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**Sister Cities International Youth Leadership Summit Inspires Peace through International Service in Minneapolis**

Washington, DC – Sister Cities International is excited to welcome students (ages 14-18) to participate in the 2015 Youth Leadership Summit at the 59<sup>th</sup> Sister Cities International Annual Conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota from July 16-18, 2015.

The 2015 Youth Leadership Summit, based on the theme “Peace through International Service,” is designed to engage the next generation of leaders and expose them to important global challenges. Through a specialized Model UN simulation, speaker sessions, and peer interactions, participants will learn how different national interests drive international cooperation on critical issues. New to the agenda this year, students will participate in a service learning project as a part of Nelson Mandela International Day on Saturday, July 18. Over the course of three days, the Summit will provide students with effective problem solving strategies, leadership skills, and insights into public policy.

During the Summit, students will experience a taste of college life by lodging at the dorms at the University of Minnesota. The residence hall is a 10-minute walk from downtown Minneapolis and offers an urban campus feel. Chaperones will supervise the students in the residence halls and there will be a front-desk staff person 24 hours a day to assist with additional needs.

Past Youth Leadership Summit participants reported that they were fascinated to learn from Conference speakers and their peers, and gained a newfound interest in international relations during their experience. In 2014, over 100 students participated from China, Germany, the Philippines, South Korea, and the U.S. One student said, “[The simulation] forces you to think differently about the world.”

In conjunction with the Youth Leadership Summit, the 59<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference will bring together elected and municipal officials, diplomats, engaged citizens, and business leaders to discuss “Bridging Generations for Peace.” Activities will include networking opportunities, tailored sessions on topics including youth engagement, economic development, and sports diplomacy, a regional track focusing on diaspora communities, special receptions, and more.

The cost for youth from a Sister Cities International member city (with lodging) is \$525; youth from a non-member city (with lodging) is \$575; and youth from member and non-member cities (without lodging) is \$295. Ground transportation to and from Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport on Thursday, July 16 and Sunday, July 19 is \$25.

For more information about the Youth Leadership Summit, the agenda, and to register, visit [www.sistercities.org/YLS](http://www.sistercities.org/YLS) or contact Aveen Karim, Sister Cities International Membership Manager, at [akarim@sistercities.org](mailto:akarim@sistercities.org). For more details about the 59<sup>th</sup> Sister Cities International Annual Conference, visit [www.sistercitiesconference.org](http://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 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.

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