



Civilizations Exchange & Cooperation Foundation (CECF)

2012 Better Understanding for a Better World

April 25 - 29, 2012

Baltimore, Maryland

Co-Sponsor: Muslim Community Center



What: 2012 Better Understanding for a Better World Conference

When: April 25 - 29, 2012

Where: The Westin Baltimore Washington Airport Hotel

Who: CECF (<http://www.cecf-net.org/>) and the following participating institutions:

- **Basilica of the Assumption** (*tbc*)
- **Oseh Shalom**
- **Muslim Community Center**

CECF is offering its fifth annual conference in Baltimore, MD to American high school students and ECA grant exchange students studying in the U.S. under the auspices of the Department of State's exchange programs.

Overview:

Youth are the hope of each nation, and the future of the world's civilization is soon to rest in their hands. The most pressing issue they face today is how to view the "Other." The threat of terrorism has brought with it a lot of fear, prejudice, hatred and suspicion of the "Other", which we aim to transcend.

Better Understanding for a Better World began in 2006 with an annual conference in Orlando, FL. In 2008, CECF expanded this unique opportunity and included an annual conference in Baltimore, MD. After two more thriving years of BUBW Conferences in both Orlando and Baltimore, CECF expanded once more to include an annual BUBW Conference in San Diego, CA in 2010. These conferences were developed to bring together American high school students of diverse faiths and cultural backgrounds with international exchange students currently studying in the U.S. They have been tremendously successful and each year the students benefit in ways that are truly impressive.

Conference Mission:

- Facilitate mutual understanding and appreciation between students from diverse regional, economic, social, religious, cultural and ethnic backgrounds
- Discuss stereotypes about the "other" and their impact
- Learn about and discuss the practice of religion and faith in a pluralistic society with the objective of promoting tolerance, mutual respect, and an awareness of common values
- Introduce various aspects of leadership, including those involving business and entrepreneurship
- Forge ties of friendship between American high school students and students from around the world

While the focus of the conference is principally on Judaism, Christianity and Islam, participation is open to all faiths, as well as those who may not be active in a particular faith tradition.

Follow up after the Conference:

Students will be encouraged to maintain contact with each other and make a presentation in their schools or communities on the issues discussed during the conference.

Participants and Selection:

American and International high school students are expected to attend. International exchange students will represent the following programs sponsored by the Department of State: Future Leaders Exchange (FLEX), Youth Exchange and Study (YES), Congress Bundestag Youth Exchange (CBYX), American Serbia and Montenegro Youth Leadership Exchange (A-SMYLE) and others. Exchange students will be nominated by their exchange organizations and American students will be nominated by a staff member of their respective high schools or community /youth group leader.

Brief Conference Outline:

Wednesday, April 25: (Arrival, Pizza Social, Ice Breaking Activities and Orientation)

- **Arrival - Students are requested to arrive between 3:00 – 6:00 PM.**

Thursday, April 26: (Diversity & Cultural Understanding and Leadership – Becoming a “Global Citizen”)

- Main address and Interactive Discussion about “**The World Today: The Family of Adam and Eve,**” elaborating on the need for “**Crossing the Divide.**” Discussion on the importance of developing an atmosphere of belonging, as well as cultural understanding, sensitivity and respect, which leads to success on a variety of levels including personal, leadership, social, educational, and business to mention a few
- Leadership Session
- Breakout sessions, group discussions identifying problems facing the youth of today and ideas /activities for better cooperation on a personal, local and global level
- Student Country Presentations, by students who represent various continents and share an informative short power point presentation

Friday, April 27: (Interfaith Visits and Panel Discussion)

- Visits to a church, synagogue, and mosque. Students will gain first-hand experience of the similarities and differences within the house of Abraham
- Panel discussion
- Group Recreational Activities

Saturday, April 28: (Team Building and Banquet)

- Team Building and Obstacle Course Session
- Banquet and Certificate Ceremony

Sunday, April 29: (Wrap Up & Departure)

- **Departure - Students are requested to schedule their departing flights between 10:30 am – 2:00 PM.**

Conference price of \$550.00 includes:

- Registration/Participation in Conference
- Lodging at the **Westin Baltimore Washington Airport Hotel** – 4 nights
- 3 meals daily
- Conference Session at the **Westin BWI Hotel** on April 26th
- **Interfaith Program** Activities on April 27th
- Admission to the **Terrapin Team Building and Obstacle Course** on April 28th
- **Banquet and Certificates Ceremony** on Saturday, April 28th
- Ground transportation throughout the conference, including transportation from the **BWI Airport** to the hotel on Wednesday (4/25) and back to the **BWI Airport** on Sunday (4/29)

For more information or to register, please contact us @ cecf1@aol.com or call 410-944-6077