TOLEDO SISTER CITIES INTERNATIONAL SERVING NORTHWESTERN OHIO (“TSCI”)

“INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL”

**CONNECTOR**

MARCH 2024

WHO: For anyone looking for a memorable day of FUN,

 ETHNIC FOOD, CULTURAL MUSIC, MAGICAL

 DANCING, A WONDERLAND OF GAMES, PRIZES,

 & AUTHENTIC ITEMS TO SEE AND BUY.

WHAT: The most exciting “INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL” ever

 in Northwest Ohio

WHERE: Oak Shade Grove, 3624 Seaman Road in Oregon, Ohio

 (*German Festival and Polka Picnic location*)

WHEN: Saturday, May 11, 2024

 11 am – 6 pm Family Time

 6 pm – 10 pm Adult Time – FANTASTIC ENTERTAINMENT – 8 PM

 *(GET YOUR $9 TICKETS EARLY – ONLY 2,000 AVAILABLE)*

 *- Children 12 and under free with a paying adult-*

WHY: Sure to be a sell-out talked about for years!!!

WHY IS THE TSCI **INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL** SO IMPORTANT?

We have just come through a season of many festivals – from Christmas carols at stores and malls to the sweet aromas of freshly baked goods and other holiday treats. With it’s diversity of traditions and practices, this is my favorite time of the year for which I prepare months in advance.

The Winter Solstice has just passed, and for some, the welcoming return of longer days is a time for reflection. Now is a time of “celebration of the returning Sun and having the time and inclination for reflection during a cold dark time.”

For some – from Iran to Azerbaijan to the U.S. – the celebration of solstice, known as Yalda, is a time of welcoming Ahura Mazda, the Zoroastrian Lord of Wisdom.

Many people in the U.S. and global African diaspora, meanwhile have vivid memories of the just passed weeklong celebration of Kwanzaa.

Elsewhere, people are celebrating the birth of Jesus, marked with their unique cultural and religious traditions. Many of the Nativity Scenes around the world will showcase varied practices in the materials, the gifts to baby Jesus, or the people and animals present at the manger.

Food, of course, will be central to these activities. Many Western Europeans look forward to a plum cake (Christmas Pudding) made with ingredients from former Indian colonies – a lasting reminder of the legacy of the British Empire.

These myriad traditions and histories speak to our uniqueness but also our collective connections. We all can view the lights from a Diwali celebration glowing next to a neighbor’s Christmas décor, much in the way Christmas trees and menorahs sit side by side during the recent holiday season.

**TSCI connects the people of 12 countries**

**with the best of Toledo, Ohio,**

**not because of what we have done in the past,**

**but because of what we might become.**

Every day TSCI is building that connectivity with Toledo’s great people, great culture, great art, great music, and great food.

As the warm days of May are calling beautiful flowers from the ground, they also call people worldwide to celebrate the end of winter and the promise of another summer to come.

**The monthly International Festival CONNECTOR will give you all the information you need for the most fun at Northwestern Ohio’s BIGGEST INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL EVER!**

**- Latest Festival News Updates -**

**INTERNATIONAL FOOD –**

**Food Trucks -**We have defined the eight (8) best spots for food trucks and have had inquiries from 11 food, 2 drinks, and 3 desserts trucks so far. It’s first come - first served, and none of them have paid for a spot yet. So, anyone interested should contact Bill at 734-790-9519 or billk@bex.net immediately to have an application sent to you. We are planning for 2,000 attendees and will have no duplication of food truck cuisine. **The food truck locations are numbered, and the earlier you pay for a spot, the better the exact numbered location you will have reserved for you.** All spots are $100 each with electric or water extra.

**Restaurant Tables –** We targeted six cuisines to be represented at the tables: Indian, Japanese, Mediterranean, Italian, German, and Mexican. **We are proud to have two cuisines already represented: Indian Cuisine by Bombay Kitchen, and German Cuisine by The Swiss Singers.** If a restaurant wants to represent any particular cuisine – not just one of the targeted above – please immediately contact Bill at 734-790-9519 or billk@bex.net to get an application. The food tables are indoors, numbered and reserved when the $100 table fee is paid. There will be no duplication of table cuisine. No kitchen equipment will be available in the food hall.

**Food Vendors in International Festival - 2024 will have**

**first rights to a spot in International Festival - 2025**

**INTERNATIONAL VENDOR MARKETPLACE –** The 42 roomy 15’ wide spaces are all numbered and reserved for each vendor. You will know in advance exactly where on the sitemap of the marketplace your spot(s) will be, and each space will be number tagged. Area lighting is on after dark, and each light pole has a 15 amp outlet available on the base. Table and chairs can be rented or bring your own. Vehicles can be brought next to your space to unload but must be moved to the parking lot by 10:30 am**. This is the event vendors will be talking about for years, and vendors in International Festival 2024 will have first rights to space in International Festival 2025.**  Reserve your space immediately to get the best location available when you pay for the space. For an information filled application contact Jing Meyer at Jing.meyer@utoledo.edu.

**NORTHWESTERN OHIO INFORMATION MARKETPLACE –** This area of the International Festival – 2025 is located in the quietest part of the “Grove” where the goal is not “Selling”, but rather sharing information on the organizations and resources located in Northwest Ohio. **You’ll find 35 roomy comfortable spaces to share their need for information about what you do and discuss how you might help them.** Early space holders are the Toledo Lucas Public Library, Toledo Zoo, Imagination Station, Welcome TLC, Women of Toledo, Toledo YMCA, Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo Arts Commission, Owens Corning, Owens College, University of Toledo, Bowling Green University, Greater Toledo International Youth Orchestra, Lourdes University, Toledo Police Department, and Toledo Fire department. More info at Bill – 734-790-9519 or billk@bex.net.

**PERFORMERS/ENTERTAINERS –** Continuous entertainment on two (2) stages from 11 am to 10 pm. A celebration of ethnic dancing, singing, and instrumental music from all around the world and all around Northwestern Ohio. Sit comfortably and just listen around the intimate Weingarten music stage or participate interactively in the performances in the large performance hall next to the beverage building and the food hall. We have already had inquiries from 80+ performers so if you want to be considered, immediately contact Paresh at 216-337-7438 or pdalwalla@optebiz.com.

**KID’S WONDERLAND – 11 am to 6 pm -** A safety fenced in area containing an Imagination Station pre-school blue foam block playground, Pre-school children’sgames with prizes, Young children’s activities with prizes, crafts presented by the Museum of Art Community Outreach Program, inflatable fun spots, swings, monkey bars, and so much more. More information – Bill at 734-790-9519 or billk@bex.net.

**VOLUNTEERS HAVE FUN – EXCITEMENT – FREE FOOD – SPECTACULAR MEMORIES -** What a great way to discover new food treats, have fun with great people at an International Wonderland, andimmerse yourself in authentic international music and entertainment for FREE...**Be an important part of the** #1 INTERNATIONAL EVENT OF 2024. To see if any spots are still available, contact Ikpemesi at 614-779-2722 or Ogundio@bgsu.edu.