

Sheriff's Headquarters Bureau International Cultural Exchange



Los Angeles County has one of the most diverse populations in the nation, with more than ten million citizens. In their day-to-day activities, deputies interact with people of various cultures and communities. In search of a better way to serve our communities and enhance our partnerships, Reserve Commander Chester Chong had a vision of educating Department members about the vast cultures around the world through an International Cultural Exchange Program.

Sheriff Baca, Undersheriff Waldie, and Reserve Commander Chong embarked on a new and innovative adventure to broaden our Department's international connection. In March 2005, the first cultural exchange visit took place in Hong Kong, China, with a delegation of 70 ambassadors. When the participating Department personnel arrived, they were greeted by members of the Chinese government as "International Visitors." When the visiting group departed to return home, they were given a farewell as friends. At the closing of 2005, the Cultural Exchange Program hosted trips to Hong Kong, Beijing, and Xian.

In 2006, our Department continued to facilitate international travels to Thailand, Singapore, New Zealand, Australia, and Fiji. To date, the number of Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Cultural Exchange ambassadors has reached more than 300 and will, undoubtedly, continue to grow. They have seen such sites as the Great Wall of China, Terra Cotta Warriors, Tiananmen Square, and other popular tourist attractions.

They have met with high-ranking police officials, state dignitaries, local merchants, and citizens, exchanging views on law enforcement issues and presenting a positive image of our Department. Ambassadors of the program can attest to the fact that regardless of where you live or the language you speak, once you have overcome the initial differences, we share the same goals.

The International Cultural Exchange has come to share a global vision of unity. Our program ambassadors, with their array of expertise and continued professionalism, have contributed to the program's success. With future trips planned to Cambodia, Vietnam, London, and other European countries, we can partner to promote tolerance and peace around the world and close the gaps created by separatism and racism. Through the International Cultural Exchange program, we can share the Core Values and Mission of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department worldwide.

The Ambassadors have witnessed demonstrations and visited the museums of various international police departments.

