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## **BIRMINGHAM SISTER CITIES WINS SISTER CITIES INTERNATIONAL'S BEST OVERALL PROGRAM AWARD**

WASHINGTON, DC – Birmingham Sister Cities (BSC) has won Sister Cities International's (SCI) 2016 Best Overall Program Award for a city with a population between 100,001 and 300,000. The 2016 SCI Best Overall Program Award recognizes sister city programs that demonstrated outstanding accomplishments in 2015 in advancing the goals and mission of the sister cities movement.

In 2015, BSC successfully facilitated all sister cities partnerships for the City of Birmingham, prepared individuals for life in a multi-cultural world, facilitated and enhanced relationships that promote international trade opportunities, and were the premier international resource organization utilized by Birmingham-area governments, businesses, organizations, educational institutions, and residents.

BSC specifically demonstrated their capacity through programs including hosting a Japan-Southeast US conference with 650 business people and officials in attendance, signing a new sister city agreement with Liverpool, UK that helped generate several million dollars in trade between the two cities, exchanging 11<sup>th</sup> anniversary quilts with Japan, sending an local Birmingham artists to perform in Szekesfehrevár, Hungary, and Plzeň, Czech Republic, donating over two tons of medical humanitarian supplies to Vinnytsia, Ukraine for war relief, and hosting the Chinese New Year Festival, Ukraine Day Festival, and Ghana Independence Day Festival.

SCI's Annual Awards are awarded in several categories including Best Overall, Innovation (Arts and Culture, Economic Development, Humanitarian Assistance, and Youth and Education), and Volunteer of the Year. Award winners will be honored at the Lou Wozar Diplomatic Awards Dinner on Saturday, July 16 during SCI's 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration in Washington, DC.

SCI's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration will include an [Annual Conference](#) and [Youth Leadership Summit](#) in Washington, DC July 13-16, 2016. The celebration will bring together hundreds of the most influential global leaders in diplomacy, foreign affairs, policy, business, and innovation. Elected and municipal officials, business leaders, youth delegates, and citizen diplomats will discuss this year's theme "Peace through People," building on President Eisenhower's initial vision of creating a more peaceful world by building global relationships.

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### **About Sister Cities International**

Founded as a Presidential Initiative by Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1956, Sister Cities International serves as the national membership organization for 570 member communities with 2,300 partnerships in 150 countries on six continents. The sister city network unites tens of thousands of citizen diplomats and volunteers who work tirelessly to promote the organizations' mission of creating world peace and understanding through economic development, youth and education, arts and culture, and humanitarian assistance.

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