

Welcome to the World!

Contributed by Sister Ann Francis Klimkowski

Toledo may not have captured the Olympic games for 2002, but we were awarded the next best thing: the bid to host the 2002 Sister Cities International Conference. During the week of July 17-21, Toledo will be the hub of international educational, cultural, and economic exchange. The conference will attract guests to Toledo from across our great nation and from some 40 countries worldwide. Our visitors will be business leaders, government officials, educators, and cultural and civic leaders.

While the mission of Sister Cities International focuses on educational, cultural, and economic endeavors, there is the other unwritten but obvious goal of the organization and of the annual conference—peace making. We are all deeply concerned by the uncertain political climate existing in the world today, and this conference is an opportunity to further global peace and understanding.

Excitement is building as the Conference approaches:

- A Parade of Nations will be part of the Opening Session and will feature a keynote speaker.
- A Reception for the Mayor at the Toledo Museum of Art will allow the general community to interact with the delegates of the Conference.
- A Trade Show and International Bazaar at SeaGate Centre will include a selection of ethnic foods and highlight local business.
- A concert will conclude the Conference on Saturday evening.
- There will be a special tract of programs for the young people who are encouraged to attend and routinely do so in large numbers.

This Conference is an opportunity for people in our region to exchange ideas and to initiate contacts with people from other countries which will last long after the conference ends. The 2002 SCI Conference will also bring people together from many local communities to help us jointly celebrate our pride in Toledo and Northwest Ohio.

If you would like to participate, volunteers are needed. Anyone interested may call Sister Ann Francis Klimkowski, at 419-824-3872.

Be a part of the opportunity to WELCOME THE WORLD to this part of Ohio.