

# Wilmington, NC and San Pedro, Belize International School Partnership

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*Below: Teacher candidates at Isla Bonita School Spring 2011*



The educational partnership between Wilmington and San Pedro [Belize] began in 2009 and has continued to grow and expand. Education teacher candidates studying at the University of North Carolina in Wilmington selected for this international program begin their internships at local schools in January of their senior year and depart for Belize in March for 5 weeks to teach in Belizean schools merging US teaching methodologies with Belizean strategies that are largely modeled on the British system. The number of university students traveling to San Pedro has more than doubled since its inception and the program has added elements that will

serve to develop leadership skills now that they are participating in service projects while in the field. The program has also expanded to include post-graduate students in education and fostered an opportunity for Belizean teachers to come to the US and spend time in classrooms.

Teacher candidates are encouraged to discuss their plans for San Pedro with their assigned schools in Wilmington prior to going and introduce background on the country and culture to students. Participating students blog about their experience so classroom teachers and students in Wilmington can follow their activities during their absence. Some classes participate in a direct student exchange by writing letters as part of the language arts curriculum during the field assignment, while others have incorporated some techniques they used due to resource challenges they faced in San Pedro, and some have brought attention to the humanitarian needs of this developing country by organizing fund-raising events. One example is Wilmington's Codrington Elementary School raised money during the student's Annual Talent Show to assist the partner schools with purchasing classroom supplies. SCAW acted as the fiscal agent for the donation and checks were presented to San Pedro High School, Isla Bonita, and San Pedro RC Primary School. The money raised for the education lab demonstrates that Codrington Elementary students learned at a very young age that they can make a difference in the lives of people they may never even meet. They learned not only what a philanthropist is, but also how they can be one.

A documentary on this program can be viewed on the IFE – Belize Facebook Page or a 2 minute promotional video is available – <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nrcf7-TkQIc>

Isla Bonita Wall Mural



San Pedro High School



# Dandong, Gliwice, Wilmington Secondary School Students Meet up over Geometry

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This spring, math teacher David Kesler of Laney High School in Wilmington partnered with other teachers in sister cities to give his students the opportunity to interact with others in classrooms across the globe. Mrs. Saibei Li of Dandong, China, and Mrs. Aleksandra Szczepanik of Gliwice, Poland, joined Mr. Kesler in the creation of an online collaborative environment. Using the online resource Edmodo, a social media outlet designed specifically for educators and their classes, students communicated with one another and posted photos to introduce each other to their home towns.

Overcoming the language barrier, using the free translation tools offered by Google, students used these photographs to initiate conversations, and it did not take long for them to warm up to each other. Mathematics does not lend itself easily to global learning opportunities, but through their Edmodo group these students engaged in mathematical discourse. Students were excited and even surprised to discover that others across the world were learning the same mathematical principles, reinforcing their universal nature.

The intention of the online classroom was to build a collaborative lesson in which students use the photographs of local buildings/structures to determine their surface area and volume.



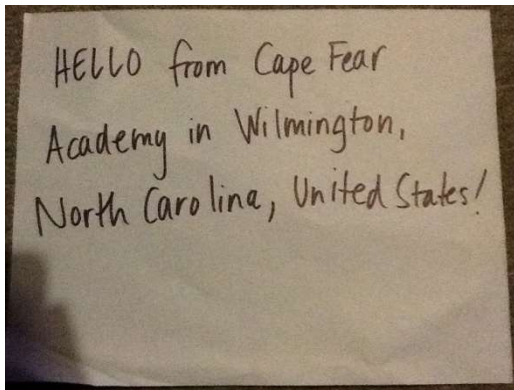
Wilmington, NC (USA)



Gliwice (Poland)

# QR Code Culture in a Box Project

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This is a simple twist on a great project that many schools have done before for those who use mobile technology. Basically, schools have sent each other (participating schools are from Finland, UK, USA, Romania, Dubai, & Spain) gifts that the children think represent their respective city. Shaw Wood Academy in our sister city Doncaster, after a lot of discussion and research about their local area, decided on play money (British pounds) to represent the shopping that can be done at the Frenchgate centre, animal masks to represent the local wildlife park as well as a small ball to represent Doncaster Rovers Football Club. Attached to each item was a QR (Quick

Response) code created by the children that linked to the website of the place that it was representing. Therefore through the technology students have been able to harness more information about the different places. Wilmington students from Cape Fear Academy sent a toy train and boat to signify the importance of those two types of transport within the region. Again, attached to these items as well as the plethora of other surprises were QR codes that helped to identify what the item represented and gave more details about the historical and geographical significance of the object. The gifts brought in the curiosity and creativity aspect of the project, whilst the QR codes started so much enquiry - both about all regions, but also about how QR codes are created and used outside of the school environment. Our children have a greater cultural appreciation as well as a much more technical one as well. A wonderful aspect of the project has been that the enthusiasm from the children which has permeated through to the parents who are researching each partner area at home and also playing 'search for the QR code' with their children by rifling through magazines as well as checking items on the shelves whilst doing their weekly shop. The project has different stages through the year. Midway through classrooms will exchange details about their region or state using the same concept of asking students what they perceive to be the significant aspects in their opinion. Finally, in the spring they will send objects and QR codes that represent their country.

This collaboration is ensuring that children recognize the significance of their city, region and country but also that of others. However, it is also about getting the children to use current technology so that they understand aspects and features of the latest technology and can cooperate through it. Participating children range in ages from 7-11 years. There is gallery of photographs of items received from schools on the Shaw Wood school blog <http://ShawwoodAcademyposterous.com>



# Pre-School Global Learning Program Wilmington, NC – Doncaster, UK

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Cape Fear Community College’s Child Development Center (CDC) in Wilmington and Willow Primary School in Doncaster started a relationship with their respective pre-kindergarten classes by adopting the “Traveling Bear” model. All the children in the exchange were ages 4-5 and they represent the youngest group our association has helped to facilitate an exchange. The Child Development Center in Wilmington is also a learning lab for students enrolled in an early education program at the community college. As far as we know, CDC is the first in the region to have embraced a cross-cultural initiative with a classroom outside the US at this stage of a child’s development. Wilmington received “Dr. Emily”, a bear who arrived from Doncaster in the fall of 2011. Dr. Emily visited with a different CDC family in the Pre-K2 class each week and families recorded her experiences in a journal. Around that same time the Sister Cities Association created a blog for primary grades to get a glimpse of what was happening in southeastern North Carolina to stimulate discussions about other cities culture and geographies. “A Day in the Life of Dr. Emily” was to remain in Wilmington for the equivalent of a school year before being sent back to Willow Primary School in England. A similar culture box was sent to Willow Primary School. Fact or fiction – a glimpse of Dr. Emily at an undisclosed Wilmington location can be viewed on <http://ispyafriend.blogspot.com>.



The classroom teachers decided to add-on to the traveling bear project and each began a community garden. The climates being different meant that the students at Willow Primary School began their planting indoors and transplanted the seedlings as conditions became more favorable. Students learned about different climates, growing seasons and types of vegetables common to each culture and geography. The UK school happened to be in a suburban neighborhood while the Wilmington program is part of an urban campus situated in a commercial downtown district. The photo to the left shows a UK teacher visiting the Wilmington campus and its students’ community garden project in April 2012.



# Victoria Edlington Primary School produces video to promote tourism Wilmington NC

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In late spring of 2011 the parents of Mrs. Myers second grade class at Victoria Edlington Primary School learned about their sister city in the US through a live performance that was recorded with the idea that it could be used as a promotional video to interest tourists in choosing Wilmington for their next holiday. The children learned about Wilmington's geography, climate, and history since the focus in that particular year was on the Americas and they choose a sister city to study. After discovering that modern day Wilmington was a popular tourist destination they turned that into a script and performed a skit accompanied by music for their parents at the end of the school term. The children also exchanged pen pal letters with a second grade class at St. Mary School in Wilmington as part of their research and discovery. The video can be viewed from the following site:  
<http://www.scawilmington/SchoolPartnerships/html>.

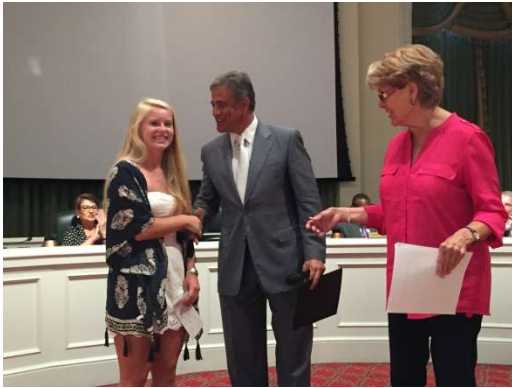
## Wilmington Befriends City in Iraq

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While Samarra is not a sister city with Wilmington, both the City Council and the Sister Cities Association of Wilmington (SCAW) have agreed in principal to offer support to help foster a dialogue between our two cities as the reconstruction of Iraq moves forward. A blog was created to offer a vehicle for Wilmington residents to begin a conversation with the Women's Center in Samarra. Computer instruction was given high priority in the establishment of these centers in various regions and that is what we tried to align with in establishing a cultural exchange. Additionally, a school partnership between Samarra and Cape Fear Academy (CFA) upper school (grades 9-12) was established during [Samarra] Mayor Mahmood's visit to the area in May 2011. He was able to tour the Wilmington campus and meet representatives from CFA's student council as they talked about approaches they might undertake to begin an international exchange between students and teachers. CFA headmaster, John Meehl, said, "He was excited about the prospects for this type of exchange." The proposed exchange required many more details to be worked out than is customary. A technology platform that could be supported on the Iraq side needed to be agreed upon along with a safe place for students to meet in Samarra to participate. Having no coed schools in Samarra they were asked if an alternative site with the needed technology and support could be identified and the Mayor offered his offices. Time zone differences and the coordination of personnel were challenging. It required considerable flexibility to allow teachers to call using Skype to develop and agree on a plan before getting started. Also school schedules in the region are vastly different from the West and even Europe and Asia due to the Muslim holy days. Exchanges between schools from this region require patience and may take more than a single year to become active.

# Sister Cities Young Artists Competition

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Mayor Bill Saffo and Sister City Commission member, Harriet Smith, recognized young artist Madelyn Schider at the June 21, 2016 City Council meeting. They presented her with a check for \$150. Madie is a junior at Hoggard High School in Wilmington. Her graphite drawing titled, “Woman,” was submitted to Sister Cities International in May to compete at the international level. The grand prize is \$1,000 and a sponsored trip to the Youth Leadership Conference in Washington, DC. The finalists and winning art will be on display at selected locations throughout the year. When asked what inspired Madie’s art, a portrait of her mother, she

responded with the statement, “My mother is beautiful and peaceful.” The competition theme for 2016 was “peace through people.”

School Partnership Outcomes 2010-2016

For more information contact: [marilyn@scawilmington.org](mailto:marilyn@scawilmington.org)