The City was responsible for building the public areas, and private investors were responsible for building or renovating the surrounding office and retail space. The financial breakout came to $1,021,100 for the City and nearly $2,000,000 for the private sector.

On Columbus Day, 1989, as the construction barriers came down, the public was finally able to see the Italian Piazza they had long been awaiting. Ceremonies were shared between the dignitaries of Bergamo and civic leaders of Greenville. Special entertainment from Bergamo and Greenville, participation by the Greenville City Police Color Guard and information about the Greenville Sister Cities Program rounded out the program.

"I think you'll be as pleased as I am with phase one. I know it will help to further enhance our downtown area and strengthen the bond we have with Bergamo," said Greenville's Mayor Bill Workman, as he observed that the dedication day "marks the date nearly 500 years ago when a famous Italian came to this country and discovered America, thus forever joining the Old World with the New World."

In turn Bergamo Mayor Antonello Pezzini, in stressing the ties between America and Italy, concurred, "This brings together the friendship of two cities."

Bergamo native Laura Sonzogni works on her design for Coffee Street Mall.

In Bergamo the festive opening of Piazza Bergamo was heralded in the Italian Press, with pictures and a full report on the project.

With this major goal realized—involving every sector of the Greenville community—the ties between the two communities solidly in place, this significant single project "Piazza Bergamo" promises to have a long-range positive impact on both communities as they progress with their sister cities activities.

Under 50,000

ANDERSON VALLEY, CALIFORNIA— GUAYABO, COSTA RICA LA FORTUNA, COSTA RICA

Cooperation Realizes Sustainable Agriculture And Agro-Tourism

Production agriculture in the valley and logging in the mountains bind Anderson Valley, California with Guayabo and LaFortuna, Costa Rica. Out of the sister city affiliation grew a shared concern to develop environmentally sound, sustainable agro-enterprises to stem the damage caused by poor agricultural practices and to prevent the irreparable damage to the scenic beauty. Once agreed to, the next steps included on-site (both in the US and in Costa Rica) specific agricultural development training and transfer of know-how. Besides the burgeoning 60-member farmer's cooperative in Guayabo and LaFortuna is the key project achievement of a marketable plan for a sustainable agriculture/agro-eco tourism project to attract an infusion of between 5-10 million dollars into the community's economy.

Mariel Matamorus of Costa Rica is studying in Anderson Valley Ag Institute's production and marketing training program.

To provide the requisite training and knowledge transfer, Anderson Valley attained both SCI Youth/Student Challenge Grant Funds and Eisenhower Scholarships, used for partial support of three Costa Rican students studying at the Valley's renowned Agriculture Institute. Here they concentrated on agricultural production, marketing, training programs, and learned about the latest techniques in fruit and vegetable projection, to prepare them for new jobs awaiting them back home.

As Eisenhower Scholar, Oliden Guzman so aptly put it, "This is giving me skills I need to return to my community and become a leader in our new farming cooperative." The Student Exchange allowed 10 Americans and Costa Ricans to attend each others' schools, share sustainable agricultural practices and assist in specific project plans related to the cooperative. Local schools have had curricula enriched, and the 4-H and Costa Rican Ministry of Agriculture are among the funders of model sites.

Two SCI Technical Assistance Program Grants enabled Anderson Valley businessmen and local government officials to join the Costa Ricans in the planning and start-up phases of the cooperative. As a direct outgrowth of this across-the-board cooperation, not only is the 60-farmer cooperative up and running, but businesses are teaming up in joint venture relationships. They are also marshalling energies to secure funding for a significant agro-eco tourism project, which will teach sustainable agriculture to visitors, involve them in reforestation activities, agriculture, and tissue culture projects; fund construction of a produce packaging facility, and school dormitories to continue to house participants in an on-going learning process. Business plans for this multi-phase venture, on the desks at the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC), a Costa Rican finance program, and a Canadian group, call for between $5-10 million, with the first $2 million expected from the Costa Ricans in 1990.

Of key importance will be the ability to stem the annual dumping of surplus produce in both the Guayabo/La Fortuna and Anderson Valley harvest cycles. On the Costa Rican side there is an abundance of mangoes, cashews, macadamia nuts, bananas and papayas, as well as other grains and vegetables. Anderson Valley's surplus is in apples and pears. The two communities are devising marketing schemes to reduce surplus dumping and offer sustainable returns to the farmers.

Additionally Anderson Valley's Agriculture Institute, which enjoys an international reputation for excellence, under the direction of Steven McKay, deemed the top U.S. agro-science teacher, has pioneered in trellised fruit experimentation and boasts a world-wide gooseberry collection. The Institute's 14-acre farm includes five commercial greenhouses and solar drying equipment. The Agriculture Institute's resources are being harnessed to be a full partner in the Costa Rican endeavor.

Professional expertise, community support, student exchanges have coalesced into a premier citizen effort to preserve the eco-system, strengthen the economy and protect livelihoods, and make a significant educational impact. In the doing, participants have developed life long friendships and a keen understanding of and appreciation for each other's values and development goals.

Best First Year Program Award

This award category is given in recognition of new affiliations launched during the past year which have successfully demonstrated careful planning, citizen involvement at all levels and a wide range of activities either completed or well underway

GLENS FALLS, NEW YORK— SAGA CITY, JAPAN

Glens Falls Sister City Program Balloons In First Year

Following the April 1989 formal signing ceremonies in Saga City joining the two communities, Glens Falls and Saga City launched a bevy of exchange activities during the first year, with 39 Japanese traveling to Glens Falls and 37 being welcomed in Saga City.

On the homefront, the Glens Falls sister city committee took organizational steps to insure the continuation of these activities. Five primary program goals were identified; first among them was the development of youth and education programs, including designs for future student/teacher exchanges, potential camping exchanges between the scouting organizations in each community, professional intern exchanges, and the possible addition of Japanese to the curriculum of Adirondak Community College. The second goal identified cultural programs, in 1989, six drawings by Saga children were displayed in the Glens Falls museum.

The mayors of Glen Falls and Saga City greet a crowd of Cub Scouts and reporters as they announce Sister City link.

The New York-based Japan Foundation asked if its traveling exhibition of ceramics by Japanese master potters be on view in the Hyde Museum. Next came the promotion of Warren County by translating the tourism brochure into Japanese for wide distribution in Saga. Development of business and professional relationships —including hospital internships, medical instrument and supply manufacture, linking of Rotary and Kiwanis chapters and investigating the applicability of the SCI Kanazawa Scholarship-featured next on the list. And, harkening back to the origins of their Sister City link, the two communities agreed to continue the Hot Air Balloon Team Exchanges, floating teams every other year to their respective festivals.

In 1989, Glens Falls citizens participated in the 100th Anniversary celebration of Saga's founding, and the balloon team went to the Saga-based World Championship Races. While in Saga, Glens Falls Mayor participated in the Saga 10K Marathon and led the delegation through a series of ceremonial hostings, which culminated in the formal signing ceremonies.

In both communities, the program enjoys strong civic and business support. Press coverage had drawn attention to the program in all segments of each community. As Lyn Kerchner, Chairman and the Glens Falls Committee, summed up the first year's program, "The benefits derived by our community include a greater understanding and awareness of a culture very different from our own. That statement is not just a platitude in this instance—when one looks at Rural Farm-Factory Glen Falls, next to Urban, Industrial, but somewhat isolated from the mainstream, Saga City. That it has taken until 1989 for either of our cities to reach out in this way, speaks for itself . . . and in the light of recent world events it is not a moment too soon for us both to become more 'global thinkers and doers!' Now that the youth of our communities are involved, we expect even more cultural openness and awareness to develop."