

2014 SISTER CITIES INTERNATIONAL EARTH DAY CHALLENGE AWARD WINNER ANNOUNCED

WASHINGTON, DC – Seattle-Be'er Sheva Sister City Association was announced as the 2014 Sister Cities International Earth Day Challenge winner. The Challenge engaged the next generation of citizen diplomats by allowing youth to work with fellow students in their sister cities to implement projects focused on mutual environmental problems.

For the Challenge, eighth grade students from Denny International School in Seattle, Washington, worked with AMIT Wasserman Junior High School in sister city Be'er Sheva, Israel. They submitted a video project that created awareness on sources of energy, how electricity is created, how much energy is used around the world and in the US, what the connection is between climate change and energy usage, and how can energy consumption be reduced.

For this joint project, students from both cities conducted research and shared ideas and feedback virtually. Lisa Kelleher, science teacher at Denny International School, and Mitzi Geffen, EFL teacher at AMIT in Be'er Sheva, spearheaded the collaboration. The goal of the project was for students to show the connection between using electricity and the environment to their peers and families. The final video has already been seen by 900 students!

Ms. Geffen says, "For my students the process was exciting and memorable. They were delighted with their growing ability to read, write and speak about electricity and the environment in English and to communicate with students in Seattle, though the 10 hour time difference and frequently conflicting vacation schedules made that quite a challenge."

"The students did not just learn about energy and environmental issues but also the fact that we can be more effective by connecting globally," said Mary D. Kane, President and CEO, Sister Cities International. Sister Cities International will be presenting the winners with a cash prize and certificate.

For more information and interview requests, please email Megha Swamy at mswamy@sister-cities.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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