



Civilizations Exchange & Cooperation Foundation (CECF)

2012 Better Understanding for a Better World

February 8 - 12, 2012

Orlando, Florida

Co-Sponsor: Islamic Society of Central Florida



What: 2012 Better Understanding for a Better World

When: February 8 - 12, 2012

Where: The Walt Disney World Resort, Orlando, Florida

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

- Islamic Society of Central Florida (<http://www.iscf.org/>) (tbc)
- Congregation Ohev Shalom (<http://www.ohevshalom.org/>) (tbc)
- Saint Mary Magdalen Catholic Church (<http://www.stmarymagdalen.org/>) (tbc)

CECF is offering its 7th annual conference in Orlando, FL 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 examine, discuss and 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, February 8: (Arrival, Pizza Social, Ice Breaking Games and Orientation)

- **Students should plan to arrive between 2:00 – 7:00 pm.**

Thursday, February 9: (Diversity & Cultural Understanding and Leadership)

- **Millennium Cultures**, an experiential program conducted by Walt Disney World Resort staff: Discover, explore, and learn to recognize how various aspects of culture are impacted by changes in technology, commerce, communication, and people.
- Catered Lunch in the Odyssey Pavilion (*tbc*)
- 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
- Workshop on **“Leadership and the Importance of Youth Involvement”**
- 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 presentations
- Evening recreational time in Disney’s Epcot Theme Park

Friday, February 10: (Interfaith Visits and Panel Discussion)

- Visit local places of worship like a mosque, synagogue, and church. Students will experience firsthand similarities and differences within the house of Abraham.
- The visits will be followed by a panel discussion with the religious leaders involved in the day’s program.
- Evening recreational time in one of Disney’s Theme Parks

Saturday, February 11: (Rejoicing as One)

- Free-time in one of Disney’s Theme Parks
- Banquet and Certificate Ceremony in the evening with a focus on **“The American Experience: Learning about Each Other and Respecting Our Cultural Differences.”**

Sunday, February 12: (Wrap Up & Departure)

- **Students should try to schedule their departing flights between 10:00 am – 2:00 pm.**

Conference Price of \$650.00 includes:

- Registration/Participation in Conference
- Lodging at a **Walt Disney World All Star Movie Resort** – 4 nights - <http://disneyworld.disney.go.com/wdw/resorts/resortLanding?id=AllStarSportsResortLandingPage>
- 3 meals daily
- Admission to The Walt Disney World Theme Parks - <http://disneyworld.disney.go.com/>
- Participation in the Walt Disney World Youth Education Series Program, Millennium Cultures - www.YouthEducationSeries.com
- **Banquet & Certificates Ceremony** on Saturday, February 11th
- Transportation during the program, including from the **Orlando International Airport (MCO)** on Wednesday (2/8) to the hotel and back to the **Orlando International Airport (MCO)** on Sunday (2/12)

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