



LINKAGES



Rochester, New York, USA

SISTER CITIES

Velikiy Novgorod, Russia

Summer 2019 Newsletter

President's Letter

Paul Caccamise



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I turned on my car radio recently and the first statement I heard was "Russia is the enemy of the United States." If I had not been sitting in a 2017 model car, I could have sworn I was back in the 1970s in the Cold War era. I should not have been taken aback at such a statement. The media reminds us daily of the tension between the two national governments but the experience of Linkages over the past three decades with the residents of Velikiy Novgorod has been very different. In fact, the sister city movement was established to prevent and counteract such international hostility.

One sign of hope was the well-attended and successful Russia-US Municipal Forum held in Moscow in October. As you will read in this issue of the newsletter, the forum was convened to bring together representatives from Russia -US sister city pairs. The group committed itself to the principles of mutual respect and activities which promote better understanding and amicable relations between our two nations based on the principle that creating connections between citizens on a municipal level can achieve peaceful relations.

As we look ahead to 2020 and the thirtieth anniversary of our sister city relationship with Velikiy Novgorod, Linkage has been in close touch with friends in Russia to consider ways to celebrate our longstanding sister city agreement. Both sides are genuinely excited about the anniversary and invitations to visit each other's cities are in the works. We are also planning other activities both here and in Novgorod.

The success of Linkages as a sister city organization for 30 years could not have been possible without the commitment of time, energy and financial support of many members. Your contribution to Linkages this year will help to support ongoing exchanges and activities in 2020 such as the annual teacher exchange, the Russian music concert reception in January and activities related to the 30th anniversary. Thank you for your continued support and your commitment to the values of the sister city which dispute the premise that the Russian and American people are destined to consider each other

“enemies.” We will keep the membership updated about plans for special events and celebrations in 2020.

Paul Caccamise

Linkages and Rochester Represented at Russia-US Municipal Forum

In October representatives from 17 Russian cities with sister cities in the US and counterparts from the US met in Moscow to reaffirm their commitment to the principles of the sister city movement. Linkages was invited to attend and had the privilege to participate in the Russian-US Municipal Forum in Moscow.



The forum, designed as an opportunity for mayors and other representatives from sister cities in Russia and in the US to meet, compare notes about sister city activities and exchange ideas for future collaborations, was organized by Sister Cities International in the US and by the Forum of Russian Cities. From October 10-12, 2019 representatives from cities in Russia and the US met in the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation in the

Kremlin in Moscow to hear presentations about each other's activities as sister city pairs and about the value the exchanges have brought to the citizens of both nations. Barbara LeSavoy, PhD, Director of Women and Gender Studies at the College at Brockport, represented Linkages and the city of Rochester at the event. Barb is a longstanding member of the Board of Directors of Linkages and is also chair of the Partnership for Women's Issues.



The group reaffirmed the power of sister city relations as the force to strengthen and promote US Russian relations. The group passed a resolution at the conclusion of the conference emphasizing the importance of joining of common forces and coordination between sister cities to renew and strengthen ties between Russia and the U. The resolution also commits to developing partnerships and sister city relations between the two nations. In the resolution the group affirms the principles of mutual respect, understanding, equality, self-determination and cooperation between peoples. The resolution ends with a statement of mutual

purpose that underlies all sister city relationships including Rochester's relationship with Velikiy Novgorod.

"We are convinced that the implementation of the suggestions listed in the Resolution will contribute to the strengthening of peace and security, the development of international ties between the Russian Federation and the United States of America, the improvement of urban management in the field of economy, culture, humanitarian relations and serve the interests of civic society."

Paul Caccamise

Open World Group to Visit in May 2020

Linkages has again been selected by the Open World program in Washington to sponsor a delegation from Velikiy Novgorod in 2020. Open World is a federally funded program that brings emerging leaders from participating countries to the United States in order to give them firsthand exposure to the American system of participatory democracy and the American model of governance. Open World delegates are recruited from former Soviet Union republics and Eurasian nations including Russia and 16 other countries such as Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Belarus. The program allows American leaders and their counterparts to engage in meaningful dialogue about topics as wide ranging as governance, environmental issues, health and social services and role of media in civic society.

Open World specifies the topics of focus which differ each year. For 2020 the program requested applications for sister city projects as one of the areas of interest. Linkages applied to be a sponsor organization for a joint project with Novgorod around the topic of Prevention of Elder Mistreatment and Exploitation in Russia and the US. This topic was chosen because the last Open World group in 2018, which focused on Women Political and Civic Leaders, discussed the

prevalence of financial exploitation of older property owners in Novgorod through real estate scams and deceptive practices. Exploitation of older adults, in different forms, has also been identified as the most common form of elder abuse in the US.

Linkages and Rochester are in a prime position to sponsor an exchange in elder mistreatment. The area is recognized in New York State and nationally as a center of excellence in elder abuse services through the Upstate Elder Abuse Center at Lifespan. The area is also home to gerontology education centers at The College at Brockport SUNY and at Nazareth College. One of two geriatric medicine education centers in the state, the Finger Lakes Geriatric Education Center, is also located the University of Rochester.

The delegation of five young leaders from Novgorod and a facilitator will arrive in Rochester in late May and spend the first week of June consulting with experts in elder protection, elder care and with real estate and legal professionals around laws and procedures to prevent illegal and exploitative transfer of property rights. As always, the group will also enjoy a day trip to Niagara Falls. The Linkages Board will form a community committee to plan the group's weeklong program. The 2020 Open World group will be the 12th Linkages has sponsored since the program started in 1999.

Linkages will be recruiting host homes to house the six visitors (and most likely an Open World interpreter). If you are interested in being a host family, please contact program organizers, Paul Caccamise at paulcaccam131@yahoo.com or Debra Fromm Faria at dffaria@brockport.edu.

Russian Friendship Concert

Featuring Faculty, Students and Friends of
Eastman Community Music School

Thursday, January 9, 2020

7:30 pm

Kilbourn Hall Eastman School of Music

26 Gibbs St., Rochester, NY 14604

Free and open to the public

Reception follows in the Cominsky Promenade

**Presented by Eastman Community Music
School and Linkages of Rochester**

Read more, donate, and get
involved on our website,

linkagesrochester.org,

or [facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com/linkagesrochester)



CONCERT!

Thursday, January 9, 7:30

Eastmans School,

Kilbourn Hall

26 Gibbs Street, 14604



OUR MISSION

The mission of Linkages of Rochester, Inc. is to increase the understanding of the people, politics, and culture of Russia, with a focus on people-to-people relations with the citizens of our Sister City, Velikiy Novgorod, Russia.

Linkages of Rochester, Inc. is an all-volunteer organization that promotes professional, educational and cultural exchanges between our two cities.

Find us on the web at

<http://linkagesrochester.org> or email us at webguy@linkagesrochester.org

Linkages is a member of the International Sister Cities of Rochester (ISCOR). Veliky Novgorod, Russia is one of Rochester's 12 sister cities.



Linkages of Rochester

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CONTENTS

President's Letter pg. 1

Teacher Exchange pg. 2

Yale Russian Chorus pg. 3

Vladimir Yarish pg. 3

Save the Date! pg. 4