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**SISTER CITIES INTERNATIONAL ELECTS SHIN KOYAMADA , ACTOR AND PHILANTHROPIST, TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**WASHINGTON D.C. (July 25, 2017)** — Sister Cities International (SCI) announces the election of Shin Koyamada, Actor and Philanthropist of Los Angeles, California as the new Young Professional Member of the Board of Directors and the official SCI Country Representative for Japan & Eastern Asia.

“We are deeply honored to have Shin Koyamada join the Board of Directors and the Sister Cities International leadership team,” said Tim Quigley, Chairman of the Board. “His passion and contribution as a world citizen diplomat is inspiring and will help the organization to highlight the critical importance of the role of the everyday citizen in promoting world peace.”

Shin Koyamada (小山田 真 *Koyamada Shin*) is the first native-born Japanese member of Sister Cities International’s Board of Directors. He is originally from Okayama City, Okayama Prefecture, Japan and emigrated to the United States in June of 2000. He is most noted for his breakout role as Nobutada, a son of Katsumodo, in the 2004 Tom Cruise blockbuster *The Last Samurai*, but has dedicated a large portion of his life to philanthropic work that focuses on promoting the role and importance of citizen diplomacy, especially in strengthening and deepening the ties between Japan and the United States.

Koyamada’s interest in Sister Cities International began when he sought to start a sister city program for his hometown of Okayama, Japan. Last April 2017, Shin attended the 60<sup>th</sup> Sister City Anniversary Celebration between the City of San Jose, CA and his hometown City of Okayama, Japan to support their sister city programs and learn more about getting involved. Koyamada has since participated in the 61<sup>st</sup> Sister Cities International Annual Conference and its concurrent events, which brought together more than 350 elected and municipal officials, business leaders, and engaged citizen diplomats as well as over 90 high school students from across the U.S. and 30 other countries to learn about citizen diplomacy.

For Koyamada, the highlight of the 61<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference was meeting distinguished and revered SCI Leadership Alumnus the Honorable Norman Y. Mineta, former Mayor of San Jose, CA and former U.S. Secretary of Transportation and Commerce. Koyamada comments, “It was my honor and privilege to meet and get to know Norman Mineta in person. I truly admire what he has accomplished in his career and am looking forward to learning a lot from him and working closely together to strengthen sister cities partnerships between the U.S. and Japan and Eastern Asia.” Secretary Mineta returned the compliment by stating, “It was great to get to know Shin. It is reassuring to have such an accomplished young leader join us.”

As the newest elected member of the Board of Directors and SCI Country Representative for Japan and the region of Eastern Asia, Koyamada stated, “I am sincerely honored to become the first Japanese native-born member of this distinguished board of directors and am looking forward to working closely with SCI to bridge global communities for world peace.”

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**About Shin Koyamada**



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Shin Koyamada became an international celebrity after co-starring in Tom Cruise film “The Last Samurai,” and has appeared in many award-winning American movies and television shows since his Hollywood debut in 2003. In March of 2008, after four years of sustained international philanthropic efforts, Koyamada and his wife Nia Lyte established the Koyamada International Foundation (KIF): a U.S. nonprofit organization dedicated to inspiring youth to pursue their dreams. Koyamada has been appointed Goodwill Ambassador by both the Mayor of Kyoto and the Governor of his hometown Okayama Prefecture, Japan. Koyamada also serves as Special Ambassador for several other well-known international organizations in the U.S. and Japan. Koyamada is also Chairman & CEO of The Shinca Group.

#### **About Sister Cities International**

Founded as a Presidential Initiative by Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1956, Sister Cities International serves as the national membership organization for over 500 member communities with 2,000 partnerships in 145 countries on six continents. The sister city network unites tens of thousands of citizen diplomats and volunteers who work tirelessly to promote the organizations’ mission of creating world peace and understanding through economic development, youth and education, arts and culture, and humanitarian assistance.