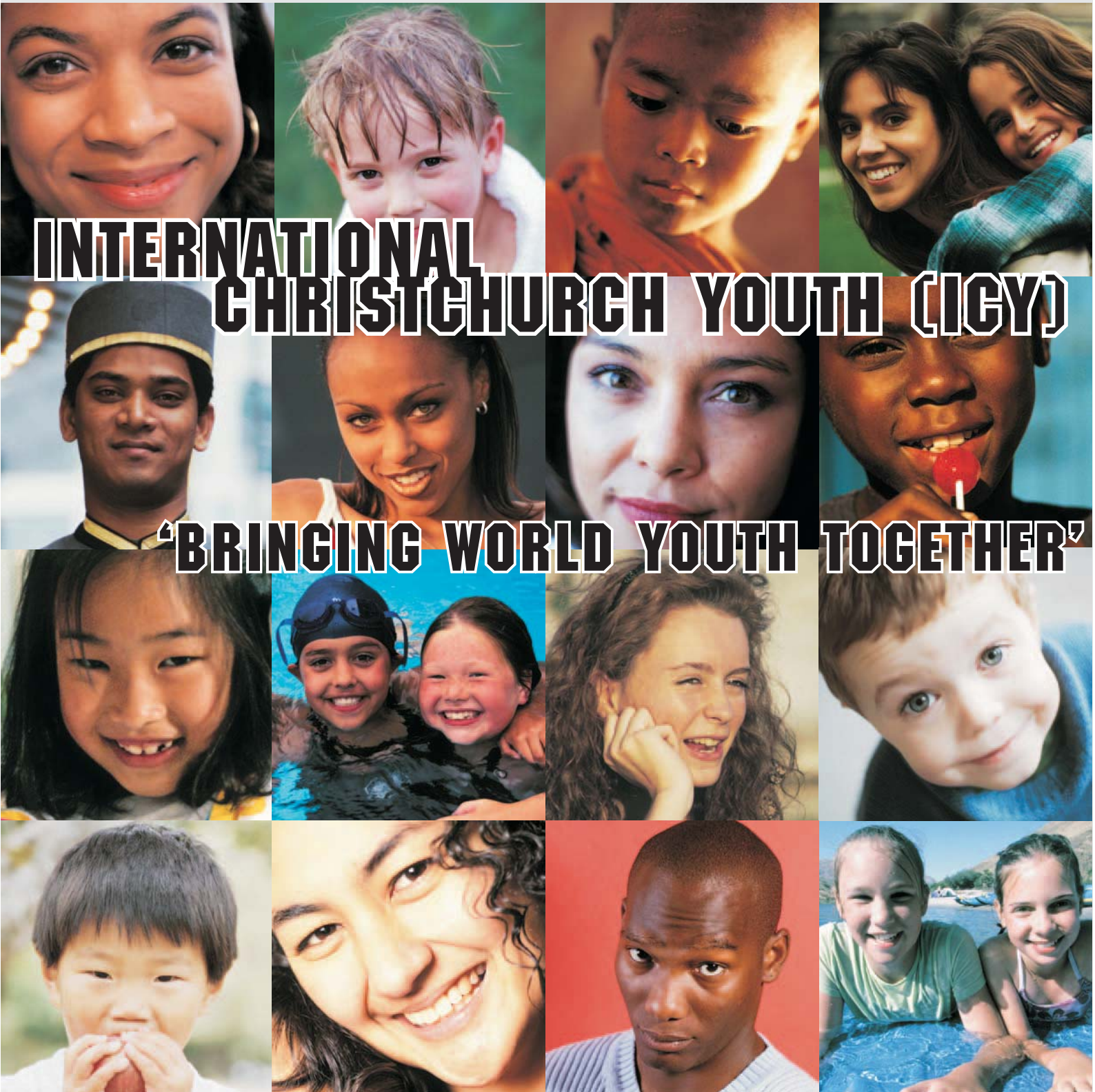


# Sister Cities New Zealand Air New Zealand Awards 2005

Category: Best Youth Project



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## **Executive Summary**

International Christchurch Youth were formed after the National Sister Cities Conferences Youth Workshop in Christchurch in 2004. We are a group of youth ranging in age from 13-20, and have all been involved in some way with international exchanges. We have set objectives based on promoting cultural awareness, and involving youth in Sister Cities and international relations.

We then planned and organised various events and activities throughout 2004, gave advice relating to Sister Cities, and have used our networks of peers to promote various opportunities for youth relating to both Sister Cities and wider international opportunities.

The first activity was an international day run at both Merrin Primary School, and Halswell Primary School, both of which are local Christchurch schools. ICY organised and helped to run both of these days, including creating activities for the children to do including a 100 question quiz made up of questions to do with Christchurch's Sister Cities; a parade; a shared lunch; a poster competition; and a performance.

The Christchurch Sister Cities Young Artists Competition (a work in progress) was our second major project, inviting all 13-18 year olds in the city to submit a piece of artwork to a local competition and exhibition. The winning entry will then be forwarded on to the International Sister Cities Young Artists Competition in the United States of America.

ICY has advised people and committees, from a youth perspective, particularly with regard to Sister City exchanges and members have assisted with the selection of students for the upcoming Seattle exchange in April this year.

ICY's networks were used to broadcast youth opportunities including the Ship for World Youth in which an ICY member gained one of ten national places, and an ICY member representing Christchurch at the National Youth Sister Cities Conference in Rotorua in 2004.

Sister Cities awareness was raised by those who participates in the two school's international days, and awareness of other cultures was heightened through the involvement of the student's families, the rest of the school and media coverage in local papers.

The art competition was promoted widely raising awareness of the wider community through coverage in local newspapers, and members going to every High School in Christchurch and supplying the Head of Art department's with all the relevant information, posters, and entry forms.

The benefits to the community and to ICY from the first year's projects have been wide. The community has been made more aware of the Sister Cities movement, and also are now more aware of different cultures around them. The members of ICY have now got increased confidence, and organisational skills, have more knowledge of how much work, and what is required in organising events. We have also benefited in the fact that we are being given the chance to pass on the information and experiences that we have all had, and are now part of ensuring that other youth know that they have these great opportunities available to them.

## Background

ICY is a group of young people who have in some way been involved with the Sister City movement through scholarships and exchanges to Seattle, United States of America; Kurashiki, Japan; and Songpa-Gu, Korea. Because of our experiences with Sister City exchanges and wanting to encourage others to get involved, we have combined to form International Christchurch Youth (ICY). ICY was formed after the national Sister Cities Conference 2004, which was held in Christchurch. Together we want to give other youth in Christchurch and New Zealand the chances that we have had, but mainly to help raise awareness of cultures other than those in New Zealand and especially those of our Sister Cities.



**Members of ICY with Lesley Keast, then Deputy Mayor of Christchurch City Council.**

From left: **Suzy Garnett** (20, University of Canterbury), **Marcella Herrera** (Facilitator), **Sarah McNeil** (16, Villa Maria College), **Janelle Malcomson** (13, Burnside High School), **Lesley Keast** (Deputy Mayor), **Ricky Hurst** (18, Linwood High School), **Wook Jin Lee** (20, University of Canterbury), **Hadleigh Milligan** (20, College of Education). Absent: **Jaimee Brewer** (16, Avonside Girls' High School), **Linda Chu** (15, Villa Maria College).

## Objectives of the International Christchurch Youth Committee

ICY's vision is "Bringing world youth together". To achieve this we have written four objectives that we are aiming to achieve and have set goals under each one to help us achieve these objectives and our vision. Our objectives are to

1. promote an awareness and understanding of the worlds cultures, especially those of our Sister Cities;
2. create youth involvement in international relations;
3. increase young people's confidence, self-development and communication, organisational and leadership skills and
4. promote international friendships.

## **Activity Details**

### ***Local Primary Schools' International Day***

We have made steps towards objective one (Promoting awareness and understanding) by setting up and helping two local primary schools (Merrin Primary and Halswell Primary) to have International Days. The purpose of the International Day was to increase knowledge and awareness of cultures other than that of New Zealand's. A draft programme was written and presented to the principals of each school at an ICY meeting. Following the buy-in from the principals, members of ICY presented the programme to staff at the schools and made suggestions on how the activities could be run and offered their help on the days.

#### International Day - Merrin Primary School (22 October 2004)

In the weeks leading up to the International Day, students were asked to create a poster about one of Christchurch's Sister Cities. The students were told that the judge would be looking for brightness, creativity, the components asked for including landmarks, dress, food, flag, and for posters that 'stood-out'. The completed posters were then displayed in the school hall.

On the day, volunteers from ICY held a Cantamath style quiz prepared by ICY where the children were put in teams and were given questions to answer about Christchurch's Sister Cities. The answers to these questions could be found in the Christchurch Sister City booklet which each team had been supplied with.

We invited the children participating in the International Day to wear clothing that characterised another country – either traditional, sporting or the colours of the country they were representing. The school held a parade to show the school their costumes with the students holding signs to indicate where their costumes were from.

Once these activities were completed, the school had an assembly where the school choir sang, and Merrin School's Korean fan dance group performed. A group of three girls (the 'Mafikizolo' Zimbabwean Dance Group) that performed a traditional and contemporary Zimbabwean dance followed the two performances by the school groups. At the conclusion of the performances, we had a small prize giving ceremony where the winning students from each of the activities (poster competition, quiz and parade) received a small prize each, as did the students whose posters were awarded with 'commended'. In addition, each child that participated received a certificate and a pen. The winning posters and the commended posters (from both Merrin and Halswell Schools) were displayed in the window of the Christchurch City Council offices.

Over lunchtime, the children enjoyed international food they had brought to school that morning. The food ranged from vegemite sandwiches and kiwifruit pieces (New Zealand), to Pizza (Italy) and Samosas (India), to Sushi (Japan) and Dalo (Fiji and the Pacific Islands).

The Merrin Korean fan dance group travelled to Halswell School and performed at the Halswell International Day on 29 October. This was a great experience for both the children from Merrin and the children from Halswell as both were able to mix with children from another local school.

A 'how to' manual is currently being written by ICY and will be sent to schools as a plan for running an International Day at their school. We are hopeful that many of the local primary schools will come on board with this in 2005.



Merrin Primary School's multi-cultural choir.



'Mafikizolo' Zimbabwean Dancers.

### ***Christchurch Sister Cities Young Artists Competition***

ICY have organised an art competition for 13-18 year olds with the theme "Connecting Global Villages". Entries for this competition close on the 18<sup>th</sup> of March for an exhibition at "Creation" Young Person's Art Space from the 29<sup>th</sup> March – 15<sup>th</sup> April. ICY will courier the winning entry to be exhibited in the annual Sister Cities International Young Artists Competition 2005, Washington D.C, United States of America, with the chance to win \$US300. As well as this, the artist and their school (if applicable), will receive the opportunity to have an exhibition at Creation for a month free of charge. We are lucky to be supported by The Drawing Room, an art supply shop in Christchurch that is supplying some excellent prizes for this competition.

### ***Advice Given***

ICY has given advice to various people and committees to help improve the visits of youth visiting from our Sister Cities. Among various ideas we made the suggestion to the Christchurch-Seattle Sister City Committee that the visiting Seattle scholars should visit Woolston Primary and Halswell Primary to talk to the children about Seattle. One of the visiting scholars said it was the best thing that they had done in Christchurch! We also commented that when we were hosting our scholars from various Sister Cities that we weren't very aware of different attractions that we could take our scholars too. Because of this, the various Sister City committees have started to give the host families 'Best Attraction' passes which give discounts to some of Christchurch's most popular tourist attractions.

*Hadleigh Milligan*, and *Suzy Garnett* are currently assisting the Christchurch-Seattle Sister City committee to select the 2005 scholars that will travel to Seattle later this year. Hadleigh and Suzy travelled to Seattle on the same exchange in 2002 and have enjoyed being part of the process of selecting the scholars each year.

### ***Using Networks to Broadcast Youth Opportunities***

Through our individual and combined networks, we have told our peers about various opportunities that are available to youth in Christchurch. One of which was the **Ship for World Youth**. The Ship for World Youth is a ship with 250 youth from around the world aboard for around seven weeks and attend various seminars and learn a great deal about other cultures around the world. New Zealand was invited to partake in the 17<sup>th</sup> ship. One of our committee members, *Wook Jin Lee*, was the only South Islander selected out of 12 participants from around New Zealand.

Another youth opportunity that we have been able to promote is a Christchurch City Council website designed for young people up to the age of 25 called **Drive Thru** (<http://www.drivethru.info>). Every ICY member is a member of Drive Thru, and have

told their network of peers about the site. Drive Thru now has over 180 members. This website is a forum for young people to voice their opinions about various issues, and find out what other youth think. It is only available for Christchurch youth to join, and although it is a pilot website, other regional councils are likely to look into one for their regions as the Christchurch site is a great success.

*Sarah McNeill*, a committee member was selected to attend the **National Youth Sister City conference 2004**, held in Rotorua and was the Christchurch representative. She has also briefed the Kurashiki Students group 2004, and talked to them about ICY, and that we would love to have them on board for their valued input. Sarah travelled to Kurashiki in 2003 on the same exchange.

## Resources

When Christchurch hosted the 2004 New Zealand Sister City Conference, there was \$3,891 profit. It was agreed that this should be used as the start up fund for our committee that formed after the youth workshop at the conference. The Christchurch City Council has been extremely kind by supplying drinks and pizzas for a number of our meetings!

The costs for each of our activities are outlined below:

### *Merrin and Halswell Primary International Days 22<sup>nd</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup> October 2004*

Prizes for both schools	\$243.90
African dancers	
-Performances at both schools	<u>\$180.00</u>
	\$342.90

### *ICY Sister City Young Artists Competition*

Printing and promotional costs	\$539.25
Creation venue rental	\$180.00 + GST
Entry charge to Sister City	
International comp. (US\$30+15)	\$100
Courier charge to Washington DC & return	\$300
Exhibition opening – 29 <sup>th</sup> March	<u>\$200</u>
	\$1319.25

These two figures subtracted from our starting budget leaves \$2228.85.

## **Community Participation**

### ***International Days at Merrin and Halswell Primary Schools***

The International Days stimulated involvement in the local school communities including such people as staff members, students, and the students' families. The staff were extremely helpful and really got behind the International Days. Below is a quote from Mary Jonker, the teacher in charge of Merrin's International Day:

*“The members of the ICY group attended and helped run this International Day. They were also responsible for organising the games and the prizes. The ICY members interacted freely with the Merrin pupils and the children responded warmly to them. The programme as set out by them was most successful and the children were very actively involved for the entire morning. The children themselves were most positive about the International Day and, upon being asked at a later date as to their favourite activities for the year, many of these children put the International Day as one of their favourite memories for 2004.”*

The students and their families were involved in the International Day through the costumes the children wanted to find from different countries, the posters that they had to complete for homework, and the different cultural food that they were asked to bring along for the international lunch. As well as this, there were many parents and care givers that came along to the parade and the shared lunch.

### ***ICY's Sister Cities Young Artists Competition***

This project has stimulated a fair amount of involvement in the local community. We have had various people indicate their interest in placing entries into the competition although this is difficult to judge as the entries have not yet closed. In addition, “Creation” Young Peoples Art Space, and The Drawing Room art supply shop have given their support in the offer of a space to hang the artwork, and the supply of prizes. People from the local Christchurch art community have been asked to judge the paintings, and have stepped forward willingly.

**Awareness**

The projects that were run by the ICY group focused on enhancing the awareness and understanding of Sister City activities in our community. We aimed to do so not only in the school communities, but also in the wider Christchurch area. This has been achieved in aurally through the International Days, with children talking with their families about the Sister Cities and all that they have learnt. We have also had media coverage in the local papers, where photos from the International Days from Merrin Primary School and Halswell Primary School were published.

In respect to the Art Competition, ICY has had articles placed in local newspapers to increase the community awareness of the event, and also have promoted the competition at local High schools. We have had a wide range of people interested in participating in the competition, and have even had grandparents ringing up for their grandchildren! This surely reflects the outreach that ICY has achieved.

## **Overall Benefits**

The young people are the people of tomorrow. ICY is the first group of its type in New Zealand, without peer in working to “Bring World Youth Together”. By creating a youth body as such, we are striving to foster the spirit of youth development in the field of international relations.

Benefits for the wider community in having a group such as ICY situated in Christchurch are, that it facilitates a forum where young people can discuss and share ideas about international relations with other likeminded youth. In doing so, we are encouraging the youth of Christchurch to become more involved with organisations and entities that seek to promote the Sister City message. We see a real potential in having a group like ICY operating for youth, by youth, and believe that many future leaders will come out of groups such as ours.

The overall benefits for ICY from organising these activities are huge. From these activities each committee member has had their confidence elevated, and experienced self-development. This involved increasing our communication, organisational and leadership skills, all of which fall under our objective three.

We have all thoroughly enjoyed being part of ICY and have formed strong friendship bonds with other committee members and with those who have helped us out. Special mention should go to Sue McFarlane of the Christchurch City Council and Marcella Herrera, who have facilitated the development of this group from day one and led us in the right direction.

Below are the benefits that are more specific to the activities:

### ***International Days at Merrin and Halswell Primary Schools***

The benefits that the International Days produce extend to both the ICY committee members, and also to the members of the school communities that were involved. Every participant learnt more about Christchurch’s Sister Cities – ICY through the preparation process; the children and their families through preparing the posters for the poster competition; and the children also through answering the questions of the quiz. ICY has sought to promote an awareness and understanding of the world’s cultures to the school communities, in order to fulfill our objective one.

### ***ICY’s Sister Cities Young Artists Competition***

The benefits to ICY by organising and running this Art Competition are vast. We will be learning new skills as how to hang artworks in a professional and formal way, as well as other details about the display of artworks in art galleries. ICY having organised this competition from the beginning, have expanded our collective skills, as well as increasing our organisational, leadership and communication skills. The wider community have benefited from this project by the participants, and their families, seeing their artworks hanging in a professional gallery, thus enhancing their confidence. It is a great chance for people of our city to see what the Sister City movement is about. And also to see what the youth of Christchurch can achieve when given a positive opportunity to put their energies into.