



# 2018 ANNUAL REPORT



worldchicago

CITIZEN DIPLOMACY  
ONE HANDSHAKE  
AT A TIME

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# WELCOME

## GREETINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT!

To friends, partners, and members of the WorldChicago family,

Thank you for your generous support of WorldChicago in 2018! Our work promoting citizen diplomacy here in Chicago would not be able to touch hundreds of lives from dozens of countries without your help. Whether you gave monetarily or gave of your time, made dinner for our international visitors or hosted them in your home, we are grateful for all that you do to welcome our guests to Chicago.

2018 was an exciting year for WorldChicago. We strengthened our partnerships with the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and Global Ties U.S., hosting diverse and relevant programs. We strengthened our commitment to youth, hosting new youth programs ranging from a Wheel Chair Basketball Program for young athletes from Thailand, Indonesia, and Kyrgyzstan, to an experiential learning program, Jóvenes en Acción, for motivated Mexican students looking to decrease the dropout rates of their home high schools. WorldChicago expanded its professional development programs as well, hosting 66 fellows from 26 countries. These talented young professionals worked in fields as diverse as ice cream sales and alpaca fur marketing.



Another highlight for WorldChicago in 2018 was our continued work on inspiring a spirit of entrepreneurship in countries where free enterprise is a new mode of thinking. Our Professional Fellows Program in the Balkans pairs talented innovators aged 25-40 with Chicago-based organizations for a 4-week fellowship. Through shadowing, networking, and project development at their host organizations, these fellows gain insight into the entrepreneurship and innovation sectors in the U.S. Their home countries of Macedonia, Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia & Herzegovina benefit when the fellows return to trailblaze a culture of entrepreneurship and innovation back home. One of our favorite parts about this program is that it is a reciprocal exchange – here is a photo of me in Sarajevo, Bosnia & Herzegovina with program alumni.

Citizen diplomacy is becoming ever more important in today's world. We are committed to our belief that bringing the world closer together one handshake at a time can only enrich the city we call home. This work would not be possible without the support of talented, compassionate supporters like you. Whether you have supported our programs through hosting a fellow, attending a fundraiser, or facilitating a workshop, we sincerely thank you.

Yours in citizen diplomacy,  
*Peggy Parfenoff*, President

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.



## MISSION



*WorldChicago is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting citizen diplomacy through programs that connect the Chicago community with the world.*

*WorldChicago facilitates collaboration between people from all over the world to advance national security, economic development, and social justice.*

*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.”*



## OUR WORK

WorldChicago visitors explore their fields of interest through meetings with our extensive network of Chicago-area citizen diplomats, who are leading voices in the public, private, nonprofit, and tech sectors. Recent exchanges have centered on topics such as green technology and climate change, public health, government accountability, combating domestic violence, and preservation of cultural heritage.

In 2018, WorldChicago implemented the following programs:

PROGRAM	NO. OF PROGRAMS	NO. OF VISITORS
International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP)	52	491
Tech Innovation and Entrepreneurship Fellows Program	2	31
Professional Fellows Programs	4	35
Youth Leadership Programs	5	64
Community Connections	1	10
Open World Leadership	2	10
Brazil BiNational Exchange	1	20
Other	1	43
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>708</b>



# 2018 VISITOR & COUNTRY STATISTICS

Afghanistan.....	4	Georgia.....	2	Oman.....	10
Algeria.....	2	Germany.....	4	Pakistan.....	19
Angola.....	16	Ghana.....	2	Palestinian Territories.....	3
Argentina.....	3	Granada.....	1	Panama.....	2
Australia.....	1	Greece.....	1	Papua New Guinea.....	1
Austria.....	2	Guatemala.....	3	Peru.....	3
Azerbaijan.....	7	Guinea.....	3	Philippines.....	14
Bahrain.....	4	Guinea Bissau.....	1	Poland.....	1
Bangladesh.....	2	Guyana.....	1	Portugal.....	2
Barbados.....	1	Haiti.....	2	Qatar.....	2
Belarus.....	18	Honduras.....	2	Romania.....	10
Belgium.....	2	Hong Kong.....	4	Russia.....	19
Benin.....	3	India.....	31	Rwanda.....	4
Bolivia.....	2	Indonesia.....	33	Samoa.....	1
Bosnia & Herzegovina..	10	Iraq.....	16	Sao Tome and Principe.....	1
Botswana.....	1	Ireland.....	1	Saudi Arabia.....	15
Brazil.....	23	Israel.....	2	Senegal.....	5
Brunei.....	1	Italy.....	1	Serbia.....	2
Bulgaria.....	5	Jamaica.....	2	Singapore.....	5
Burkina Faso.....	2	Japan.....	2	Slovenia.....	9
Burma.....	4	Jordan.....	4	South Africa.....	9
Burundi.....	1	Kazakhstan.....	8	South Sudan.....	3
Cabo Verde.....	2	Kenya.....	5	Sri Lanka.....	3
Cambodia.....	2	Kosovo.....	1	Suriname.....	1
Cameroon.....	9	Kuwait.....	6	Tajikistan.....	4
Canada.....	4	Kyrgyz Republic.....	16	Tanzania.....	2
Central African Republic..	1	Laos.....	1	Thailand.....	11
Chile.....	2	Latvia.....	1	Togo.....	2
China.....	25	Lebanon.....	3	Trinidad and Tobago.....	2
Congo.....	1	Liberia.....	2	Tunisia.....	4
Costa Rica.....	1	Lithuania.....	2	Turkey.....	8
Cote d'Ivoire.....	5	Macedonia.....	10	Turkmenistan.....	4
Croatia.....	7	Madagascar.....	1	UAE.....	2
Cuba.....	7	Malawi.....	2	Uganda.....	10
Curacao.....	1	Malaysia.....	4	Ukraine.....	28
Cyprus.....	1	Mali.....	2	United Kingdom.....	13
Czech Republic.....	4	Mauritius.....	1	Uruguay.....	1
Denmark.....	1	Mexico.....	16	Uzbekistan.....	3
Democratic Republic of the Congo.....	1	Moldova.....	3	Venezuela.....	3
Djibouti.....	2	Mongolia.....	1	Vietnam.....	6
Ecuador.....	3	Montenegro.....	1	Zambia.....	4
Egypt.....	4	Morocco.....	4	Zimbabwe.....	7
Estonia.....	7	Mozambique.....	3		
Ethiopia.....	6	Nepal.....	14		
Finland.....	2	Netherlands.....	2		
France.....	3	Nicaragua.....	1		
Gabon.....	2	Niger.....	3		
		Nigeria.....	8		

Total Countries: 137  
Total Visitors: 708



# 2018 IVLP VISITOR & COUNTRY STATISTICS

## Countries by Region



## Top 10 Program Themes



1. Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development
2. Juvenile Justice and Empowering Youth
3. Promoting Transparency, Accountability, and Ethics in Government
4. Human Rights
5. Security - Security Challenges, Countering Terrorism, Countering Violent Extremism, Cyber Security
6. Higher Education
7. Economic Growth
8. Emerging Political Leaders
9. U.S. Financial System
10. Empowering Women - e.g. STEAM fields, Women Entrepreneurs, Journalists



# PROGRAMS

## INTERNATIONAL VISITOR LEADERSHIP PROGRAM



The International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) is the U.S. Department of State's premiere professional exchange program. Through three- to four-week visits to cities across the U.S. — including Chicago — current and emerging foreign leaders from a variety of fields engage in face-to-face dialogues with Americans and cultivate lasting relationships with their professional counterparts.

Visitors hailed from 129 different countries, from Angola and Argentina to Zambia and Zimbabwe, and nearly everywhere else in between. In 2018, WorldChicago welcomed 490 IVLP participants on 52 different programs, engaging dozens of Americans in citizen diplomacy as well.

Programs focused on topics such as Community Policing and National Security, Urban Economic Renewal, Women in Law, Water Resources Protection, Engaging Youth Through New Media, and Opera Management and Exchanges.



### Women in STEAM: Hidden No More Program

Diplomacy hit the red carpet this fall as WorldChicago hosted "Hidden No More," a project for women in STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics) inspired by the hit movie *Hidden Figures*. 25 women from 25 different countries came to Chicago to share their experiences working in fields that are largely dominated by men. The group toured Fermilab in Batavia, IL, the country's premier laboratory for particle physics and accelerator research, as well as Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry. The women also had the chance to meet with several inspiring women leaders in STEAM fields, including Colonel Jill Morgenthaler, the first woman to enter an experimental class for women in the U.S. Army ROTC, Krisztina Elzeki, the Executive Director for the Chicago Council on Science and Technology, and several professors at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

The group collaborated with IMC Financial, a technology-driven trading firm that develops innovative technology, and students in the ACERO Network of charter schools. Afterwards, IMC Financial hosted a reception at the Willis Tower attended by guests from all over Chicago and the world. WorldChicago is grateful to all partners who helped make Hidden No More a worthwhile venture for this amazing group of women.



*"Thanks for choosing Astellas to provide this unique and valued collaboration between our industry and the governments of the United States and Japan." -Astellas US*



## YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS



In 2018, WorldChicago hosted five Youth Leadership Programs, supported by the U.S. Department of State, U.S. embassies in foreign countries, and private foundations. All youth programs aimed to foster mutual understanding, build respect, and inspire civic engagement among young Americans and their international peers. A special thank you to our generous host families for welcoming these young leaders into their homes!



### Jóvenes en Acción:

This summer, WorldChicago welcomed 12 exceptional high school students from Aguascalientes, Puebla and Mexico City, Mexico to the Jovenes En Accion program. This program focused on reducing dropout rates in their hometown through instituting ideas learned from Chicago youth advocates. The students attended classes such as robotics and fashion design with American students from After School Matters, learned about the school to prison pipeline at the Logan Square Neighborhood Association, discussed youth advocacy with Mikva Challenge, and participated in volunteer work at Chicago Urban Retreat. The Mexican students got to form strong relationships with American high school students at Walter Payton College Prep and even established a pen pal program after their return home.



### 2019 Youth Program Dates:

- 1/22-2/4/2019
- Youth Ambassador Program for Central America
- 7/11-7/25/2019
- Iraqi Young Leaders Exchange Program
- 7/18-7/27/2019
- UK-US Youth Dialogue Program (Dates TBA)
- Saudi Young Leaders Exchange Program
- Italy Youth Exchange (Dates TBA)

### U.K.-U.S. Youth Dialogue Program:

The U.K.-U.S. Youth Dialogues program is always a joy for WorldChicago to host. 12 youth from the United Kingdom came to Chicago this summer to learn conflict resolution skills and promote multiculturalism by living with homestay hosts and participating in seminars with leaders across the city. This year's cohort got to work with Jennifer Ladeg of The Coaching Group, Hind Makki at CAIR Chicago, Refugee One, Free Spirit Media, and Circles and Ciphers, among others. In their spare time away from seminars, the group saw the Chicago skyline from above and below with the Willis Tower Skydeck and Wendella boat tour field trips, as well as made friends with American youth their age through WorldChicago Youth Diplomats.



# PROGRAMS

## Iraqi Young Leaders Exchange Program (IYLEP)

This year's cohort of IYLEP displayed its diversity, race, religion and beliefs more than anything else during their stay. Eleven Iraqi and three US students came together as a group to explore dialogue and reconciliation through hands-on experience, civic engagement, and volunteer opportunities. They met with youth-focused organizations including Obama Youth Job Corps, Alternatives Inc., Catholic Charities, Mikva Challenge and Interfaith Youth Core. Their meetings took place across both the North and South sides, giving the program participants a taste for our city's distinct diversity.



*"A home away from home, that's how I feel about my host family. Day by day I enjoy my stay with my host family more and more. The first time I stepped into the house Mitzi initiated a great atmosphere making me feel that I'm home by showing me around to every single thing I might or might not need. Every day the conversation we have after the program ends is something that I believe that complete the purpose of the program and staying with the host family."*

*-Al-Muthanna, IYLEP Participant*

## Saudi Arabia Youth Leadership Program

The Saudi Youth Leadership Exchange Program brought 10 talented youth from Saudi Arabia to Chicago for a week of exploring social entrepreneurship and volunteerism. Over the course of an action-packed week, the Saudi youth volunteered at Working Bikes, participated in a media production workshop at Free Spirit Media, learned about entrepreneurship at Dreams for Kids, got communications training from top Chicago publicist Kevin Lampe, and talked about women's rights in Saudi Arabia at the Peace Parks Project. In their free time between meetings, the kids also explored Chicago through a Wendella boat tour and jumped on The Ledge at the Willis Tower Skydeck. All-in-all, our Saudi youth gained valuable skills that they will no doubt use to become strong leaders back home.



*"Being a host mom has been both a rewarding and life-changing experience. Not only do I have the opportunity to share our wonderful American culture with my guests, but I receive a true immersion in my guests' cultures and traditions. I feel like I have traveled around the world without leaving my home and have formed lifelong friendships with my guests. Through sharing our stories and cultures with one another, I am reminded that, despite our differences, we are really very similar. I am so grateful to have this special, unique opportunity with WorldChicago." -Mitzi, Homestay Host*



## WORLDCHICAGO YOUTH DIPLOMATS



Youth Diplomats with Dr. Jane Goodall at a Women in Science Luncheon

The WorldChicago Youth Diplomats is a half-year program that brings together 40 high school students from across the Chicagoland area. Leaders meet monthly to learn about local and global issues, develop leadership skills, and engage in service-learning to build essential skills in leadership and cross-cultural communication.

In 2018, WorldChicago Youth Diplomats met with official U.S. State Department delegates from Brazil, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Malaysia, Mexico, Slovenia, South Africa, Ukraine; youth from Indonesia, Iraq, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico, Thailand, and the United Kingdom; and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for Belarus and Turkey. The youth diplomats discussed issues ranging from Tibet, to the global refugee crisis, games to understand culture, educational models abroad and issues facing urban communities worldwide.

For the second consecutive year, the WorldChicago Youth Diplomats visited Washington D.C. In tandem with the Gulf Coast Diplomacy Council's Youth Diplomats program, 15 of our youth convened in the nation's capital for a day of professional visits to the Meridian International Center, Department of State Diplomacy Center, the Embassy of Belarus, and Georgetown University. Thank you to the Julian Grace Foundation in their support of the Youth Diplomats program.



*"This trip to Washington D.C. made me understand what it really means to be a diplomat. You don't get that from just having diplomats talk to you in Chicago, but to see them at work really shows you what it's like. You can see that every day is so different."*

*-Jelani, Youth Diplomat*

# U.S. Department of State Sports Visitor Program: Regional Youth Wheelchair Basketball Program June 21-28, 2018



In 2018, WorldChicago was the local facilitator of the U.S. Department of State SportsUnited Office's Adaptive Basketball Exchange for Thailand, Indonesia and Kyrgyzstan. The program focused on promoting youth sporting opportunities and a culture of advocacy for individuals with physical disabilities.

In June, 16 amateur athletes, ages 16-24, traveled to Chicago to learn more about how our city strives to create an inclusive society. The participants had the opportunity to play a litany of adaptive sports, including: softball, kayaking, rock climbing, flag football, and, of course, basketball. Having the opportunity to try new sports (and meet their U.S. peers) was awe-inspiring. Kyrgyz dancer, Adina Samyibekova, noted, "In my country, there are no such sports events for people with disabilities but today I saw it with my own eyes. I saw even more opportunities for myself. Trying to play softball was a new experience, a new discovery. I learned that you can do whatever you love without any restriction, and that in life it is necessary to try everything and to not be afraid to work towards your goal, to a dream, no matter what."

The athletes had the opportunity to attend a Chicago White Sox game and Ice Cube's Big 3 Basketball Tournament at the United Center; for many of the participants, it was a first.

The athletes also met with several inspirational speakers who told their stories about fighting for sporting accessibility and equity. The athletes met with Paralympic Athlete and activist Mary Kate Callahan, who told her story about suing the Illinois High School Association over unfair competition standards for athletes with disabilities. In her settlement, Mary Kate achieved the right to compete against all girls statewide in swimming competitions. In discussing her meeting with Mary Kate Callahan, Paralympic hopeful Annisa Rahmadani said, "I was inspired to meet Mary Kate Callahan and learn how she advocates for disability rights and how she can become a USA Paratriathlon athlete. My goal: to meet her again in Tokyo 2020!"

WorldChicago would like to thank the City of Chicago Mayor's Office for Peoples with Disabilities, Shirley Ryan Abilities Lab, Adaptive Adventures, Chicago Park District, and Great Lakes Adaptive Sports Association for their help in creating a truly unique program.

*By: Brian Peckrill, Vice President of WorldChicago*



## PROFESSIONAL FELLOWS PROGRAM

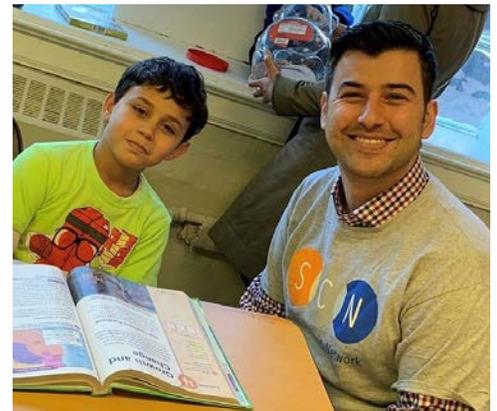
### Fellows Home Countries, 2018

Argentina · Azerbaijan · Bosnia and Herzegovina · Brazil ·  
 Burma · Costa Rica · Croatia · Ecuador · Georgia · Granada ·  
 Guatemala · Haiti · Indonesia · Jamaica · Macedonia ·  
 Malaysia · Mexico · Peru · Philippines · Russia · Slovenia ·  
 Thailand · Turkey · Ukraine · Venezuela · Vietnam

WorldChicago is honored to be a facilitator of the U.S. Department of State's Professional Fellows Program. This unique educational/economic development program brings emerging international leaders to the U.S. to participate in four-week fellowships with state and local governments, nonprofits, private companies, and universities.

By experiencing organizational practices and networking with their Chicago-based industry contemporaries, these individuals are primed to bring about positive change in their home countries. One unique feature of the Professional Fellows Program is that it is a two-way exchange. Meaning, Chicago-based host organizations have the opportunity to send a supervising staff member to the fellow's home country to implement a joint project. To ensure our fellows experience American life firsthand, WorldChicago places our fellows in homestays throughout the Chicagoland area. Many homestay hosts have created lifelong friendships and have traveled overseas for an impromptu reunion, or even to attend a fellow's wedding.

WorldChicago cannot implement the Professional Fellows Program without a strong commitment from the community, namely professional and homestay hosts for the role they play in providing intercultural interactions for the people of Chicago and the world. Thank you to all our hosts who made this programming possible!



*"People are important. This program, our visit to this country, they wouldn't be what they are if it wasn't for those who join us on this journey. They can be hosts, like my cool team at Holistic Index or the kids attending the after-school program with Erduan at the Syrian Community Network. They can be a part of WorldChicago, like the board and the homestay hosts. They can be the random folks that meet us and want to know more—and those have a special place in my heart!"*

**-Professional Fellow Maja Jovičić, Bosnia & Herzegovina**





# PROGRAMS

2018 Programs for Professional Fellows	Participants
Meridian Young Leaders of the Americas Initiative (YLA)	15
American Councils Russian Business Leaders	5
Tech Innovation and Entrepreneurship Fellows Program	31
American Councils Professional Fellows Program	15
Total	66





## OPEN WORLD PROGRAM

The Open World Program is an initiative of the Library of Congress to bring emerging leaders from Eastern Europe and Eurasia to the United States to experience American democracy in action. During the program, participants meet with their professional counterparts, participate in cultural activities, and live with local families.

### AZERBAIJAN: Cyber-Intellectual Property Rights



This spring's Community Connections group was from Azerbaijan and focused on Cyber and Intellectual Property Rights. As digital security is only increasing in importance for both diplomacy and national security, the group was excited to collaborate with American experts. The group met with industry leaders such as David Fagan of Bridgeview Bank, Fred Kwong of Delta Dental Plan Associates, James Higgins of the City of Chicago Department of Innovation and Technology, and John Ambrogio of Partridge Partners. During a group discussion on cybersecurity in banking, Bridgeview Bank's Chief Information Officer even said that the delegates had given him ideas that Bridgeview Bank would look at implementing.

In their spare moments outside of meetings, the delegates had a chance to present their own research to staff at the Central Asian Productivity Research Center, as well as meet with former Peace Corps volunteers at the invitation of one of our homestay hosts. Through these meetings, shopping at Navy Pier, and a Wendella boat tour, the group truly got to experience the breadth of Chicago.



### UKRAINE: Accountable Governance, Decentralization, and Clean Urban Development

This Open World Program group was composed of Ukrainian experts studying Accountable Governance, Decentralization, and Clean Urban Development. As both Chicago and Ukraine have been the sites of ecological catastrophes, the group was eager to exchange ideas. The delegation met with government leaders at the Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Housing and Urban Development, and Chicago Department of Transportation, as well as non-government leaders such as Jahmal Cole of My Block, My Hood, My City and Carter O'Brien at the Field Museum of Natural History.

Delegate Stefaniia Medvid, who works for the Tariff Policy and Energy Management Department in Ukraine, was inspired by Michael Davidson's presentation at the Chicago Community Trust to commit more resources towards ecologically friendly food systems in her department. Visitor Maksym Golovko, who works for Ukraine NGO Agents of Change, revitalized his organization's social media presence after the presentation by Jahmal Cole. With a Big Table Dinner at Green City Market in Garfield Park Conservatory and a Divvy bike tour around the city included in their program, it was hard to tell when the delegates were working and when they were just having fun.



## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS PROGRAM

Community Connections – an initiative of the U.S. Agency for International Development – provides Eastern European and Eurasian entrepreneurs, local government officials, legal professionals, and NGO leaders with an opportunity for practical training tailored to their interests and a three-week homestay with a local family. The broad public diplomacy goal of the program is to contribute to economic and democratic reform in participating countries and to promote mutual understanding through exposure to U.S. society and personal connections with Americans.

### BELARUS: Public Communication Strategies

With backgrounds from environmental policy to gay rights, the delegation was diverse, but all were eager to learn about how public relations and activism intersect. The group's program, organized by Chicago political strategist and ThinkInc founder Laurie Glenn, consisted of meetings with leaders spanning the communications sector of Chicago. These included Chicago Tribune reporters Don Washington and Stephen Franklin, Metropolitan Planning Council's Emily Blum, Human Rights Commissioner for the City of Chicago Mona Noriega, and Thea Crum at UIC Great Cities Institute. The group especially enjoyed participating in a peace circle on the South Side's Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation.

In their spare moments outside of meetings, the delegates volunteered at North Park Village Nature Center and explored Chicago through a Wendella boat tour. Towards the end of their stay, the group got to experience a different side of Illinois with a trip to the Illinois State Fair in Springfield.



## OTHER PROGRAMS

### BRAZIL: Binational Center Faculty Development Exchange

The BNC of Brazil Faculty Development Exchange brought together 20 Educational Coordinators from the Brazilian network of Binational Centers to explore innovative English as a Second Language (ESL) pedagogical strategies. BNC faculty spent two weeks in the United States split between Iowa City and Chicago.

In Chicago, the program kicked off with a briefing by Chicago Public Schools, Office of World Languages and Cultures on foreign language education across almost 700 public schools and data that is used to track student growth. To contextualize this overview, the Educational Coordinators visited The Academy on Global Citizenship in Archer Heights to discover how the charter school implements a dual language curriculum and uses Spanish for Content Based Instruction (CBI). Following their time in Chicago, the cohort was imbedded into University of Iowa's ESL faculty, where they attended workshops on new methods of instruction, observed ESL classes, and planned projects for their return to Brazil.

WorldChicago is excited to be partnering with U.S. Embassy – Brasilia and the Council of International Visitors to Iowa City again on this project in 2019!

# CHICAGO SPOTLIGHT: Uplifting Fellows

"Building business connections to promote peace is what this program is all about, and this is an extremely effective and progressive strategy for diplomacy. I am so proud to be a part of this program."



Third time's the charm! Corielle Laaspere, CEO of liftUPLift, completed her third fellowship hosting experience this fall. Corielle's business, liftUPLift, believes that entrepreneurship is the surest and straightest path to empowerment for women. liftUPLift accelerates the growth of women owned businesses by connecting them to one another and to consumers worldwide, all in one marketplace. Members of their global alliance of women entrepreneurs contribute annually to support their 501(c)3 nonprofit, which is dedicated to ending sexual violence.

Since Corielle is a seasoned host, we reached out to ask for her advice for other Chicago organizations and companies, and why they should get involved with WorldChicago:

"Working with WorldChicago is an incredible opportunity to become a citizen diplomat. By participating as a professional host, your organization works towards promoting peace, creating global understanding, and developing joint partnerships around the world."



Project management is perhaps the most important skill that has enabled me to be successful as a host and participant in reciprocal projects. As a host, I don't just try to integrate the fellow into my organization for a few weeks and hope they can contribute something useful. I take the time to learn about their background and skills, and I work with the fellow to create a project with specific goals and objectives that can be accomplished in 3-4 weeks. For example, Vari (YLAI Fellow from Peru) and I produced a series of video interviews with women entrepreneurs from the YLAI program. I also set aside several days during her 4 weeks to develop a project proposal for the reciprocal exchange.

If a host can think of a way to use an experienced entrepreneur for a 3-4 week project, then becoming a host is a no brainer. Colleges will often encourage students to study abroad in part because potential employers respect and value that experience on a resume. I have found the same is true for participating in this program. In addition to all the other benefits of cultural exchange and new business partnerships, simply adding this work to my resume has opened new doors for me because it is interesting and admirable to potential clients and grant-makers. Overall, you can make an impact where it counts and build bridges where they are needed."

**Thank you to all 2018 professional hosts!**

# CHICAGO SPOTLIGHT: Home away from home



By: Roland Kulla

I have been hosting fellows for more than 20 years and with WorldChicago for the last 15. When I first started out, I was with a program called Servas (it still exists and I still host for them). It started after World War II as a peace movement with the idea that if you could meet people, you would be less likely to shoot people. You are required to put how much notice you want, you can put two weeks, a week, three days, four days and I always put 'No prior notice required'. So, on a Saturday afternoon I was sitting there in my house and the phone rang. The caller was a twenty-seven-year-old by the nickname Tom, who was travelling around the world, and his mother had joined him for the American leg. They asked to stay with me since their plans fell through. I said 'sure'.

So, they make it on down and I am going to Oak Park that night for a party with my friends and they are big fans of Frank Lloyd Wright. I call my friends and say, "Can I bring somebody?" and they say fine. Tom's mom was tired, so she stayed home, but I bring Tom and he is like the hit of the party. My friends come up after a while and they ask, 'when did you meet this guy?' (I have known these people for a long time and they have never seen Tom before). I say, "Oh, about two hours ago," and then I kind of told them about the program. They say, "What? You let people come and stay in your house?!" and I say "Sure, its only stuff."

And still, my response today is the same as then. I have had hundreds of people come stay with me and I had at least one hundred people come through WorldChicago. In these days when everybody is like battenning down the hatches and pulling up the draw bridge in this moat mentality, I choose to be open, I choose to be hospitable. And you know when you think, "what can one person do?" you can welcome people, one or two or three people at a time, which is what I am doing right now. When I moved about ten years ago to the Back of the Yards, I wanted to have a big enough place where I could host people. I have three official bedrooms but now I am also kind of enlisting the air mattress in the studio for a professional exchange alumns who stayed with me a couple of years ago.

One of the questions I was asked to talk about was, "what kind of impact does this make?" and, "how many host countries have I hosted from?" and I thought I would bring the visual aid to show you. If you think about one person at a time, that is fine, but I always put a dot when I get a new country so it's on this map. (See map in photo below).

I just posted something on Facebook and I already have like 60 responses from all over the world. One of the things I also do is ask whenever I can host three, send me one from each country. The reason is because these guys come from countries where there has been a lot of violence and a lot of conflict, but here they have a safe space to meet others and start building friendships that transcend the political and social background.



**Thank you to all 2018 homestay hosts!**

# CHICAGO SPOTLIGHT: Visitors who Volunteer

By: American Councils  
Professional Fellow  
Potjaporn Joonlaoun  
from Thailand



"In October, I assisted my host family who works for The Community Builders, Inc. and another three active residents of Oakley Square Apartments in holding a hiking activity for the kids who are living in the community. The hiking activity was at Waterfall Glen, Willowbrook, Illinois. There were 9 kids age between 7 to 17 attending. The purposes of this activity are to distract the young people in the community from involving with illegal activities, to provide opportunities in learning new and useful skills and in exploration of interests.

Before I decided to join this activity, I had heard my host family telling about her work and I had seen her dedicating herself to the community she has been working for. She explained to me that providing houses for low-income people is not sufficient, they also need guiding how to maintain good life and kids are the most important target to improve communities. Providing them with activities that helps physical and mental health development is necessary.

The community, in fact, has provided different activities for kids such as cooking classes, handicrafting, group reading, and hiking. I actually wish I could join all of the provided activities, but due to time limitation I could choose only one and that was hiking, my forever favourite hobby, and working with kids is a bonus.



The whole activity took from 10 a.m to 2 p.m. During the activity I assisted my host family and the other three residents in preparing lunch, looking after the kids and joining team activities. Especially I had an opportunity to share with the kids about Thailand which they seemed to be really fascinated with. One kid shouted surprisingly and said 'How can you live without Halloween, Christmas and Thanksgiving. I said Thailand is a Buddhist country so we do not have like what you do here, but we instead have something else such as Water Festival and Banana Boat Floating called Loy Kra Thong. The kids were really interested in and fascinated by my country's culture."



Thank you to all 2018 volunteers!



## EVENTS

### GSA Spring Soiree: May 17

At our spring soiree, we celebrated spring and networked with other Chicago area professionals! WorldChicago's Professional Fellows in Tech & Entrepreneurship from Macedonia, Croatia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, and Slovenia were all in attendance.



### Spring Diplomacy Luncheon and International Fair: May 24th

WorldChicago hosted the Annual Spring Diplomacy Luncheon, our biggest fundraiser of the year. This business luncheon celebrated the great work the Chicagoland community is doing to promote cross-cultural understanding and best business, professional, and educational practices with our international peers. This year's luncheon featured a panel of female professional fellows discussing entrepreneurship in their home countries. The Gold Medallion Citizen Diplomacy Award was given to Ambassador Carol Moseley Braun.

### Fall Fundraiser: October 17

This year's fall fundraiser took place at Mars Gallery in West Loop. This fun-filled evening included stories and first-hand experiences from those who have been impacted by our work both in Chicago and around the world, including many Professional Fellows from Latin America, Europe, and Central Asia. The guests enjoyed drinks, tacos, churros, and international silent auction items!



### Young Professionals

The Young Professionals group kicked off the year in March with a sold-out International Trivia Night at The Globe Pub. Participants tested their knowledge of global affairs, international food and drink, and world history, vying for the title of International Trivia Night champions!



## African Women's Entrepreneurship Program Showcase and Luxe Bloom Reception: July 25



WorldChicago hosted 22 African women entrepreneurs from 15 countries, recognized by the U.S Department of State for their leadership in business, at the Sofitel, Chicago. The guests had the opportunity to interact one-on-one with these distinguished women and see samples of their products. The entrepreneurs showcased goods from jewelry to agricultural supplies. By hosting this program, WorldChicago provided a platform for the women to collaborate, make business connections, and highlight the growing role of women in the development of private enterprise in Africa.

“WorldChicago provides a gateway to the world’s emerging entrepreneurs here in Chicago,” said Shelley Rosen, Founder, Luxe Bloom. “We are humbled to be part of the program to help educate and welcome the women of AWEPP to our office each year for a day of exchange, empowerment, and inspiration. Thank you, WorldChicago!”





## Diplomatic Dialogues

Citizen diplomacy over coffee and croissants! WorldChicago's Diplomatic Dialogues series brings together our members and international visitors for friendly, informal dialogue around a diverse range of topics. In 2018, our topics were Cyber Security & Public Safety with a focus on Azerbaijan, women in economics, and exploring U.S. strategies for adoption of new libraries and museum technology with our delegation from China.



## International Peace Day: September 17

WorldChicago participated in Peace Day 2018 at Daley Plaza, a celebration to send peace to the world. The event included One Minute of Silence for World Peace, cultural performances of music and dance to celebrate the diversity of our city and world, and brief remarks by some of Chicago's prominent peace-builders.



## Annual Meeting and Holiday Party: December 4

We held this year's annual meeting and holiday party at the Consulate General of South Africa. The event celebrated the holidays, and the guests learned more about business and tourism opportunities in South Africa.





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## OUR PEOPLE

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Thank you to these Chicago organizations who hosted a fellow for a month or met with our international visitors!

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Phone: 312.254.1800 [worldchicago.org](http://worldchicago.org)

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