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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Larry Powell, Fresno County Superintendent of Schools, in partnership with the Sister Cities International Council of Fresno, will host a special reception for delegates and foreign language teachers on Wednesday, October 7, 4:30-6 p.m. at the Fresno County Office of Education (Room 201). The purpose of the meeting is to unveil plans for a new scholarship program that will encourage high school students to travel and study abroad.

Sister Cities International has been Fresno's sole official exchange program for 52 years and this year, for the first time ever, countywide teachers representing German, Italian, Chinese, Armenian, French, Japanese and Hebrew foreign languages will be asked to select deserving scholarship recipients.

Sister Cities International is the only U.S.-based organization dedicated to creating long-term city-to-city relationships between the United States and communities abroad with a network of over 650 U.S. cities and more than 1,900 sister city relationships in 135 countries on six continents.

According to Linda Motschieder, President of the local SCI chapter, "Fresno has vibrant ongoing exchanges with four international cities: Muenster, Germany; Verona, Italy; Afula, Israel; and Kochi, Japan. We are delighted that Mayor Swearingin and the Fresno City Council have approved the establishment of Nimes, France; Etchmiadzin, Armenia and Taishan, China as potential sisters. Citizen committees have been formed to explore these possible partnerships."

According to Powell, involving teachers is essential and fits perfectly with the mission of county schools. "The Fresno County Office of Education supports strong academic programs, career technical education, and the arts as we work to create a culture rich society where the whole child is important. FCOE will continue to provide support to meet the challenges of the 21st Century, and help our students become successful in the new global economy."

MORE

City of Fresno Mayor Ashley Swearengin, who will be a featured speaker at the inaugural reception, wants citizens to know that “Fresno is a city that takes pride in its diversity, and the Sister Cities program has helped build relationships with our international partners that provide a growing awareness and appreciation of each other’s cultures and people. As a result of our cultural exchanges, we have the opportunity to improve the quality of life for all our communities.”

Delegation leaders, Fresno City Council representatives and other local dignitaries are expected to attend. For more information, contact Armen D. Bacon at 265-3012 or Linda Motschieder at 431-2555.

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