
**FREETOWN-NEW HAVEN SISTER CITIES PROGRAM WINS SISTER CITIES INTERNATIONAL'S
INNOVATION AWARD (HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE)**

WASHINGTON, DC – Freetown-New Haven Sister Cities Program won Sister Cities International's 2015 Innovation Award (Humanitarian Assistance) for a city with a population between 100,001 and 500,000. The 2015 Sister Cities International Innovation Award (Humanitarian Assistance) recognizes the accomplishments of outstanding community and individual sister city programs that promote peace through mutual respect, understanding, and cooperation.

New Haven, Connecticut's unique connection to Sierra Leone goes back to 1839 with the Amistad schooner and the Africans that revolted against Spanish captors. The captives eventually won their freedom and the right to return home to Sierra Leone after a trial in New Haven that ended in the U.S. Supreme Court. Today, a statue stands in front of New Haven's City Hall to commemorate the Amistad Incident.

Upon hearing the news about the Ebola outbreak and the thousands of people dying from the virus in Freetown, Sierra Leone, New Haven's Mayor Toni N. Harp formed an emergency committee called *Citizens to Drive out Ebola* whose mission was to raise \$100,000 in 12 weeks. Althea Norcott, chairperson of the Freetown-New Haven Sister Cities Program, was chosen to head the campaign. After launching several fundraising campaigns throughout the community, their goal was exceeded totaling \$114,000. The project provided an amazing opportunity for New Haven to embark on this important initiative and to show the world what it truly means to be a "sister city" during a catastrophic time. The Freetown community will greatly benefit from much needed medical supplies and appropriate transport vehicles to treat and respond to people affected by Ebola. The vehicles and supplies will support their healthcare system post Ebola.

Sister Cities International's Annual Awards are awarded in several categories including Best Overall, Innovation (Arts & Culture, Economic Development, Humanitarian Assistance, and Youth & Education), Volunteer of the Year, and Youth Leadership. Award winners will be honored at a special ceremony on Saturday, July 18 during Sister Cities International's 59th Annual Conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

The Sister Cities International 59th Annual Conference will bring together elected and municipal officials, engaged citizens, diplomats, and business leaders in Minneapolis, Minnesota to discuss, "Building Generations for Peace." 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 2015 Sister Cities International Annual Conference, please visit: www.SisterCitiesConference.org.

#

About Sister Cities International

Founded by President Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1956, Sister Cities International serves as the national membership organization for over 545 individual sister cities, counties, and states across the United States with relationships in over 2,100 communities in 145 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.

Facebook: [Sister Cities International](https://www.facebook.com/SisterCitiesInternational); Twitter: [@SisterCitiesInt](https://twitter.com/SisterCitiesInt); Website: www.sistercities.org