



History of Exchange

Casablanca, Morocco
Chicago's Sister City Since 1982

Co-Chairs: Lisa Roberts and Julie Stagliano

1982

Focus: Signing Agreement

The City of Chicago signed a sister cities agreement with Casablanca, Morocco in 1982.

1991

Focus: Reaffirmation of Agreement

During Sister Cities International Conference 1991, the City of Chicago hosted a delegation of Casablanca city officials and reaffirmed the intent of both cities to continue to strengthen the existing bonds of friendship.

Focus: Government & Business

The Wali of Casablanca, Ahmed Motii, and six Moroccan governors came to Chicago to further develop economic and cultural ties between the two cities.

August

Focus: Environment

Members of the Moroccan parliament visited Chicago. They met with Mayor Richard M. Daley and toured waste management recycling facilities and studied the mass transit system.

1992

Focus: Culture

The Casablanca Committee presented a slide lecture and presentation entitled, "Play it Again, Sam." The lecture on Morocco featured speakers Cindy Mitchell, Chair of the Casablanca Committee, and Marianna Beck and Jack Hafferkamp, freelance travel writers.

1993

May

Focus: Culture

The mural representing Mr. Chabaa's impression of Chicago was permanently installed in the arrival corridor of the international terminal at O'Hare airport.

1994

Focus: Education

The Casablanca Committee organized a community youth service project. The project involved seven teenagers from Chicago who volunteered for three weeks with seven Moroccan youth in Casablanca at the orphanage Lolla Hasna. Later, the Casablanca students came to Chicago to volunteer at St. Martin De Porres, a settlement house for homeless women and their children. Cultural activities in both cities broadened the experience of these teenagers.

1995

Focus: Business

A business delegation from Morocco visited Chicago and explored tourism opportunities.

Focus: Medicine

The Casablanca Committee organized a needs assessment tour to Casablanca. They were accompanied by Dr. Viyasagar Dharmapuri, Director of the International Division of the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Illinois in Chicago Hospital (UICH); Dr. Sydney Mitchell, UIC Hospital Director; Dr. Beligere, Pediatric Cardiology; and Sharon Mitchell, Pediatrics & Gynecology.

A medical exchange program was planned with the Department of Pediatrics of University Hospital Ibn Rochd in Casablanca. The program offered an exchange of research activities, faculty, pediatric physicians, nurses and administrators. In addition, the Committee helped to supply the Casablanca Hospital with used and reconditioned medical equipment and supplies.

1996

Focus: Culture

The Casablanca Committee hosted poet Kamel Zobdi, who performed at the 1993 Sister Cities Poetry Competition held at Navy Pier.

Focus: Culture

The Moroccan artist Mohamed Chabaa participated in the Chicago Sister Cities O'Hare airport mural project.

Focus: Culture

The Moroccan Ambassador to the U.S., the Honorable Benaissa, and a delegation of tourism and trade professionals, visited Chicago. Their itinerary included a panel discussion on "New Perspectives for the Middle East & Mediterranean Travel & Tourism," a lunch with Mayor & Mrs. Daley and the Casablanca Committee, and an evening reception that featured a concert of Andalusian and Gnawan music. The musical groups also performed at the Daley Plaza noon concert. As a result of this visit, the "Moroccan-U.S. Council of Trade and Investment" committed to opening an office in Chicago.

Focus: Business

The Casablanca Committee received a partial grant from NASDA to fund a 1993 "business to business" trade delegation of Chicago-area businesses to Morocco. This was a joint effort between the City of Chicago Department of Planning & Economic Development and the State of Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs. This delegation also included representatives from the Chicago Sister Cities International Program and the U.S. commercial attaché in Morocco.

The 1993 trade mission resulted in 47 sales leads, 24 representation leads and eight possible joint ventures. Total estimated revenues were \$6.7 million over 24 months. American National Bank signed four "corresponding bank agreements" with Casablanca banks during the mission. All parties involved agreed they had a highly successful mission. In addition, the Committee presented the Mayor of Casablanca with a photo exhibit on Chicago architecture, which toured local schools and then went on permanent display at the City Hall. The Committee also had productive meetings with the Mayor, the Wali (Governor), the U.S. Consul General, and the American and Casablanca Chambers of Commerce.

Focus: Medicine

The Casablanca Committee held a fundraising dinner at the Clark Street Bistro to benefit the Ibn Rochd Hospital. Two physicians and one nurse from Casablanca's Ibn Rochd Children's Hospital visited the UIC Hospital for training under the guidance of Dr. Vydasag, chief of the Neonatal Intensive Care unit.

1997**Focus: Culture**

The Moroccan Marketplace and Festival took place at the Chicago Cultural Center. The committee sold more than \$100,000 in Moroccan goods with a portion of the proceeds being donated to the Ibn Rochd Children's and Maternity Hospital in Morocco.

Focus: Culture

A World in a Weekend featured Casablanca for its September celebration with lectures, a cooking demonstration and musical performances. Visiting Moroccan professors performed at the Moroccan Marketplace and Festival and A World in a Weekend, and met with local educators.

Focus: Medical and Social Service

The Casablanca Committee hosted a medical exchange of doctors, nurses and hospital administrators. The doctors and nurses underwent training at the University of Illinois Medical Center.

1998**Focus: Culture**

The Casablanca Committee led a cultural tour to Morocco.

Focus: Culture

The Casablanca Committee hosted a dinner for Khalid Khannoushiat, 1997 Chicago marathon winner and native Moroccan.

Focus: Education

The Casablanca Committee secured the commitment of Wafa Bank of Casablanca to display the dinosaur discovered in the Moroccan Sahara Desert by University of Chicago paleontologist and Casablanca Committee member Paul Sereno.

Focus: Business

A Moroccan delegation attended International Franchising and Leasing Show in Chicago.

Focus: Government

The Casablanca Committee hosted a Moroccan attorney and member of City Council.

Focus: Medical and Social Service

The Casablanca Committee solicited and donated medical equipment, cribs and an ambulance (with Chicago skyline logo on exterior) to Inb Rochd Children's Hospital.

1999**Focus: Culture**

Casablanca Committee Chair Cindy Mitchell and several committee members designed and led a tour of Morocco for members of The Art Institute of Chicago.

Focus: Culture

Committee member Paul Shaver lectured on Chicago architecture at a gathering of the Casablanca Architecture Association. Paul worked with the Moroccan Architecture Association and the American Consul General to help them create a landmark ordinance for the Art Deco buildings in Casablanca.

Focus: Culture

The American Consulate General in Casablanca and the Casablanca Committee collaborated on the refurbishment of the Churchill Library at the consulate residence. The library featured Roosevelt memorabilia commemorating the "Anfa" conference that took place at the residence between Presidents Roosevelt and Churchill during WWII.

Focus: Culture

The Casablanca Committee presented to the City of Casablanca two life-size replicas of "Carcharodontosaurus," a meat-eating dinosaur discovered by University of Chicago Paleontologist Paul Sereno in the Moroccan Sahara in 1995. The presentation of the models resulted in the creation of the first public museum in Casablanca. Paleontologist and Casablanca Committee member Paul Sereno gave a slide lecture and presentation to city officials, students of Le Cedre school and other invited guests. Le Cedre developed a curriculum around the exhibit.

Focus: Government

The Casablanca Committee partnered with the International Visitors' Center for the visit of the Moroccan Minister of Culture Rais who learned about Chicago's experience with public-private partnerships.

Focus: Environment

An agreement was signed between the City of Chicago Department of Environment and the Environmental Department of Casablanca.

Focus: Medical and Social Service

A visiting Moroccan doctor observed operations in the neurology department of the University of Illinois Hospital.

Focus: Medical and Social Service

Dr. Andrew Griffin, a pediatric cardiologist, spent time at Ibn Rochd Children's Hospital giving lectures to medical students, doctors and nurses. Dr. Henry Betts, chairman of the Chicago Rehabilitation Institute, spoke with the director of Ibn Rochd about setting up a rehabilitation program at the hospital.

Focus: Medical and Social Service

Dr. Golden, a Chicago doctor specializing in rheumatology, lectured in Casablanca at the Ibn Rochd Hospital.

Focus: Medical and Social Service

Stemming from a second trip to Casablanca made by several Committee members, the Lalla Hassna's Orphanage and "Gout de Lait", a hospital for premature babies, were adopted as organizations the Committee would assist.

Focus: Medical and Social Service

The Casablanca Committee continued its very active support of Ibn Rochd Children's Hospital via donations of medical supplies, books, professional trainings and site visits.

2000**Focus: Culture**

The Casablanca Committee held an opening night celebration of DePaul University's "Exploring Muslim Cultures Series". The evening included a private viewing of the exhibit "Weaving Culture: Textiles and Jewelry in Morocco", and proceeds benefited the Ibn Rochd Children's Hospital in Casablanca.

Focus: Architecture

The Casablanca Committee hosted a group of architects from Morocco, including two from the city government of Casablanca. The group was in town to meet with Chicago architects and landmark preservation specialists. Although Casablanca has one of the finest collections of Art Deco architecture in the world, little has been done to preserve it until lately. Chicago architect and Casablanca Committee member Paul Shaver attended an architectural forum in Casablanca, where he gave a lecture on Chicago architecture to the Casablanca Architecture Association. Since, he has worked with the Moroccan Architecture Association and the American Counsel General to help them create a landmark ordinance in Casablanca. In 2000, the city passed a landmark bill, based on the Chicago ordinance. Casablanca's first landmark building has been designated.

Focus: Culture

The Casablanca Committee held a fundraiser for Pegasus Players to support their production of "Side by Side by Sondheim" in Casablanca.

Focus: Education

As a part of the Chicago Sister Cities Sister Schools Abroad Program, 30 students from Le Cedre School in Casablanca, ages 12-18, visited their sister schools in Chicago. They were hosted by Chicago students and their families, and were given a taste of both Chicago's sites and American schools. These students practiced their English and helped students of French in their sister schools exercise their linguistic skills. Various activities were planned for these students, including trips to museums, trolley tours, a day at Navy Pier, and a presentation by Dr. Paul Sereno, who discovered a 90-million-year-old dinosaur on an expedition to Morocco. The public highlight of their visit was a performance at the Chicago Cultural

Center, where each group of students gave musical performances for their counterparts from their sister schools.

2002

Focus: Culture

A photo exhibit, *Tea in the Sahara*, was shown at the Cultural Center. The documentary film *Music of Morocco and the Cycles of Life* explored the traditional musical heritage of Morocco.

Focus: Culture

Members of the Committee traveled to Casablanca for a cultural tour and to promote trade and tourism.

Focus: Culture

The photo show "Chicago 2000" opened at the U.S. Consulate in Casablanca.

2003

Focus: Medical and Social Service

Volunteer Optometrists in Service to Humanity (VOSH) conducted a technical mission to Casablanca to examine patients and supply free eyeglasses and corrective lenses to those in need.

Focus: Business

The Committee collaborated with a local organization holding a grant to train ten Moroccan NGO leaders. The committee participated in the voluntarism workshop and held a reception for guests.

November

Focus: Culture

Michael Miles' *Chicago Rhythm and Rhymes* took place in Preston Bradley hall, benefiting the Casablanca Committee.

July

Focus: Education

Teachers from Le Cedre School in Morocco visited to deliver Arabic and French language classes at Lincoln Elementary School.

Focus: Culture

Three artisans were hosted by the Casablanca Committee while they constructed the mosaic fountain at Garfield Park Conservatory.

Focus: Culture

In conjunction with the Tea Pot Exhibition at the CCC, a Moroccan presentation of tea tradition was held in the Randolph café.

Focus: Business

A Trade Mission briefing breakfast was held at ULC to discuss the March 2004 Mission to Morocco.

2004

Focus: Education

Thirty-five students and teachers from Groupe Scolaire Le Cedre were hosted by Abraham Lincoln Elementary School for a week. The group experienced homestays and classroom participation.

Focus: Culture

The Committee held the Formal dedication of Moroccan Fountain in the Garfield Park Conservatory in partnership with the Superintendent of the Chicago Park District.

Focus: Culture

Chicago Week in Casablanca: Eighty-Two participants from Chicago carried out a multi-sectored mission to Casablanca including a medical component, city planning, business, volunteerism strengthening, and education component. The counterpart Chicago Committee in Casablanca made logistical arrangements for a genuine collaborative exchange. Thirty-Five Optometrists and technicians conducted a vision clinic with Moroccan counterparts, examining over 3200 underserved children and adults in five days. Six urologists and two surgical nurses performed microsurgeries and held a technical seminar with counterparts from Ibn Rochd Hospital. City planning experts presented the Chicago model and plan for future collaborations in infrastructure development and architectural preservation. MBA students from Kellogg School of Management (Northwestern University) toured Moroccan business schools and explored potential internship placements with business enterprises and FTA opportunities. Committee members participated in a volunteerism seminar to promote networking, sharing of resources and ideas and other ways to build capacity. NGO literacy programs were the area of intense collaboration. Education experts introduced Moroccan educational reforms and committee members so to initiate a new sister school agreement. A bluegrass group performed Chicago-style music and collaborated with Moroccan musicians.

Focus: Business

The Casablanca Committee participated in a World Bank Institute study on the feasibility of international municipal cooperation in achievement of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Casablanca and Chicago focused on the area of literacy in two neighborhoods (poor working class) of Casablanca. Researchers gathered data on literacy rates among 15-24 year olds and communicated findings of the survey to make practical suggestions for future development projects. Videoconferences were held to join WB, Sister Cities International, Chicago, Casablanca and Tamale, Ghana and Louisville, Kentucky to discuss process and collaboration status. Chicago gathered an expert committee to give advice on this topic and frequent written and telephonic exchanges track progress and share planning tasks.

December

Focus: Sports

Casablanca – Chicago Youth Development Initiative: This special initiative between the Casablanca and Chicago Committees of Sister Cities International Program and the Moroccan Basketball Federation is part of a larger attempt to create positive options for young people in Morocco and develop life skills through sports. This ongoing project demonstrates existing Chicago models of sports, youth and education programs for replication in Morocco in the hopes of countering the influence of extremist groups recruiting young Moroccan men and women for negative purposes. The basketball camps educate the participants in basketball techniques and drills while encouraging literacy, academic excellence, life skills and character development.

2006

December 4-6

Focus: Culture

The Casablanca Committee of CSCI and the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs brought the exotic sights of a Moroccan Souk (Moroccan Marketplace) to the Chicago Cultural Center for an international experience including goods for sale from every corner of Morocco, including jewelry, pottery and home furnishings at every price point. The Marketplace was free and open to the public and attracted hundreds of shoppers each day.

2007

April 5

Focus: General

In conjunction with Global Voices, the Casablanca Committee planned a multi-faceted trip to Casablanca. Eric Weinheimer, President and CEO of the Cara Program (a program that assists the homeless and at-risk populations in their efforts to achieve real and lasting success by providing comprehensive training, permanent job placement and critical support services) met with Casablanca officials to provide best-practice information about poverty eradication and job training programs. Lisa Roberts, former Chicago Park District's Director of Conservatories, worked with city planners to discuss the best use of the large piece of land given to the City Casablanca by the King of Morocco. Dan Frank, Principal of Francis Parker High School joined the committee to make a Sister School and Global Voices relationship with a Jewish-Muslim school. The comprehensive basketball exchange will also continue as four coaches from One on One Basketball traveled to Casablanca to impart basketball coaching and life skills to underserved youth.

Focus: Education

Through the Global Voices Program, Schurz High School French language students exchanged play-reading with their counterparts at Ben M'Sick and Mohamed VI schools in Casablanca through a video conference.

July 22-31

Focus: Education

Thirteen students from Casablanca visited Chicago. They were part of a group called IDMAJ, a volunteer organization that serves and teaches children from slum neighborhoods. They met with the Director of Education at the Chicago Children's Museum, the CEO of CARA program, took a tour of Gallery 37 and met with Mayor Daley.

2008

April

Focus: Multiple

The Casablanca committee took a multi-faceted trip to Morocco in April. They donated \$15,000 to the Chicago Cultural Center in Sidi Moumen, a low-income neighborhood in Casablanca. This center was created by Boubker Mazoz, President of the Casablanca Chicago Sister Cities committee, and serves the youth in the community with a computer center, tutoring, and a theater. The center is also in the process of building a radio station to be used for and by the Sidi Moumen neighborhood. During the trip, the Sister School Abroad Program educators met with their counterparts in Casablanca to further improve their relationship, discuss exciting opportunities and create a network of school exchanges.

They plan to expand their programming with green technology and the Growing Connection project. The Growing Connection maximizes the use of plants to grow food and combat hunger, and is wonderful for dry or urban areas. It provides an opportunity for education to teach growing food, plant science, and

microeconomics. Twenty-one Earth Boxes will be delivered to Casablanca for use at several sites. Global Voices brought two teachers from Chicago to Casablanca and will continue their programming.

The committee is also in the preliminary stages of planning a food documentary, and has scouted locations in Casablanca.

July 21 through July 24

Focus: Education

The Casablanca Committee of Chicago Sister Cities International Program hosted a visiting delegation of young students from Morocco. The three day program focused on sports, music, media and education. The students, ages 15 through 19, were from Chicago Sister City Schools in Casablanca, and came from the Sidi Moumen Neighborhood, where a bombing took place in March, 2007.

October

Focus: Education

Lincoln Park High School principal, faculty members and students visited Groupe Scolaire le Cedre, a Casablanca Sister School.

October 10

Focus: Education

Near North Montessori School in Chicago signed a Sister School Agreement with Yatrib Elementary School in Casablanca.

2009

April

15 students from Abraham Lincoln Elementary School traveled to Casablanca to visit students from Groupe Scolaire le Cedre to focus on curriculum based studies.

April 24

Focus: Government

Mayor Richard M. Daley convened municipal leaders from throughout the United States, Canada and the Arab world for the first-ever U.S. Arab Cities Forum. The three-day conference provided a unique opportunity for mayor and local leaders to engage in a high-level dialogue about the challenges municipalities face and strategies to ensure cities remain competitive in a global society. Mayor Daley co-hosted the event with Mayor Omar Maani of Amman and Mayor Mohamed Sajid of Casablanca. The Forum featured sessions focused on Education and Youth, Economic Development and Improved Quality of Life, and Environment and Sustainability.

September

Dr. Steven Rose, Director of the Lurie Cancer Center at Northwestern University in Chicago, and his wife Candice, Chair of the Belgrade Committee, met with medical personnel in Marrakech and Casablanca to develop a nurse training program.

Ten students and five chaperones from four Chicago schools, Francis Parker, Lincoln Park High School, Walter Payton and Carl Schurz visited Casablanca as part of a service learning project.

The Casablanca Committee received a grant from the U.S Department of State to develop a newsletter to be shared among Chicago and Casablanca's eight Sister Schools and the Idmaj project team in Casablanca.

October

The principal of Lincoln Park High School visited her counterpart in Casablanca, Monsieur Kamal Lahlou, and received a reciprocal visit in Chicago from Monsieur Lahlou.

October 1-4

Focus: Medical

Dr. Adnane Afifi from Al Kindy Cancer Center participated in the Lynn Sage Breast Cancer Symposium – Sister Cities Medical Initiative.

2010

January 25

Focus: Cultural

Chicago Musician Michael J. Miles returned to Morocco at the invitation of the U.S. State Department for a seven-city tour. A Chicago-based musician, composer and educator, Miles is recognized as one of the country's leading innovators on the 5-string banjo and is artist-in-residence at the Old Town School of Music. Miles toured with Chicago-based drummer, Tony Dale, as well with Moroccan multi-instrumentalist, Abdellah El Miry. The tour includes additional collaborations with local musicians along its route, including a special event with world-renowned oud player, Haj Younes of Casablanca.

March

Focus: Humanitarian

The Casablanca Committee of Chicago Sister Cities International was awarded an Africa Urban Poverty Alleviation Program (AUPAP) grant by Sister Cities International. The Casablanca Committee will utilize the two-year, \$115,000 grant to design a program to promote partnerships that bring about improved health services to the citizens of Casablanca most in need. AUPAP is funded by a \$7.5 million grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to Sister Cities International.

June 20

Focus: Cultural

Chicago Arabesque 2010, and the Amman and Casablanca Committee hosted a Father's Day Hefleh, featuring L'Orchestre Chabab Al Andalous, sponsored by the US Embassy in Rabat. The Classical Maghrebi music invoked the Andalusian Spanish Arab world, and was followed by Debkeh dancing, coffee and sweets.

July

Focus: Cultural

The Moroccan Association of Sister Cities International welcomed Anima, a world class youth choir based out of Glynn Ellyn, who performed at the Sidi Moumen Cultural Center alongside Moroccan youth. At the concert, the choirs sang each other's national anthems and had the opportunity to meet and eat with IDMAJ youth.

Focus: Culture & Education

The Global Voices play writing program continues for its eighth year between more than 400 Moroccan students and students from Francis Parker and Schurz High School. The plays are written in French by the Chicago students and in English by the Moroccan students and are then shared and acted out through video conferencing.

December

Focus: Government

Mayor Sajid of Casablanca hosted the third annual U.S. Arab Cities Forum, which brought together municipal leaders from around the US and Arab world, was co-hosted by Mayor Daley.

2011

April 11

Focus: Government and Humanitarian

Mayor Richard M. Daley and Todd Murray, President of Beltone Electronics Corporation, welcomed His Excellency Aziz Mekouar, Ambassador of Morocco to the U.S. and Mr. Ahmed Reda, Moroccan Minister of Industry, Trade and New Technologies to Chicago. Beltone partnered with the Casablanca and Humanitarian Committees of Chicago Sister Cities International to donate 100 Beltone hearing instruments, worth more than \$200,000, to Casablanca. The hearing aids will be distributed through the Moroccan Association of Sister Cities International.

The donation was made possible through the strong bonds between the Sister Cities of Casablanca and Chicago and through the public and private partnership between the City of Chicago and Beltone Electronics. This donation marks the third time that Beltone has partnered with Chicago Sister Cities International. The two previous donations were made in collaboration with the Amman Committee of CSCI. Last year, \$200,000 worth of hearing aids was donated to the Holy Land Institute for the Deaf. In 2007, Beltone donated \$400,000 worth of hearing aids to the King Hussein Cancer Center.

While in Chicago, H.E. Ambassador Mekouar also acknowledged the appointment of Marilyn Diamond as Honorary Consul General of Morocco in Chicago, and Lady Janet Murphy as Honorary Vice Consul General of Morocco in Chicago. They were appointed to these positions because of the work they have done to strengthen the ties between the Sister Cities of Chicago and Casablanca in their roles as Co-Chairs of the Casablanca Committee of Chicago Sister Cities International. Lady Janet Murphy received the decoration of the *Order of Wissam Al Alaoui* from His Majesty King Mohamed VI in recognition of a lifetime of service to Morocco, beginning with her service there in the Peace Corps in 1964.

May

Focus: African Urban Poverty Alleviation Program

The African Urban Poverty Alleviation Program proposal, submitted by the Casablanca committee, was approved by Sister Cities International. Work will begin on supporting a clinic in the Sidi Moumen neighborhood. Support will include securing equipment and medical materials, the renovation of toilets and the construction and renovation of additional rooms. Our project will provide a more sanitary environment inside and outside the clinic, needed computers and equipment to better organize patients and their files. Ultimately we want to increase the amount of patients seen, treated or counseled by a doctor and renovate the space within and outside the clinic.

June

Focus: Healthcare

Mr. Abdelhakim Sefiane, an audiologist from Morocco, visited Chicago to train with Beltone Electronics to review the donated hearing aid software and programming.

July

Focus: Education

Four Chicago high school students from Francis Parker participated with Idmaj volunteers as camp counselors in a summer camp at Al Akhawayn University (AUI) in Ifrane, Morocco.

2012**March****Focus: Government**

The Committee held a reception in honor of Mayor Sajid of Casablanca, Morocco's Minister of Housing, and Boubker Mazoz, the President of the Casa Chicago Association, who were visiting Chicago for a Housing Conference.

May 12**Focus: Government**

The Casablanca Committee hosted a reception for His Excellency Rachad Bouhlal, the new Ambassador of Morocco to the United States, and arranged for him to be an Honored Guest at the Alliance Française de Chicago's spring gala 'Le Bal Magique du Maroc'.

May 15**Focus: Education**

As part of an ongoing educational exchange between eight secondary schools in Casablanca and three Chicago, students participated in an Open Voices video conference performance. Students wrote one-act plays in either French or English and edited each other's work. The exchange culminated in groups performing each other's plays. The video conference capabilities were sponsored by Dar America in Casa and DLA Piper law offices in Chicago.

May 20**Focus: NATO**

The Committee met with the Moroccan delegation to NATO including His Excellency Ahmed Snoussi, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Morocco to the United Nations; His Excellency Rachad Bouhlal, Ambassador of Morocco to the United States; and Moroccan Minister of Foreign Affairs Saad-Eddine Al-Othmani.

August 6-10**Focus: Culture**

The 7th Annual Chicago Sister Cities International Festival transformed Daley Plaza into an international village filled with merchants, food, music, and dance from Chicago's 28 Sister Cities. The merchant *What the Traveler Saw* sold traditional Moroccan arts and crafts representing the culture and heritage of Casablanca.

November**Focus: African Urban Poverty Alleviation Program**

The African Urban Poverty Completion and dedication of new health center in casa funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation applied for by Chicago casa committee. The Casablanca Committee of Chicago Sister Cities International was awarded an Africa Urban Poverty Alleviation Program (AUPAP) grant by Sister Cities International. The Casablanca Committee will utilize the two-year, \$115,000 grant to design a program to promote partnerships that bring about improved health services to the citizens of Casablanca most in need. AUPAP is funded by a \$7.5 million grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to Sister Cities International.

Dec 2012 Reception for Ambassador to USA from Morocco, Azziz Mekouar and Business meetings hosted by Council on Global affairs.

All year have facilitated meetings for two Fullbright Scholars in Morocco. One studying and teaching Dance and the other Theater

Nov2012 met With U of Chicago dept Of Public health to facilitate their work on Toxiplasmosis and Hepatitis in Morocco

November with Alicia Menendez to discuss the Harris School's International Policy Practicum which will take place in Morocco in Dec. 2013

Dec 2012. Provided contacts to Moroccan Embassy of top business contacts for a meeting in DC sponsored by dept of state as part of a new treaty between US and Morocco

2013

2014

March 20

Focus: Government

Mayor Rahm Emanuel welcomed Ambassador Rachad Bouhlal from the Kingdom of Morocco to Chicago to convey the City's steadfast commitment towards maintaining strong Chicago-Morocco business relationships and furthering collaboration on innovative water infrastructure projects.

September 15

Focus:

University of Chicago paleontologist Nizar Ibrahim, a National Geographic Society Emerging Explorer—and member of the Casablanca Committee of Chicago Sister Cities—discovered Spinosaurus, the biggest and baddest among meat-eating dinosaurs. It was bigger than T. Rex and the first dinosaur known to swim. The dinosaur was found in Morocco and its discovery spans several sister cities.

2015

April 6

Focus: Education

Mr. Abdelkamel Lahlou, Director of Le Cedre School in Casablanca was in Chicago to visit Le Cedre's sister school in Chicago, Francis W. Parker School. While in Chicago, Mr. Lahlou met with members of the Casablanca Committee of Chicago Sister Cities International, who accompanied him on a tour of Francis Parker. They also had the opportunity to discuss how they can work together to bring the schools closer and to facilitate a deeper engagement among students.

July 25-August 1

Focus: Social Services

Chicago Sister Cities International and its Casablanca Committee, Dominican University's Graduate School of Social Work, IDMAJ and the International Social Work Exchange Program hosted seven social services delegates and an interpreter from Chicago's sister city of Casablanca, Morocco. The exchange explored how social service providers in Chicago and Casablanca are engaging at-risk youth in their respective cities. This involved learning about gang culture and mitigation efforts, shelters and services

for homeless, trafficked, immigrant and refugee youth and various policies and approaches in the two countries.

2016

April 4

Focus: Education

The Aspen Institute Stevens Initiative announced the award of a two-year grant to Chicago Sister Cities International, one of 10 new projects funded through a national competition to use virtual exchange to increase cross-cultural understanding and equip young people to participate in a global economy.

Chicago Sister Cities International is among the first wave of virtual exchange programs to be funded by the Stevens Initiative, a public-private partnership designed to increase people-to-people exchange between youth in the United States and the Middle East and North Africa as a lasting tribute to the legacy of Ambassador Chris Stevens.