

Denver Sister Cities International Newsletter
May 1, 2020

The Denver Sister City Committee for Kunming, China is here turning lemons into lemonade!

They may not be able to participate in their planned educational and cultural activities this year, but that isn't stopping them from bringing support and encouragement to our local global community.



Due to COVID-19, the Committee had to postpone the second part of a people-to-people art exchange with Kunming. In late 2018, they held a very successful exhibition in Kunming of Denver area women artists which drew excellent public attendance, media coverage and art sales. The Committee was eager to

host a Chinese delegation and have Kunming artists exhibit their work at the McNichols Building this year in May, but the local community will have to wait until 2021 to see what promises to be an exciting exhibition.

The Kunming Committee also initiated a John H. Yee Scholarship Fund last year and was planning to support a local student group traveling to Kunming this summer. Although this year's trip has been cancelled, the Committee hopes to help them next year. These trips are an excellent way to promote intercultural relationships, global awareness, and leadership development in our youth.

Instead of letting the funds sit in the bank for the next year, the Kunming Committee decided to see if there were other opportunities to serve the local Chinese community.

Since the rise of the Coronavirus we have sadly seen an increase of verbal attacks on our Asian Denverites. That fear, coupled with the stay at home restrictions, have led to a substantial loss of business for some of our local Chinese restaurants. Many of you have joined us in our annual Chinese New Year celebrations at [The Empress Seafood Restaurant](#) - an essential place in Denver and home to the best Dim Sum in the City! Once the Committee learned that business was down at the Empress, they wanted to do something.



The Kunming Committee brought the challenge to their friends and ideas started percolating. Jim Ryder joined the Kunming Committee decades ago after he and his wife Hing, whom he met while working in Hong Kong, moved to his native Denver. Hing began working as a FDA liaison for the Poison and Drug Center at Denver Health while he volunteered as an EMT in the ER. Hing joined Denver Sister Cities as a way to stay engaged with the global community in Denver and eventually became the Committee Chair of the Kunming Committee while Jim served as its Treasurer.

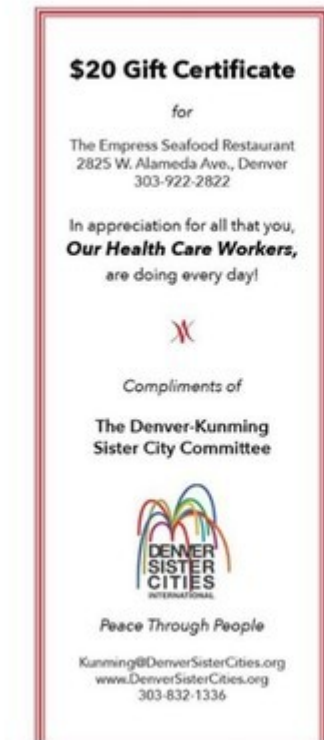
Sadly, Hing, has since passed, however Jim is still strongly connected and engaged in helping share the Chinese culture in Denver.



Photo of Jim & Hing

In addition to the issues facing Chinese restaurants, Jim knew his friends and colleagues at Denver Health had their own challenges: inadequate personal protective equipment, an overwhelming number of patients, and an emotionally and physically exhausted staff stretched to the limit and in constant fear of contracting the virus themselves and infecting their families. The desire to support and encourage these local healthcare heroes weighed heavily on Jim's heart.

On an April Zoom Committee call with members at home and missing the more personal connection of meeting and enjoying a meal together at the Empress, they decided to buy \$1000 worth of gift certificates from the [Empress](#) and then donate them to healthcare workers at Denver Health.



Kin Wong, the owner of the [Empress](#), was very happy about the gift certificates, while Debbie Salazar, the donation coordinator at Denver Health, was honored to be able to distribute gift certificates for 50 delicious dinners to their much-deserving staff.



We want to be friends with you on social media!

Denver Sister Cities is honored to work locally to make Denver a place that is inclusive of all cultures and nationalities. We will continue to support our global community in the midst of our current challenges. Join us on [Facebook](#) & [Instagram](#).

Thank you for being a part of our global family!



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