People to People Travel to Cuba
With the Boulder Cuba Sister City Organization
January 18-30, 2014
“Interacting with the People of Cuba: Arts, Environment, and Cuisine, Havana and Eastern Cuba”
4 nights Havana; highlights of Santiago de Cuba, 2 nights Guantánamo, 4 nights Baracoa, 1 night Holguín

Trip limited to 14 participants

Proposed schedule of Educational/People to People Activities (subject to change. Charter air schedules are not yet set):

**Saturday Jan 18:** Travel Day. Meet in the lobby of the Miami Regency Hotel at 5:30 pm to receive travel documents and instructions about entering Cuba. There is a free shuttle to the hotel from the second level of the Miami International Airport. Miami hotel not included in trip price, but we will arrange a group rate. Be sure to request a wake-up call and/or have a travel alarm for the next very early morning. (Our Cuban hotels won’t have alarm clocks)

**Sunday Jan 19:** Leave the hotel on the 6:00 am shuttle for our morning flight to Havana. A comfortable air conditioned bus and bilingual guide will meet us at Havana’s José Martí airport and take us on an orientation tour of the city and lunch at a typical Cuban restaurant. 4:00 pm check in at the 4 star hotel Armadores de Santander in Old Havana. Evening dinner at one our favorite private restaurants followed by free time to begin exploring Old Havana.

**Monday Jan 20:** Bus to the Museum of Literacy to learn about Cuba’s efforts in 1961 to bring literacy to all of their citizens and to compare aspects of our educational system with that in Cuba. Lunch at the beautiful Casa de la Amistad hosted by ICAP, the Cuban Friendship Institute. After lunch discover Old Havana on a walking tour of the four main plazas of the city, and learn about the efforts to renovate Old Havana by the Office of the Historian of the City. Notice many new private businesses.
Evening free to try another recommended restaurant such as the Meson de la Flota where you can enjoy Cuban Flamenco music and dance, or explore on your own and discover a new favorite restaurant.

**Tuesday, January 21:** Morning visit to a senior center in Old Havana, to learn about elder care in Cuba and to mix and interact with Cuban seniors. You might want to bring photos of your own family to share with them.

In the afternoon we will visit a quiet oasis in Havana, the Quinta de los Molinos, the site of Cuba’s first botanical garden, where you will observe many native and endemic species that we will later see in their natural habitat. We will speak with local botanists about conservation efforts.

Evening free to enjoy the city, or to cross the bay to visit the immense Cabaña fortress where every evening soldiers dressed in 18th century uniforms reenact the traditional shooting of the canon to announce the closing of the city gates and harbor.

**Wed January 22:** On our last full day in Havana we will provide you with a variety of activities to engage in, depending on the interests of the group. Some examples are visits to art galleries to converse with artists, taxi to the Hemingway Museum, Finca Vigía outside of Havana; visit the Museum of the Revolution or the Fine Arts Museum.

**Thursday January 23:** Early morning flight to Santiago de Cuba where we will take a quick bus tour of some important historic sites including the beautiful and important Santa Ifigenia cemetery where many national heros are buried. Following a light lunch on the balcony of the beautiful Casa Granda hotel we will continue on to Guantánamo City.

We will be greeted in Guantánamo by the local ICAP representatives for a discussion of US-Cuba relations, and then check in to the Hotel Guantánamo, built in 1985 it is an example of the Russian cement slab architecture of the era.

We will have a short walking tour of some of the new pedestrian friendly areas of Guantánamo, accompanied by historian José Sanchez Guerra, with the opportunity to discuss urban renewal with him and will attend a performance of one of Guantánamo’s music or dance groups.
Friday January 24: A 1½ hour bus ride will take us through small towns and impressive vistas to Boulder’s sister municipality of Yateras, a mountainous rural region famous for its coffee and citrus fruit production. We will visit two of the larger towns of the municipality, Felicidad and Palenque. In Felicidad we will visit the Casa de Changui and interact with the musicians and many local residents. They will share some of their local traditions with us, and we will share things about our community with them. In Palenque we will take a walking tour, visit with our friend the librarian, and have lunch with a variety of residents of the municipality.

Late afternoon return to Guantanamo City to enjoy the “Noche Guantanamera” alongside the residents of the city. On weekend evenings several main streets are cordoned off for a big street party featuring music and traditional food. We will also attend a performance of one of Guantánamo’s excellent dance groups: the Tumba Francesa for Haitian/French dance or the modern and AfroCuban dance troupe, Danza Libre and chat with the dancers afterwards about art and dance education in Cuba.

Saturday January 25: We will leave the hotel early to bus to Yateras’ famous “Stone Zoo” where we will see some of the 400+ animals and historic scenes sculpted from stones in their natural setting. We hope to meet self-taught sculptor Angel Iñigo Blanco to learn about the creation of the Stone Zoo. Wear comfortable shoes, as the hillside paths are sometimes slippery. After the visit to the Zoo we will begin the long journey to Baracoa, the oldest European settlement in Cuba founded in 1511. We will pass through the driest area of Cuba, over the mountains via the famous Farola highway to the wettest area in Cuba, stopping at the seaside town of Imías for lunch. You can enjoy a dip in the Caribbean Sea while waiting for lunch. Bring your own towel.

In Baracoa we will stay at the hotel El Castillo, a former fortress located high on a hill overlooking the city. We will meet our host, historian Elexis Fernandez Rubio, to discuss our program in Baracoa. Following dinner with Elexis at a local paladar for our first taste of the traditional cuisine of
Baracoa there will be free time to stroll the city, listen to music at the Casa de la Trova or the Casa de Cultura.

**Sunday Jan 26--Tuesday Jan 28**  
There is so much to see and do in Baracoa that we will have a variety of activities to participate in depending upon the interests of the group. Activities include:

- **Walking tour with architect Enrique Florián.** Baracoa was visited by Christopher Columbus in 1492 and became the first European settlement in Cuba.
- **Tour of artists’ studios with art historian Rosendo Romero Suárez to meet the artists and learn about art education and the lives of artists in Cuba.**
- **Visit the archeological museum with archeologist Roberto Orduñez.** The museum is situated high above the city in a group of caves with displays of Taíno culture;
- **Visit the city museum located in an old Spanish fort;**
- **Meet with anthropologist Victor Oscar Pérez to learn about folk medicine practices and Inalvis Guilbeaux to learn about traditional cuisine in Baracoa.**
- **Learn to make a traditional culinary specialty in a private restaurant.**

**Evening activities:** Dine at some of the best local private restaurants. We recommend El Buen Sabor, La Casa del Poeta, Marco Polo, La Musa de Piedra. Baracoa has some of the best food in Cuba, and we will savor some of the local specialties. There is music and activity and opportunities to mingle with local residents in Baracoa most nights. After dinner listen to music at the Casa de la Trova, or the Casa de Cultura; sip a chocolate specialty at the Casa de Chocolate while watching the world go by; or attend Afro Cuban dance performances by Bara Rumba or Omi Ilhe.

**Wed Jan 29:** After breakfast at the hotel we will take a 1 1/2 hour bus ride to Alejandro de Humboldt National Park (a UNESCO World Heritage site) for a day to learn about environmental issues and environmental education. You may take a row boat ride around Taco Bay with botanist Laritza Sánchez with a focus on the different types of mangrove vegetation that protect the shore (and if you’re very lucky see a manatee) or hike with mollusk specialist Norvis Hernández and environmental education specialist
Rafael Milhet to observe some of the endemic species of the area and discuss environmental education for children and adults living in and around the Park.

After our time in the park and a picnic lunch we will continue to Holguin. Night at Hotel Pernik in Holguin and farewell dinner.

Day 12 Tuesday Jan 30
Transfer to Holguín airport for charter flight to Miami, arriving in time for late afternoon flight back to Denver.

**ESTIMATED TRAVEL COSTS:**

The Sister City Organization will arrange flights to/from Miami and Cuba, transportation in Cuba including flight from Havana to Santiago, two experienced sister city tour leaders and a bilingual Cuban guide/interpreter within Cuba, 11 nights in three or four star hotels in Havana, Guantánamo, Baracoa, and Holguin (double occupancy, includes breakfast), Cuban health insurance, and some other related travel costs including your Cuban visa, tips for the guide and bus driver, entrance fees for all scheduled activities, some meals, pre trip reading list and informational booklet. Travelers will be responsible for travel to and from Miami, hotel in Miami, most meals (other than breakfast), drinks, tips for maids, baggage porters, and restaurant servers; optional activities, and personal expenses.

The estimated cost of $3500 double occupancy is based on past trips and the rising prices in Cuba. There is a $300 single supplement charge. We will try to find a roommate if you wish, but can’t guarantee it. A deposit of $200 is required with your application form. The deposit is non refundable if you are accepted to travel by the Boulder-Cuba Board of Directors. The final payment is due December 10, 2014.

**YOUR BOULDER-CUBA SISTER CITY TOUR LEADERS:**

The group will be accompanied by BOCUSCO founder and President, Spense Havlick and BOCUSCO Vice President Kate Hennessey. Dr. Havlick, a specialist in environmental planning and water resource management, is a professor emeritus at the University of Colorado and is a widely sought
after consultant, lecturer, and guest scholar nationally and internationally in the areas of the environmental impacts of urbanization, land use and transportation planning, natural hazard mitigation, and community health and safety. He has traveled to Cuba many times since his first trip in 2000 that led to the formation of the sister city relationship in 2002. Ms Hennessey, Professor Emeritus of Modern Languages at Rock Valley College, holds MA degrees in French and Spanish with an area of interest in 19th century Cuban literature. She has accompanied student study tours to Cuba beginning in 1999, and has edited many books on Cuban culture and environment for Editorial Nuevos Mundos.