Michigan, the Great Lakes State, and Shiga Prefecture, home to Lake Biwa, joined together in 1968 to form a sister state relationship. The Michigan-Shiga sister state bond is the oldest and most comprehensive partnership between the United States and Japan. Thousands of citizens from Michigan and Shiga have participated in cross-cultural exchange activities, including student and teacher exchanges, cultural events, art exhibits and artist exchanges as well as economic development initiatives. Our relationship has inspired cultural sites in Michigan, including the Japanese garden at Michigan State University and the Shigematsu Memorial Japanese Garden at Lansing Community College, as well as inspiring Japan-themed events, such as the annual Japan Festival in Novi, the State Japanese Quiz Bowl and the Michigan Language Japanese Speech Contest.

Michigan-Shiga Sister State Program
P.O. Box 4715
East Lansing, MI 48826
E-Mail: shigaken@msu.edu
www.mishiga.org

Official Sister Cities & Friendship Cities
1. Adrian – Moriyama
2. Ann Arbor – Hikone
3. Birmingham – Ritto
4. Clinton Township – Yasu
5. DeWitt & DeWitt Twp. – Koka
6. Garden City* – Takashima
7. Grand Rapids – Omihachiman
8. Lansing – Otsu
9. Marquette – Higashi Omi
10. Marshall – Koka
11. Olivet* – Maibara
12. Petoskey – Takashima
13. Pontiac – Kusatsu
14. Portland* – Nagahama
15. St. Johns* – Konan
17. Traverse City – Koka

* indicates unofficial, friendship city status

Shiga Prefecture

Michigan

History
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AT EVERY STAGE OF LIFE, MICHIGAN AND SHIGA ARE BRIDGING CULTURES, BUILDING FRIENDSHIPS AND CULTIVATING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES.

Youth
Michigan-Shiga Student Exchange Program: Each summer, Michigan high school students have the opportunity to live with a home stay family in Shiga and experience high school in Japan through this two-week student exchange. Michigan students then host their exchange partners in their homes and attend school together in the fall. Established in 1990 by the boards of education in each state, this program has introduced Japanese culture and experiences to hundreds of Michigan high school students, and allowed Japanese high school students to explore Michigan’s land, people and culture.

Visit the MSU Honors College Gifted and Talented Education website for program application, scholarship and additional program information! www.gifted.msu.edu

College
Japan Center for Michigan Universities (JCMU): JCMU offers the opportunity for Michigan students to study Japanese language and culture in Hikone city, a historic castle town on the shores of Lake Biwa. Since its founding in 1989, JCMU has developed an array of academic program offerings including intensive language and cultural studies each semester and summer, career/culture hybrid programs in health care, environmental science and hospitality business, and May short programs. JCMU programs include home stays, internships, conversation partners and a variety of field excursions. JCMU is open to all college students, including beginning Japanese language learners. All students from Michigan’s 15 public universities receive an automatic scholarship to help defray costs. Visit our website for more information! www.jcmu.isp.msu.edu

Young Professionals
Economic Development: The sister state relationship was originally formed with the focus of bridging our people, cultures, educational institutions and natural resources. In the 21st century, our cultural and environmental connections remain strong, while new bonds for economic development and tourism between our states are emerging. Michigan and Shiga are working together to keep pace with an increasingly global economy. Our sister state relationship promises to build a strong global alliance for generations to come.

Adults and Families
Goodwill Mission: In alternating years, citizens of each state form a Goodwill Mission delegation, which travels to the sister state for several weeks. Michigan participants travel to Shiga and its surrounding environs on odd-numbered years. Participants stay with host families experiencing Japanese home life, visiting sights of cultural and historical importance and meeting city and prefectural officials. Since 1968, Michigan’s Goodwill Mission participants have formed lifelong friendships, cultivating cultural understanding, stimulating economic exchange and enriching our great state. Find out how to participate in an upcoming Goodwill Mission to Shiga or how to host new friends from Japan at the Michigan-Shiga website! www.mishiga.org