



Fortaleza, Brazil, Receives Vision Zero for Youth Leadership Award, Recognized for Outstanding Efforts to Create Safer Streets for Children

STOCKHOLM and CHAPEL HILL, N.C., US (February 17, 2020) – Creating safer streets starting where youth walk and bike with the goal of building safer, healthier communities for everyone. That’s been a goal in Fortaleza and the Brazilian city’s efforts to achieve that goal has earned it the rare distinction of the first-ever recipient of the [International Vision Zero for Youth Leadership Award](#).

From 2016 to 2018, the City of Fortaleza saw a 20.7 percent reduction in child injuries and deaths from all traffic-related crashes, including pedestrians.

“We are honored to recognize the efforts and accomplishments of a city building upon a strong foundation of mobility to foster Fortaleza’s next generation of road users with a focus on safe walking, biking and transit use,” said Nancy Pullen-Seufert, Director, National Center for Safe Routes to School, University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center. “Fortaleza’s commitment to children – including their need for play, community, access to child-friendly spaces, and opportunity for active transportation – is one we hope will be emulated by other cities worldwide.”

The International Vision Zero for Youth Leadership Award recognizes and highlights noteworthy road safety practices with the goal of inspiring other cities to take bold steps to reach zero traffic deaths among children and youth. Fortaleza has earned international recognition for its efforts to prioritize mobility and safety for all road users. The city was selected as the first International Award recipient because of its work to create a culture of active transportation for children and youth, including:

- implementing traffic calming measures to decrease speed including in places where children walk and bicycle;
- redesigning areas traditionally used only by motorized vehicles as communal areas for recreation, education, and activity;
- creating programs with a focus on the whole child, ensuring children can not only travel safely, but also engage meaningfully in environments; and
- prioritizing youth in road safety policies.

“Research tells us today that the early years of life are crucial for human brain development. That’s why we have been concerned about investing in the improvement of public spaces in our city, including streets and squares, for example, so that children can play and interact with friends and family,” said Roberto Cláudio, Mayor of Fortaleza. “That means investing in our future. The path to a better quality of life in our society is also through safer streets.”

The Award was presented by Zoleka Mandela, Global Ambassador of the [Child Health Initiative and granddaughter of former South African President Nelson Mandela](#), to Patrícia Macêdo, Secretary of International Affairs for the city of Fortaleza, on February 17, 2020. The presentation took place at the event *This is My Street, Safe and Healthy Journeys for Children and Youth* organized by the [FIA Foundation](#) in Stockholm, Sweden, as an official pre-event of the [3rd Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety](#). Delegates and representatives from the world of industry and research, international institutions and organizations, and practitioners from around the world were gathered in Stockholm for the international Conference to share successes and lessons from the implementation of the Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011–2020; chart future strategic directions for global road safety up to 2030 and beyond; and define ways to accelerate action on proven strategies to save lives.



Speaking at the event, Zoleka Mandela said: “Vision Zero for Youth puts young people at the very heart of the agenda for road safety. We know that our children and young people are most at risk of violent road death and injury, even though the simple, proven solutions are right at hand. We must celebrate cities like Fortaleza, which have gone beyond lip service and have made real changes to save lives. Vision Zero can, and should, be implemented on every street.”

The Award is presented by the Vision Zero for Youth initiative, led by the National Center for Safe Routes to School with support from the FIA Foundation. The International Award is an expansion of an award program that began in the U.S. It is guided by the International Vision Zero for Youth Committee, comprised of international road safety organizations. The city of Los Angeles with the Los Angeles Unified School District and New York City with its Vision Zero Task Force were the first two Award winners in the United States.

To learn more about the Vision Zero for Youth and the International Award, including a four-page fact sheet about Fortaleza’s comprehensive transportation safety initiatives and efforts, visit: www.visionzeroforyouth.org.

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About Fortaleza, Brazil

The city of Fortaleza has earned much recognition for its strong priority for mobility and safety for all road users. Its child-focused practices show an appreciation for the unique importance of play and community in child development, the need for equitable access to child-friendly spaces, and the opportunity to choose active transportation from an early age. By building systems with children’s perspectives already in mind rather than as an afterthought, they are raising generations of thoughtful road users. See *additional background about transportation safety initiatives in Fortaleza, Brazil*, below.

About Vision Zero for Youth

Launched by the National Center for Safe Routes to School in 2016, the Vision Zero for Youth initiative encourages communities and elected officials to focus safety improvements and efforts to slow traffic speeds where children and youth travel. Starting with youth can be the spark that creates community support for a broader Vision Zero program to eliminate all traffic fatalities. The initiative includes resources, ideas for taking action, opportunities for city leaders to commit and national and international recognition programs. Support for the initiative provided by the FIA Foundation, UNC Highway Safety Research Center and the Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center. *Learn more at www.visionzeroforyouth.org.*

About National Center for Safe Routes to School

Established in 2006, the National Center for Safe Routes to School helps communities change their culture around safe and active travel. Its role includes national coordination and technical assistance for US Walk to School Day and Bike to School Day, and providing tools, training, research and evaluation for



safe walking and bicycling for children and youth. The National Center for Safe Routes to School served as US Federal Highway Administration's clearinghouse for the federal SRTS program for eleven years.

Learn more at www.saferoutesinfo.org.

Additional background about transportation safety initiatives and efforts in Fortaleza, Brazil

Provided by City of Fortaleza staff

Goal: Creating a Culture of Walking and Bicycling

- Fortaleza has two innovative programs to help foster a culture of active transportation for its young residents. Mini Bicicletar is a bike-sharing program that provides child-sized rental bicycles with retractable training wheels. With fifty bikes at five strategic, communal locations, its first few months of operation garnered over 6,000 rides (around 36 per day).
- When Fortaleza's Sunday leisure cycling lane program began in 2014, the city didn't have the strong cycling culture it has today. For many people, the Sunday leisure cycling lane was their first experience with cycling in the streets with their families. Now, the city has 23.7 kilometers of streets on this program and it is common to see entire families cycling together with their kids using Mini Bicicletar.

Goal: Traffic Calming Measures to Decrease Speed

- In late 2017, city officials, in concert with partners from NACTO-GDCI, the Bloomberg Initiative for Global Road Safety, the World Resources Institute, and the Albert Sabin Children's Hospital targeted the roadway in front of the hospital for safety improvements (such as raised crossings, curb extensions, and sidewalk refurbishment).
- For families of children with special health needs who often arrive by bus or on foot, the streets and sidewalks surrounding the facility were in such disrepair that approximately one-half were forced to walk or carry their children in the roadbeds. These treatments had the additional benefit of improving equitable access to reliable healthcare for children and their families.
- After road treatments were implemented in the hospital's neighborhood:
 - Traffic speed dropped by 42%
 - The number of pedestrians forced into the roadbed dropped by 86%
 - Zero child pedestrians were forced into the roadbed

Goal: Prioritizing Youth in Road Safety Policies, Looking to the Future

- In Fortaleza, 55% of school children walk to school. Through a collaboration with NACTO-GDCI Streets for Kids, the city is focusing next on the journey to school.
- "Caminhos da Escola," Fortaleza's Safe Routes to School Program, brings together the benefits of low-speed zones and Cidade da Gente's projects to improve areas around schools, combining critical safety improvements that decrease motorized traffic speeds with the bright colors and fun spaces used with Cidade da Gente. This is to both protect and engage students on their way to and from school.
- Fortaleza's new Vision Zero Plan prioritizes children and youth as a crucial inroad to building cross-cutting collaborations required to create sustainable change in the community.