
**SISTER CITIES ASSOCIATION OF SARASOTA WINS SISTER CITIES INTERNATIONAL'S
INNOVATION AWARD (ENERGY/SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT)**

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

The Sister City Association of Sarasota (SCAS)'s main focus in 2013 was organizing and implementing the Sister City International Conference on Sustainability through Renewable Energy and Aquaculture held at the University of South Florida – Sarasota/Manatee. The conference focused on achieving sustainable living through modified living conditions (Eco-Municipalities), work practices (Green Building, Sustainable Agriculture), new technologies (Renewable Energy) and water/ocean resources (Water Sustainability, Aquaculture).

The conference introduced students from local and statewide schools and international sister cities to the concepts and components of sustainability. Additionally, SCAS provided information to the wider community and a forum for interaction regarding sustainability through the topics of sustainable communities, renewable energy, sustainable agriculture and aquaculture. They plan to develop an ongoing interactive sustainability program with their sister cities in future years.

To successfully implement this conference, SCAS's working group members collaborated with University of South Florida-Sarasota/Manatee, the Greater Sarasota Chamber of Commerce, Green Business Leadership Committee in Sarasota, Sarasota Sister Cities Alliance Members, the Caledonian Club and Foundation of Florida West, the French-American Business Council of West Florida (FRAMCO), the Gulf Coast Chinese Community Organization, and more.

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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