

## SARASOTA, FLORIDA AND RAPPERSWIL-JONA, SWITZERLAND

### STRENGTHEN TIES

#### **HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

The Board President of the Swiss American Club Sarasota, Primo Bader and the former President of the Sister Cities Association Sarasota, Beth Ruyle Hullinger, began discussions in 2014/2015 to create close links between the two cities. In September, 2015 there was the formal presentation of a Friendship Letter, at the Town Hall in Rapperswil, in the presence of the Consul General of Switzerland, based in Atlanta, Mr. Andreas M. Maager, and the Rapperswil City President Mr. Erich Zoller.

Following initial contacts in Rapperswil-Jona, teams were created with the ongoing strong support of the Swiss American Club in Sarasota and the Sister Cities Association of Sarasota. The joint efforts encompass both the newly formed "Verein" (VSC-RJS) in Switzerland, representing the Rapperswil-Jona interests, formed by Rene Faessler and the Sarasota Sister City Director, Nelly Camardo, who is, as well, Treasurer of the Swiss American Club Sarasota.



#### **MISSION OF SISTER CITIES ASSOCIATION SARASOTA**

The Sister Cities Association Sarasota's objective is to develop respect, understanding and cooperation through citizen diplomacy. To accomplish this mission, relationships are developed with people in cities that have cultural, education, tourism and business environments similar to Sarasota's. Working outside the realm of government, but with its support, we encourage and facilitate cultural and education exchanges, business opportunities and increased tourist interest.

#### **SWISS VISITS TO SARASOTA**

Within the spirit of the Sister Cities Association of Sarasota's recent initiative with the Swiss City of Rapperswil-Jona, 4 members of the Swiss Volleyball Team were welcomed on June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2016 to Siesta Key.

This was followed by separate visits from the Rapperswil Verein's Board Members, Prof Alex Simeon and Mr. Peter Merkli.

September 2016 saw the participation of the newly formed Verein at the Trade Fair event held in Switzerland in coordination with The Technical School of Rapperswil and Edelweiss Airlines, which fly between Tampa and Zurich.

Our most recent visitors to Sarasota were a Canoe Team of 4 persons from Rapperswil. They enjoyed a barbecue held in their honor at the Sarasota Sailing Squadron and hosted by Nelly Camardo, with Members of the Swiss American Club of Sarasota, as well as delegates from the Sister Cities Association of Sarasota.

We look forward to continuing the deepening of our ties between the two cities!

Candace Wehbe /Vice President

Swiss American Club of Sarasota

[www.swissamericanclubsarasota.org](http://www.swissamericanclubsarasota.org) Facebook Swiss American Club Sarasota

Swiss Canoe Team Members Swiss American Club Sarasota and Sister Cities Association Sarasota

