

April 28, 2025

To the Members of the Selection Committee:

It is my sincere pleasure to recommend Mrs. Mary Zunick for selection to the Board of Directors for Sister Cities International. I know of no citizen more committed to cultural understanding and exchange who is better suited for the role. Over the past thirteen years and travels across the globe, I have met no one more committed to SSI's mission "to promote peace through mutual respect, understanding, and cooperation, one individual and one community at a time."

Since 2008, Mrs. Zunick has led the Hot Springs-Hanamaki (Japan) Sister City Program. This program has twice (2012 and 2020) been recognized by SCI as the Best Overall Program for cities with populations between 25,000 and 50,000. The program was recognized in 2013 with the SCI Youth Leadership Award, the SCI Innovation Award in Business in 2015 for development of a sake brewery, as well as the 2024 Annual Award for Innovation in Business, Trade, and Professional Exchange for a city with a population of 25,001 - 100,000.

Mrs. Zunick has served as the Honorary Consul General of Japan for the State of Arkansas since 2018. The position is appointed by the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She was recognized by the Arkansas Secretary of State with a Diamond Award for her leadership of the Sister City Program. She currently serves as Arkansas State Representative for Sister Cities International.

In recent years, the reach and influence of the Hot Springs Sister City Program has grown tremendously. The Arkansas Cherry Blossom Festival has evolved from a small local fundraiser into a cultural event that draws thousands from across the state and region. She has also been a steadfast champion for the development of an Arkansas-based sake brewery. Origami Sake launched in 2023 and is already receiving acclaim within the global sake industry while also spotlighting two incredible Arkansas resources (rice and thermal spring water).

The standard that Mrs. Zunick has set in strengthening the relationship between Hot Springs and Hanamaki is an example not only for communities in Arkansas but also brings critical perspective as new communities across the globe explore the wonderful possibilities that stem from Sister Cities International. I hold Mrs. Zunick in the highest of esteem and believe she will serve as a tremendous ambassador for both Sister Cities International as well as the state of Arkansas. Please do not hesitate to contact me at 501-622-5115 or alderdicec@asmsa.org if I can be of further assistance.

Respectfully submitted,



Corey Alderdice
ASMSA Executive Director
Board Chair, Hot Springs Sister City Foundation