



**For Immediate Release**

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## **Delegates Sought for Sister City Goodwill Mission**

BIRMINGHAM, Mich., March 12, 2015 – The City of Birmingham is seeking individuals and families who are interested in traveling to Japan this fall to take part in a unique cultural experience as part of its sister city relationship with Ritto, Japan in the Shiga Prefecture. Since 1976, the City of Birmingham has enjoyed the sister city relationship as a part of the larger Michigan-Shiga Sister State program. A central part of this program is the annual Goodwill Mission, which promotes cultural understanding and affords participants from both countries the opportunity to build life-long friendships.

The annual Goodwill Missions are truly unique experiences and have resulted in many lifelong friendships between past participants from Michigan and Shiga. The Michigan-Shiga Sister State Board is currently seeking interested individuals to travel as delegates in the 2015 Goodwill Mission to Shiga, Japan. All residents of Michigan are welcome to participate in the 2015 Goodwill Mission, scheduled for October 11 through 21, 2015. A delegation of 35 Michigan community members will enjoy an 11-day Goodwill Mission to Shiga, including home-stay experiences with Shiga families.

The home-stay portion of the trip is a unique experience and a lifelong highlight for many past participants. During this time there are sightseeing trips to various local points of interest such as the Ritto Historical Museum, Wachusan Pharmacy, the ancient and world-renowned Shigaraki Pottery district, an excursion on Lake Biwa aboard the Michigan Boat, a formal tea ceremony, local shrines and temples; along with every day family camaraderie.

Those interested in learning more about the 2015 Goodwill Mission may visit [www.bhamgov.org/2015goodwillmission](http://www.bhamgov.org/2015goodwillmission). The site offers detailed information about the trip, including cost estimates, transportation information, the application form and trip itinerary. Application forms and a \$200 deposit are due by May 1, 2015.

Additional information and registration forms are also available online at [www.mishiga.org](http://www.mishiga.org). If you have any questions about this opportunity, please contact Kathee McDonald at 517.388.1308 or [mcdon288@gmail.com](mailto:mcdon288@gmail.com).

*Since 1968, the State of Michigan has enjoyed a sister state relationship with Shiga Prefecture in Japan. In addition to the sister state relationship, 17 cities in Michigan, including Birmingham, have sister city relationships with cities in the Shiga Prefecture. The 2015 Goodwill Mission marks the 47th anniversary of the Michigan-Shiga Sister State relationship and the 39th anniversary of the sister city relationship between Birmingham and Ritto.*

*City of Birmingham – A Walkable Community. Visit the city's website at [www.bhamgov.org](http://www.bhamgov.org).*

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