

## A Survey of Madison's Sister City Programs, 2009

12-16-09

### 1. Official name of program - Madison Vilnius Sister Cities, Inc. (MVSC)

#### 2. Key facts about the sister city

- a. City name - Vilnius, capital city of the Republic of Lithuania
- b. Province or state - N/A
- c. Country - Lithuania
- d. Population - 555,000 (2008)
- e. Nature of local government - city is governed by the Vilnius City Municipality. 51 Members are elected to the city council for four year terms; candidates are nominated by registered political parties. The council elects a mayor, four deputy mayors and a city clerk.
- f. Nature of the local economy - Currency is the Litas, pegged on the Euro; declining economy, 10% unemployment in the country
- g. Socio-economic data – Broad mix of well-paid professionals and state-dependent retirees
- h. Other – Geographical center of Europe; 14 sister cities, 1 brother city; Vilnius' Old Town is a Unesco World Heritage Site; Vilnius was named the European Capital of Culture, 2009; Vilnius boasts the world's first bronze cast of Frank Zappa! (1995); Lithuania joined NATO and the European Union in 2004; similarities to Madison – both are urban capital cities with a major university surrounded by agricultural land, dairy being an important industry.

### 3. A map showing the location of the sister city in the country.

Please attach a map to this questionnaire. Wherever possible, please use Google maps.

### 4. History

#### a. Key organization dates

(1) What year was your organization founded? – discussions to create a sister city in "Soviet Russia" began in 1983. Mayor Joseph Sensenbrenner communicated via letter the desire to "twin" the cities and received a response from the Vilnius Mayor in 1986, when the official movement to create the organization was initiated.

(2) In what year did you become an official Madison sister city? – In 1989 the organization was officially recognized as and named Madison Vilnius Sister Cities after much public outcry from American-Lithuanians here protesting the "Soviet" aspect of the name.

b. What were the *primary* motivating factors behind the selection of your city? If there was more than one primary motivating factor, you may check more than one box.

humanitarian

cultural and educational

business and economic

other? (please explain) \_\_\_\_\_

**combination of above** (please explain)\_\_\_ The Madison committee (religious leaders) originally wanted to be paired with a Soviet city. The mayor of Vilnius at the time was the longest sitting mayor in the the Soviet Union as well as the vice president of the International Sister Cities organization. MVSC was established to promote friendship and international understanding between the two cities. This included humanitarian efforts as well as educational and cultural exchange.

c. Did your sister city program have specific initial goals it sought to realize? If so, what were they? Initially, the goal of the program was to "promote a better understanding between the US and the Soviet Union".

Early projects included sponsoring various groups including medical students from Lithuania to spend time here learning Western medical practices. Lithuanian Olympic rowers also visited and participated in sporting events. Computers, medical equipment and supplies were shipped to Lithuania. Orphanages and similar agencies were financially supported. Later, LT choirs, media, government officials, and educators were invited and hosted by MVSC in Madison.

d. Who were the initial leaders?

Two MVSC chairpersons' names appear on the original Articles of Cooperation: James T. Sykes and Edmundas Jusksys. On the original committee that traveled to the USSR (1986, Madison-Soviet Sister Cities) were Allen Hubbard, Ruth Pauly and the Rev. John Kruse.

e. What were the key *organizational events* and *when* did they occur? Typical key events might include: triggering events; concept discussion; getting others involved; formal organization creation; and seeking council approval. Please select the key organizational events for your program and fill out the table below:

Key event	Year	Additional information
Madisonians visit Vilnius & Mayor of Vilnius (Algirdas Vileikis) visits Madison	1986 & 1988	Four Madisonians, members of Clergy and Laity Concerned (CALC) visited Moscow and Vilnius as guests of the Soviet Peace Committee.
Madison's American-Lithuanians protest the name, "Soviet Sister Cities"	1986	The intention was not to disrupt the process, but to educate the public on the political situation in Lithuania, illegally annexed by the Soviets in 1940, as well as conditions endured behind the Iron Curtain. As a result, the name was changed to Madison <i>Vilnius</i> Sister Cities.
MVSC Articles of Cooperation signed and MVSC incorporated as non-profit organization	1989	Signed by Mayor of Madison, Paul R. Soglin and Juozapas Petkevicius, Vice Chair, Executive Council, City of Vilnius.
Lithuania's independence	1991	Although MVSC was not involved with political aspects, Lithuania's independence affected the organization's focus. Still providing humanitarian aid, MVSC evolved into a more cultural exchange project.

#### In addition:

Vilnius Capital City Days visited by Madison Delegation, 2001 - Because Madison's mayor could not attend, 3 delegates from MVSC participated in the three day event. The delegation left a positive impression on the Lithuanian people just by traveling there; a special spirit of solidarity was established because of the 9-11 tragedy, which had occurred just two weeks before, and MVSC was the sole group from the US that did not cancel their travel.

f. Thinking about your international sister city partners:

(1) Who were your initial contacts? Names are not as important as their roles/positions in the locality.

Municipal staff in Vilnius.

(2) Why were they selected?

They were assigned by the Soviet government, as was the process at the time.

(3) How did you make initial contact with your future sister city leaders in the locality?

After written correspondence from Mayor Joseph Sensenbrenner, the initial CALC committee made personal contact and was aided by Sister Cities International and Soviet representatives.

(4) What factors explain why your prospective city agreed to participate in the sister city program?

Soviet propaganda cannot be excluded, but perhaps there were altruistic reasons as well.

- g. Do you have a copy of the council resolution creating your sister city program? If so, please include a copy when you make your presentation to the committee. [Note to staff: Do the mayoral files contain this information? If so, we could eliminate this question.]

Yes, unsigned copies.

- h. What historical records do you have? Check each that apply.

- board minutes
- scrapbooks of newspaper clipping
  - concept papers
  - fundraising prospectuses
- brochures
- photographs
- other (please describe) Original signed sister city agreement between Vilnius and Madison

h. Where are these documents kept? Please provide the keepers' names and contact information. Past President, MVSC, Daina Zemliauskas-Juozevicius has possession of these documents. 608-260-8971, [auradain@tds.net](mailto:auradain@tds.net), 701 South Shore Drive, Madison, WI 53715 Photographs are archived on the MVSC website, [madisonvilnius.org](http://madisonvilnius.org)

- i. For each of the *outbound* trips provide the following data:

- (1) Trip dates (month and year is sufficient)

From 1986 until 1990, there were outbound trips made by UW professors and physicians, as well as MVSC organizers and government officials. Since then, one MVSC financed trip was made in September of 2001 for MVSC delegates to attend Vilnius' Capital City Days.

Also, Zaibas, the Lithuanian Dancers of Madison have made many outbound trips (solely out of pocket). Regardless of the source of funding (and unfortunately, none has come from the city's coffers), Zaibas has represented MVSC and Madison throughout the world by participating in folk dance festivals. Locations include Los Angeles, Toronto, Vilnius, Japan, and very recently (December 2009), Argentina.

- (2) Approximate number of participants

50+.

- (3) What were the most important/most memorable events of the trip?

With changing political tides in Lithuania over the years, each visit had its purpose and and positive outcome. The key trips are described above.

- (4) Salient qualities of participants

- Demographic (ages, gender mix, socio-economic qualities, etc.)

Wide mix of professions as well as gender.

- What factors probably motivated participation?

Many factors were involved, but all have one in common: establishing person to person contact to promote peace and understanding (which is the very essence of the sister cities organizations).

- (5) Did you experience any problems that you think may be common to all of Madison's sister city programs? If so, please describe

Considering historical documents, it appears that in the early years, there were funds earmarked for travel. The city of Madison was more involved through participation of its mayor and city council. Presently, there are no available funds for travel, and interest as well as enthusiasm for our program from our city government has waned. In the recent past, Madison's sister cities representatives have had to literally beg the council for the nominal funding that the city provides – just to keep the organizations afloat. As a result, MVSC members who travel to Lithuania do so at their own expense.

- j. What is the approximate total number of persons who have gone on all outbound trips to date?

50+.

- k. For each of the *inbound* trips held provide the following data:

- (1) Trip dates

1989 - ongoing

(2) Approximate number of participants in visiting delegation

As many as 40 in one delegation (Virgo Choir, 1989), media groups, justices, the Lithuanian Ambassador, the US Ambassador to LT, several groups of medical students, justices, musicians, agriculturists and veterinarians.

(3). What were the most important/most memorable events of the trip?

Too many memorable events to list separately, but include impressions of western medicine that LT medical students brought home, agriculturists' experience gained from attending the World Wide Dairy Expo and connecting with UW's Dairy professors, and others who made US contacts in their various professions.

(4) Salient qualities of participants

▪Demographic (ages, gender mix, socio-economic qualities, etc.)

MVSC's visitors from Lithuania have included nearly every profession, ages from college students to seniors, male and female equally divided, many socio-economic backgrounds.

▪What factors probably motivated participation?

Opportunities to work with and learn from counterparts in the US; for musicians, the opportunity to perform for US audiences.

(5) Did you experience any problems that you think may be common to all of Madison's sister city programs? If so, please describe

Lack of understanding and interest from Madison's City Council and lack of funding. City officials (mayor, council, staff) have always received invitations from MVSC to attend various events/performances, but we are not aware that any have attended.

1. What is the approximate total number of persons who have gone on all inbound trips to date?

200+.

## 5. 2010 goals and objectives

a. What are your most important goals and objectives for 2010?

-Continue to organize annual events (Lithuania's Independence Day celebration, annual banquet, annual summer picnic and Christmas Eve celebration);

-As in 2009, help UW's BALSSI (Baltic Studies Summer Institute) program create a series of events regarding the Lithuanian language and culture; Sponsor a welcome dinner for students.

-Financially support "Zaibas" (Lithuanian Folk Dancers of Madison)

-Maintain/update website

-Publish e-newsletter

-Maintain/expand membership base

b. Generally speaking, what programs and strategies are you using to achieve these goals and objectives?

The organization relies on its board and volunteers to make these goals a reality. The board meets monthly to discuss goals, strategies and divides up the tasks. The members are told of projects and programs at MVSC events and through the e-newsletter and mailings.

## 6. 2010-2012 activities

a. What plans do you have for *outbound* trips? Please describe.

MVSC is not planning outbound trips. There simply are not enough funds in the treasury to cover such travel.

b. What plans do you have for *inbound* trips for? Please describe.

As of yet, we do not have specific trips planned for 2010. MVSC generally invites LT artists/musicians performing in the Chicago area and cover their travel costs and accommodations in Madison. When these trips occur, they are usually planned within a very short time frame.

c. Do you have any other programmatic initiatives planned for 2010 thru 2012? Examples could include pen pal programs, business exchanges, fundraising fairs, etc.

Annual events listed above; some of them have guest speakers.

## 7. Governance

a. Regarding your board:

How many people serve on your board?

8 board members (12 are allowed according to the MVSC bylaws)

What are the socio-economic qualities that best describe your board?

Currently our board members are mostly of Lithuanian descent, born either in the US or Lithuania and are a mix of working professionals and retirees.

Do you have any special "slots" or categories of members? If so, please describe.

There are no special categories. Naturally, people somehow have to be interested in Lithuania or the Baltic States. We are always searching for board members who are non-Lithuanian Madisonians.

Do you have written by laws? (If so, please attach a copy)

Yes. Hard copy only.

b. How do you define a member?

Historically, an MVSC member has been defined by paying nominal annual dues. Since the MVSC website has been online (approximately 2 years), those who sign up for e-newsletters are also considered to be members. Membership is open to all and members need not be of Lithuanian descent.

c. How many members do you currently have?

Approximately 200.

d. What governance problems have you experienced and how have you solved them?

Because of the political change in Lithuania, and more nationals being able to move here, MVSC's board evolved from mostly non-Lithuanian at its inception to nearly all Lithuanian and American-Lithuanian, though this has proved helpful in contacting and inviting a larger (Lithuanian immigrant) MVSC community. Several board members who had served for years recently resigned due to "burn out". MVSC is hoping to recruit more American (non Lithuanian) Madisonians to complement and fill the board to capacity.

e. How would you describe your current *level* of activity?

Very active for a small, volunteer based organization.

f. Are you planning any governance changes that would increase your organization's capacity and sustainability? If so, please explain.

Maintain the board and people's interest of serving on the board as well as organizing events. MVSC is planning to include more members as active volunteers to spearhead projects— e-newsletters have increased communication in this regard.

g. Do you have the leadership, resources, program vitality, and other factors needed to sustain your program for the next five years? Please explain.

Yes. MVSC is adept at "taking in" new people and their ideas. The board has many projects in mind, but since most board members work full time and events are organized on a volunteer basis, not all of the ideas can be executed.

h. The SCCC was created because many felt that Madison's sister city programs had great but unrealized potential, and that improved coordination and collaboration *between its programs and on behalf of all programs* could help achieve that potential. Could a permanent, well-organized SCCC provide services that could be of significant value to your sister city program? If so, please describe them.

Yes, but SCCC needs to be more than a board. It should have dedicated staff who knows about and informs our organization about related city events, helps to find venues, helps to organize events, helps with printing, advertising events, etc. Perhaps setting up a website of its own to function as a clearinghouse for information (events calendar, venue listings) would be one way to start. Being that there is strength in numbers, a show of unity and communication amongst Madison's sister cities is paramount to SCCC's success. Events such as the International Fest held annually in Madison is a natural choice for the SCCC to get the word out to Madison's community that it exists and to publicize its goals.

In terms of business/commercial exchange opportunities, the SCCC should assist each sister city to identify the specific possibilities and provide contacts.

Another service the SCCC could provide is making official Madison “gifts” available for those traveling to the various sister cities.

## 8. Program budgets

a. When you prepare your program’s annual budget, what *categories* or line items do you use? Examples could include:

- General program maintenance
- Outbound trips
- Inbound events
- Gifts
- Postage
- Printing
- Equipment rental
- Other (please explain)

In its annual budget, MVSC includes general program maintenance (website costs), postage & printing (for special events), donating a yearly subscription of *Lithuanian Heritage* magazine to the Madison Public Library, and annual programs (which include advertising, venue rental for performers/speakers).

b. Please provide *summary* budgets for the last three years. By “summary” we mean the line items (categories) and the total for each year. [Should we provide a simple four-column table here with, say 10 rows for budget line items and a bottom row for the annual total?]

Included as three separate attachments: MVSC Base Level Funding 2006, 2007, 2008

c. What *categories* of out of pocket costs do participants typically have to pay on outbound trips? All categories that relate to travel. MVSC does not and can not compensate for outbound trips.

d. What are the approximate total out-of-pocket expenses per person for an outbound trip? Depending on time of year for travel, flight alone is \$900-\$1300.

e. Have you ever subsidized expenses of participants on outbound trips? If so, explain the amount and how you covered these costs.

The most recent subsidized (and last) outbound trip was made by 3 MVSC delegates to participate in Vilnius' Capital City Days, held in September of 2001. MVSC allocated the cost of airplane travel from its treasury (approx. \$2,100); lodging and other expenses were covered by the city of Vilnius.

f. Experience shows that Madison’s sister city governments are able to earmark larger amounts of money for hosting and gifting when Madisonians travel there, and that we Madisonians are not able to match those appropriations when they travel here. Please describe methods you have used to handle this problem. MVSC has learned not to rely on the city of Madison for help in financing inbound trips or allocating funds for visitors' expenses. When necessary, our organization has dipped into its treasury to cover or aid with costs such as travel and room/board. To cut down on these expenses, the members of MVSC provide homestays for our visitors, and donate their personal funds for food and entertainment. When MVSC members have traveled on their own expense, they have also had to purchase gifts "out of pocket" to present to host families or government officials.

g. Are there other points you’d like to share with the SCCC about your budgetary practices that were not addressed in the above questions? If so, please explain.

The expense that MVSC incurs for our most prominent events (public performances, exhibits, and its annual banquet), providing profits for various Madison venues and businesses, has far superceded the funding granted far from the city.

## 9. Fundraising

a. City of Madison. For the last several years the City of Madison has earmarked about \$10,000 annually for sister city programs. This money was distributed in two categories: a base grant of about \$500 and a discretionary grant of up to \$1000.

(1) Have you ever received a base grant? How many, in what amounts, and in what years?

MVSC has been a recipient of the city's base grant since the inception of the grant program. In 2003 and 2004, \$555 was allocated to all of the sister cities that applied. From 2005 on, the base grant was cut across the board to \$500.

(2) Have you received a discretionary grant? How many, in what amounts, in what years, and for what purpose?

Yes, MVSC received discretionary grants each year:

2004: \$350 to donate to the restoration of the "Rulers' Palace" in Vilnius (on behalf of the City of Madison) and to defray expenses (advertising & venue rental) for Lithuanian jazz artists' performance in Madison (free events at the State Capitol Rotunda and Pres House.)

2005: \$500 to defray cost of producing an exhibit of Lithuanian photography at the central branch of the Madison Public Library.

2006: \$549.99 to enable a delegation of Lithuanian agriculturalists to attend the annual World Dairy Expo and to help with shipping American English books to the Vilnius Library System.

2007: ? for help in bringing an art exhibit entitled "The Artists of Old Town" to Madison which was being shown in Appleton.

2008: \$572 to help purchase, frame, and exhibit Lithuanian Soviet-era posters at the gallery in the central branch of the Madison Public Library.

b. What types of fundraising activities have you done *outside* of the city grant program? Please identify all of the categories or techniques you have used, when you used them, how much money they raised, etc.

Which of these techniques have you found most successful and why?

Most of MVSC's fundraising activities take place during membership activities, i.e., we depend on donations in addition to dues during special events and performances. We have found that holding raffles and auctions within the MVSC community have been successful in raising additional dollars.

c. How are you raising money for your organization today?

Same as above.

d. What fundraising plans do you have for 2010 and beyond?

Membership dues and donations during events.

e. If a significant amount of *additional* sister city money could somehow be raised through such techniques as private sector grants, and if that money were made available to your program, how would you propose to use that money?

**Hire staff** to organize one or all of the following events (with help from volunteers):

-Organize the Jonas Mekas exhibition about the fall of the Soviet Union at Madison's contemporary art museum. That exhibition has been shown only in London and New York:

<http://imaginepeace.com/news/archives/3736>

-Bring at least several original M. K. Ciurlionis paintings for an exhibition:

[http://ciurlionis.licejus.lt/MKC\\_Tapyba.htm](http://ciurlionis.licejus.lt/MKC_Tapyba.htm)

...or modern Lithuanian artists such as Marcinkevicius (painter), Linas Cicenas (painter), Petras Repsys (graphic artist), Sarunas Sauka: ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C5%A0ar%C5%ABnas\\_Sauka](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C5%A0ar%C5%ABnas_Sauka))

-Bring Oskaras Korsunovas' performance to Madison:

[http://www.okt.lt/en/about\\_us/history](http://www.okt.lt/en/about_us/history)

-Establish a UW-Madison student exchange program with Vilnius University;

-Organize a tourist trip to Lithuania via UW-Extension, similar to their trips to Western European countries.

f. Other?

Funding would also be a great help in producing/printing updated full color brochures to advertise MVSC and how specifically it is beneficial to the Madison community.

## 10. Marketing

a. How do you make Madisonians aware of your existence?

- Brochure?
- Information booths (where?)
- Other? Please explain

MVSC has full color brochures (printed approx. 5 years ago) which are distributed at international fairs, exhibits, and wherever the folk dancing group performs, including area schools and commercial venues. We have also participated in every annual International Fest and Celebrate Madison during which, in some years, MVSC was represented at tables/booths. For approximately two years, MVSC has maintained a website and e-newsletter. Recently, MVSC participated as one of Madison's sister cities featured on the City Channel.

b. How do you recruit program participants? How effective have these efforts been?

MVSC board members have close ties with the Lithuanian Consulate in Chicago. Through this relationship, we learn of opportunities to invite Lithuanian speakers and artists to Madison. Also, our ties with UW's Center for Russia, East Europe, and Central Asia (CREECA) have grown stronger throughout the years, allowing us to utilize CREECA's sponsorship for various events.

c. Do you try to secure media coverage for your program? If so, please describe how you do this.

When MVSC is producing a Lithuanian musical performance, various print newspapers are contacted via email or phone and when possible, CDs are supplied for airplay on WORT and WERN. Contacting various Madison organizations via the web has proven successful as well. For visual exhibits and other cultural events, MVSC relies on the talent and time of its membership to design, print, and post flyers throughout the area.

d. How would you describe the relative effectiveness of your media program?

Our media program is challenged by the fact that many of our musical/cultural events occur within a very short time frame from when we learn about the opportunity to the actual performance. Advertising these events becomes a hardship as many print deadlines are missed. However, using the internet as a resource has been helpful in short-term notification to various Madison organizations.

e. What recommendations do you have to *improve* your media effectiveness?

It would be ideal to have more lead time for advertising our events, though that is not generally possible. Securing more help with the dissemination of information would be beneficial, as would having funds to cover the rising costs of producing print material.

f. Madison's sister city programs generate relatively little attention from the business community, and yet businesses are potentially one of the greatest beneficiaries and largest program underwriters. Have you tried to make Madison's business community a significant partner in your program? If so, please describe the methods you have used.

Apart from contacting businesses such as Copp's (grocers) and Whole Foods to help sponsor events, no, MVSC has not approached the business community for any partnership.

g. The SCCC is considering several concepts that it believes have potential to involve more businesses in *your* sister city program. Which of the following concepts do you think have the greatest potential to get the business community involved in *your* program? Please place a number in the box that reflects the concept's relative promise: #1 means great promise, #2 some promise, and #3 little promise.

#2                      Sister City Partners. A partner is a business that would receive exclusive or near-exclusive opportunity to secure sister city business in exchange for a discounted rate. This could be attractive to hotels, restaurants and other hospitality businesses.

#1                      Product fairs For example, five of Madison's sister cities produce cheese; therefore, an event would be created at an appropriate location to showcase such products.

#3                      Business-to- business opportunities. This would include specialized exchange programs for businesses or organizations that share a common product or service.

Other? Please explain.



h. The SCCC is considering several marketing concepts for individual and overall programs. Which of the following techniques would have the most positive, enduring impact on your program? Please place a number in the box that reflects the concept's relative promise. A #1 means great promise, #2 some promise, and #3 little promise.

#3 Create a "friends" organization (e.g., Friends of Madison Sister City Programs) so that it could do fundraising, marketing, publicity, etc. *independently* of the city.

#2 Create a web site that could be used as an informational and recruiting tool.

#1 Establish and run a joint sister city fundraising program.

Other \_\_\_\_\_

i. Are there other points you'd like to share with the SCCC about your marketing practices that were not addressed in the above questions? If so, make those points here.

## 11. Measuring success

a. One of the questions that the SCCC is studying is: How would an astute observer of Madison's sister city program know when the program is successful? With that question in mind, does your sister city program use metrics (either qualitative or quantitative) to measure your success? If so, please explain. During art exhibits and performances of Lithuanian artists, we have supplied "guest comment" books. Not only has this been an effective tool in learning the impact these programs have, but MVSC's membership has grown using this method (provides contact information).

a. As you reflect on the experience of your sister city program, what factors have the greatest potential to make it better? Please explain.

Our board is always evolving, adding young blood with new ideas while retaining the experience and knowledge of older members. A more diverse mix of Lithuanian immigrants and native-born Madisonians will help to consistently bring good ideas and projects into our program.

While the problems of burn out and lack of funding persists, MVSC remains confident in its leadership to carry through with its important projects; assistance from a group such as the SCCC would be greatly appreciated.

b. As you look back on the management of your sister city program, what are the most important lessons you have learned?

One thing MVSC has learned is that there is no *one* way of doing anything. It has always been productive and exciting to explore and execute new projects by trying out new paths and methods.

c. Are there any final points about your program that you would like to share with the SCCC? If so, please outline those points here.

Recently accomplished goals regarding cultural and educational exchange and humanitarian aid in Vilnius include:

- Procured and mailed American English books to branches of the Vilnius Library;
- Supported orphans and youth at risk programs;
- Invited and hosted Lithuanian agriculturalists/veterinarians for World Dairy Expo (2007 and 2009);
- Provided information to city agencies regarding bicycle racks for Vilnius city buses.

In Madison:

- Provided free concerts by reknowned Lithuanian musicians, from traditional folk to modern jazz (venues include: State Capitol Rotunda, UW Morphy Hall, Capitol Lakes Grand Hall)
- Organized free lectures by prominent educators: Lithuanian agriculturalists at Monona Terrace; UW Professor Emeritus Alfred Senn, Madison Public Library;
- Organized annual exhibits at the main branch of the Madison Public Library (photographs of Vilnius, 2006; Lithuanian Textiles, 2007; Soviet-era posters from Lithuania, 2008);
- Continued its donations of pertinent books and annual subscription of *Lithuanian Heritage* magazine to the Madison Public Library;

- Assisted UW's Baltic Summer Studies Institute and its Center for East Europe and Central Asia by providing cultural programs for its students;
- Participated in several public schools' international fairs as well as annually at Madison's International Fest (Zaibas, Lithuanian Folk Dancers of Madison).

Our Sister City, Vilnius, is an exciting place that we have seen evolve from a drab Soviet colony to a vibrant, important and progressive European capital. It has been very satisfying to follow its development along this monumental path and experience person-to-person contact with that part of the world. MVSC is proud to share its resources with our sister city through humanitarian, educational, and cultural projects. In Madison, our organization has enriched the lives of its residents through providing numerous events that expose Lithuanian culture. Performances, exhibits, and lectures have always been offered free of charge, and are always open to the public.