



2014 ANNUAL REPORT

Citizen Diplomacy, One Handshake at a Time



WorldChicago...

- Facilitates professional and personal interactions for international leaders during official visits to Chicago
- Enhances respect and communication through international exchanges and alliances
- Promotes the City of Chicago and State of Illinois as important centers of business and culture.

WORLDCHICAGO IS A NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION that fosters citizen diplomacy and global understanding through people-to-people exchanges. Our programs and events promote Chicago as a global center for business, technology, education, and culture.

Founded as the International Visitors Center of Chicago in 1952, WorldChicago administers citizen diplomacy programs for international professionals, scholars, and youth participating in U.S. Department of State and other short-term exchange programs in Chicago.

WorldChicago offers Chicago-area citizens opportunities to forge partnerships with these emerging leaders, who explore their fields of interest through meetings with Chicago's leading voices in the public, private, nonprofit, and tech sectors.

In addition to professional meetings, our international visitors participate in volunteer activities that help enhance and improve the Chicago community, and social outings that engage with Chicago's diverse, globally-minded citizens. More than 20% of our visitors also reside with host families during their stay in Chicago, providing a full immersion cross-cultural exchange experience.

WorldChicago is an affiliate of Global Ties U.S., a nonprofit membership association with more than fifty years of leadership in citizen diplomacy. Together with more than ninety community partner members and the U.S. Department of State citizen diplomacy programs, WorldChicago helps shape international relations "one handshake at a time."

WorldChicago is pleased to acknowledge that this Annual Report is funded in part by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the United States Department of State, under the authority of the Fulbright-Hays Act of 1961, as amended.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

MISSION	2	EVENTS	16-17
WELCOME	3	PEOPLE	18-21
2014 AT-A-GLANCE	4-5	GET INVOLVED	22
PROGRAMS	6-15	PROFESSIONAL HOSTS	23

Dear WorldChicago Members:

2014 was an exciting and eventful year for WorldChicago. We hosted a record 148 youth leaders and mentors from Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and North and South America! It was a fun year for us as we got to know these bright students and introduced them to life in Chicago. Especially rewarding was watching them open their minds to civic activism and gain confidence in their own abilities as leaders. As we brought almost three times as many young people to Chicago as we did in 2013, our community of host families responded with generosity and warmth to welcome our visitors into their families. I must open this letter with a heartfelt thank you to these families for making these nine youth programs possible.

This year also brought 68 groups of accomplished young professionals to Chicago through the U.S. Department of State's International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP). While all of our IVLP delegates return home filled with new ideas and connections, Sonia, an entrepreneur from Swaziland who came to Chicago through our African Women Entrepreneurship Program, also brought back a wonderful business opportunity. Through the professional connections she made through her program, Sonia may soon be selling her beautifully-packaged condiments in our local markets! Sonia came to the U.S. hoping to meet people and build relationships that could help her "turn sustenance farmers in Swaziland into commercial farmers," and we're very excited that her dreams may be on the brink of being realized.


In late September, WorldChicago hosted a second large group of groundbreaking women leaders, this time through the IVLP's Women Leaders: Promoting Peace and Security program. While these 90 women came from more than 80 countries and brought with them a diverse range of expertise and backgrounds, they left united as a sisterhood of women determined to fight gender-based violence and build their communities through peaceful leadership. Witnessing these strong women gain confidence volunteering alongside American volunteers, meeting the staff of shelters for victims of domestic violence, and listening to Colonel Jill Morgenthau's rousing keynote speech was a moving experience.

At the heart of all of these transformative programs are you, our Chicago Citizen Diplomats! Through your hospitality, visitors experience the real United States. Our international delegates are awed by our country's diversity as well as its caring and concerned citizens, and they see many connections between our communities in Chicago and their communities back home.

We hope that you'll continue to engage with WorldChicago next year as we prepare to bring a group of emerging tech innovation leaders from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Slovenia to Chicago through a direct grant from the U.S. Department of State. There will be many opportunities to get to know our fellows while they are in Chicago this coming May and October, either by hosting a fellow at your office or in your home, or by coming to one of our social events.

We would also like to extend a warm thank you to WorldChicago's many members and supporters for making our two fundraising events such a success. At our annual spring diplomacy luncheon, over 200 Chicago leaders came together to celebrate citizen diplomacy in Chicago. Keynote speaker Hedy Ratner of the Women's Business Development Center inspired visitors with her stories of promoting women's business opportunities around the world. This past fall, more than 100 WorldChicago supporters gathered at our annual cultural reception to "Indulge in Italy" and meet other Chicago professionals over delicious Italian food.

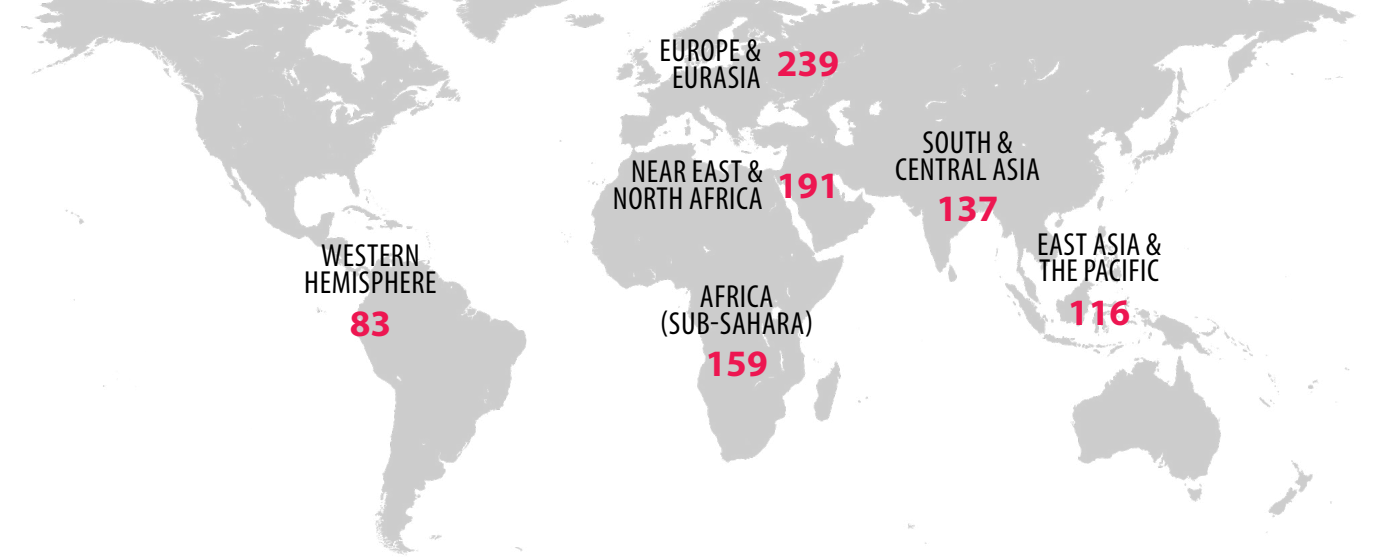
Thank you again to all of our members, supporters, and Citizen Diplomats — we couldn't ask for a better city in which to host our programs!

Best wishes,

 Peggy Parfenoff
 President

VISITORS *by* COUNTRY

COUNTRY NAME	#				
		Denmark	2	Kosovo	1
		Djibouti	1	Kuwait	4
		Dominican Republic	1	Kyrgyzstan	1
		Ecuador	8	Latvia	1
		Egypt	29	Lebanon	3
		El Salvador	2	Lesotho	1
		Estonia	1	Liberia	1
		Ethiopia	8	Libya	4
		Fiji	1	Lithuania	3
		Finland	1	Macedonia	1
		France	10	Madagascar	2
		Gabon	1	Malawi	1
		The Gambia	3	Maldives	1
		Georgia	5	Mali	2
		Germany	5	Mauritania	2
		Ghana	13	Mauritius	6
		Greece	1	Mexico	17
		Guatemala	3	Morocco	11
		Guinea	4	Namibia	1
		Guyana	1	Nepal	6
		Honduras	1	Netherlands	1
		Hong Kong	4	Nicaragua	1
		Hungary	4	Niger	8
		India	31	Nigeria	6
		Indonesia	1	Norway	1
		Iran	16	Oman	4
		Iraq	26	Pakistan	32
		Ireland	1	Palestinian Territories	19
		Israel	2	Panama	1
		Italy	2	Peru	6
		Japan	35	The Philippines	4
		Jordan	17	Poland	20
		Kazakhstan	43	Portugal	1
		Kenya	16	Qatar	1
		Republic of Korea	18	Romania	1
				Russia	23
				Rwanda	5
				Sao Tome & Principe	1
				Saudi Arabia	5
				Senegal	2
				Serbia	8
				Sierra Leone	5
				Singapore	1
				Slovakia	2
				Slovenia	2
				Somalia	1
				South Africa	8
				South Sudan	2
				Spain	66
				Sri Lanka	3
				Sudan	4
				Suriname	1
				Swaziland	1
				Syria	14
				Taiwan	1
				Tajikistan	3
				Tanzania	8
				Thailand	1
				Togo	1
				Trinidad & Tobago	1
				Tunisia	10
				Turkey	5
				Uganda	8
				Ukraine	11
				United Kingdom	24
				Venezuela	3
				Yemen	9
				Zambia	1
				Zimbabwe	3
		TOTAL COUNTRIES	139		
		TOTAL VISITORS	925		

VISITORS *by* REGION



TOP 10 VISITOR COUNTRIES



TOP 10 PROGRAM THEMES

- Social Issues*
- Entrepreneurship
- Women in Leadership
- Art & Culture
- Government, Policy, & Politics
- Law
- Journalism
- Education
- Trade & Investment
- Environment & Sustainability

**including topics such as civil society, diversity, domestic violence prevention, interfaith dialogue, human rights*

BY-THE-NUMBERS

- 925** International visitors hosted by WorldChicago
- 91** Exchange programs hosted by WorldChicago
- 139** Countries represented by visitors
- 327** Unique Chicago-area meeting hosts
- 699** Volunteer hours from Chicago meeting hosts
- 651** Volunteer hours contributed by visitors
- 3,277** Chicago hotel rooms booked
- 24** Percent of visitors who stayed in homestays
- 113** Unique Chicago-area homestay hosts



Homestay hosts Diane and Tom Judge with their guest from Sierra Leone.

Promoting Entrepreneurship & Innovation

Visitors experience Chicago as a hub for startups, business education, technology, and social enterprise

ENTREPRENEURSHIP WAS a central theme for WorldChicago visitors in 2014. Almost 100 entrepreneurs came to Chicago this year through several delegations, each with a slightly different focus.

This summer we had the opportunity to host another group of dynamic women entrepreneurs through the African Women's Entrepreneurship Program of the U.S. Department of State International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP). Delegates — working in agriculture, fashion and textiles, and home decor — met with small business owners and artisans, and took part in seminars on action planning, package design, and communications.

In the spring and fall, we welcomed delegations of Professional Fellows from Eastern Europe, South and Central Asia, and the Middle East learning about both social and traditional

entrepreneurship, and tech innovation.

These entrepreneurial exchanges were not exclusive to professional visitors. In the spring, summer, and fall, we welcomed three delegations of nearly 70 young African leaders through the entrepreneurship-themed Pan-Africa Youth Leadership Program. While many of the participants' projects focused on improving their schools and communities, they approached their project development from an entrepreneurial perspective, forming business plans, creating pitches and elevator speeches, and learning to make a budget.

WorldChicago also offered opportunities for our members and the interested public to engage in dialogue about innovations happening around the globe. Our November Coffee Conversation featured Michael Printzos, a young Greek

entrepreneur and business leader on an IVLP program exploring Business Development and Innovation. During his visit, he met with the State of Illinois Office of Trade & Investment, U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration, among others, and toured entrepreneurial hub 1871. In a lively Q&A, Michael shared his impressions of Chicago (all positive!), as well as sharing his insights into the Greek economic crisis and the initiatives that are helping to lift his country out of recession. In October, our Pan-African youth leaders from Côte d'Ivoire, Congo, and Niger presented their social impact plans to an engaged audience of supporters, experts, and host families.

As a hub for startups, business education, tech innovation, and social entrepreneurship, Chicago has grown to be a must-see city for entrepreneurs visiting from around the world. Our visitors attend business skills seminars taught by Chicago-area professors and successful business owners, and have the opportunity to gain valuable experience applying these skills through hands-on workshops and volunteer activities.

Through site visits to Chicago's many startup incubators, technology parks, and business associations, visitors are inspired to think of themselves not as isolated business owners, but as members of a larger business community with a responsibility for helping their fellow entrepreneurs, employing their neighbors, and revitalizing their economies. International visitors also get many opportunities to expand their professional networks during meetings with local business owners.

Promoting economic development and revitalization on an international scale continues to be a major focus of the State Department. By providing



Delegates in the African Women's Entrepreneurship Program celebrate the close of their program in Chicago.



Deputy Mayor of Zagreb Sandra Svaljek with WorldChicago President Peggy Parfenoff in Zagreb, Croatia.

LOOKING AHEAD | *Entrepreneurship in Southeastern Europe*

WorldChicago is excited to announce that we have been awarded a grant from the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs to host emerging tech innovation leaders and entrepreneurs from Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, and Slovenia through the Professional Fellows Program.

Participants will complete four-week fellowships with government agencies and NGOs that promote innovation and entrepreneurship, and university and technology incubators. Local fellowship hosts are then eligible to travel on a

reciprocal exchange.

In November, WorldChicago President Peggy Parfenoff and Vice President John Baum visited the three countries to meet our overseas partners, promote the program, and interview candidates for the first exchange in May 2015.

One of the meetings during this visit was with Zagreb Deputy Mayor Sandra Svaljek, who is a big fan of Chicago. Turns out, she visited Chicago on a 2009 IVLP exchange hosted by WorldChicago, when she was Director of the Economics Institute. She still loves deep dish pizza.

opportunities for skill development, networking, and inspiration to promising entrepreneurial leaders, particularly those who are often underemployed and lack access to capital and business skills, the State Department hopes to have a transformative impact around the world.

In particular, WorldChicago is proud to have played a role in the State Department's efforts to promote entrepreneurship among women and youth in sub-Saharan Africa. This year, 80% of our visiting entrepreneurs have come from dozens of countries across the continent. We are thrilled to continue to be involved in these State Department initiatives into 2015.

We have greatly enjoyed working with these passionate and visionary business leaders and youth leaders over the past year, and we are looking forward to welcoming more entrepreneurs to Chicago next year.

IMPACT | *From a Visitor*

By Zaujja Ndifuna, Uganda

At the launch of the project, Our Community Our Responsibility, five schools and the neighboring community accepted to work together to promote a clean, healthy, green, and beautiful environment in our homes and schools.

After securing funding, over 200 school children and 20 teachers — including the head teachers — participated in the cleanup. The children were more than willing to take part and the community welcomed the idea and asked to plant the trees in their compounds.

Taking our project to next level: every term, one of the schools will take the lead to identify an activity, a place where to carry out the activity, and a convenient day for all the schools to participate. Meanwhile each school got a garden and cleaning tools, trashcans, watering cans, and a teacher in charge of the community project. Thanks to Pan-Africa Youth Leadership initiative.

Zaujja was a mentor in the 2014 Pan-Africa Youth Leadership Program.



INTERNATIONAL VISITOR LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

The International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) is the U.S. Department of State's premiere professional exchange program.

Since the first group of 130 IVLP delegates came to the U.S. from Latin America in 1940 to learn about journalism, over 200,000 international visitors have traveled to the U.S. as part of IVLP delegations.

The program takes place over two to four weeks and includes stops in three to six different U.S. cities. Each program brings together distinguished professionals to explore a theme that the Department of State deems particularly important for a given country or region.

In 2014, WorldChicago hosted 568 IVLP delegates on 69 programs.

Programs lasted about four to six days and included opportunities for the groups to share best practices and expand their professional networks through meetings with their Chicago government, nonprofit, or private sector counterparts. This year, the most frequent program topics for our groups included Preventing Domestic Violence, Investigative Journalism, Rule of Law, Clean Energy, and Sustainable Urban Planning.

For many groups, WorldChicago also organizes a dinner at home with an American family or an opportunity for delegates to volunteer alongside American volunteers.

Although WorldChicago's IVLP delegates only spend a few days in Chicago, they make connections here

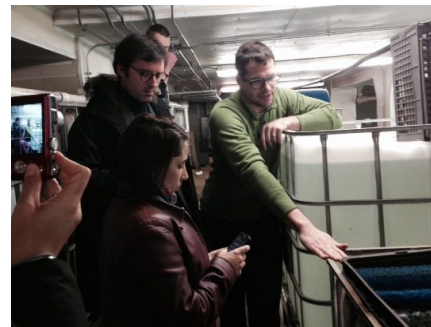
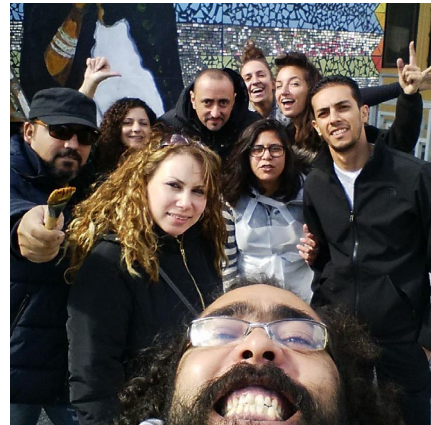
that last a lifetime. According to our surveys of WorldChicago's 2014 IVLP delegates, 96% expect to remain in contact with someone they met in Chicago.

As the IVLP celebrates its 75th anniversary in 2015, WorldChicago is honored to play a part in these ongoing cultural and professional exchanges that have linked Chicagoans to the world.

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Interested in sharing your professional expertise with WorldChicago delegations? Enjoy fascinating dinner conversation? Need volunteers to assist with a one-time volunteer project?

Visit worldchicago.org learn more about professional hosting, home hospitality, and volunteer hosting opportunities.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Artists from Palestine exploring Community Arts in America "take a selfie" while volunteering with Green Star Movement on a mosaic mural at Stagg Elementary on Chicago's south side; The African Women's Entrepreneurship Program celebrates a successful program closing in Chicago; Young political leaders from the United Kingdom learn about elections and voting procedures with the Chicago Board of Elections; Engineers from China volunteer with the North Branch Restoration Project during a program about Sustainable Development & Environmental Protection in the U.S.; Delegates from France exploring Green Technologies & Alternative Energies learn about aquaponics at The Plant on Chicago's west side. Photos: IVLP visitors, Chicago hosts, and U.S. Department of State

Women Leaders: Promoting Peace & Security

A 2014 IVLP HIGHLIGHT was hosting 88 women leaders from around the world in Chicago for the closing session of the Women Leaders: Promoting Peace and Security Program September 23–27.

Supported by the 2011 U.S. National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security, the program aimed to give international women leaders the skills and inspiration to become powerful advocates for peace, stability, and security in their communities.

The program opened in Washington, D.C., where delegates discussed the themes of the program and attended expert panels and speeches. Then they broke into smaller groups to meet their professional counterparts and experience American culture in ten different U.S. cities.

The full group reunited in Chicago to attend meetings and share their experiences and impressions in a closing session and keynote address.

Annie Marie from the Philippines appreciated meeting "American women who are gentle, yet with fire in their eyes!" The delegates felt a strong bond with these women

leaders as they realized that they were all fighting for common causes and facing similar challenges.

As they met and built networks with their sisters from the U.S. and around the world, delegates felt uplifted by the strong international community of support. Heba from Egypt marveled at how their shared goals brought the group together.

"For three weeks we lived together. We didn't get caught up in cultural, religious, ethnic differences, or country politics. We focused on humanity; we love each other. We can do this on a global level."

The program also transformed the way the delegates perceived the U.S. After watching American action movies, Bintou from Guinea was surprised to learn that real life in America is much less violent than she expected.

Other visitors expressed amazement at the generosity and volunteerism they witnessed in the U.S.—a reality that sharply contrasts stories they had heard back home of American materialism and greed.



Supreme Court Justices and Registrar meet Secretary John Kerry in Washington, D.C. Photo: U.S. Department of State

IMPACT | From a Dinner Host

By Greta Pope

In April, my husband Ed and I hosted three Supreme Court Justices and one Supreme Court Chief Registrar for dinner at our home. What a treat this was.

These gentlemen were from Botswana, Liberia, and Nigeria, all fluent in English. We also invited several American friends who are legal professionals. The evening felt like a gathering of "old friends." Our illustrious guests compared and contrasted many aspects of their work. We discussed the social climate, music, and food from each of our countries.

One of the Justices was Muslim and eats a halal diet. Though I was aware of the practice of eating halal, I had never before purchased and prepared halal meats. I researched the cooking process and asked several Muslim friends where I might find a halal butcher shop. I was directed to a market in Bridgeview called Rashid's. I walked in the door and was warmly greeted. I explained my dinner party for the next evening. Rashid was very accommodating, explaining the meats that he had available and the process for cooking them.

After dinner, one of the Justices commented that the food was delicious and very similar to what they might eat at home. This was music to my ears. They had truly enjoyed the meal.

After we finished eating, the Justices each toasted Ed and me. They thanked us for our hospitality and bestowed gifts from their countries upon us. It was heartwarming. This was a very special evening that will long live in our hearts. It's always wonderful to make new friends, and we definitely did that evening.

Greta is a performer, entertainer, and WorldChicago Board Member.

IMPACT | From a Visitor

Since participating in the African Women's Entrepreneurship Program in summer 2014, Sonia Paiva from Swaziland, managing director of Eswatini Kitchen, has made great strides towards bringing the company's gourmet foods to Chicago-area grocers. Eswatini Kitchen enhances the lives of underprivileged communities by providing a fair and sustainable income directly for over 300 people and indirectly for over 700 people in Swaziland.

"I find this so exciting because if I can get a market for our products I can convert sustenance farmers into commercial farmers with a secure market," Sonia said.

"Thanks so much for having exposed us to so many influential people."



Eswatini "Heavenly Honey." Eswatini co-founded the National Honey Council and facilitates training and support for rural people to become beekeepers. They then buy the raw honey from more than 200 beekeepers at fair prices. Photos: Eswatini Kitchen

International Women of Courage

Award recognizes women leaders advocating for human rights & empowerment at great personal risk

IN HONOR OF International Women's Day, the U.S. Department of State hosted ten women of courage on a special initiative of the International Visitor Leadership Program. The 2014 Secretary of State's Award for International Women of Courage recognizes women around the globe who have shown exceptional courage and leadership in advocating for human rights and empowerment, often at great personal risk. Through this annual award, the United States honors the endeavors of extraordinary women worldwide who have played transformative roles in their societies.

WorldChicago hosted the closing sessions and a reception for these inspiring leaders March 12–15.

At the start of the two-week program, participants arrived in Washington, D.C. for the March 4 award ceremony with Deputy Secretary of State Heather Higginbottom and First Lady Michelle Obama, then traveled to Pittsburgh for related activities.

In the second week, participants split for two days of individual programming in various cities around the U.S. before reconvening in Chicago for networking sessions and activities designed to plan future cooperation.

In Chicago, participants visited Young Women's Leadership Charter School, attended an action planning workshop with Terra Winston, and enjoyed a farewell reception held at the home of WorldChicago Board Member Michelle Kristula-Green and attended by several prominent women leaders in Chicago. The program finished with closing sessions at the John Hancock Center Signature Room at the 95th.



FROM TOP: International Women of Courage awardees at closing reception. MIDDLE: Delegate from Afghanistan talks with Mona Noriega, Commissioner of the Chicago Commission on Human Relations and Jenny Cizner, Director of International Relations and Protocol, Office of the Mayor of Chicago. LEFT: Delegate from Georgia talks with students at Young Women's Leadership Charter School.



PROFESSIONAL FELLOWS PROGRAM

The U.S. Department of State's Professional Fellows Program brings emerging international leaders to the U.S. to participate in three to four-week fellowships with a variety of government offices, public policy-oriented nonprofits, private companies, and universities.

These professional development opportunities provide young global leaders with exposure to U.S. government and civil society processes, hands-on project or research experience, and a platform to learn and share best practices with their American counterparts.

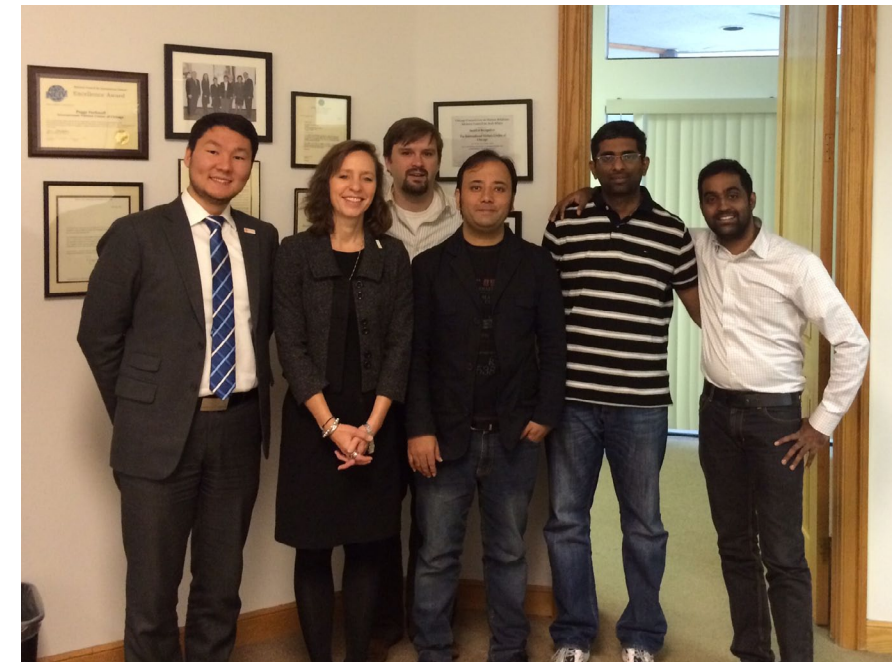
Fellows also live with Chicago-area homestay hosts to experience American home life first-hand.

Through the program, fellows, homestay hosts, and professional hosts are able to build meaningful and long-lasting relationships.

In spring and fall of 2014, WorldChicago hosted fellows from Azerbaijan, Egypt, Georgia, India, Israel, Kazakhstan, Oman, Pakistan, Palestinian Territories, Russia, Sri Lanka, Tunisia, Turkey, and Ukraine. These emerging professionals pursued fellowships in three different areas: public policy, disability rights and advocacy, and economic empowerment through entrepreneurship.

WorldChicago would like to extend special thanks to all of our professional and homestay hosts for their commitment to cross-cultural knowledge sharing, and for supporting the next generation of government and civil society leaders around the world.

Thank you to our national partners American Councils, Hands Along the Nile Development Services, the University of Michigan, and World Learning.



Professional Fellows from Kazakhstan, Pakistan, and India with WorldChicago President Peggy Parfenoff and Vice President John Baum at WorldChicago's offices.

2014 Fellowship Hosts

EASTERN EUROPE | MAY 1–JUNE 1

- University of Illinois Enterprise Works Chicago
- UCAN
- Illinois Science & Technology Coalition
- The Congress for the New Urbanism
- Chicago Public Library

EGYPT & TUNISIA | MAY 10–JUNE 2

- Access Living
- Second Sense
- Aspire of Illinois
- Illinois Dept. of Rehabilitation Services
- J.J.'s List
- University of Illinois Chicago Dept. of Special Education
- El Second Sense
- Valor
- Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago
- Chicago Lighthouse
- Anixter Center

OMAN | MAY 11–30

- Northwestern University Farley Center for Entrepreneurship & Innovation

SOUTH & CENTRAL ASIA | MAY 13–29

- Illinois Dept. of Employment Security
- Heartland Alliance Social Impact Center
- Office of Alderman George Cardenas
- Illinois Dept. of Financial & Professional Regulation

EASTERN EUROPE | OCT 9–NOV 3

- Illinois Dept. of Financial & Professional Regulation
- The American Red Cross of Greater Chicago
- Chicago Innovation Mentors
- Industrial Council of Nearwest Chicago
- Cook County Dept. of Human Rights & Ethics
- Jasculca Terman Strategic Communications
- Girls in the Game
- Chicago Children's Advocacy Center

SOUTH & CENTRAL ASIA | OCT 14–31

- University of Chicago Chapin Hall
- Smart Chicago Collaborative c/o The Chicago Community Trust
- Illinois International Trade Center / Illinois Small Business Development Center at College of DuPage Center for Entrepreneurship
- DePaul University School of Public Service

OPEN WORLD PROGRAM

From May 2 to 10, WorldChicago hosted six higher education professionals from Serbia for a program about Accountable Governance/Economic Development: Teaching Technology That Delivers Jobs.

Delegates met with NGOs, universities, and companies, including the Illinois Institute of Technology, Technology Innovation Center & Illinois Science and Technology Park, Microsoft, and the UIC College of Engineering.

The Open World Program is an initiative of the U.S. Legislative Branch that has enabled more than 17,000 leaders from Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine, Tajikistan, and

Turkmenistan to meaningfully engage and interact with Members of Congress, Congressional staff, and thousands of other Americans. Open World delegates experience American democracy in action, meet with their professional counterparts, and experience American culture with a local homestay host.

BILINGUAL TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAM

For the fifth consecutive year, WorldChicago partnered with Roosevelt University to implement a program for science and technology teachers from Madrid, Spain from June 30 to July 23. The 25 teachers attended courses at Roosevelt's School of Education to develop and improve their binlingual teaching skills.

WorldChicago arranged homestay hosts and planned cultural activities for the teachers, several of whom were participating for the second time — even staying with the same host family!

SHANGHAI MANAGER FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

WorldChicago hosted five professionals from Shanghai, China for a two-month fellowship program October 25–December 20, coordinated in cooperation with the Shanghai Economic Management College and the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission of Shanghai Municipal Government.

WorldChicago would like to thank this year's fellowship hosts for sharing knowledge and best practices in the spirit of cross-cultural exchange: American College of Surgeons; Chicago Rehab Network; City of Chicago Department of Aviation; and City of Evanston Administrative Services.

In addition to working on-site in their fellowships, fellows took part in supplementary meetings, attended relevant seminars and speaker events with WorldChicago and the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, and experienced American hospitality with dinners and city tours with WorldChicago members and friends.



ABOVE, from left: Fall 2014 Professional Fellows attend a campaign rally in the Illinois gubernatorial election; IVLP delegates from Kazakhstan tour the Stickney Water Reclamation Plant. LEFT: Spring 2014 Professional Fellows explore Chicago as they cruise along the Chicago River.

Reflecting on 2013 Chicago-Brazil Sports & Disabilities Exchange

Assessing impact from Brazilian delegates one year later

LAST YEAR, WorldChicago received a direct grant from the U.S. Department of State SportsUnited Office to organize an exchange program for disability rights activists in Chicago and Brazil.

We traveled to Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo with six Chicago disability rights leaders in April 2013, then hosted 19 youth athletes with disabilities and adult leaders from Rio and São Paulo in Chicago in July 2013.

Checking back with our Brazilian participants one year later, we were reminded that while our visitors only spent ten days in Chicago, the impact of an international exchange experience lasts a lifetime and touches many more people than just the visitors themselves.

Our delegates were deeply moved by their trip to Chicago. For example, after seeing in Chicago “how beautiful and practical it is to live in a city that effectively meets the needs of disabled individuals,” participant Marina from Rio has become inspired to work for changes in her own city that would help people with disabilities. Meeting with activists in Chicago helped her learn “how to fight for [her] rights”—a skill that she has been sharing with “victims of prejudice” in Brazil.

Willian and Sileno from São Paulo have also been raising awareness about disability rights issues among their communities.

Willian's experience in Chicago has motivated him to organize seminars at his school to “share this experience with other teachers,” and like Marina, he has become more involved with advocating for disability rights.

Like most of our visitors, Sileno writes that he is still in touch with many of the people he met through this program. Working with other disability rights leaders from São Paulo who participated in the exchange, he gave a presentation to the community to share their experiences in Chicago.

Following this exchange, youth participant Taiana from Rio has continued to be involved with sports and disabilities through an internship with the Rio 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Committee. She remains in touch with many of her fellow program participants from Brazil and writes, “I will treasure the friends I made during the program, as well as the time I spent in Chicago forever.”

It was an honor to meet and host this dynamic group of leaders, and we look forward to hearing more about their future successes as they continue to advocate for disability rights in Brazil!



TOP: Willian, right, prepares to march in the Chicago Disability Pride Parade with WorldChicago President Peggy Parfenoff and fellow Brazilian delegate and paralympic athlete Anderson. MIDDLE: Sileno marches in the parade with his basketball players from São Paulo. BOTTOM: Taiana and Marina, left, show their support in the parade.

YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS

WorldChicago was a local coordinator for 2014 U.S. Department of State Youth Leadership Programs for international high school students — and what a year it was!

In partnership with FHI 360 and World Learning, we hosted nine youth delegations from 23 countries for a total of 148 participants. These programs inspire cross-cultural dialogue, support mutual understanding, and encourage civic engagement while delving into various subthemes, such as entrepreneurship, community art, or public health.

Through volunteer activities, visits, and workshops at Chicago nonprofits related to their theme areas, and guided reflection and brainstorming, students deepened their understanding of a particular area of interest and along the way, discovered their own potential as leaders.

Most of our young visitors had never before traveled outside of their countries (and certainly not alone). They arrive in Chicago awestruck at the skyscrapers and nervous about navigating public transit alone. Yet over the course of their short stay, they quickly grow into confident honorary Chicagoans. A young woman from

Ecuador marveled that “I never thought that I could be alone on a train or a bus in a big city... This trip has given us a lot of independence and experience that we don’t have in our home country.”

Staying with a Chicago host family is also a transformative experience for our visitors. The host family experience is the most meaningful aspect of the program, as our young leaders find themselves welcomed into a new family and immersed in American culture. Said one student from our Pan-Africa program, “[my host family] accepted me for who I was. They took me in like they have known me for very long, like I was one of them.” One of our British students appreciated that her host family “taught me about American culture and how American politics work. I learnt about the privileges and disadvantages faced by Americans”.

As the students gain confidence in navigating Chicago on their own, through program activities and workshops they simultaneously discover their ability to effectively express themselves and overcome obstacles to accomplish their goals.

Students gained knowledge and skills to realize their goals through meetings and workshops with experts

at organizations such as After School Matters, BUILD, Chicago Freedom School, Illinois Department of Public Health, Heartland Alliance, Illinois Institute of Technology, Kevin Lampe, and Mikva Challenge.

A young leader from Mexico reflects that, thanks to this experience, “we learned the information to help our own community,” while an Iraqi student notes that, “I am a leader now, I can do the project I dreamed about and I will help my community.”

Drawing on these experiences, youth leaders developed innovative individual or group projects to implement in their communities upon their return home. Through poster shows and Coffee Conversations, they presented their ideas to a supportive gathering of new Chicago friends and families at the close of each program.

While their time in Chicago may have ended, the impact of these youth exchanges lives on. One young visitor from Mexico says that, “this has been the most impactful experience of my life,” while a student from South America predicts that, “my experience will help me encourage my classmates back home.”



2014 Youth Programs

PAN-AFRICA YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROGRAM
Mar 27–Apr 4 | June 5–13 | Oct 2–10
Participants: 69 | Countries: 15 | Entrepreneurship

INDIA-PAKISTAN YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROGRAM
June 13–18
Participants: 17 | Countries: 3 | Cultural Immersion

IRAQI YOUNG LEADERS EXCHANGE PROGRAM
July 10–24
Participants: 12 | Public Health

U.S.–U.K. YOUTH DIALOGUE PROGRAMME
July 14–22
Participants: 14 | Diversity & Interfaith Dialogue

MEXICO JOVENES EN ACCION
July 21–Aug 2
Participants: 14 | Anti-Bully & Drop-Out Prevention

CHINA YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROGRAM
Aug 12–23
Participants: 9 | Exploring Community through Arts

YOUTH AMBASSADORS PROGRAM WITH BOLIVIA, PERU, & ECUADOR
Sep 19–30
Participants: 15 | Multiculturalism & Human Rights

BELOW, far left to right: A student from Mexico “likes” the Facebook Chicago office; Youth Ambassadors volunteer for a beach clean-up with the Alliance for the Great Lakes; A student from The Gambia presents her project to promote women’s rights; Students from Côte d’Ivoire and Congo have fun volunteering at Working Bikes; Youth from China display their Van Gogh-inspired project at the Art Institute; Friendly World Cup rivalries at the Industrial Council of Nearwest Chicago.



IMPACT | From a Host Sister

By Karina Reyes

Growing up, we’re taught to think of our own families, communities, and traditions as “normal” and everyone else’s as “different.”

Volunteering at WorldChicago has helped change my views on that. I was able to interact with teenagers my age who’ve come from afar, while also having the opportunity to ask them about their ways of life: what they eat, how they enjoy school, what their parents do for a living. All followed by my favorite question, “What is the weirdest thing you have seen an American do?”

I like this question because it flips the script, normalizing their world and making mine the weird one. It’s all relative — it’s good to see how your view isn’t the only “normal” one.

WorldChicago gave me the opportunity of experiencing a culture exchange on a deeper level. During the summer, my family and I hosted a young girl from Iraq named Fatima. Although her stay with us was only a couple of weeks, my family and I learned a lot from her. Because I am studying Arabic, I

tried to practice the language with her, but learned that her version of the language and mine were different. I learned that dialects of the Arabic language differ from country to country.

Fatima also was able to see how my family and I live on a daily basis. Because I live in a Mexican household, my family always has tortillas in the fridge. Fatima believed that tortillas were similar to pita bread, but discovered that they are not when she took a bite out of a cold, uncooked tortilla.

Being exposed to different cultures and people always helps me practice having an open mind. It is an important quality to have, especially in today’s society where meeting people with other cultures and beliefs happens often. Volunteering at World Chicago and having the opportunity to host someone from across the world is something that everyone should experience at least once in their lifetime.

Karina is a senior at Lindblom Math & Science Academy.



FUNDRAISERS



SPRING DIPLOMACY LUNCHEON

On May 6, WorldChicago assembled over 200 Chicago business and nonprofit leaders at the University Club for our annual Spring Diplomacy Luncheon fundraiser.

Keynote speaker Hedy Ratner led the enthusiastic audience on a world tour as she shared moving stories about her travels supporting the economic empowerment of women. The Co-Founder and Co-President Emeritus of the Women's Business Development Center, Ms. Ratner was chosen by the U.S. Department of State to meet with women business leaders in Belarus, Moldova, India, Kuwait, China, and Taiwan.

A true Citizen Diplomat, Ms. Ratner accomplishes her goal of "encouraging women to live their dreams" through personal woman-to-woman meetings both abroad and here in Chicago with WorldChicago-hosted visitors. Many of these brief meetings have grown into something beautiful—sparking lifelong friendships with her "sisters" around the world and inspiring reciprocal visits and long-term projects.

One such project, Ms. Ratner's trip to Belarus to help found a Women's Business Development Center, began



TOP: Hedy Ratner delivers the keynote address at the WorldChicago Spring Diplomacy Luncheon. MIDDLE, from left: Peggy Parfenoff, Ms. Ratner, WorldChicago Board Member Lou Vitullo, and WTTW's Elizabeth Brackett. ABOVE: Ms. Ratner with Professional Fellows. Photos courtesy Bridget Gallagher

with a professional meeting in Chicago with Lyudmila, an IVLP delegate from Belarus hosted by WorldChicago.

In recognition of her lifetime support of women's achievement in Chicago and abroad through Citizen Diplomacy, WorldChicago awarded Ms. Ratner the 2014 WorldChicago Gold Medallion Citizen Diplomacy Award to a standing ovation from the assembled guests.

INDULGE IN ITALY

WorldChicago's annual fall cultural fundraiser and cocktail reception, held on September 16, focused on the enchanting country of Italy.

The evening highlighted Italian culture, cuisine, wine, and entertainment. Consul General of Italy in Chicago Adriano Monti gave welcoming remarks and shared trivia facts about food and culture in Rome.

Guests experienced the taste and ambiance of Rome at Tre Soldi Trattoria while enjoying Italian music, taking their chances in a wine bottle grab, and bidding on silent auction items highlighting Italian culture such as fresh pasta baskets, Italian cooking and language classes, and autographed memorabilia of Italian-American athletes.

Special thanks to the Event Committee, chaired by WorldChicago Board Member Lydia Lazar, Laura Granara, and Katie McLenaghan.



TOP: WorldChicago guests browse the silent auction. ABOVE: Consul General of Italy in Chicago Adriano Monti welcomes guests with a history and trivia lesson about Rome.

CITIZEN DIPLOMACY EVENTS



Keynote speaker Michele Ledgerwood with International Women's Day guests.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

On March 7, WorldChicago co-presented the annual celebration of International Women's Day with the International Trade Club of Chicago and the Union League Club of Chicago. This event provides Chicagoans the occasion to celebrate social, political, and economic achievements of women while focusing world attention on areas requiring further actions.

The event opened with an international fair showcasing local organizations, companies, associations, and entrepreneurs passionate about women's and international affairs.

Guests then attended a luncheon emceed by WBEZ radio personality Allison Cuddy, with opening remarks by cultural speakers Dr. Rasha Mahmoud Hussein Mohammed from the Elabbasia Regional Blood Transfusion Center in Cairo, and Carmen Vidal-Hallett, Principal at Eco Vidal Design, Inc.

Michele Ledgerwood, Senior Associate, Center for Strategic and International Studies then delivered the keynote speech, "Seven Revolutions: Global Trends and the Role of Women in 2035."

COFFEE CONVERSATIONS

Coffee Conversations bring together WorldChicago members, partners,

professional hosts, and international visitors for lively dialogue around a range of topics. The format ranges from a single speaker to a panel; country and cultural presentations to informal roundtable discussions about industry trends and current affairs.

To illustrate the impressive diversity of our international visitors, 2014's featured speakers included: a delegation of environmental sustainability leaders from France focused on climate change, green technology, and alternative energy; Serbian professors working to enhance their workforce; a French journalist from *Le Monde*; project presentations on anti-bullying and school dropout prevention from youth leaders from Mexico; social entrepreneurship project presentations from youth leaders from sub-Saharan Africa; and candid remarks on revitalizing and promoting entrepreneurship and economic development from a young Greek business leader.

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

WorldChicago's Young Professionals group offers an exciting opportunity for globally-minded, civically-engaged young leaders to expand their local and international networks, access global expertise, and meet socially and professionally with current and emerging leaders from around the world.

The Young Professionals started the year with, "The Best Trip I've Ever Taken" Kick-Off Event & Dinner held at Demera Ethiopian Restaurant.

In May, Young Professional members and U.S. Department of State Professionals Fellows attended World Music Wednesday at the Old Town School of Folk Music featuring Hadar Noiberg Trio, part of the Israeli and World Music Festival. The evening began with a meet-and-greet at the Grafton Pub.

Continuing with tradition, also in May the Young Professionals group held the 3rd Annual International Trivia Night at the Globe Pub. It was a competitive showcase of extensive international knowledge.

In September, in collaboration with the Chicago Cultural Alliance, Young Professionals had a unique opportunity to experience Chicago's ethnic diversity through a tour of Chicago's Humboldt Park and Ukrainian Village neighborhoods, complete with a tasting of Puerto Rican and Ukrainian cuisine.

In late September, the Young Professionals series concluded with the annual careers event, a book signing featuring John Zogby, renowned American political analyst and author of *First Globals: Understanding, Managing, and Unleashing Our Millennial Generation*.

ANNUAL MEETING & HOLIDAY PARTY

On December 2, WorldChicago supporters gathered to celebrate global culture and the wonderful work WorldChicago hosts, members, and volunteers do to promote citizen diplomacy in Chicago!

Attendees enjoyed a presentation on our citizen diplomacy stories in 2014, received a sneak peek into the exciting programs to come in 2015, and were treated to an interactive presentation on Leo Burnett's advertising initiatives around the world.

The Annual Meeting was followed by cocktails, hors d'oeuvres, and a performance of global culture.

2014 BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Board Member Linda Cushman (right) and Board Chair Brian Caffarelli (right) at the Global Ties U.S. National Meeting with Wendy Williams (center) of the Philadelphia International Visitors Council. Wendy also traveled with WorldChicago on our 2012 trip to Cuba.

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Summer intern Becky McLain at 31st Street Beach with a youth program participant from Rwanda.

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For many visitors, the highlight of their exchange is a homestay, dinner, or cultural outing with local Chicagoans. Thank you to our wonderful homestay and hospitality hosts — you truly embody the spirit of citizen diplomacy!

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Arts n Spirits
Ateneum Theatre
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Broadway in Chicago
Burke Beverage
Caffeinated Club
Capannari Ice Cream
Chicago Architecture Foundation
Chicago Botanic Garden
Chicago History Museum

Chicago Improv Comedy Show
Chicago Wolves
Cinnamon Boutique
Colonial Café & Ice Cream
Crowne Plaza Chicago
Dana Hotel and Spa
Fiat
Frank Lloyd Wright Trust
French Pastry School
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Howl at the Moon Chicago
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Moto Restaurant
Multilingual Connections
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WorldChicago receives about 60% of our funding through U.S. Department of State program grants and contracts. The remaining 40% is achieved through membership, event proceeds, in-kind donations, and sponsorships.

Your continued support helps us close this funding gap and create even more opportunities to bring the world to Chicago, and Chicago to the world.

How You Can Help

DONATE!

WorldChicago relies on generous contributions from both individuals and corporations to fill our funding gap so that we can continue to bring international visitors to Chicago and plan impactful programs that engage both our visitors and our Chicago Citizen Diplomats.

Your unrestricted donation helps us address our most immediate needs.

Visit worldchicago.org to make your gift today!

WorldChicago also welcomes in-kind donations. If you would like to donate something for our programs, events, or our online and silent auction fundraisers, please contact Abbey Jennings at ajennings@worldchicago.org or (312) 254-1800.

BECOME A MEMBER!

Help us welcome international visitors to Chicago while enjoying great benefits like free or discounted admission to all WorldChicago events, reciprocal hospitality with WorldChicago alumni around the world, and exclusive opportunities to meet with U.S. Department of State international visitors socially and professionally.

Most importantly, as a member, you'll be providing crucial support to WorldChicago as we bring visitors to Chicago from around the world for our meaningful and inspiring exchange programs.

There is a membership level for everyone! WorldChicago has five different memberships to choose from, beginning with our \$40 Young Professional Membership.

To join or renew your membership, please visit worldchicago.org, or contact Abbey Jennings at ajennings@worldchicago.org or (312) 254-1800.

BECOME A HOMESTAY HOST!

Explore new cultures and make lifelong connections with international leaders – right here in Chicago! Our youth and professional visitors stay with Chicago-area homestays for an immersive experience with American culture.

Help make their stay in Chicago unforgettable — host a visitor!

Hosts provide a bed, breakfast, and some dinners. Visitors participate in fellowships or program activities Monday-Friday, with evenings and weekends free to spend with host families.



To learn about our current hosting opportunities, visit worldchicago.org, or contact Maria Krasinski at mkrasinski@worldchicago.org or (312) 254-1800.

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WorldChicago brings together business, political, university, nonprofit, and student leaders focused on promoting citizen diplomacy in Chicago.

We work with the U.S. Department of State to facilitate international business, cultural, educational, and youth leadership exchange programs for nearly 1,000 delegates from over 100 countries a year.

Our sponsors gain exclusive access to these speakers and an insider's view to the impactful, international work they are doing for Chicago.

For information about current sponsorship opportunities, contact Abbey Jennings at ajennings@worldchicago.org or (312) 254-1800.

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