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**COLUMBIA HEIGHTS, MN/LOMIANKI, POLAND—SISTER CITIES, INTERNATIONAL WINS SISTER CITIES INTERNATIONAL'S BEST OVERALL PROGRAM AWARD**

WASHINGTON, DC—Columbia Heights, MN/Lomianki, Poland—Sister Cities, International (CHLP/SCI) won the Sister Cities International (SCI) 2017 Best Overall Program Award for a city with a population under 25,000. The SCI Best Overall Program Award recognizes sister city programs that demonstrated outstanding accomplishments in 2016 in advancing the goals and mission of the sister cities movement.

Columbia Heights, MN/Lomianki, Poland—Sister Cities International works to affirm the city of Columbia Heights' identity as a city of peace through the active participation of its volunteers and the strong support of various city officials. In 2016, CHLP/SCI completed its two-year police exchange with sister city Lomianki, Poland. In August, a delegation of dignitaries from Lomianki visited Columbia Heights to work with the local police department, visit the new public library, and meet with residents of Columbia Heights. CHLP/SCI has also worked to translate the WWII documentary "Frantic 7" by Jerzy Szczesniak of Warsaw into English. The documentary highlights the mission of the U.S. Air Force's attempt to drop supplies to the Polish people during the Warsaw Uprising, which was the catalyst for Columbia Heights' partnership with Lomianki. The book will be available through an American publisher in December, 2017.

In addition, members of CHLP/SCI worked to put on cultural events to commemorate 25 years of successful humanitarian, cultural, educational, civic and social activities with Lomianki; and a local youth was also selected as a national winner in SCI's 2016 Young Artists and Authors Showcase. Though Columbia Heights is a small city, CHLP/SCI is a productive organization that truly enriches the community.

SCI's Annual Awards are awarded in several categories including Best Overall, Innovation (Arts and Culture, Economic Development, Humanitarian Assistance, and Youth and Education), and Volunteer of the Year. Award winners will be honored at the Lou Wozar Diplomatic Awards Dinner on Saturday, July 15 during SCI's 61<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference in Virginia Beach, VA.

SCI's 61<sup>st</sup> [Annual Conference](#) events, which include a [Youth Leadership Summit](#) and a [U.S.-Russia Mayors' Summit](#), will take place in Virginia Beach, VA from July 12-16, 2017. The events will bring together hundreds of the most influential global leaders in diplomacy, foreign affairs, policy, business, and innovation. Elected and municipal officials, business leaders, youth delegates, and citizen diplomats will discuss this year's theme "Global Communities for World Peace," building on President Eisenhower's initial vision of creating a more peaceful world by building global relationships through communities.

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**About Sister Cities International**

Founded as a Presidential Initiative by Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1956, Sister Cities International serves as the national membership organization for over 500 member communities with 2,000 partnerships in 145 countries on six continents. The sister city network unites tens of thousands of citizen diplomats and volunteers who work tirelessly to promote the



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organizations' mission of creating world peace and understanding through economic development, youth and education, arts and culture, and humanitarian assistance.

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