

**HOUSTON/GALVESTON-STAVANGER
SISTER CITY SOCIETY**

AFFILIATED WITH SISTER CITIES INTERNATIONAL
AND MEMBER OF NORDMANNNS FORBUNDET



Houston, Galveston and Stavanger

A Leading Success Story of a
Sister City Program

Founded in 1980

E-Mail: info@hgsscs.org

Web Site: www.hgsscs.org

What is the Sister City Program?

The Sister City Program was established by President Eisenhower to improve communications, cultural and business relations between the people of the United States and the rest of the world community. Said Ike, "Sister City relationships can turn nations into people and contribute as no other form of communications to the humanizing of international relations".

What is the Houston/Galveston-Stavanger Sister City Program, and why is it so successful?

Houston and Stavanger formed a sister city relationship in 1980 as a result of strong business ties between the two cities and the significant investments made by Norwegians in commercial activities in Houston and vice versa. The support for the organization by business, civic, and cultural leaders was a prime contributor in recognizing Houston as having the best Sister City program in 1983. Then, in April 1988, during Stavanger's visit, some of the events also took place in Galveston.

Recognition as a Result of the Ties between the Three Sister Cities

Ministers from Norway are regular visitors to Houston. Houston has been selected to have a Royal Norwegian Consulate General, a Norwegian Trade Council, a Norwegian-American Chamber of Commerce, and a Norwegian Seamen's Church. Four Houstonians have been decorated by the king of Norway, whereas one of them, Mr. Jay Medley, received one of the highest awards ever given by the king to a foreign individual.

Some years ago, Houston was chosen the "Port-of-Honor" for visits by "Christian Radich", a square rigged Norwegian training ship, and also "Saga Sieglar", a replica of a Viking trading vessel.

Historical Highlights

Founded in 1980 as a result of a Norwegian Festival and strong oil and shipping industries in Houston and in Stavanger, HGSSCS has been actively engaged in promotion and goodwill. During Stavanger's visit in April 1988, Galveston participated in many activities and expressed a wish to join the Sister City organization. On September 26, 1988, the mayors of Houston, Galveston and Stavanger formally signed a document joining the three cities in the program named "Houston/Galveston-Stavanger Sister City Society".

Primary Activities

The primary activities have been cultural exchanges at which HGSSCS have alternated as host every other year. These programs, which have won several awards from the National Sister City organization, have emphasized youth. Participating student delegations have included music, drama, athletic groups and scouting, have performed and competed at schools and other sites.

The Society helps build long-term relationships between Houston, Galveston and Stavanger by sponsoring many activities. The organization was involved both when the late King Olav V of Norway and the present King Harald V of Norway visited Houston as well as when the Norwegian ambassador to the U.S. visited here and hence reciprocal visits. The Society suggested and implemented the membership of the Stavanger Chamber of Commerce in the Greater Houston Chamber of Commerce as its first foreign member. Since the organization's inception, the King of Norway has decorated four Houstonians. Houston has also been chosen the "Port-of-Honor" by many Norwegian ships.

Additionally, the Society hosts annual activities for its members which include business, education and culture, and gives the participants an opportunity to be acquainted with the people of Norway, and to reciprocate with Texas hospitality.

Introduction to HGSSCS Objectives

Based on the HGSSCS Articles of Incorporation:

- Provide members with a forum for education and the discussion of topics of common interest to the people of Houston, Galveston and Stavanger.
- Provide exchange participants with the opportunity to study and promote a better understanding between the people of Houston, Galveston and Stavanger in arts, literature, cultural ideals, aspirations, and the developments of each.
- To strive to promote friendly, personal relations between the peoples of the two regions as they meet, either as members, or if residing or traveling in either region.
- To foster and promote scholarships, along with possible funding, among the students of educational institutions of both regions.
- Without concerning itself in any way with the internal politics or the internal policies of either region, to seek to engender the goal of peace, progress, and prosperity for people the world over.

HGSSCS MEMBERSHIP FORM

LAST NAME: _____

FIRST NAME: _____

SPOUSE: _____

HOME ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____

ZIP: _____

TEL: _____

FAX: _____

CELL TEL: _____

E-MAIL: _____

NAME OF BUSINESS: _____

BUSINESS ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____

ZIP: _____

TEL: _____

FAX: _____

E-MAIL: _____

Send correspondence to: (Home) _____ (Business) _____

MEMBERSHIP DUES:

Corporate - \$200 _____

Family - \$40 _____

Single - \$25 _____

() Renewal () New Member

**Please make check payable to HGSSCS and mail to:
Anne Brith Berge, 5219 Pine Arbor Drive, Houston, TX
77066-2548**

HGSSCS is a 501(c) 3 non-profit cultural and educational organization.

Donations are tax deductible to the extent of the law.

Date: _____

Check #: _____

Signature: _____

Dear Prospective Sponsor:

Houston/Galveston-Stavanger Sister City Society (HGSSCS) is a 501 (c)3 non-profit charitable and educational organization founded in 1980. It is affiliated with Sister Cities International, as well as Nordmanns-Forbundet, a worldwide association of organizations with ties to Norway. HGSSCS has previously won three prestigious Reader's Digest Awards for Sister City Exchange Programs; in 1984 and 1988 for best "Youth Program", and in 1993 for "Best Overall Sister City Program".

You are being contacted as we seek corporate and foundation support and active participation in our upcoming exchange programs.

The participants consist of High School youth (75-100) and adults(30-50). The high school students will come from diverse areas of the Houston and Galveston including: Ball High School in Galveston, Scouts (boys and girls), Youth Choirs, Chamber Ensembles, Fiddler Groups, Volleyball Teams, Basketball Teams, Tennis Teams, Swim Teams (includes physically handicapped kids),. The groups range in size from 5 to 50. The adults are primarily the teachers and parental supervisors of the students, as well as local business leaders and governmental officials.

Your involvement will help us in following ways:

- Make exchange trips financially affordable to the participating youth.
- Provide youth with a safe and educational trip

Specifically, we are looking for corporate sponsorship to assist in defraying and subsidizing the cost to the parents of the American students traveling to Norway and the Norwegian students traveling to Texas. These exchange programs provide a most valuable opportunity to gain exposure to another culture and society, especially one so intricately tied to the oil and shipping economies that also support Houston, Galveston and Stavanger.

As an active supporter of the Houston and Galveston communities, we hope that you will join us in our endeavor to provide this educational opportunity for our youth, and the exchange of business and

Government contact opportunities between these very similar cities.

We will be happy to provide you with any Federal or State tax status and determination letters, which are kept on file. Further, you may view our financials online at www.guidestar.org, and a donations link exists on www.NetworkForGood.org which is the Website for 501 © 3 organizations, which is active.

Budget Items and Anticipated Costs

Cost per student is approx. \$1000 (mostly airfare), with students staying with host families for room and board. Our goal has always been to charge \$500 per student, with the generous support of corporate and foundation sponsors. As most adults will need hotel rooms, an adult chaperone cost is \$2000 for the week of the duration of each festival, including the airfare.

Ancillary costs and "wish list items" include the desire to cover the cost of bringing V.I.P. people like the mayors of each of the cities, or to provide trip/medical insurance for the participants and mitigate our risks (\$25-34 per youth; \$54-79 per adult, depending on coverage sought). Other line items available are sponsorship of formal dinners for the participants and our counterpart organization based in Stavanger, with the city officials addressing the participants, gifts for the cities, printing costs, and the cost of annual insurance coverage of the board.

On our website, we would be pleased to present logos, links, and information about our corporate sponsors, and prominently display them on organization brochures and program materials.

As the exchange occurs every two years, alternating hosting activities in Houston and Galveston and Stavanger, Norway, we will have the chance to show the Texas hospitality to our visitors from Norway. Expenses for the events taking place in Houston and Galveston are covered locally in Houston, with the generous support of donations from corporations and foundations. Housing of student visitors will also be at host families from schools in the Houston/Galveston area that participate in the exchange programs.

It is our goal for the future to fund an endowment to

promote educational and cultural events, exchanges, and scholarships at times other than our designated exchange trips. Sponsors may also so designate their funds for this purpose.

Good Reasons to be a Sponsor

- Promote Texas to our visitors from Norway.
- Promote local community awareness of modern Norwegian culture, heritage, and community aimed at promoting cultural understanding for both youth and leaders.
- Develop contacts for business initiatives carried out between the U.S. and Norway.
- Ensure your organizations visibility in these two key oil and shipping markets.
- Good corporate citizenship and stewardship. (Also meet and match your competition.)
- Reach prime market segments through HGSSCS involvement in the Houston, Galveston and Stavanger business, government, and educational communities.

Tax Status

- FEDERAL: HGSSCS holds recognition as tax-exempt cultural and educational organization under Section 501 © 3 of the Internal Revenue Code.
- For more information, see www.guidestar.org for copies of recent 990 tax filings.
- STATE: HGSSCS holds Texas limited sales, excise, and use tax exemptions as a non-profit charitable and educational organization with activities and programs as described in Title 34, Part 1, Chapter 3, Subchapter O, §3.322 Exempt Organizations of the Texas Administrative Code.

Your contribution will help us support exchange programs. Should you decide to participate, we would appreciate an electronic copy of your organization's logo and a paragraph of text that best describes your organization so that you will be properly recognized on our published sources of organizational information (e.g. brochures, website, etc.).

If you should need further information, please contact HGSSCS via email: info@hgsscs.org

We have established a hierarchy of sponsorship levels, all of which include services and value-added incentives that are proportionate to the dollar amount donated. In all cases, the donor will receive recognition in all program materials and on the website. Your contribution is an inexpensive way of maximizing local exposure for your organization with the participants on both sides of the Atlantic, with the participants and their parents, as well as in any exchange program publicity. We sincerely hope you choose to participate and we are ready to answer any questions you may have.

- **Diamond-Prime Benefactor: Over \$25,000**
- **Platinum-Benefactor: \$10,000-\$25,000**

Prime Benefactors will receive one free airfare for a designated individual to travel to Norway. Both Prime Benefactors and Benefactors will have the opportunity to sponsor, plan, and coordinate special events and social activities in conjunction with exchange programs. Both levels of Benefactors will be listed in the respective category among other recognized associates of the programs. The listing will be accompanied with a description of the Benefactor's organization. Finally, the Benefactor's company logo will be displayed in the brochures that are distributed in Houston and Galveston and in Stavanger as both trip and organizational information and on the website. Includes corporate membership.

- **Gold-Patron: \$5,000-\$10,000**

Within the materials, Patrons are listed in the respective category among the other recognized associates of our exchange programs. The listing will be accompanied by a description of the Patron's organization. Includes corporate membership.

- **Silver-Sustainer: \$2,500-\$5,000**

Within the materials, Sustainers are listed in the respective category among the other recognized associates of our exchange programs. The listing will be accompanied by a description of the Sustainer's organization. Includes corporate membership.

- **Bronze-Circle of Friends: \$500-\$2,500**

Within the materials, Friends are listed in the respective category among the other recognized associates of our exchange programs. The listing will be accompanied by a description of the Friend's organization. Includes corporate membership.