

SISTER CITIES INTERNATIONAL
Pierce County Tacoma Sister Cities Program

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Sister Cities International is a nonprofit citizen diplomacy network creating and strengthening partnerships between U.S. and international communities in an effort to increase global cooperation at the municipal level, to promote cultural understanding and to stimulate economic development. The organization feeds my Spirit.

Involvement: I have been involved with Sister Cities International for over twenty five years both in Austin, Texas and in Tacoma, WA. Today I serve as Treasurer of the Pierce County Tacoma Sister Cities Program which has eleven sister city relationships. I serve on two Sister City committees: Cienfuegos, Cuba and El Jadida, Morocco, our newest Muslim relationship. Sister Cities International will hold its 2009 conference in Belfast, Ireland, the first international conference and symbolically in a place where peace has been difficult to come by. Sister Cities also has a goal of increasing its contact with Muslim culture so that deeper relationships can be established between the US and Muslim nations.

At least ten members of my church are involved in these programs.

I am thrilled to help create deeper relationships in the relationship with our newest sister city. I was also instrumental in guiding this relationship through the organizational process and breaking the barrier that had been set by the City Council of no more than ten sister cities. We now have eleven cities, and it is a Muslim country that has good relations with the US and with Israel, and we are engaged in peacemaking working with a medical alliance that provides support to victims of earthquakes.

Participation in Sister Cities has enabled me to know all our city officials personally and the Director of Economic Development for the City of Tacoma as well as officials at the Port of Tacoma and World Trade Center. It is an altruistic program for the City of Tacoma that brings culture, Spirit, and economics together. I love all the people who involve themselves in this program. A few months ago, the Director of Economic Development said, "I want to come to your 9 AM service."

How to Get Involved in a Sister Cities Program:

- Contact your local Mayor's office to determine if there are any existing Sister Cities. They will provide you with telephone contacts for the Sister Cities committees in your city.
- To get involved, you may want to join a local committee or participate in activities sponsored by those cities. Often cities have websites and post Sister City activities.
- To form a new Sister City in your community, you may contact Sister Cities International to find an international city that matches your own,
- Then you would need to establish an organizing committee and work with city officials to establish the relationship.