



**SisterCities**

I N T E R N A T I O N A L

Connect globally. Thrive locally.

2013 Young Artist and Authors Showcase

## ***The Power of Exchange***

Sister city relationships foster partnerships within the community and between international cities, counties, and states. Whether in person, online, or through the mail, exchanges of people and ideas facilitate community development and educational opportunities. The 2013 theme is an opportunity for youth to use artwork, poems, and essays to highlight the important role that exchanges play in connecting people, cultures, and ideas.

Made possible through the generous support from

*The Carvey Family*



**2013 Grand Prize Winner, US**  
*Hope*  
**Faith Tsou**  
**Naperville, IL**



**2013 Grand Prize Winner, International  
*Flight of the Butterfly*  
Katherine Whatley  
Abu Dhabi, UAE – Sister Cities of Houston, TX**



**Finalist, US**  
***Branching Out to the World***  
**Grace Haddad**  
**Suffolk, VA**

**“I was inspired to show, in my mixed media picture, how people are constantly on the internet using accounts such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to connect with family and friends around the world.”**





**Finalist, US**  
***Worlds Converge***  
**Vivienne Salisbury**  
**Houston, TX**

**“This piece was inspired by the juxtaposing of two life drawings. The comic sheet behind the figures reflects their fading childhood, and selections of the national news were pasted on top to evoke the encroaching realities of and adult world. The merging of the two figures illustrates their shared musings, both in their own worlds but caught in the same convergence”**



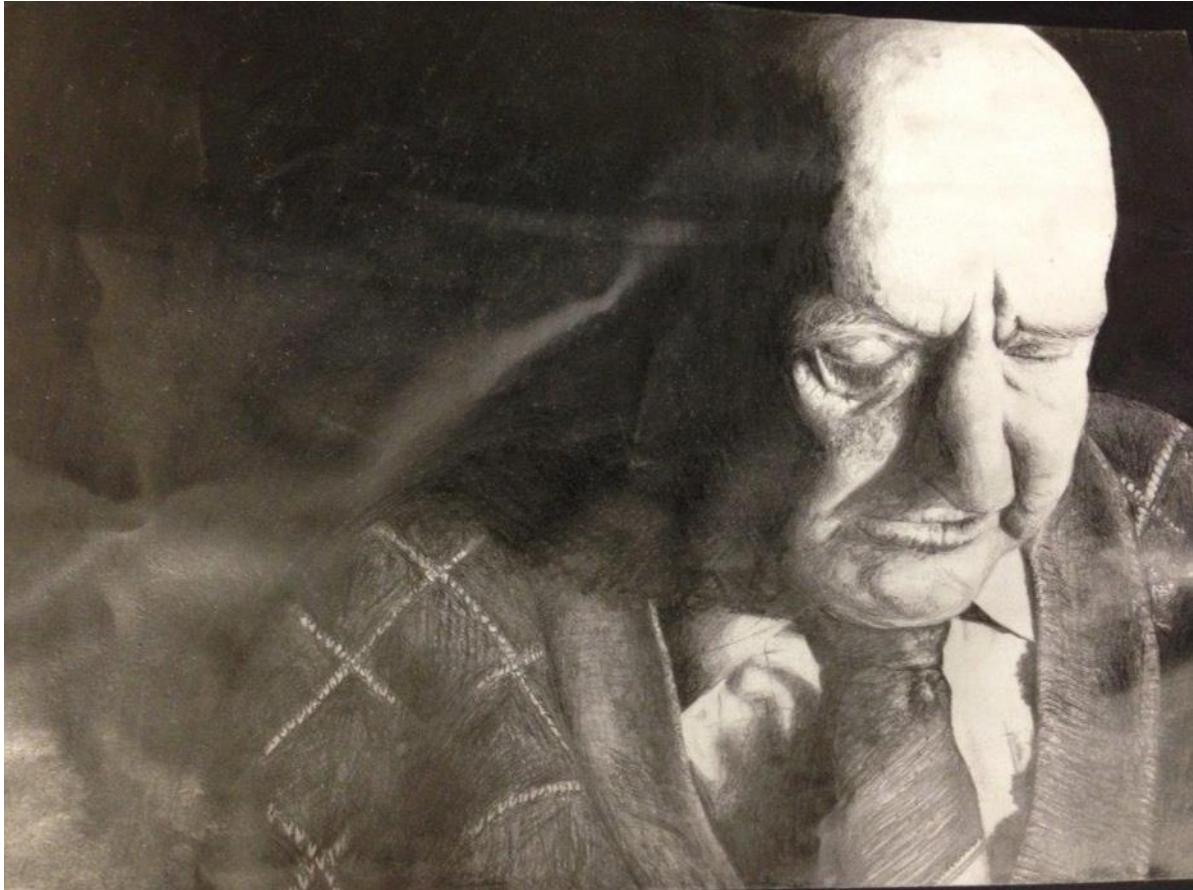
Finalist, US  
*Ribbons of Infinity*  
Elizabeth Hopwood  
Chandler, AZ

“I was inspired mainly by the idea that technology intertwines us all. I have not only noticed this in my own life, but through exchanges with other people. Technology gives us a rich new understanding of the lives and cultures of one another, making us truly world-minded.”





**Finalist, US**  
***Convergence***  
**Sarah Arthur-Paratley**  
**Lexington, KY**



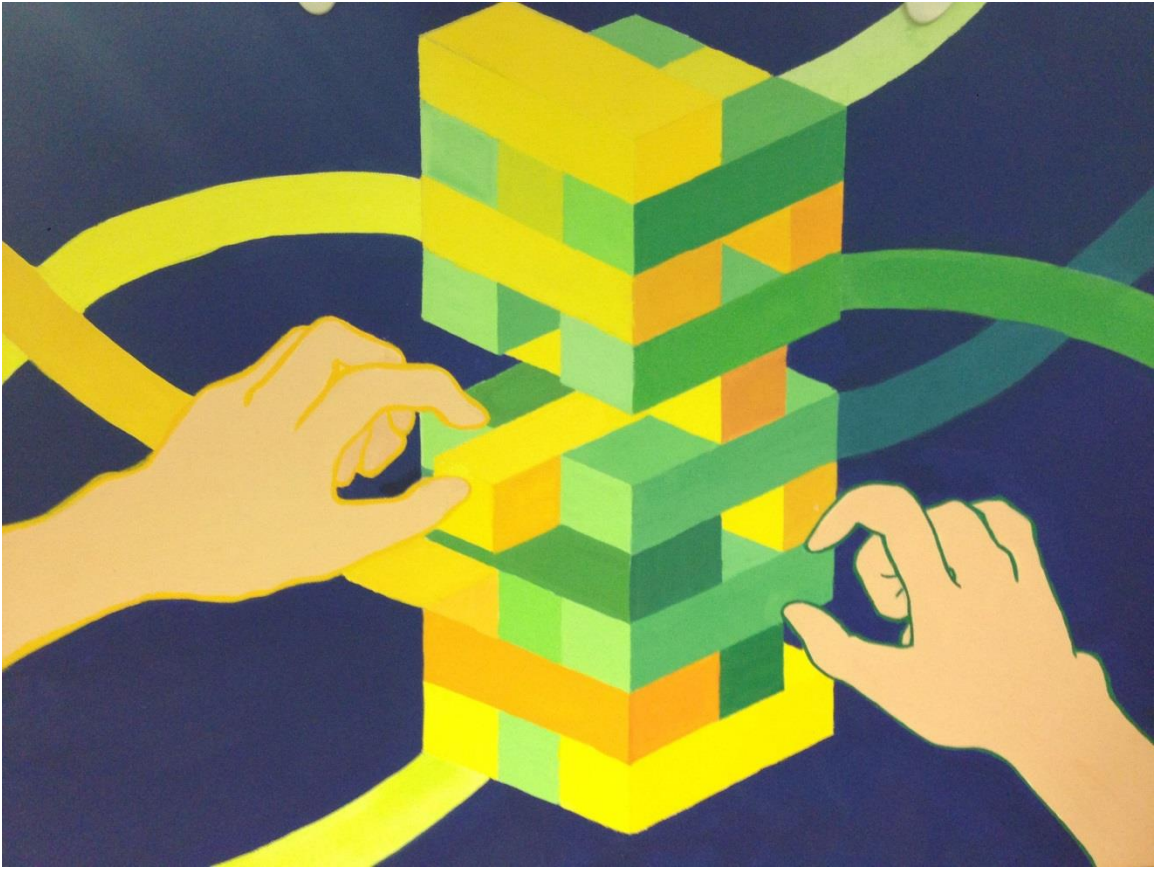
**Finalist, International  
*Symbiosis***

**Jonathan Hunter**

**Bangor, NI, UK – Sister Cities Association of Virginia Beach, VA**

**“I wanted to focus on the power of exchanging conversations especially with the older generation, in this piece I have tried to capture the poignant moments between a grandfather and grandson.”**





**Finalist, International  
*Construction in the New World*  
Yuka Kikuchi  
Hanamaki, Japan – Hot Springs Sister City Program, AR**



**Finalist, International  
*The Connected World*  
Marin Yoshida  
Fukui, Japan – New Brunswick Sister Cities Association, NJ**

**“I hope all the people in the world will have a stronger connection through the internet”**



**Finalist, International  
*Enlightenment and Progress through Exchange*  
Charmaine Agawin  
Sariaya Philippines – Santa Clarita Sister Cities, CA**

**“What inspired me in creating my entry is the hope of all the wonderful things that our city – sisterhood with Santa Clarita will entail. My young idealistic heart truly believes and anticipates that positive things will be possible for Sariaya and Santa Clarita through kinship and sisterhood. It is the dream and passion behind my artistic composition.”**



2013 Grand Prize Poetry, US

*Untitled*

Rachel Beglin

Chandler, AZ

When we trade our flesh,  
sending our ambassadors out like vines across arbitrary borders,  
we exchange so much more than skin and bones.

Susan taught me how to say “pickle” in Dutch – augurk –  
when we clipped tennis balls across the Atlantic.

I gasp every time the Italian girl in photo class  
presents her pitch perfect pictures  
from home.

I learned to play “Eleanor Rigby” last summer  
from my English camp counselor; from *Liverpool*.

Losing some friends to foreign exchange programs,  
but receiving e-mails of St. Patrick’s Day in Trafalgar Square,  
virtually tagging along on their (mis)adventures in Germany and Switzerland and  
Austria.

My neighbor’s bangin’ band brings in  
an unexpected Brazilian following  
and I smile as I struggle to understand  
the accented tongue of the Pakistani girl I coach in Speech and Debate.

It took ages to find the *Shift* key on the Danish laptop I borrowed  
at a Model United Nations conference,  
where those of us who can’t travel, make believe, *shifting*.  
Whether we’re blogging with the Portuguese or opening our home to an  
Australian student,  
there’s no amount of dollars, euros, rupees, or pounds  
you could exchange;  
for the power of exchange is priceless.  
Together we can shrink the world.

**2013 Runner-Up Poetry, US**  
***The Most Powerful Exchange***  
**Ronek Padgaonkar**  
**Phoenix, AZ**

As millions of immigrants stepped on the shore,  
They saw Ellis Island, but they saw something more.  
A green statue, with a torch, brought them to their knees,  
'Cause they knew what it meant; it meant they were free.  
And we should look back at this time, with fond admiration,  
Because this nation would be nothing, without the exchange of population.

All over the world, people move to new places,  
They bring their old traditions, to show to new faces.  
Soon, all those customs become a staple of society,  
Making new connections and giving life some variety.  
From religious holidays to foreign-made sculptures,  
Human life is build, on the exchange of our culture.

It all started with a man setting himself on fire,  
Sending a harsh message to get the life he desired.  
The movement spread, over videos and the web,  
The spring of revolution began to flow and ebb.  
Heartless regimes were toppled, after battles well-fought,  
But the idea for change started with the exchange of a thought.

When people do well, we all join in cheer,  
When tragedy befalls us, we all share tears.  
Even though we are different, we are all really the same,  
It doesn't matter what's your race, your religion, or your name.  
'Cause in the end we're one species! we're all sisters and brothers,  
And the most powerful exchange? The exchange of love for one another.

**2013 Second Runner-Up Poetry, US**  
***The Power of Exchange***  
**Sophie Rabb**  
**Phoenix, AZ**

If you want to see the change you have to be the change  
Ghandi's famous wisdom soaks through my brain  
I realize this knowledge is the power of exchange

In the Once and Future King, White says the air has no boundaries  
I say neither should the land, so I have the great master plan  
We should unravel all the mysteries, research all our histories

Through self-discipline and the people that you know  
My business teacher pleads, your success can grow  
With more knowledge, I see my future start to glow

Last summer I traveled to the land of Vietnam  
Waved to the strangers, they were all very calm  
I will always remember them, the smiles that they put on

Truly I believed that place was just a little strange  
Then with acquired insight, my mind has changed  
I realized that this was the power of exchange



**2013 Grand Prize Essay, US**  
***The Powerful Exchange of Love***  
**Seung Won Choi**  
**Santa Clarita, CA**

When the word of exchange comes to mind, many people think of two groups of people who exchange goods for the benefit of each other. In history, we have seen two different groups exchange each other. But as time passed, communities have come together filled with compassion to help others. I believe that this type of exchange is especially powerful to not only one side of the exchange, but to both. Through these exchanges, we fill up each other's weaknesses and needs. Today, society helps one other through our strengths to give to others. Through this powerful exchange, talents and gifts can be given to other areas of the world. To me, when I hear "the power of exchange," I think of my trip to Mexico in the summer.

During the summer, I was blessed to be able to have the opportunity to go to Mexico to build a house for the less fortunate in Mexico. These people lived with conditions that were different from what I was used to. I spent four days building a house with a group of people for this family without a home. Building this home, I felt like I was exchanging love and effort into this house that would become an important part of the family's lives. I felt that I was able to give this new family a house built with love, while I was able to receive the family's heart of thankfulness. Instead of feeling like I only gave something to this family, I felt like I received something much more important. I was able to realize how blessed I am to live in such a sheltered society not having to have any problems financially or any first-world problems that strike many families today. While building this house, I was able to communicate with the family even though we were from two different places without a common language. Through common interests and ideas, I was not only able to build a house, but a relationship out of love. Through this experience the long-term effect it had on me was that I was able to learn more about the world that we live in, instead of only being limited to the society that I live in. I was able to make new friends through this memorable exchange and remember how important it is to help others.

My experience in Mexico had a profound effect on not only the community, but to me especially. I believe that the exchange between these two different groups is significant and can help the world to become closer together as one united society. This experience left me striving to have a compassionate heart that seeks other opportunities to help other unfortunate people in the world. Ultimately, this type of exchange can help the community to change for the better, hand-in-hand.

## 2013 Runner-Up Essay, US

### Socks

Hannah Daniel

Phoenix, AZ

Have you ever thought about the power of socks? Those snug little houses for your feet? The thin mother-like protective layer that shields you from blisters meeting shoes? No, beyond the second you grab a pink cheetah one and a green striped one out of your underwear drawer, you do not think much about socks. You especially do not think about their existential existence and most definitely not their global power. Prepare to change your thinking.

It was a manila package; the thicker kind that have a layer of bubble wrap inside. It was waiting for me on the kitchen counter. We had not lived in Arizona very long. It was a new house but it wasn't quite home. So when the manila package came addressed to me I was a little confused; mostly because I was ten and ten year olds rarely receive important looking packages and also because with the move I had limited friends. Who would have sent something to me? It wasn't even my birthday. It turned out to be from a girl I was friends with back in Colorado. Ripping open the box I was let down a bit to find none other than a pair of socks. My heart sank a little as my imaginative ideas of what was inside died. Then a letter slipped out of the package.

It was kind of a crazy idea; you send a pair of socks to one person. On the enclosed letter there were two names: the girl I knew and her cousin. The idea was to send a pair of socks to the person I didn't know (the cousin) with a letter containing my information and my friend's. I would then send the letter out to six people, giving them my friend's name. It was a little complex but the overall idea was to exchange socks with people you did not know. Oh and the last rule? They had to be "funky."

Yes, sock exchanges aren't really the same as foreign exchange, but there are some symbolic similarities at work here. All these people used a large scale network to send the socks. A lot of them were to people they had never met before. But they passed back and forth little pieces of themselves; little symbols of individuality in everyday objects. That's what the power of foreign exchange truly is. It's trading a part of you until you have a whole funky sock drawer full of new ideas and people. It's powerful because it creates bonds that would never have been created. And it made the new kid in Arizona feel a little more at home.

**2013 Second Runner-Up, Essay**  
***Let the Fireflies Lighten Our World***  
**Kiraney Zheng**  
**Suffolk, VA**

Fireflies are beautiful creatures. However, if there is only one in the grass, nobody will realize its loveliness. It is the same as thoughts, culture, and life. We need to exchange them generously with others. As an exchange student from China, I have realized this great world has shiny, abundant and unique cultures. Shanghai to Suffolk is the long distance in geography as well as in lifestyle. The oriental charm meets western fashion and starts bonding together.

Whether the city is big or small, as long as there is love in this place, its culture will sprout, grow and flourish. My first impression of Suffolk was a small city with many peanut factories. It is not like Shanghai with 23-million people, skyscrapers and neon lamps. In the wind, I listen to the twitter of birds and enjoy the simple but meaningful life. I still remember the first time saw Mr. Peanut standing in the center of the town square wearing a formal hat, swallow-tailed coat, and a pair of glasses, which looks like a savant. He smiles and seems to say to me, "Welcome to Suffolk !" Recently, I visited a gentleman who had a dedicated showcase about Mr. Peanut from large sculptures to small toys. This gentleman was very proud of his collections because he carefully took them out of the showcase and scrupulously introduced their history of Suffolk to me. This taught me to understand other cultures before I exchange mine.

Although there are gaps between countries, exchanging ideas will develop more connections and understandings. Several decades ago, it was hard to imagine a Chinese girl starting high school in America by herself. Challenging the Chinese traditional concept of son preference, girls have the same opportunities to be well educated now. I share my rich culture and ancient history with my classmates by starting a Chinese Club at school. I feel gratified that they understand China more. We had a field trip to celebrate Chinese New Year. I explained General Tsao chicken, the most popular dish, and fortune cookies, do not exist in China at all. It is like Chinese people always think American food is only hamburgers and hot dogs.

Sharing life becomes easier and leads to stronger interpersonal relationships. My new life is full of fun and laughter in America. Nevertheless, when I stay alone at night, I miss my family so I make video calls. Their amiable faces, familiar language, and earnest teachings shorten the thousand-mile distance. After watching Super bowl, my friends in China quickly sent me a text to praise Beyoncé's fantastic performance and interesting advertisements. We can exchange our feelings, even if we are in different countries and time zones.

Exchange has a magic power to enlarge a girl's view, reduces the distance between two countries and restructures a happy family. It is important to remember that only one firefly cannot lighten the dark sky, but the numerous fireflies came together can light up the whole world.