

CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH
4TH DISTRICT, NEW JERSEY

CONSTITUENT SERVICE CENTERS:

MONMOUTH
112 Village Center Drive
Freehold, NJ 07728-2510
(732) 780-3035

MERCER
4573 South Broad Street
Hamilton, NJ 08620-2215
(609) 585-7878

OCEAN
405 Route 539
Plumsted, NJ 08514-2303
(609) 585-7878
By Appointment



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

October 1, 2020

CO-CHAIRMAN, TOM LANTOS HUMAN RIGHTS
COMMISSION

SENIOR MEMBER, FOREIGN AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE

RANKING MEMBER, AFRICA, GLOBAL
HEALTH, GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS, AND
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
SUBCOMMITTEE

WESTERN HEMISPHERE SUBCOMMITTEE

RANKING MEMBER, CONGRESSIONAL-
EXECUTIVE COMMISSION ON CHINA

www.chrissmith.house.gov

The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation
1 Dole Drive
Westlake Village, CA 91362

To the Jurors of the Conrad N. Hilton Humanitarian Prize:

It is my honor to nominate Airline Ambassadors International (AAI) for the Conrad N. Hilton Humanitarian Prize for 2021.

Founded in 1996 by Nancy Rivard, this non-profit organization began with a small group of airline personnel using their travel benefits to help orphaned and vulnerable children. AAI has grown to include members of all ages and professions who volunteer their time as Ambassadors of Goodwill in their home communities and abroad.

Since their founding, AAI has been on the forefront of emergency aid to worldwide disasters, bringing humanitarian aid to Haiti after the 2010 earthquake, Thailand after the 2005 Tsunami, and New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, just to name a few.

Airline Ambassadors leverages their unique connections within the aviation industry to provide a better life for thousands of vulnerable children. Their Humanitarian Missions Program provides direct relief by bringing needed supplies to locations around the world, while their Children's Medical Escort program has brought hundreds of children to the US for life-saving surgeries and procedures.

As the prime author of the *Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000*, I traveled to Ukraine with Ms. Rivard and representatives of AAI to educate Ukrainian officials and flight crews about AAI's groundbreaking Human Trafficking Awareness Trafficking Training. Because of the training provided globally by AAI, more than 1,000 "tips" have been sent to law enforcement, saving lives.

Airline Ambassadors provides humanitarian assistance to children and families in need as well as international relief and development to under-privileged communities worldwide. —
Bringing Compassion into Action.

AAI has met Human Need in 62 countries

- **Hunger and Poverty** – Addressing food insecurity

Co-Chairman of the following: Task Force on Alzheimer's Disease • Bi-Partisan Taskforce for Combating Anti-Semitism • Lyme Disease Caucus
Coalition for Autism Research and Education • Bi-Partisan Congressional Pro-Life Caucus • Bosnia Caucus • Poland Caucus • Ad Hoc Congressional Committee for Irish Affairs
Congressional Caucus on Human Trafficking • Vietnam Caucus • Congressional Heart and Stroke Coalition • Fragile X Caucus • Spina Bifida Caucus • Hungarian Caucus
Malaria and Neglected Tropical Diseases Caucus • Hong Kong Caucus • Congressional Pediatric and Adult Hydrocephalus Caucus

- **Education** – Investing in the future
- **Health** – From mountaintop clinics to remote villages
- **Child Welfare** – Giving hope and sharing love
- **Disaster Relief** – Alleviating human suffering
- **Community Development** – Building Capacity in the developing world

Success to Date - Responding to human suffering

- Hand-delivered over \$60M in aid to children and families in 62 countries.
- For every \$20 donated last year, \$91 worth of aid (medicine, hygiene, school supplies) was delivered directly to children and families in need.
- Completed “Safe Houses” in five locations in Haiti; established medical clinics in El Salvador; schools in Guatemala; feeding programs in Argentina; vocational training programs in Thailand and Mexico; housing projects in El Salvador and Sri Lanka; sustainable agriculture in South Africa; and wellness trainings in the Philippines, El Salvador, Nepal, Haiti and Ecuador.
- Escorted over 3,000 children for life changing surgeries.
- Provided 120 trainings on Human Trafficking Awareness
- Recognized by the US Congress, and the United Nations

Three Volunteer Programs

- **AAI members PROVIDE for orphans and vulnerable children through their Humanitarian Aid Program** – Members hand-deliver humanitarian aid to our adopted projects and provide volunteer services to orphanages, clinics, schools as well as disaster relief in times of emergency and have provided Wellness Trainings in four countries in seven locations, particularly since the onset of COVID-19.
- **AAI Members PROTECT children traveling with their Children’s Escort Program** – Members escort children who require life-altering or life-saving medical treatment to and from the US, as well as children being adopted.
- **Members ADVOCATE on Child Protection** – By providing volunteer training around the world at airports to educate those in the travel industry on the issue of child and human trafficking and how they can combat it by reporting tips to the proper authorities.

Effective Partnerships

After twenty years of providing exemplary humanitarian services and as a notable first responder for disaster relief, AAI has established formal partnerships with the Department of Defense Southern Command, Special Operations Command South (SOCOM South), American Association of Airline Executives (AAAE), UNICEF, and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). As early as 2010, AAI became the implementing partner for UNICEF’s “Enhancement of Child Protective Services in Human Trafficking” program in Haiti. AAI accomplishes its global work through its ten Regional Directors and numerous local resident Member Volunteers from the airline industry who “*Travel to Make a Difference.*”

Since 2010, AAI has become a recognized leader of the airline industry in the fight against human trafficking. Working with Members of Congress, AAI initiated two congressional meetings that engaged the CEO's of several airlines, the International Air Transport Association (IATA), and the International Civil Aeronautical Organization (ICAO) to put a stop to human trafficking in the aviation industry. AAI substantively contributed to policies and legislation regarding industry best practices for trafficking and hosted several international events for IATA and ICAO.

AAI has also co-chaired the subcommittee of the US Department of Transportation and the White House Counsel to the President to Combat Trafficking In Persons (TIP). AAI is a member of Interpol's Special Operation Network on human trafficking and partners with UNODC as it works with international law enforcement agencies including INTERPOL, INL Northern Triangle, and DHS. Through the course of this work, AAI members have provided over 120 live TIP Trainings to U.S. Embassy staff throughout the world, international airports, and foreign ministries since 2011. AAI has provided classes that have certified over 7,000 airline employees to recognize and report human trafficking in their workplaces under the request of airport management and local law enforcement.

Pandemic Response

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to unprecedented global challenges, human suffering, and economic disruption that are linked to many other aspects of our lives. As an example, in working with high level regional law enforcement authorities over many years, AAI has identified challenges, best practices, and policy responses to new human trafficking and health vulnerabilities arising from the COVID-19 crisis. It is known there's a connection between increased criminal activity and natural disasters—law enforcement throughout Central America ~~are overwhelmed with both enforcement of important quarantines and protecting the public from~~ criminal enterprises. Since the quarantines began, criminal organizations have been operating with a newfound impunity that only a distracted law enforcement community can provide. Law enforcement, therefore, does not have the resources to conduct effective COVID-19 education, but only quarantine enforcement.

AAI has thus coordinated a timely response to the impact of the COVID-19 crisis by repurposing the tools and resources employed in its fight against human trafficking onto an evolving mission to address COVID-19 with the same local and national agencies, and law enforcement.

The only proven science, thus far, to defeat this pandemic are methods of disease avoidance—this includes modern hygiene and nutrition education as governments mandate quarantines. AAI has delivered wellness education in El Salvador, Haiti, Philippines, Nepal, and Ecuador and even to a US based project to support the Hopi Tribe. Additionally, AAI has repurposed a feature of their TIP training—their “TIP Line” reporting app—to include reporting and education about COVID-19 which is being implemented in conjunction with San Salvador, El Salvador's airport, the Salvadoran Ministry of Health, and the International Narcotics Law Enforcement Northern Triangle (INL).

To help expand the reach of their wellness training, AAI has begun using Arist, a text message learning platform that has proven a 94% completion rate. This will enable volunteer teams to scale the impact of the wellness trainings to a wider public. Today, even in developing nations, people have cell phones which connect to the Internet. For these reasons, AAI's Wellness Training, offered via Arist, has the potential to reach thousands to help them learn to make better choices and become proactive with their health.

AAI had been recognized consistently through 20 years

- United Nations Affiliation (1997)
- Woman of the Year and Ambassador of Peace Award (1999)
- Northwest Airlines In-flight Services Charity of the Year (2000)
- Rotary Paul Harris Fellow & Humanitarian Award of Islamic Cultural Center (2001)
- National Caring Award (2002)
- Presidential Volunteer Service Award (2003)
- Association of Professional Flight Attendants Award of Merit (2004)
- E-town radio's "E" Achievement Award (2005)
- Award of Valor SAL Ministry of Foreign Relations, & Heroes of the Hurricane (2006)
- Foreign Ministry of El Salvador (2007)
- First Lady of El Salvador (2008)
- City of Sosua, Dominican Republic Keys to the City (2009)
- Boys Town Award (2010)
- Giraffe Hero Award (2012)
- President's Volunteer Service Award and Global Woman of the Year (2013)
- Ambassador of Peace Award at the London Travel Market (2013, 2014)
- Human Rights-Hero-Award by the Foundation for-a-Slavery Free World (2015)
- Perdita Huston Human Rights Award from United Nations Association (2017)

Airline Ambassadors International has repeatedly demonstrated their commitment to end human suffering consistently over their two decades of service. As such, I respectfully request you give them your full and fair consideration for the 2021 Conrad N. Hilton Humanitarian Prize.

Sincerely,



CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH
Member of Congress