

EPSCA NEWS

Quarterly Newsletter - <https://www.epsistercities.org>

Sister Cities revitalized!

Over a period of over 3 years, the COVID-19 pandemic brought many changes to our lives. Estes Park’s sister city relationship with Monteverde, Costa Rica, was another casualty of the global crisis. Starting in 2020, Estes Park Sister Cities Association (EPSCA) was inactive to the point of losing its charter with the international matching agency, losing its 501(c)3 nonprofit status with the IRS as well as its registration with the Colorado Secretary of State. In early 2023, a group of interested people began efforts to revitalize the EPSCA.

In the new year of 2024, there’s a newly elected board of directors and new membership categories to encourage the continuation and growth of our town’s partnership with Monteverde. Elsewhere in this newsletter, we’ve outlined the various categories of membership and some of the immediate goals and objectives of EPSCA. And we encourage you to be part of this citizen diplomacy effort!



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“In early 2023, a group of interested people began efforts to revitalize the Estes Park Sister Cities Association.”



EPSCA Interim President Cynda Basch presents information about Estes Park’s relationship with Monteverde, Costa Rica, at the annual meeting in September, 2023.



President's welcome

Dear friends, I am thrilled to announce the revitalization of the Estes Park Sister Cities Association! As the newly elected president of the board, I am eager to begin programming and working with our Sister City, Monteverde, a beautiful city nestled in the mountains of Costa Rica.

Before I begin discussing our plans for the future, I would like to take a moment to thank our interim board president for the past year, Cynda Basch, for her years of dedicated service. Under her leadership, the EPSCA nonprofit status was reinstated and we have been reconnected to contacts in Monteverde. We are indebted to her and Chuck Scott for sharing their knowledge and experience as previous board members.



Carlie Bangs

As a board, we believe that rebuilding this partnership with Monteverde will provide many benefits to our community. We will have the chance to exchange ideas, cultural practices, and experiences with our sister city. This will help us to broaden our horizons and deepen our understanding of the world around us. Additionally, we hope that the exchange of both students and adults will foster new opportunities for art, tourism, education, and cultural understanding. As board president, I am especially excited about the potential for collaboration in areas such as ecotourism, environmental sustainability, and conservation. Monteverde is known for its commitment to protecting the natural world, and Estes Park can learn a great deal from their efforts. We hope to work together to find new ways to preserve our planet for future generations.

In the coming months, the board will be collaborating with the Estes Park School District and community stakeholders to explore ways to deepen our connection with Monteverde. We are eager to hear your ideas and suggestions for how we can make the most of this partnership. We believe that this collaboration has the potential to strengthen our community and enrich our lives in countless ways. Thank you for your support, and I look forward to sharing more updates with you as this exciting new journey unfolds.

Our current board would like to thank you for your support:

Dave Thomas, Sean Jurgens, Mike Harris, Cynda Basch, Chuck Scott, Susan Taylor, and Barbara Werner

Sincerely, Carlie Bangs, Board President



Chuck Scott brings Sister Cities experience to board

Board member Chuck Scott first got involved with EPSCA in 2013 when he became the Estes Park High School principal. Aware of its value for the students, he worked to get the program started again after it had lapsed for a few years. As a result, two-way student exchanges continued until the COVID-19 pandemic interruption in 2020.

In 2016, along with the Town Mayor and a delegation of other adults, Chuck took advantage of the opportunity to see Monteverde himself. During that visit, town officials in both communities re-signed a Sister Cities agreement. Potential library and business connections were explored as well. Chuck recalls touring the Cloud Forest Reserve, a local coffee farm and the public school.

Environmental science has been the major focus of these student exchanges.

RMNP has offered housing and science-related activities in the National Park for the Costa Rican students. Similarly, in Monteverde, the Cloud Forest personnel conducted activities for the Estes Park students.

Now Chuck would like to see the high school program expanded to offer students an intercultural experience that includes language learning, music and art.

He also envisions adding a second sister city for Estes Park, possibly in Europe.



EPSCA membership categories:



Individual Membership
Student/Teacher \$10.00
Individual \$25.00
Family (max 4 people) \$50.00
"Cerro Amigo" \$100.00

Organizational Membership
Organization/corporate \$200.00

Photos from previous exchanges

Photos from student exchange in 2019



EPSCA Board of Directors:



**Carlie Bangs,
President**

- background in program development, community advocacy, and environmental education; served as acting Secretary in 2023 as EPSCA was revitalized
- currently works for the Town of Estes Park as the Housing and Childcare Manager
- raising three daughters in the Estes Park School District

- Employed by Presbyterian Church (USA) for 11-1/2 years in México; coordinated visits by short-term U.S. delegations, established sister-church partnerships
- handled logistics for visiting groups including lodging, meals, work projects, and educational opportunities
- bilingual (English/Spanish), teaches ESL and Spanish



**Dave Thomas,
Vice President**



**Sean Jurgens,
Secretary**

- family owns and operates Quality Inn in Estes Park; representatives from Monteverde stayed at the Inn
- at CSU, studied business administration and Spanish
- wife teaches at the elementary school
- lobbyist for lodging

- licensed Certified Public Accountant for over 50 years; tenured full Professor of Accounting at St. Edward's University
- active in industry serving as Chief Financial Officer of various companies across several industries; activities included banking and loan arrangements, capital budgeting, maintaining liaison with investors and lenders, implementing and maintaining financial control systems



**Mike Harris,
Treasurer**



Cynda Basch

- member of EPSCA since 2019; interim president in 2023
- participated in hosting student science exchange in EP in 2018 and 2019; chaperoned student science exchange to Monteverde in 2019
- Bilingual (English/Spanish) high school teacher and librarian

- involved in the Sister Cities program since 2013; board member since 2014; acted as Vice President in 2023
- represented Estes Park in Monteverde in 2016 at a re-signing of our commitment to the program; helped with several student exchanges over the years



Chuck Scott



Susan Taylor

- passion for cross-cultural education and relationships, enthusiasm for our outdoor-focused community
- Program Director for Estes Park Center/YMCA of the Rockies, works with staff from all over the world; involved in youth development through pre-school, day camp, and environmental education

- career focused on language teaching (ESL) and intercultural communication and training; trilingual (English/French/Spanish)
- directed 5 academic semester abroad programs in England and Ghana; included homestays, work projects, and contemporary culture seminars with local experts; organized homestays for The Experiment in International Living; participated in an informal citizen exchange between Crozon, France and Nederland, CO



**Barbara
Werner**

