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Sister Cities International announces
2012 Young Artists and Authors Showcase Winners

Washington, DC -- *Sister Cities International* is proud to announce the winners and finalists for the 2012 Young Artists and Authors Showcase. For over 2 decades, the Young Artists and Authors Showcase has given youth from around the globe the opportunity to artistically express their vision for a more unified, peaceful world.

This year's applicant pool demonstrated a high level of talent, effort, passion, and dedication put forth by sister city youth. Young artists and authors reflected on the 2012 theme "Youth as a Catalyst for Change," through a variety of visual media, poetry, and essays. The theme reaffirms the power of youth in fostering positive change in society, and their potential as future leaders. The winners and finalists' works of art will be on display at *Sister Cities International's* Annual Conference in Jacksonville, Florida, July 12-14, 2012.

Joshua Williams, from Hampton, VA, was selected as the Young Artists Showcase Grand Prize winner for his artwork, "Cotton Club Crescendo." Runners-up included Mariah Soldevilla from Volusia County, FL; Christine Wilda from Columbia Heights, MN; Yasaman Sahba from Southlake, TX; Morgan Demski from Naperville, IL, and Cole Jacobson from Red Wing, MN. *Sister Cities International* also announced winners in the international entries category. Representing Kalingrad, Russia, Natalia Galkina won the Grand Prize for her piece, "Looking to the Future through our Past." International finalists included Zac Wood, from North Down, United Kingdom; Kaho Tazaki from Narashino City, Japan, and Lin Zixin from Guangxi, China.

Among the Young Authors Showcase, Danielle Hejhal, from Osage, IA was the Grand Prize winner for her essay, "Connections, Hope, Promise for the Future". Cambrea Braudaway, of Phoenix, AZ, was the Grand Prize winner in the poetry category for her poem, "As Youth We Can." Runners-up in the essay category were Daniella Cohen of Highland Park, IL and Alyssa Garcia of Chandler, AZ. Honored in the poetry category were finalists Deb Martin of Ephrata, PA and Pakue Vang of Columbia Heights, MN. International finalist entries were from Akos Kovacs of Debrecen, Hungary, for his essay "The Role of Young Generations in the Future of Society" and Saidhbhe Cullen, of Tullamore, Ireland for the poem, "I Am the Voice of the Youth".

About Sister Cities International:

Sister Cities International facilitates nearly 2,000 partnerships in 136 countries on six continents between 600 communities in the United States with similar municipalities abroad. *Sister Cities International* represents citizen diplomats who work tirelessly to promote the organizations' mission of creating world peace and cultural understanding through economic and sustainable development programs, youth and education projects, arts and culture, and humanitarian assistance.

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