year with the Annual Cutting of the ‘Vasilopita’ and with guest speaker, the Hon. Emmanuil Androulakis, Consul General of Greece in Atlanta.



## 2. New Year Celebrations / January

Atlanta—Bucharest: Celebration with the Romanian community in Metro Atlanta.



## Remembrance / January

Atlanta—Ra’anana Holocaust Remembrance Event – Rescue and Refuge – Rabbi Bent Melchior, Key-note Speaker.



## 3. Fete des Rois / January

Atlanta—Toulouse traditional French holiday celebration.



## Youth development / January

Lagos—Atlanta: Committee explored a partnership with Lagos East City Council on Modern Montessori Center to support youth development.

## 4. Treaty Celebration / January

Atlanta—Toulouse represented at the French-German Elysee Treaty Celebration.

## 5. Greek Film Expo / February

Atlanta—Ancient Olympia Greece sponsored the Film Expo featuring Greece's 2020 Oscar entry at Tara Theater.



# Events In 2020

## 1. Board Meeting / February

Atlanta—Toulouse: Meeting of members of the Committee Board.



## 2. Presentation / March

Atlanta—Ancient Olympia Greece sponsored a travel presentation by the Honorary Consul of Cyprus, Mrs. Polyxeni Potter.



## 3. Daffodil Dash / March

Atlanta—Ra'anana: The Annual Daffodil Dash 5K Run and Walk was postponed and organized as virtual event.



## 4. French Students / March

Atlanta—Toulouse: Traditional Welcome Brunch for GA-Tech-Lorraine Master Students.



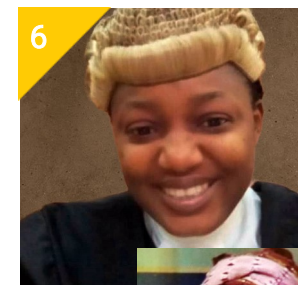
## 5. UK Trade Mission / March

Atlanta—Newcastle: Northern Powerhouse trade mission to Atlanta for exporters and high-growth businesses in the life sciences and healthcare sectors.



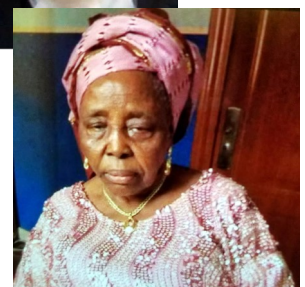
## 6. Committee appointments / March

Lagos—Atlanta: Two key professionals are recruited to strengthen the Atlanta-Lagos Counterpart Committee. *Photo: Attorney Florence Adewale and Retired School Principal Mrs. Bolanle Osikoya.*



## Youth Soccer Skills / March

Atlanta—Port of Spain Sister City Committee and Georgia Youth Select Soccer Association provided skills training for Atlanta area youth at Miller Grove High School in Lithonia and Briscoe park in Snellville.





# Events In 2020

## 1. Food distribution / April

Atlanta—Montego Bay is addressing food insufficiency in both sister cities. Food distribution in Decatur, GA.



## 2. COVID support / April

Lagos—Atlanta: Committee provides distribution assistance with fighting the COVID-19 pandemic with food and palliatives in Lagos.



## 3. Food distribution / May

Atlanta—Montego Bay: Food distribution program continues in Union City.



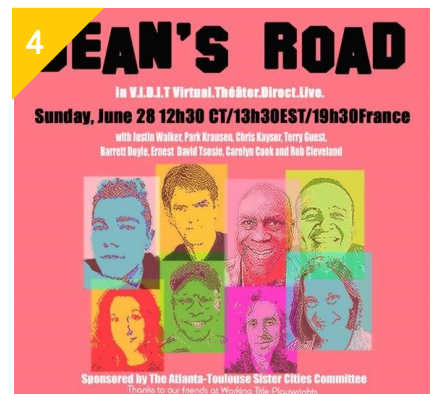
## COVID Conference / May

First virtual summit 'Sister City Diplomacy & COVID-19 Virtual Summit: Looking Ahead to the New Normal'.  
\*See Highlights section, page 6.



## 4. Dean's Road / June

Atlanta—Toulouse: ATSCC supported the collaboration of actors and artists from Atlanta and Toulouse with a donation and participation.



## 5. Food distribution / July

Atlanta—Montego Bay: Food distribution program continues in Atlanta.

## 6. Virtual Film Festival / July

Atlanta-Ancient Olympia promoted to the Atlanta Greek Community the virtual showing of Greek movies in the United States.



# Events In 2020

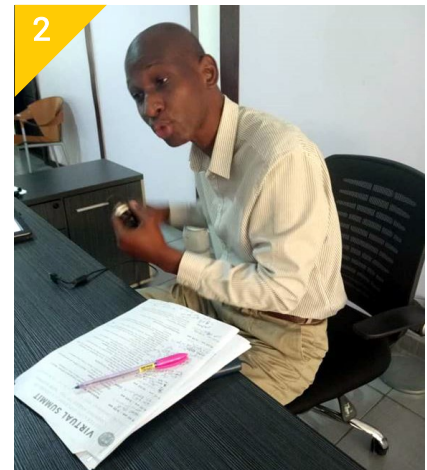
## 1. Global Diaspora / July

Lagos—Atlanta: Dr. Austin Esogbue, Committee Chair presented aspects of his work with Lagos and best practices at Diaspora Day global webinar to connect Nigerian diasporans from around the world.



## 2. African Sister Cities / July

Lagos—Atlanta: Committee members join a series of webinars to study best practices, opportunities, resources and viable projects for US cities to twin with African cities. Photo: Atlanta Lagos Cttee. Secretary General, Mr Bashiru Agunloye.



## 3. Sister Cities International Convention / July

Teri Simmons, SCI Board Member and former ASCC Chair, speaks at the SCI Convention on 'Strengthening ties with our global partners'.



## 4. Medical donation / August

Atlanta—Montego Bay: Donation of medication for patient suffering from a brain tumor in Montego Bay.



## Zoom social / August

Atlanta—Toulouse hosted a virtual cocktail event to reacquaint members.

## 5. Food tasting / September

Atlanta—Toulouse: Socially distanced, lunch for members at La Petite Maison.



# Events In 2020

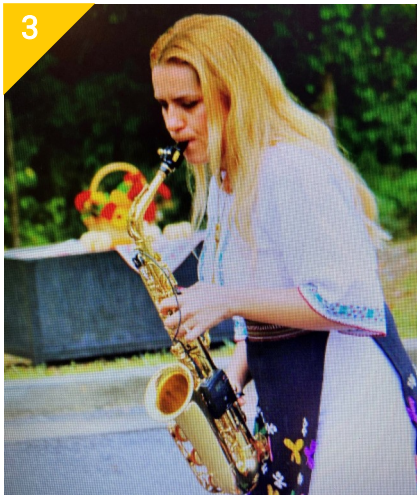
## 1. Official visit / October

Atlanta—Nuremberg: Commissioner Pat Wilson of the Georgia Department of Economic Development visited Nuremberg on his European trip to mark the successful sister city relationship.



## 2. Garden tour / October

Atlanta—Toulouse: Members met to tour the historic Smith-Gilbert Atlanta area garden.

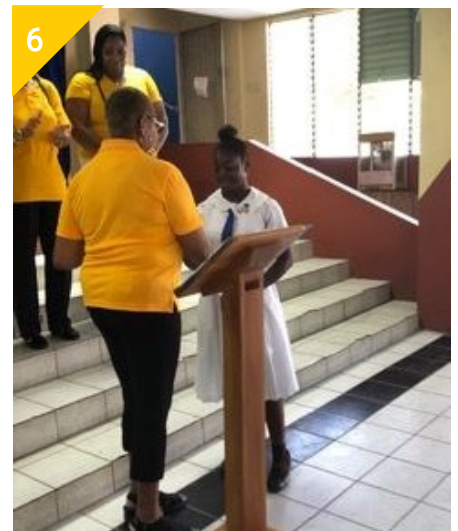


## 3. RomFest / October

Atlanta—Bucharest: RomFestAtlanta, an annual celebration and fund raising event.

## 4. Food distribution / October

Atlanta—Montego Bay food distribution continues in Jamaica.



## 5. #STOP SARS Demonstration / October

Lagos—Atlanta Committee endorses demonstrations against killings of innocent and unarmed protesting youths in Lekki, Lagos but condemns rioting, violence, and property destruction.

## 6. Scholarship / October

Atlanta—Montego Bay scholarship recognition in Jamaica.

# Events In 2020

## 1. News coverage / November

Atlanta—Nuremberg: Nuremberg press studies Atlanta's influence in the 2020 general elections.



## 2. SCI Connect / November

Lagos—Atlanta: Chair participated in the webinar on Emergency Municipal Management showcasing Sister Cities International's collaboration with Africa Fire Mission to provide fire-fighting assistance throughout Africa and explored opportunities for Lagos.



## 3. Hike Meet / November

Atlanta—Toulouse: Members meet for a hike at Mason Mills Park.



## 4. Fernbank Winter Wonderland / November

Atlanta—Port of Spain: Celebrations and Traditions around the World and the Theme of APSCC's Christmas Tree was 'Carnival in Trinidad.'



## 5. Homeless outreach / November

Atlanta—Montego Bay: Chair, Dr. Smith, packing bags to be distributed over thanksgiving to homeless women.



## 6. Holiday treats / December

Atlanta—Montego Bay: Christmas treats in Jamaica and in Atlanta Nicholas House.





## Atlanta Sister Cities Commission

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### COMMISSION LEADERSHIP

Mr. Matt Ohm, Chair

Dr. Margo Alexander, Ancient Olympia  
Chair, Brussels

Mr. Nick Modares, Bucharest

Dr. Charleise Young, Cotonou

Mr. John Lee, Daegu

Ms. Keiko Scott, Fukuoka

Dr. Augustine Esogbue, Lagos

Dr. Yvonne Smith, Montego Bay

Mr. David Smith, Newcastle

Mr. Matt Ohm, Nuremberg

Ms. Karen Clarke, Port of Spain

Dr. Arnold Heller, Ra'anana

Chair, Rio de Janeiro

Mr. Victor Ramirez, Salcedo

Mr. Allen Chang, Taipei

Ms. Nina Tickaradze, Tbilisi

Ms. Sherry von Klitzing, Toulouse