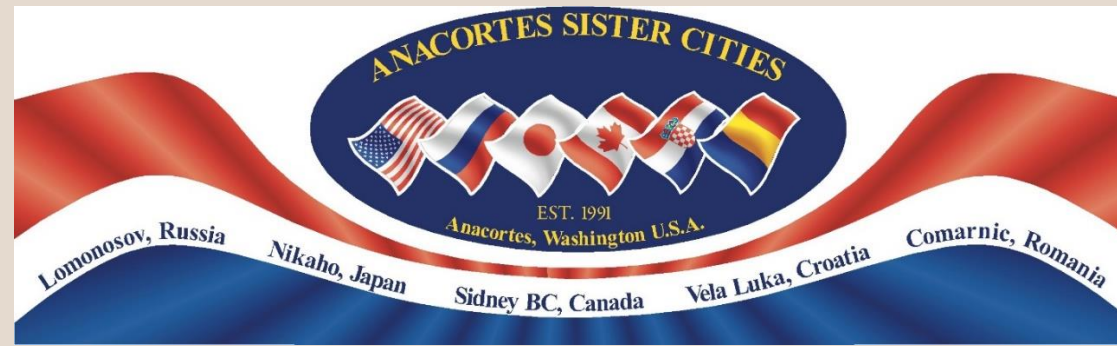




The ASCA Story



Anacortes Sister Cities Association

Who are they? What do they do? How do they fund their projects?

The short answer is that, like all 2000 international Sister Cities organizations in 140 countries, Anacortes Sister Cities Association (ASCA) is focused on promoting peaceful connections, one city, one village, one family, one person at a time. Members share each other's culture, food, home, and have fun creating life-long friendships.

President Dwight Eisenhower, who knew more than most about how war destroys human connections, in 1955 initiated the person-to-person organization that became Sister Cities International (SCI). He would be proud of the results of his efforts to bring people of various nationalities back together.

Individual Sister Cities have the freedom, within SCI guidelines, to plot their own course, to find their own ways to strengthen international human relationships, to create youth exchange and education programs, to foster adult adventures, and to have a great deal of fun doing so.

Since 1991, ASCA has indeed plotted its own course, or should we say, courses - many courses with many international folks, some of whom are not even official members, just friends enjoying the ride.

ASCA's timeline:

ASCA was founded in **1991**, soon after the Berlin Wall was torn down.

Lomonosov, Russia - Sister Cities relationship was established in **1991**. Lomonosov, originally known as Oranienbaum, was founded in 1711 by Peter the Great and his right-hand man, Alexander Menshikov, just eight years after the founding of St Petersburg, and about 20 miles west of St Petersburg, on the Gulf of Finland. Oranienbaum played an important role in Russia's history during the time of the Czars.



Lomonosov Town Square



Rendering of original Menshikov Palace



Celebrating 300 Years



Catherine the Great's Chinese Palace in Lomonosov

Anacortes and Lomonosov have enjoyed student exchanges, adult trips, and cultural, traditional events, including, in 2011, the celebration of the 300th anniversary of Lomonosov's founding.



Celebrating 300 Years in Lomonosov



Novoselye Folk Dancers



Lomonosov students visit Anacortes



Chaperone

Nikaho, Japan - Sister Cities relationship was established in **1996**. Nikaho (Kisakata) is a beautiful city, similar in size and surroundings to Anacortes. Nikaho is located on the Sea of Japan, with Mt. Chokai in the background, Anacortes on Puget Sound, with Mt. Baker in the background. Student, adult, and cultural exchanges have been frequent and rewarding for all participants.



Nikaho with Mt Chokai in the background



20th Anniversary gift to Nikaho



Mayors meet in Anacortes



Friends meet in Nikaho



Mayors meet in Nikaho

Sidney BC, Canada - Sister Cities relationship was established in **1996**. Anacortes and Sidney found common ground on several occasions trying to save the Anacortes/Sidney ferry fun, resulting in the formation of this relationship. In the process, Anacortes became enchanted by the idea of starting a Town Crier program, a long tradition in Canada. Decades later, Anacortes continues to enjoy the unique and energetic tradition. Sister Cities members in both communities participate in each other's patriotic and holiday parades, and enjoy each other's art.



Anacortes Independence Day Parade



Sidney Canada Day Parade

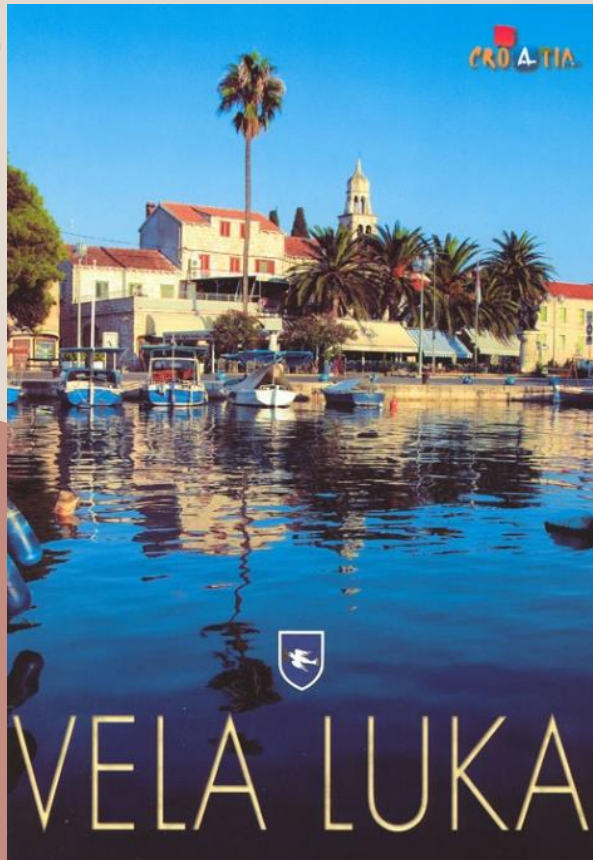


Welcome to Sidney



Two Cities bound by a Ferry

Vela Luka, Croatia - Sister Cities relationship was established in **2004**. Vela Luka is located along the stunning Croatian coast, on the west end of the Island of Korcula, just north of Dubrovnik. Anacortes and Vela Luka were connected long before 2004, as immigrants traveled to Anacortes at various times because of economic and political conditions. The Croatian community in Anacortes facilitated this relationship.



“Vela Luka” means Big Bay



Flags flying in front of Vela Luka City Hall



Sword Dance performance in Vela Luka

Comarnic, Romania - Sister Cities relationship was established in **2021**. Comarnic is located about one hour north of Bucharest and just south of the famous Bran Castle of Dracula fame. The relationship began in 2003, but took until 2021 to become official. In the intervening years, many trips, cultural adventures, and a three-day wedding added color to the relationship.

In 2022 an unwanted and unfortunate world event brought Romania into the spotlight. As Russia invaded Ukraine, approximately one million refugees crossed Romania's border seeking safety. Many found their way to Comarnic. ASCA and friends in Comarnic partnered to provide financial assistance to the refugees. ASCA members, donated, either directly to Comarnic or to other Ukrainian refugee programs, more than \$40,000.



Comarnic dance group in and around Anacortes



Comarnic's "Deer Whisperer" in Anacortes



Comarnic Students by Saddlebag Island

Back to one of the original questions, **“What do they do?”**

Glad you asked. Anacortes Sister Cities has developed and funded numerous programs over the last three decades, including:

Student Exchanges – Formal exchanges include a 30-year exchange between middle school students in Anacortes and Nikaho, Japan, and a new high school exchange between students in Anacortes and Comarnic, Romania. Less structured exchanges are arranged between students in Anacortes and those in Lomonosov, Russia, and Vela Luka, Croatia. Hundreds of Anacortes students have enjoyed the unique experience of meeting international students whose background and culture serve to broaden the world view of these students.



Anacortes students in Japan



Japanese students in Anacortes



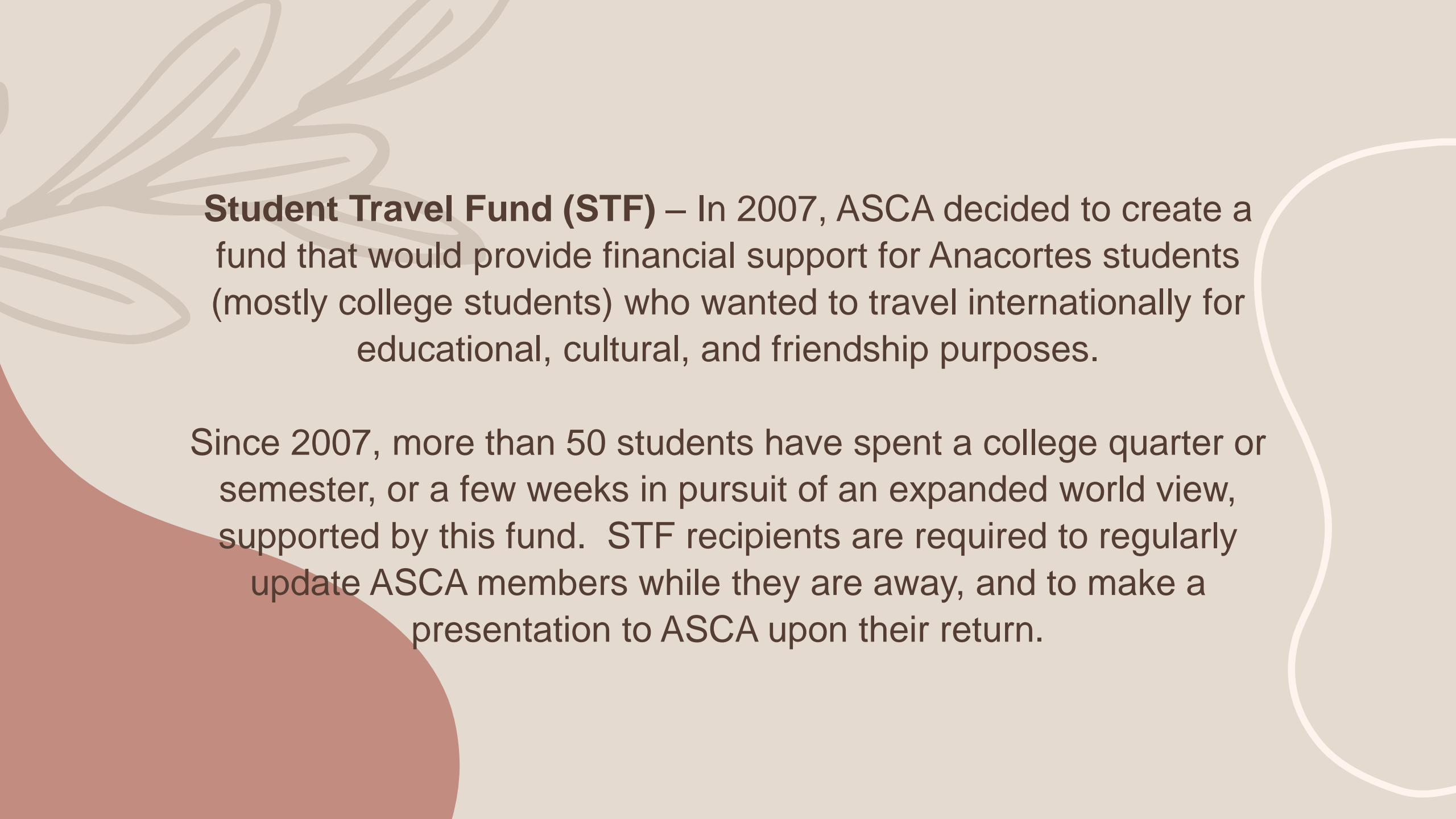
Romanian students and adults in Anacortes



Anacortes students in Russia



Anacortes students in Croatia



Student Travel Fund (STF) – In 2007, ASCA decided to create a fund that would provide financial support for Anacortes students (mostly college students) who wanted to travel internationally for educational, cultural, and friendship purposes.

Since 2007, more than 50 students have spent a college quarter or semester, or a few weeks in pursuit of an expanded world view, supported by this fund. STF recipients are required to regularly update ASCA members while they are away, and to make a presentation to ASCA upon their return.



Anacortes Student Travel Fund (STF) student in Peru ...

... in Thailand ...



... in Lithuania ...



... in Switzerland ...



... in Spain ...



... in Germany ...



... in Nicaragua ...



... in Italy ...



... in Brazil ...

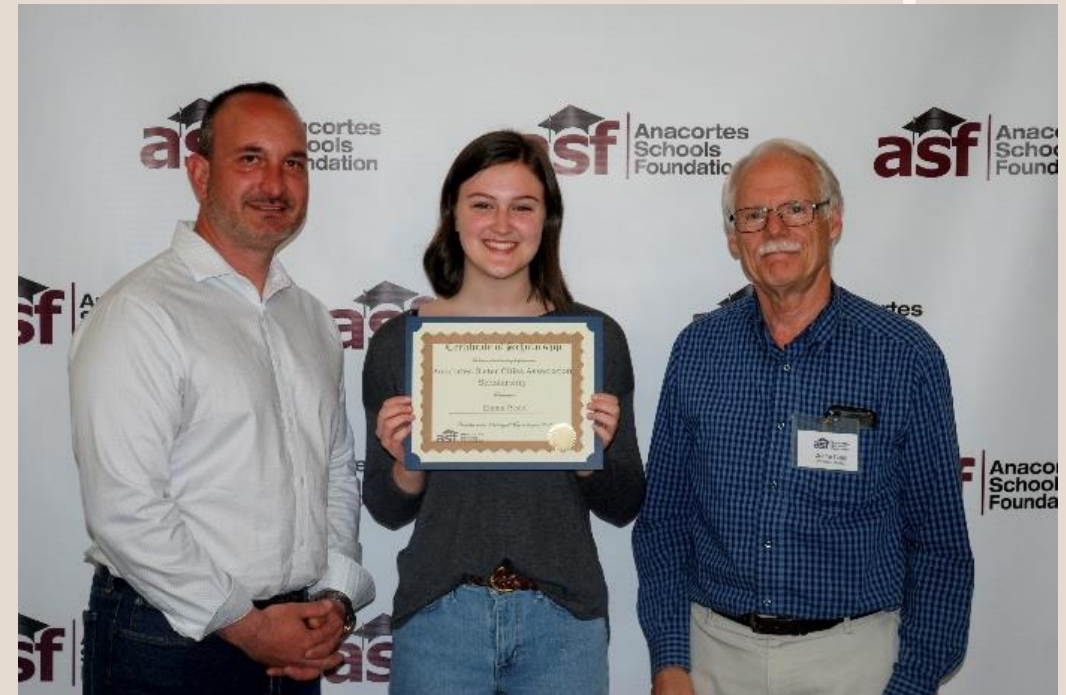


... in Ireland ...



... in Spain

Student Scholarships – Since 2013, in partnership with the Anacortes Schools Foundation, ASCA has handed out scholarships to graduating Anacortes High School and college students who are pursuing a career in fields related to international studies.



ASCA Scholarships

International Youth and Adult Performing Groups:

Lomonosov, Russia – The Kosokov family, national folk singing champions, performed in Anacortes. The Novoselye folk singing group entertained a group of Anacortes folks in Lomonosov. Later, the group traveled to Anacortes and performed at several venues in the area, thoroughly enjoyed by all audiences.



Dancing with Novoselye group near Lomonosov



Novoselye performing in Mukilteo ...



... and with Anacortes HS students



Lomonosov's Novoselye group visit Anacortes City Hall

Nikaho (Kisakata), Japan – The high-energy Taiko drummers performed on two occasions at the Anacortes Arts Festival, bringing electric energy to anyone within hearing distance. Every student and adult trip to Nikaho has enjoyed a Taiko performance.

Following a Kyudo (traditional Samurai Archery) performance in Nikaho for an ASCA audience, performers were invited to Anacortes, performing several times on the Transit Shed dock, overlooking the Guemes Chanel, for hundreds of Anacortes Arts Festival attendees.

Nikaho's Calligraphy and Tea Ceremony were demonstrated at the Arts Festival as well.



Taiko Drummers in Nikaho



Kyudo in Anacortes ...



... and in Nikaho



Tea Ceremony in Anacortes



Calligraphy Workshop in Anacortes

Vela Luka, Croatia – With a sizable Croatian community who've called Anacortes home for decades, it is only natural that a Sister Cities relationship between the two cities would develop.

Performing groups like Kumpanija (traditional sword dancers) and Klapa Vela Luka (a capella singers) have displayed their remarkable talents in front of Anacortes audiences, as well as in numerous surrounding cities.

They have performed at Seattle's CroatiaFest. ASCA was one of the founding partners of CroatiaFest in 2004. Croatian food and culture have been on display in Anacortes during fundraising events.



Kumpanija in Brodniak Hall in Anacortes



Kumpanija and Klapa in Brodniak Hall in Anacortes



Klapa Vela Luka in Anacortes



Kumpanija in Anacortes



Klapa Vela Luka in Anacortes along with Anacortes dance group and Seattle band



Klapa Vela Luka in Anacortes City Hall with Mayor



Klapa Vela Luka performing at Senior Center and at Anacortes Rotary



Klapa Vela Luka performing at sea

Comarnic, Romania – The Martha Bibescu Children’s Club has been the nest for developing the traditional dancing and singing talents that have been on display in various parts of Europe and in Anacortes. The performers with stunning costumes and skills have performed on the main stage at the Anacortes Arts Festival on two occasions and in numerous local communities.



Comarnic dancers in Anacortes ...



... and in Comarnic



Comarnic Singers and Dancers in Anacortes and Comarnic

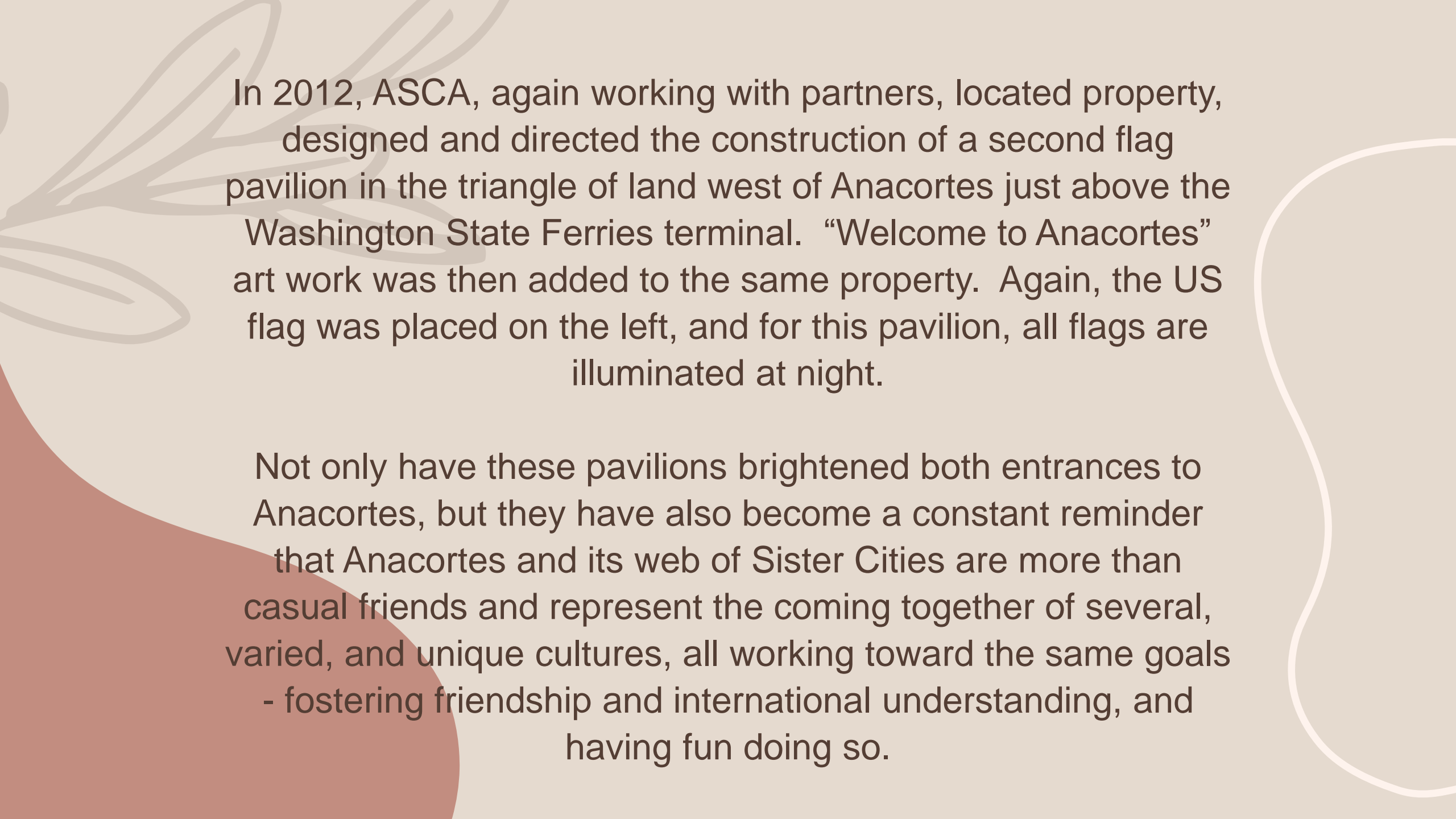


Comarnic Dancers performing in Anacortes



ASCA Flag Pavilions

Twenty years ago, ASCA made the decision to honor its Sister Cities by displaying their national flags along with the US flag. Working with partners, in 2004, ASCA organized and oversaw the construction of a flag pavilion along Highway 20 a couple of miles east of Anacortes just behind the large “Welcome to Anacortes” sign. Following protocol, the US flag stands at the left of the pavilion, and is lighted at night.



In 2012, ASCA, again working with partners, located property, designed and directed the construction of a second flag pavilion in the triangle of land west of Anacortes just above the Washington State Ferries terminal. “Welcome to Anacortes” art work was then added to the same property. Again, the US flag was placed on the left, and for this pavilion, all flags are illuminated at night.

Not only have these pavilions brightened both entrances to Anacortes, but they have also become a constant reminder that Anacortes and its web of Sister Cities are more than casual friends and represent the coming together of several, varied, and unique cultures, all working toward the same goals - fostering friendship and international understanding, and having fun doing so.

2004 – ASCA East Pavilion



John Laster



Construction







2012 – ASCA West Pavilion





Construction







The Celebration









Anacortes Town Criers – Three World Championships





**A.H.G.T.C. - 9TH WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP
ANACORTES, WA - AUGUST 2001**
















Back to another original question, “**How does ASCA fund its projects?**”

ASCA raises funds to support its programs in numerous ways:

1. Student Exchange Programs – Students and their families are responsible to raise most of the funds that will be needed for their overseas trips. They organize a wide variety of hands-on fundraising activities and request sponsorships and scholarships from various organizations.



2. Fundraisers – ASCA regularly organizes larger fundraisers like dinners with an international theme, which are often accompanied by international singing and dancing groups. Income sources include admission and sponsorships.

3. Golf Tournament – ASCA's annual golf tournament is the organization's largest fundraiser, supported by golfers and, most importantly, by sponsoring businesses, organizations, and individuals.

ASCA is always grateful for sponsors who are willing and able to appreciate and support ASCA's vision for residents of Anacortes, both adults and students.

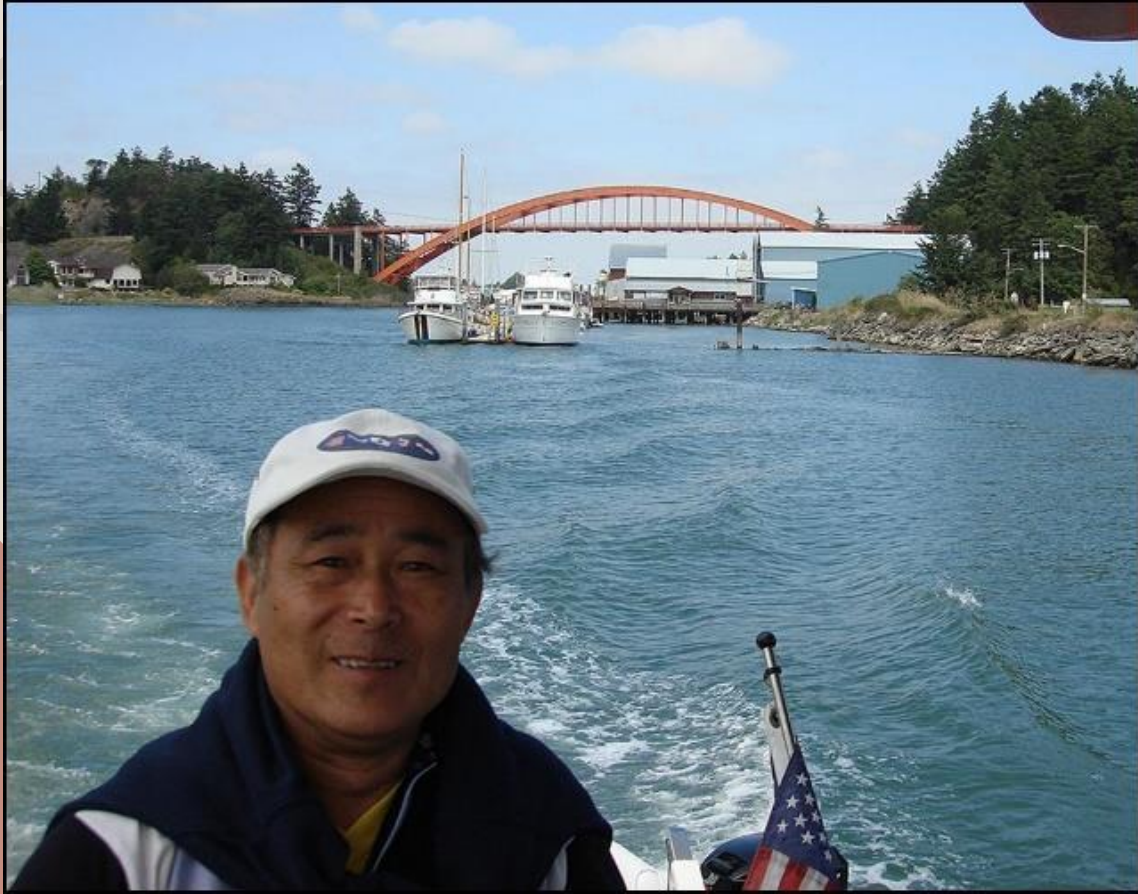
Miscellaneous “Favorite Fotos”:



Croatian performers in Anacortes



ASCA members in Japan



Nikaho guests in Anacortes



Comarnic guests in Anacortes



Lomonosov guests visit Anacortes' Police Department



Fixing food in Anacortes



Anacortes student in Morocco



Anacortes students in Croatia



Ukrainian refugees shopping in Comarnic with City staff member



Lomonosov students during the Skagit Valley Tulip Festival

ANACORTES SISTER CITIES



EST. 1991
Anacortes, Washington U.S.A.

Lomonosov, Russia

Nikaho, Japan

Sidney BC, Canada

Vela Luka, Croatia

Comarnic, Romania