

2006 Air New Zealand Awards Entry

Category: Youth, Education or School Project

Category: Culture, Sport or Recreation Project

Submitted by:
Christchurch City Council
International Christchurch Youth (ICY)

A YEAR OF SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS

Contact: Wook Jin LEE
28A Clifford Avenue
Fendalton
Christchurch
Home: (03) 355 3805
Mobile: 027 428 4920
Fax: (03) 941 8262
Email: wjl37@student.canterbury.ac.nz

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Let's be frank – youth participation in New Zealand's Sister Cities movement clearly has some unfulfilled potentials. It has been 25 years since the movement began in New Zealand, and much has been achieved through the dedicated efforts of the advocates of the ideals of Sister Cities during that period. However, if the concept of Sister Cities is to be as relevant in 2030 as it is today, more work is needed to promote the relevance of the movement to our young people. That is where the International Christchurch Youth (ICY) group comes into play. ICY is unique in that it is the only youth organisation in New Zealand solely dedicated to the Sister Cities movement, and we have made giant strides over the past year in spreading the messages of international friendship and harmony.

2005-6 has been a hugely significant year for ICY. We continue to develop as an organisation, just as our members are individually developing as young people. Continuing on from our successes at the 2005 Air New Zealand Awards, ICY has taken the initiative in leading the youth segment of Sister Cities movement in New Zealand through our innovative events that drew participation and support from many different parts of our society. Our enthusiasm and efforts have culminated in the organisation of many events that promoted the ideals of the Sister Cities movement in the community. These include the 'Joining Hands Around the World' project, our annual Christchurch Sister Cities Young Artists Competitions, and many other successful one-off events. Recognising the need for long-term efforts to promote youth participation in the Sister Cities movement, we have implemented various means by which the group can become a truly sustainable organisation. These included the drafting of the 70-page ICY Manual, which serves as a reference document to aid the work of our group, as well as providing a framework for ICY activities to ensure that office holders are not required to re-invent the wheel. The adoption of an organisational constitution has given the group a more cohesive and accountable structure, thus giving ICY greater solidity and credibility.

As well as the progress we made as a group, our members individually enjoyed many successes also. Linda Chu's fine achievement at the Goi Peace Foundation International Essay Contest for Young People and Wook Jin Lee's successes in various fields provide some examples of the incredible talent that we have among our mix. It is expected that many ICY members will go on to become leaders of New Zealand and beyond, with their involvement with the group playing a major part in their development.

ICY is a youth group that has achieved many unprecedented things, and it really has been the flag bearer in the New Zealand Sister Cities movement's pursuit of greater youth participation. We are a very capable group of young people who are enthusiastic about what we do, with a proven track record to support our claim to be the pre-eminent Sister Cities Youth group in New Zealand.

However, in order for us to continue our successes and improve upon our achievements, support from outside organisations are essential. Being a non-profit organisation run by youth, for youth, we are often limited in what we can do due to a lack of resources. Being granted the Air New Zealand Awards again in 2006 will ensure that the group maintains its excellent rate of growth in 2006-7, by enabling us to explore other national and international opportunities. This is especially the case since ICY will be sending two representatives to the 50th Anniversary Conference of Sister Cities International in Washington D.C. in July, in what clearly is an unprecedented move for New Zealand.

It is for these reasons that ICY would ask the Judging Panel for your favourable consideration of our application. We have shown through our efforts that young people are not just people of tomorrow but also can be leaders of today, and we are confident of being worthy recipients of the 2006 Air New Zealand Awards.

INTRODUCTION

2005-6 has been an eventful year for International Christchurch Youth (ICY). We received the delightful news of our successes at the 2005 Air New Zealand Awards, which gave ICY a fresh injection of enthusiasm. Thus began the initiation of our 'Joining Hands Around the World' project in March 2005, which developed into something far greater than originally envisaged, and the launch of the inaugural Christchurch Sister Cities Young Artists Competition. The Art Competition has since become an annual fixture for ICY, and many successes have resulted from it. ICY has also taken the initiative in developing itself into a truly self-sustaining, youth-run organisation through constructive reform, whereby an organisational constitution was adopted and a new structure was established. This is an exciting time for ICY, which has gone from strength to strength with the tremendous support and encouragement of the Civic and International Relations team at Christchurch City Council.

The following report will outline the most significant ICY events and achievements between February 2005 and March 2006. These are:

- Christchurch Sister Cities Young Artists Competition 2005 and 2006;
- The 'Joining Hands Around the World' Project;
- ICY Reform and ICY Manual; and
- Members' Personal Achievements.

OBJECTIVES

International Christchurch Youth (ICY) is a non-profit, non-governmental organisation run by youth, for youth, dedicated to promoting and upholding the spirit of the Sister Cities movement amongst the youth of Christchurch. We came together following the youth segment of the 2004 Sister Cities New Zealand Conference held in Christchurch, and have sought to achieve the following objectives in organising and managing our events with a vision to '*Bring World Youth Together*':

- Promoting an awareness and understanding of the world's cultures, especially those of our Sister Cities;
- Creating youth involvement in international relations;
- Enhancing young people's self-development, particularly developing communication, organisational and leadership skills; and
- Promoting international friendships.

Therefore, ICY has a set of objectives that provide a clear framework for the tasks we set out to achieve. All of ICY's projects reflect these key organisational goals.



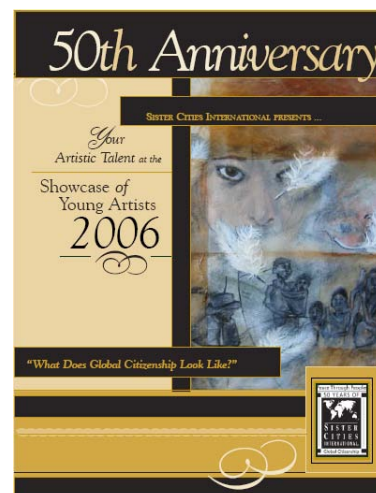
ACTIVITY DETAILS

1. Christchurch Sister Cities Young Artists Competition

Sister Cities International has an annual Showcase of Young Artists, and the international body encourages member communities to organise a local version of the competition. ICY picked up on this opportunity and organised the inaugural Christchurch Sister Cities Young Artists Competition 2005, themed ‘Connecting Global Villages’. Coordinated by *Hadleigh Milligan*, this project gave some of the most talented young artists of Christchurch aged between 13 and 18 an opportunity to have their artworks exhibited at Creation Arts Space – a Christchurch youth gallery – between 29 March and 15 April 2005. From the entries, a winning artwork was selected and sent to Washington D.C. to enter the Sister Cities International Young Artists Competition.

First place was awarded to ‘Dreaming the Thoughts of Others’ by

Melissa Gray, 17, of St. Margaret’s College. The entry was duly couriered to Washington D.C. with the support of the Christchurch-Seattle Sister City Committee, and yielded a remarkable outcome, especially considering this was our inaugural competition. To quote from a letter from Tim Honey, the Executive Director of Sister Cities International, Melissa Gray’s winning artwork of the inaugural Christchurch competition was “*so beautiful that it is featured on the front cover of our Sister Cities International Showcase of Young Artists brochure for 2006.*”



Melissa's artwork featured on the Front Cover of the 2006 International Brochure.

Wook Jin Lee organized the 2006 Sister Cities Young Artists Competition, themed ‘What Does Global Citizenship Look Like?’ The exhibition will run from Tuesday 28 March to 19 April, at the Art Zone of the Centre of Contemporary Art. 17 artworks were exhibited at this bigger and better-known venue, and we are hoping that the winning entry by Erin Jackson of St. Margaret’s College, ‘Not Just a Badge’, will prove a hit at the Sister Cities International Young Artists Competition.

2. ‘Joining Hands Around the World’

This project was launched at the Culture Galore on 19 March 2005. We also used this opportunity to promote ICY and do some fundraising. Resene kindly sponsored ICY with paint for this project. We collected painted handprints from local school children who attended the event on squares of calico, along with their details. In addition to these, *Sue McFarlane* of Christchurch City Council helped ICY to get the handprints of school children from Christchurch’s six sister cities. These all came together in a display in the Cathedral Square for KidsFest on 22nd July, where more handprints were collected, and also at the Cultural Festival in September. This activity connected children from all over the world, physically as well as symbolically.



In the end, over 2,000 handprints were collected, and they have inspired a well-known local artist to create a sculpture using these. ICY is supportive of this project, and we are hopeful that our project will continue to influence our community.

Once we satisfied our initial goal to connect handprints of children from our sister cities, it was decided that the 2006 Culture Galore would be the ideal location to conclude this project. Therefore on 18 March, over 2,000 handprints were displayed around the venue to allow the attendees to appreciate what we have achieved as a group.

3. ICY Reform and ICY Manual

Although ICY has come leaps and bounds over the past year, concern was expressed that it was perhaps not performing as independently as it had originally been envisaged. It was perceived that although ICY members individually are very capable and talented, there was a general lack of organisational experience amongst the great majority of the membership. *Wook Jin Lee* led the initiative to reform ICY so that it became a truly self-sustaining, youth-run organisation that it was originally meant to be. The ICY Constitution was drafted by *Wook* and adopted by the group in October 2005.

The Constitution sets out a reformed structure for ICY, in an attempt to give the group a more cohesive and accountable framework. It provides for the establishment of an ICY Committee and an ICY Leadership Group, whereby the former is the governing body of ICY and the latter manages the day-to-day running of the organisation. This type of structure is common in many youth organisations, and it was believed that the group would function with greater efficiency and independence under this framework.

Wook also published a guiding document that specifies how ICY should be run. The 70-page ICY Manual, completed in February 2006, details the responsibilities of the groups and officers of ICY as well as the procedural and operational framework. It is a comprehensive guide for running a youth organisation such as ICY, and the existence of such a document would ensure that office holders are not required to re-invent the wheel. It will continue to serve as a reference document to aid the work of the organisation, with room for adjustment and improvement.

RESOURCES

ICY is a non-profit youth organisation, and we are often limited in what we can do due to a lack of resources. Although we receive generous support from the Civic and International Relations team of Christchurch City Council, the resources that we have at our disposal are by no means adequate to fulfill all our goals.

Therefore, ICY has actively sought sponsorships and support from various organisations, which have generally been responsive to our requests. For example, Resene Colour Shop was kind enough to donate over 100 test pots of paint for the 'Joining Hands Around the World' project, and many organisations provided ICY with prizes for its Young Artists Competition. The Drawing Room, the Art Zone, Creation Arts Space and the Young Designer Awards Trust were all extremely supportive of our venture, and have expressed their intention to work in partnership with ICY on a long-term basis.



The Civic and International Relations team of Christchurch City Council has been the primary support provider for ICY since our beginning. As well as the annual funding that we get each year from the City Council, we were also able to draw on the expertise that staff at the Council provided for us. Their Communications team was often called upon to help out with media releases and promotional activities, and the International Relations Coordinators provided us with substantial logistical and moral support.

Our main expenses from the 'Joining Hands Around the World' project came from purchasing numerous rolls of calico, which were used for acquiring the handprints. The Young Artists Competition required ICY to pursue an aggressive marketing strategy, whereby a significant portion of our assets were

dedicated to the costs involved in printing. Further expenses were incurred for other matters, such as catering for the exhibition opening. In total, it is estimated that our projects for the past year have cost us over \$1,500 in total, and ICY is



in a position to apply for sponsorships and grants for the year ahead. Successful applications for grants are necessary if we are to carry on with our projects and also to investigate further opportunities for our organisation.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

The main target group for ICY's project was the youth. However, the diverse range of our projects meant that we were able to engage people of many different walks of life. The 'Joining Hands Around the World' project, as the name suggests, required physical participation from citizens of Christchurch, both young and old. The youngest participant was a one year-old whilst the oldest was 80. What began as a simple youth project became something far greater, as handprints from all our six sister cities were joined in friendship. This was a visually striking project, which drew a lot of media coverage and attention as well as public participation. Through this, ICY and Christchurch's Sister Cities movement were able to attract unprecedented attention, and we are confident that more people became aware of Sister Cities through our efforts.



The Young Artists Competition attracted entries from some of the most talented young artists of Christchurch. Every secondary school in the wider Christchurch area was contacted and their participation sought. Contact was made with the media, and we also came into communication with tertiary institutions such as the University of Canterbury, Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology, and the Design and Arts College of New Zealand. In the end, the Young Artists Competition was a project not specifically for secondary school students, but also that for anyone who has a belief in and enthusiasm for the Sister Cities movement, with the artistic talent to put their thoughts into a visual form.

Therefore, our works did not only engage the young people of Christchurch, but also those who are young at heart. It is our sincere hope that those who participated in our events enjoyed the experience as much as we appreciated their involvement.

AWARENESS



We believe that over the years, the Civic and International Relations team of Christchurch City Council has done a tremendous job in raising the awareness and understanding of Sister City activities in our community. However, it is submitted that ICY has provided a fresh face to the Sister Cities movement in Christchurch through our passion and innovative thinking.

With the growth that we have undergone in the last year, we have been able to expand on our vision of '*Bringing World Youth Together*' in a wide range of ways. The 'Joining Hands Around the World' project not only enabled us to become more aware of our sister city relationships, but it also provided a colourful and exciting event for all ages to enjoy when the handprints were displayed at Culture Galore and KidsFest. Information about ICY and the Sister Cities movement was provided to other young people of Christchurch at such events. Because we appreciate the need for sustained promotion of the Sister Cities movement, we never hesitated to provide for the public

information on our group and Christchurch's sister cities. It was a great way for us to share our experiences and encourage others to get involved. This was one way in which we recruited new members for our group. We were able to promote our sister cities and the spirit of the movement, as well as to increase the awareness of the world's cultures and international friendships.

As mentioned above, our efforts were not exclusively targeted at young people. We did our absolute best to coordinate events that would have a wide appeal, so that people from many different walks of life could all enjoy in the occasions along with young people. We are confident that this was done effectively in all our events and activities.

BENEFITS

It is submitted that our community and organisation enjoyed mutual benefit through our projects. We believe that our projects added a real value to the Sister Cities movement in Christchurch. The introduction of youth proved that the spirit of the movement is far from being obsolete. Because we have been so active in promoting Sister Cities, our community is that much better informed about the benefits of having Sister City relationships. Whether they were old or young, white or coloured, the people who made contact with ICY became more aware that international relationships are not limited solely to nations. They were able to realise that real international relations take place close to home, through people-to-people contact or citizen diplomacy. Therefore, instead of being taught on certain subject matters, the young people of ICY were able to pass on the messages advocated by the Sister Cities movement to a diverse range of people.

Benefits for ICY were immense also. International relations is not an area that many young people can participate in. Opportunities and resources are often scarce and not enough people realise that they can become involved in diplomacy at local level. ICY members have been fortunate enough to gain exposure to international relations early on, and through our events, we were given opportunities to develop skills in many areas. Organising an event for ICY is a challenging task, as not all members have experience in this. Being able to learn about the intricacies involved in coordinating an event in a supportive environment is something that we offered our members, and this type of experience would be difficult to attain otherwise.



It would be fair to assess that all our members benefited immensely through their involvement with ICY. The older members have appreciated the numerous networking opportunities that arose through working under the auspices of Christchurch City Council, and the younger members developed organisational and leadership skills by being involved in professional working environments. There is no doubt that our involvement in the group has enhanced our development as leaders of tomorrow, and we continue to learn from each other.

ANY OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION

Members' Personal Achievements

In the midst of the excellent progress we made as a group, ICY members underwent substantial development and learning over the past year, and this culminated in some special achievements by a number of ICY members. These highlighted the active role that ICY plays to promote international opportunities for the young people of Christchurch, and its growing youth network.

Linda Chu was placed Third in the Children Category of the 2005 Goi Peace Foundation International Essay Contest for Young People, themed 'Caring for Our Planet'. This was a fine achievement, as this prestigious event attracts over 3,600 entries from over 100 countries each year.



Wook Jin Lee returned from the 17th Ship for World Youth, a unique international exchange programme sponsored by the Japanese Government. On his return, he was elected as the Vice President of the New Zealand Ship for World Youth Alumni Association. He successfully ended his term as the Vice President of the United Nations Youth Association of New Zealand, and was recently selected as New Zealand's Vice Representative to the South Pacific Regional Commonwealth Youth Caucus. He is also the recipient of the Asia New Zealand Foundation David Holborow Memorial Scholarship for 2006.

The Year Ahead

The upcoming year is assured to be an exciting one for ICY, as we continue and further enhance the projects that have worked for us in the past, and strive to develop new ideas that would meet our key objectives. With our new structure in place, we are confident that we will maintain our growth as a youth organisation and continue to positively influence the youth of Christchurch.

There are two other major opportunities for ICY to participate in this year. 2006 is a vastly significant year for the Sister Cities movement in New Zealand and around the world. In May, we will celebrate the 25th Anniversary of Sister Cities New Zealand in Wellington, whilst in July, Sister Cities International will be celebrating 50 years of citizen diplomacy through its 50th Anniversary Conference. We will be sending three representatives to Wellington for the Sister Cities New Zealand Conference this year, and through our participation, we would be able to show the participants of the 2004 Conference just how far the group has progressed since our humble beginnings. In an unprecedented move, ICY will be sending two delegates to Washington D.C. to participate in the Sister Cities International Conference, and the organisation for this is already at an advanced stage.

ICY as a group, just like its members, has much potential for growth. Despite being in existence for less than two years, ICY has steadily increased its sphere of influence in Christchurch, especially amongst its youth. A unique organisation of its kind, ICY would certainly thrive from the support of larger, established organisations such as Sister Cities New Zealand and Air New Zealand. The prospects of winning the Air New Zealand Awards offer many exciting opportunities for ICY and its members, as financial constraints are often the biggest obstacles for a youth group willing to make a difference in our community.

ICY has proved that with some initial support and guidance, a group of like-minded youth can come together and form an effective, self-sustaining organisation. Although all our members are engaged in full-time studies or employment, we have still managed to achieve many things that even adults may struggle to do. Just as a growing plant requires good nurturing and investment to flourish, ICY would benefit immensely from your trust and investment, and perhaps develop into a model which other communities follow to set up their own sister cities youth programmes. The Sister Cities Youth movement will continue to develop so long as groups like ICY are enabled to reach their full potentials.

It is for the reasons stated above that ICY asks the Judging Panel for your favourable consideration of our application. We have shown through our efforts that young people are not just people of tomorrow but also can be leaders of today, and we are worthy recipients of the 2006 Air New Zealand Awards.

Thank you very much for your serious consideration of our application. We promise you that your good faith will be greatly appreciated, and well-repaid.



Members of International Christchurch Youth at the 2006 Sister Cities Young Artists Competition, 28 March 2006
(from Left to Right)

Wook Jin Lee, Hadleigh Milligan, Janelle Malcolmson, Michelle Clements, Jaimee Brewer, Nicole Bennett, Chiaki Bolam-Smith
Absent: Linda Chu, Sarah McNeill, Emma McCann, Rachel McAuley, Rebecca Lee, Nadia Morgan, and Charlotte Robertson