

Celebrating Ten Years as a UCCN Member

Paducah spent 2023 celebrating its 10-year anniversary as a member of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network. Over the past 12 months, Paducah has focused on acknowledging projects and partnerships as well as growing new collaborations within the Creative Cities of Crafts & Folk Art and the other clusters. One priority has been to spend more time promoting the UCCN to local residents. A marketing campaign was created using local print media, television, and social media to educate residents on the Creative Cities and Paducah's role within the UCCN. The Paducah Creative City team created an award-winning campaign called #MyPaducah, which encouraged residents to share photos of themselves enjoying the city. The Paducah Creative City team spoke to civic groups throughout the year. The ownership of Paducah Creative City by arts and culture groups was most evident during the month of July, when the Rotary Club of Paducah speakers all presented on their experiences with UCCN, and this Focal had nothing to do with planning the programming!

In April, Sandro Tiberi, master papermaker from Fabriano (Italy), Creative City of Crafts and Folk Art, visited Paducah as a contestant in Fantastic Fibers, hosted by the Yeiser Art Center. Sandro had a busy schedule visiting the American Quilter's Society QuiltWeek, speaking, visiting schools, attending receptions, and meeting artists. One aspect of the visit that was a first for Paducah was that Sandro stayed at the home of Mary Hammond, focal point of Paducah.

Fiber artist Susan Spencer spent time with Sandro explaining how she has grown her traditional paper pattern making company, Seamly Systems, into a software system that equips fashion designers with digital design tools. She was able to do this through SPROCKET Paducah, a digital economic development organization dedicated to nurturing tech-enabled

businesses, fostering collaboration, and providing essential resources for success. Susan also collaborated with engineering students at the University of Kentucky College of Engineering Paducah Campus to develop 3D software. Sandro Tiberi has been invited to jury the April 2024 Fantastic Fibers competition in Paducah.

Another highlight of the 10th anniversary celebration was a direct result of the 2022 Jinju World Folk Arts Biennale. The Wheelhouse Rousters, who perform traditional Southern American music, represented Paducah in the cultural performances. Many friendships were made with musicians and dancers from Sukhothai, Ouagadougou, Baguio City, Bida, and Ambon. A special friendship quickly formed between the musicians from Paducah and Ambon (Indonesia), Creative City of Music. The six musicians in Kaihulu and Ambon Focal Point Ronny Loppies traveled 10,000 miles each way to visit Paducah and participate in the Lower Town Arts & Music Festival. Lower Town is an arts district located in an area listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Kaihulu and the Wheelhouse Rousters collaborated on several performances, both scheduled and impromptu in restaurants, on television, and on the street. The visit was enriching to all. Ronny Loppies also stayed at the home of Paducah Focal Point Mary Hammond. This personal experience enhances the relationship and exchange of knowledge.

Another exchange occurred after Paducah was invited to participate in the 2022 Manises Ceramics Festival. Manises (Spain) is a Creative City of Crafts and Folk Art. Jamie Romero, a Manises ceramist and amateur chef visited Paducah. He worked with the Culinary Class at the West Kentucky Community & Technical College to prepare a traditional Spanish meal. He also visited the high school culinary class and the Paducah School of Art & Design. Jamie and local Ceramist Mitch Kimball invited the community to visit while they fired the plates, goblets, and serving dishes used during a special fundraising meal in collaboration with renowned Paducah Chef Sara Bradley of the Freight House restaurant. Sara had just participated in the Bravo television network's *Top Chef: World All Stars*.

Months later, a delegation of artists and businesspeople from Paducah traveled to Manises to participate in the 2023 Ceramics Festival. The group,

including Liz Hammonds from Paducah Creative City, also traveled to Fabriano to visit Sandro Tiberi to learn about traditional papermaking. This delegation built new relationships with creatives in Manises and Fabriano and returned to Paducah with inspiration to further the mission of the UCCN at home.



Mary HAMMOND
(Focal Point of Paducah)