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**SANTA BARBARA/PUERTO VALLARTA SISTER CITY COMMITTEE WINS SISTER CITIES INTERNATIONAL'S BEST OVERALL PROGRAM AWARD**

WASHINGTON, DC – Santa Barbara/Puerto Vallarta Sister City Committee (SBPVSCC) has won Sister Cities International's (SCI) 2016 Best Overall Program Award for a city with a population between 50,001 and 100,000. 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, SBPVSCC successfully facilitated all sister city exchanges between Santa Barbara and Puerto Vallarta, prepared individuals for life in a multi-cultural world, facilitated and enhanced the relationships that promote international trade opportunities, and were the premier international resource organization utilized by Santa Barbara-area governments, businesses, organizations, educational institutions, and residents on all things Puerto Vallarta.

SBPVCC conducted several programs in 2015, including giving \$6,000 for first response medical equipment to Puerto Vallarta and scholarships in the "Sponsor Student" program from the Rotary Club. They sponsored the 2015 Tequila Harvest Festival, hosted the community Valentines Dinner/Dance at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History that featured a Mariachi group, participated in the Old Spanish Days Festival, the United Nation Walk and pot-luck dinner, and the 9/11 Peace Concert.

In addition, they hosted a "Las Posadas" event, attended the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Sister Cities Association of Americas International Conference in Puerto Vallarta, the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration De La Fraternidad Universal en Yucatan, Southern California Sister Cities Association regional meetings, the US/Mexico Sister Cities Association Annual Conference, and 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Puerto Vallarta I. Madonnari festival. They continued 17 years of the Law Enforcement Exchange, supported the "Save the Turtle" project in the Bay of Puerto Vallarta by donating \$1,000 towards hatchery equipment and classes, supported the Puerto Vallarta Rehabilitation Clinic by donating \$2,000 to helping needy families, painted the Boca de Tomaltan Health Clinic.

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**



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

June 29, 2016

**MEDIA CONTACT**

Anastasia Dellaccio

[Adellaccio@sistercities.org](mailto:Adellaccio@sistercities.org)

202.347.8637

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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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