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**CITY OF SAN ANTONIO INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS OFFICE WINS SISTER CITIES INTERNATIONAL'S  
INNOVATION AWARD FOR ARTS AND CULTURE**

WASHINGTON, DC – The City of San Antonio International Relations Office has won Sister Cities International's (SCI) 2016 Innovation Award for Arts and Culture for a city with a population greater than 500,000. The 2016 Sister Cities International Innovation Award for Arts and Culture recognizes the accomplishments of outstanding community and individual sister city programs that promote peace through mutual respect, understanding, and cooperation.

Through increased cultural exchanges and programming, the City of San Antonio has showcased international artists through exhibitions, speaking presentations, cultural festivals, and more, while providing opportunities for local artists and residents to engage with them.

Examples of these events in 2015 include "Fiesta," a 10-day festival that draws 3.5 million attendees and raises funds for local projects; "Mano Factura:" Arte Regio Exhibit, a three-month long outdoor exhibit featuring thirty sculptures painted by different artists from Monterrey, Mexico; "Wings of the City" Exhibit, a five-month urban outdoor art exhibit from world-renowned Mexican artist Jorge Marín; the visit of the world-famous bear mascot from Kumamon, Japan which included a skit on a nationally televised San Antonio Spurs game; "Hats Off, Chennai", a grassroots initiative to salute Chennai for its spirit and perseverance during the catastrophic floods of 2015 that has collected close to \$130,000; the Indian Festival of Diwali that celebrates the triumph of good over evil and light over darkness; "The Book Garden" Exhibit, an installation at San Antonio's Central Library from Taiwanese artist Long Bin Chen and local students featuring sculptures made from books and printed materials; "Luminaria", the annual contemporary arts festival which featured two artists from sister city Gwangju, Korea and their impressive illuminated works of art; "An Evening with Benito Cabrera" that included several free concerts by "timple" virtuoso Benito Cabrera that represented two sister cities in the Canary Islands; and "Don Quixote: A San Antonio-Chennai Sister City Presentation," a 21st century stage adaptation from Chennai, India of the 17th century novel Don Quixote.

The Mexican Association of Entrepreneurs, the Consulate General of Mexico, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Mexico, Aero Mexico, the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office, the Library Foundation, the Southwest School of Art, the Alamo Asian American Chamber of Commerce, local ethnic groups, Musical Bridges Around the World, the Catholic Archdiocese, the University of the Incarnate Word, Casa España, and the Government of the Canary Islands all worked with the City of San Antonio International Relations Office to assist in putting on these events.

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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