

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Palo Alto and Bloomington Mark Second Anniversary of Groundbreaking City-to-City Partnership

*Non-Profit Sibling Cities USA Invites Other U.S. Cities to
Build Bridges Across a Divided Country*

Palo Alto, Ca. and Bloomington, Ind.

On June 1, 2024, Palo Alto, Ca. and Bloomington, Ind. will celebrate the second anniversary of the cities' first-of-its-kind partnership through [Sibling Cities USA](#). The Palo Alto-based nonprofit seeks to build bridges between regionally and politically diverse U.S. cities through community-building, commerce, and civil discourse.

The celebration will be held at the Lucie Stern Community Center in Palo Alto and at the IMU Frangipani Room in Bloomington, with a videoconference feed between the two cities. The free event is open to the public in both cities (RSVP details below).

According to Sibling Cities founder Vicki Veenker, the second anniversary milestone serves as an opportunity for other U.S. cities to consider similar relationships. Veenker, an attorney who serves on the Palo Alto City Council, founded Sibling Cities USA to "bridge America's regional divides, two cities at a time." Sibling Cities is modeled on the framework of sister cities, a decades-old global program that fosters city-to-city connections across international borders.

"Our June 1 events will celebrate the many impactful projects our two cities have undertaken over the last two years, including a series of Town Halls, held over videoconference and focused on important, but sometimes challenging topics," Veenker said. "The occasion is also forward-looking as we anticipate other cities joining us in our mission to re-discover the large swaths of common ground we Americans share, even if we are too-often bombarded with reports of our polarization."

Bloomington Program Director Alain Barker said Bloomington and Palo Alto have successfully leveraged the two cities' shared values and common ground to productively explore their differences and learn from each other. "The goal is to knit our country back together," said Barker, a senior lecturer at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music. "Sibling Cities activities are about getting beyond stereotyping and exaggerations. We are proud to lead the way for other municipalities and communities to create connections that will strengthen our country."

In addition to the Town Hall events, Palo Alto and Bloomington have each hosted delegations from the other city, collaborated on a teen essay contest, and fostered connections between the cities' respective Rotary and Kiwanis Clubs, among other projects.

The Sibling City kickoff event in 2022 featured a fireside chat with Cornell William Brooks, former President of the NAACP and professor at Harvard University, who serves on Sibling Cities USA's Advisory Board, and remarks from Tara VanDerveer, Indiana University alumna and the recently retired head coach of the Stanford Women's Basketball Team.

Event Information: Saturday, June 1, 2024

BLOOMINGTON: IMU Frangipani Room | Reception 5:30 pm | Program 6:30 pm

PALO ALTO: Lucie Stern Community Center | Music 3:00 pm | Program 3:30. Reception to Follow

RSVP [here](#).

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