OPEN WORLD PROGRAM

In mid-September 2015, the ICW hosted five visitors from Ukraine on an Open World project funded by the Open World Leadership Center at the Library of Congress. The theme of the program was “Social Issues & Health: HIV/AIDS.” Delegates had an opportunity to meet with Dr. Kathleen Jordan, Senior Vice President of Seven Hills, who provided an overview of the health care system in MA and the United States.

Participants toured programs across Massachusetts, including Seven Hills Behavioral Health, Community Health Promotion & Disease Prevention, Recovery & Wellness Center, Family Health Centers, and UMass Memorial Medical Center. Worcester Public School Health and Fitness teacher Cheryl LaFortune gave visitors a tour of Worcester East Middle School and talked about health education, HIV/AIDS awareness, and sex education in the public school system. Visitors from Ukraine presented their research and body of work at Clark University and were welcomed for lunch at Café Reyes to explore social business opportunities and transitional employment for residents in recovery at the Hector Reyes House.

In addition to a full professional program, the delegation enjoyed several cultural activities with a visit to Bancroft Tower, Elm Park for an art exhibit, a Council meeting at City Hall, time at the beach, and a tour at Fort Taber in New Bedford.

US EMBASSY STAFF TRAINING

Twenty-five foreign staff members hailing from 22 U.S. Embassies spent a week of professional development programming and cultural immersion with the ICW in late fall, 2015. The group was with the ICW under the U.S. Department of State’s Foreign Service Institute training for Locally Employed Staff (LES). LES serves as a bridge in U.S. Embassies between the embassy and foreign publics.

Throughout the course of their training in central Massachusetts, groups had the opportunity to meet with organization leaders and program participants. The training explored local economic development initiatives, the challenges women and girls face, youth engagement and empowerment, education programs, and LGBTQ supports.

Training concluded with a stop at Worcester Wares for Worcester-themed souvenirs, a day of volunteering at Mass Audubon, and a visit to the Big E for a true New England cultural experience!
GLOBAL TIES U.S. NATIONAL CONFERENCE

In January 2016, ICW staff Spencer Gale and Jamie Rotman, along with VP of Seven Hills Bill Stock attended the 2016 Global Ties U.S. National Conference in Washington, D.C. In addition to networking with national colleagues, Bill Stock facilitated meetings with representatives from the offices of Congressmen McGovern, Keating, and Kennedy, as well as Senators Markey and Warren in order to promote the continued support of international exchange opportunities.

WORCESTER STATE UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP

Teachers from Thailand pose for a group selfie.

The ICW worked closely with WSU administration and faculty to host four teachers from Thailand in April 2016. The scholars learned about U.S. educational models and visited local public junior high schools and high schools. We want to thank ICW supporters Jane Kjems, Jim Welu, and Kent and Judy Van Hoven for opening their homes to the Thai teachers and creating a memorable experience through their kindness and generous hospitality.

ICW staff meet with MA Senators' staff.

WORCESTER SISTER CITIES

Students in France connect online with a classroom in Shrewsbury, MA.

After joining the official Sister Cities International in 2015, the ICW team has been cultivating new and existing relationships with cities abroad. Currently, we are working with community leaders in Villebarou, a town in France, to explore various exchange opportunities, including a culinary exchange between Worcester Technical High School and a vocational school in France. Since the start of 2016, we have also partnered with the Shrewsbury Montessori School and an elementary school in Villebarou to facilitate virtual exchanges. Using Skype, students were able to practice their English and French language skills with similarly aged French school children. ICW is looking forward to the next exchange with Worcester’s Sister Cities.
INTERNATIONAL VISITORS

Every year the ICW hosts numerous programs through the U.S. Department of State’s flagship exchange program, the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP). The following provides a glimpse at several of the groups we hosted and the countless resources throughout Massachusetts that generously welcomed visitors for professional exchange opportunities:

PAKISTAN
Education, Employability, and Entrepreneurship

Visitors spent time in Worcester learning about innovative and collaborative educational models that increase employability and enhance opportunity. The group met with Worcester Technical High School, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Department, LEEP Center, and Innovation Center of Worcester/IdeaLab.

JAPAN
U.S. Manufacturing and Steel

The ICW welcomed Mr. Kagiwada from Japan, who is in the U.S. on a year-long study to learn about U.S. manufacturing systems. We extend a huge thank you to Hank and Donna Rose, who so generously hosted Mr. Kagiwada in their home for the duration of his local program, and to Metso Automation, MassMEP, Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce, Lampin, and Nucor for creating an educational program.

BRAZIL
Young Political Leaders

Developing political leadership and democratic practice is a popular topic for many visiting delegations. This group spent time exchanging expertise and work practices with Tim Murray, president and CEO of Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce; Stuart Loosemore, Esq., Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce; Michael Traynor, Esq., director of government affairs and public policy for the City of Worcester; Ms. Erin Williams, cultural development officer for the City of Worcester; and Lieutenant Rick Bates, LGBTQ liaison for the Worcester Police Department.

ITALY
Integration of Immigrants

Refugee and immigrant resettlement and integration is a timely topic, of which Worcester is uniquely positioned to welcome international discussions to explore best practices and future developments. Dr. Young and Dr. Sorrenti kindly opened their home to the participants for a warm welcoming reception and dinner. The IVLP delegation of three women from Italy, who serve first wave refugees and immigrants, met with Anh Sawyer, Southeast Asian Coalition; Wisam Breegi, Mandaean Community Organizer and Leader for the Worcester Refugee Area Project (WRAP); Lisa Brennan, Ascentria Care Alliance; Mariam Gas; and Jayna Turchek, Director of Human Rights for the City of Worcester.

RUSSIA
Advocating for the Disabled

Delegates from Russia explored dignified human services and opportunities in MA for individuals with disabilities and significant life challenges. Colleagues and organizations were exceptionally engaging and welcoming, and we look forward to collaborating again with ASPiRE!, an Affiliate of Seven Hills Foundation; Jean Des Roche, Director of Assistive Technology at Seven Hills Foundation; VSA Massachusetts; and the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation in Amherst.

SHARED WORLDS

From 2015 – 2016 Anita Fabos and Cheryl Hamilton, in collaboration with Clark University and the Mosakowski Institute, furthered research on the real-life experiences and perceptions between native and foreign-born populations in the Worcester area. The ICW proudly hosted a focus group with several members to support this important research on issues of social belonging and community engagement. We look forward to sharing the final report.
CULTURAL EVENTS

ICW Members enjoy a meal at Pomir Grill, located at 119 Shrewsbury Street in Worcester.

Worcester has so much culture to explore! ICW members and supporters gather throughout the year at a different international restaurant to celebrate our local culture and identities while connecting with those interested in exchange.

To date we have been to Thai Time, Pomir Grill, O’Connor’s, Café Reyes, Loving Hut, and the British Beer Company. Want to join the next event? Have a great place you want to share with ICW? Let us know by emailing Spencer Gale at sgale@sevenhills.org.

After working to increase local cultural opportunities for visiting delegations, Music Worcester has kindly donated and given ICW members and supporters great deals on shows. Over 50 ICW members and supporters had the opportunity to attend the Bollywood Masala Orchestra through Music Worcester at Mechanics Hall.

50 YEARS OF CITIZEN DIPLOMACY

Whitcomb Hall, located at 51 Harvard Street in Worcester, is listed on the National Register of Historic Homes.

Last fall we celebrated our 50th Anniversary with over 150 people who came together to enjoy an evening reception at Whitcomb Hall in Worcester. This milestone acknowledges the importance of citizen diplomacy and international exchange in bridging our local and global communities.

Karin Branscombe generously donated the use of Whitcomb Hall, which houses her insurance business, Quaker Special Risk. Whitcomb Hall, located at the corner of Highland and Harvard Streets, is a granite, Queen Anne/Victorian-styled mansion designed by architect Stephen Earle in 1879, for George H. Whitcomb. Ms. Branscombe often invites the community to host events at the property to showcase its beauty and historical significance.

Exquisite food, joyful conversation, and awards highlighted the celebration. Thomas P. Massey, PhD, former Dean of Clark University’s College of Professional and Continuing Education, was honored for his long-time commitment to hosting the ICW at Clark. Royce Anderson was honored for 16 years of leadership as ICW’s Executive Director and for his work supporting international community exchange in Worcester.

Dr. David A. Jordan, President/CEO of Seven Hills, welcomed the ICW members, old and new, to the family of Seven Hills Affiliates committed to growing and strengthening the reach, and embracing the diversity of the community.

ICW VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

ICW’s membership base is growing everyday, and in order to accommodate our international guests, we are always on the lookout for host homes, volunteer drivers, and visitor liaisons. If you or someone you know is interested in volunteering time in support of international exchange, please contact ICW at 508.983.2922, or icw@sevenhills.org.

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