

**SISTER CITIES ESSEX HAITI, INC. WINS SISTER CITIES INTERNATIONAL'S
INNOVATION AWARD (YOUTH AND EDUCATION)**

WASHINGTON, DC – Sister Cities Essex Haiti, Inc. has won Sister Cities International's 2014 Innovation Award (Youth and Education) for a city with a population less than 100,000. The 2014 Sister Cities International Innovation Award (Youth and Education) recognizes the accomplishments of outstanding community and individual sister city programs that promote peace through mutual respect, understanding, and cooperation.

The mission of Sister Cities Essex Haiti, Inc. (SCEH) is to build a mutual long-term sustainable relationship between the people of Essex, Connecticut and the people of Deschapelles, Haiti, their extended communities, and Hospital Albert Schweitzer located in Deschapelles.

Since 2011, SCEH has been working on the "Early Education Project" in conjunction with a volunteer group called Organization Economique Developpment et Social (ODES). The objective of the project is to work with teachers in Deschapelles to enhance existing curricula, introduce hands-on educational materials important to cognitive development, provide the necessary equipment and materials, and for American and Haitian teachers to learn from one another. Stage two of the Early Education Project began in 2013, as SCEH and ODES held workshops in both Essex and Deschapelles. The program has grown from three schools in 2011 to 15 schools in 2013, as knowledge has been effectively disseminated and shared with workshop participants and educators at several schools in Deschapelles.

In addition to ODES, to successfully implement this project, SCEH's working group members collaborated closely with Essex Elementary School and Regional School District Four of Connecticut.

Sister Cities International's Annual Awards are awarded in several categories including Best Overall, Innovation (Arts & Culture, Economic Development, Energy/Sustainable Development, Humanitarian Assistance, and Youth & Education), Volunteer of the Year, and Youth Leadership. Award winners will be honored at a special ceremony on Saturday, August 2, during Sister Cities International's 58th Annual Conference in San Jose, California.

The Sister Cities International 58th Annual Conference will bring together elected and municipal officials, engaged citizens, diplomats, and business leaders in the exciting capital of Silicon Valley to discuss, "The Power of Digital Diplomacy". Conference sessions will provide attendees with opportunities to learn about strengthening their sister city programs through informative sessions led by experts and industry leaders. For more information on the 2014 Sister Cities International Annual Conference, please visit: www.SisterCitiesConference.org.

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About Sister Cities International

Founded by President Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1956, Sister Cities International serves as the national membership organization for over 500 individual sister cities, counties, and states across the United States with relationships in 2,000 communities in 140 countries. This sister city network unites tens of thousands of citizen diplomats and volunteers who work tirelessly to promote peace and understanding through programs and projects focusing on arts and culture, youth and education, economic and sustainable development, and humanitarian assistance.

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