



July 26, 2022

Dear Colleagues and Community Partners,

If your young professionals (YPs) request time to participate in a cultural exchange with Springfield Sister Cities Association (SSCA), we hope you'll consider saying "yes."

Two components of SSCA's mission state that we are to "*facilitate cultural, economic, technological and informational exchanges*" and that "*we transform distant locations into person-to-person relationships.*" As SSCA strives to meet this mission, we desire to extend opportunities for cultural understanding to young professionals within the greater Springfield area.

On Oct. 31 through Nov. 5, 2022, SSCA staff will guide a small group of Springfield YPs on a visit to Tlaquepaque, Mexico, Springfield's sister city since 2003. The goal of this trip is to provide an opportunity for YPs to engage with their foreign counterparts who work within a similar trade or business. Included with this letter, you will find a complete list of goals for this Young Professional program.

When your YPs ask to participate in this trip, they are really asking for the opportunity to:

- Grow personally and professionally, both within your organization and our community
- Gain a global perspective of their work and career
- Learn new skills and competencies
- Enhance their quality of life by meeting and making friends with peers from Springfield and Tlaquepaque

We not only hope you say "yes" to the trip, but we also ask that you consider supporting your YP by counting this as regular work time not affecting vacation accrual. You might also consider a financial contribution to the total trip cost of \$1,900 which includes airfare, lodging, ground transportation and most meals.

Activities will consist of:

- City Tour/Orientation
- Tlaquepaque Chamber Visit
- Job Shadowing and Networking
- Dia de los Muertos Activities
- Behind the scenes Artisan Tours
- Distillery Tour in Tequila, Jalisco

SSCA promises this trip will cultivate personal, professional and community growth. I hope you will give your YPs this opportunity. If you are interested in reserving a space for your YP or if you have questions, contact Lisa Bakerink, SSCA executive director at 417-864-1341 or lbakerink@springfieldmo.gov or visit peacethroughpeople.org.

Regards,

Andy Drennen, president of Springfield Sister Cities Association