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None Better: New Britain Captures All-America City Award

*City's Achievements, Delegation Wow Judges in Denver;
New Britain One of Only Ten Communities Nationwide to Earn Distinction*

New Britain, Conn., June 19, 2016 – On the strength of an energizing weekend presentation in Denver by community stakeholders focusing on the city's accomplishments in raising healthy, successful children, the [National Civic League](#) on Sunday designated New Britain a 2016 All-America City, one of only 10 communities nationwide to be so honored.

The prestigious [All-America City Award \(AAC\)](#) celebrates and recognizes neighborhoods, villages, towns, cities, counties, tribes and regions nationwide that engage residents in innovative, inclusive and effective efforts to tackle critical challenges. A team of 11 New Britain stakeholders from the government, business, education and non-profit communities has been preparing for the past month to compete against 19 other AAC finalists, taking off on the theme "New Britain: None Better."

"This is another major feather in New Britain's cap and representative of so many wonderful things happening here in our community," said Mayor Erin Stewart. "This prestigious award validates our hard work and will prove vital moving forward as our community continues working together to open new doors of opportunity for every resident. I want to congratulate the Coalition for New Britain's Youth and our entire Denver delegation for doing a marvelous job telling New Britain's story."

"The weekend was energizing and our experience telling the world about New Britain and what we have to offer was just fantastic," said Robin Lamott Sparks, Executive Director of the Coalition for New Britain's Youth and director of the delegation. "It is rewarding to know that the world beyond New Britain's borders appreciates and recognizes the strides we are making. This kind of recognition not only validates our efforts, but gives us that much more incentive to continue our hard work in making New Britain a wonderful place to live, work and raise a family."

Added Nancy Sarra, Superintendent of Schools who was part of the Denver delegation, "Every educator and staff member of the [Consolidated School District of New Britain](#) has much to be proud of today. We work hard every day to make our student experience as rewarding as it can be. This validation of our efforts will work wonders in our classrooms and in the living rooms of families throughout the community as we continue to set new standards of excellence in all that we do for our children."

The 2016 award highlighted communities that have developed innovative solutions to ensure all children are healthy and supported to succeed in school and in life. The [Coalition for New Britain's Youth](#) applied for the award on the city's behalf, highlighting New Britain's collaborative success in combatting chronic absenteeism, reducing summer learning loss and improving the health of children and youth.

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The [Community Foundation of Greater New Britain](#), the Coalition's fiscal agent and single-largest supporter as part of the Foundation's First Years First early childhood development initiative, committed up to \$10,000 to support the Denver delegation's travel and related expenses.

"We couldn't be more proud of our Coalition members and the community as a whole in achieving this major honor," said Jim Williamson, President of the Community Foundation of Greater New Britain. "This proves that collaboration works, and that a collective commitment to working together as a community to achieve new heights can pay dividends that will resonate for years to come."

A jury of nationally recognized business, local government and philanthropic leaders heard New Britain's 10-minute presentation at the Sheraton Downtown Denver over the weekend. Under Sparks' guidance, the New Britain team consisted of Mallory Deprey, Program Coordinator, YWCA of New Britain; Merrill Gay, Chair, New Britain Board of Education Wellness Committee; Dayjah Green, former participant, House of Teens; Jerrell Hargraves, Family Intervention Liaison, New Britain Board of Education and Alderman, City of New Britain; Elaine Riccio, Site Coordinator, Jefferson Family Resource Center; Kristian Rosado, Alderman, City of New Britain; Superintendent Sarra; Kaylah Smith, Program & Scholarship Associate, Community Foundation of Greater New Britain; Tim Stewart, President, Greater New Britain Chamber of Commerce; and Joe Vaverchak, District Supervisor of Attendance/Residency, Consolidated School District of New Britain.

In naming New Britain one of 20 finalists, National Civic League evaluators cited the community's multi-pronged approach to creating space for children to thrive and strong quantitative outcomes. New Britain's focus on a team approach to solving community-wide challenges was well-received: "Cross-sector collaboration was apparent throughout the application," stated evaluators.

New Britain's weekend presentation featured each presenter alternating talking points highlighting New Britain's success story and achievements in the three key areas. Rosado likened New Britain's approach to modern-day community challenges to the innovation displayed by the city's industrial founders. "It's that same roll-up-your-sleeves spirit that's helping us face new challenges in the 21st century," he told the jury. "Where other communities see problems, from school absenteeism to an achievement gap, we see opportunities for how and where our next innovations should take place."

"Working across sectors to tackle problems is not considered innovative anymore. But what is innovative in New Britain is that this collaborative work has been driven by the grassroots efforts of nonprofit organizations and residents," added Sparks. "Working together to leverage resources is not just expected – it is the cultural norm. We know we will be even more successful in the future."

For a complete listing of all awardees, visit www.nationalcivicleague.org.

The Coalition for New Britain's Youth is a citywide group of community stakeholders committed to improving the lives of New Britain's youth, birth through age 24. The Coalition includes parents, educators, government officials, health and social service agencies and others. Partners use reliable data to develop common strategies, align efforts and evaluate progress toward achieving their shared vision, ensuring the children and youth of New Britain have the skills they need to be successful in life.

To learn more about the Coalition or to become a member, visit www.coalition4nbyouth.org.