



worldchicago

ANNUAL REPORT



2021

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MESSAGE FROM BOARD CHAIR



Dear WorldChicago Community,

I'm pleased to report that WorldChicago again met the challenges of programming during the pandemic for a second year. Not only did we continue to welcome visitors virtually from around the world and created top-quality professional exchange programs that engage everyday Chicagoans, but we also managed to grow our programs.

In 2021, WorldChicago was able to engage in one of our largest programs ever, the Young Transatlantic Innovation Leaders Initiative (YTILI), a U.S. Department of State flagship program which will bring a cohort of 60 young European entrepreneurs from 45 countries to the U.S. to participate in a fellowship program during 2022-2023. We were able to partner with Chicago organizations from many sectors to participate in this new program and continued to engage WorldChicago in the larger Chicago community.

This year we also welcomed our first in-person delegation since the pandemic began. In partnership with the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy in Tbilisi, Georgia, a delegation of Georgian media and journalism professors and faculty came to Chicago for help in addressing the current challenges that Georgian professors face in the classroom. The group spent one week in Chicago visiting higher education institutions and an additional week at Eastern Illinois University in Normal, Illinois. This program marked the beginning of more in-person programming in 2022.

2021 was a year to remember. In 2022, WorldChicago is celebrating our 70th anniversary. This amazing milestone is one that commemorates WorldChicago's service to the Chicago community by highlighting the amazing seven decades in which we have welcomed thousands of international visitors to Chicago, and, most importantly, we have engaged thousands of everyday Chicagoans who have opened their homes, their businesses, their classrooms, and their communities, to build a more peaceful and prosperous world through citizen diplomacy.

Thank you for supporting WorldChicago. We could not do this work without you.

With Gratitude,

Virginia Russell

**Board Chair
2021-2022**

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OUR MISSION



WorldChicago is an affiliate of Global Ties U.S., a nonprofit membership association with more than 50 years of leadership in citizen diplomacy. Together with more than 90 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 a nonprofit organization which serves to promote global connections through communication, collaboration, and understanding.

WorldChicago is a leader in fostering mutual understanding through creating and supporting dynamic global relationships, connecting Chicagoans with their global counterparts, and building personal and professional bridges to create opportunities for dialogue, economic prosperity, and goodwill.

WorldChicago enables entrepreneurial growth, professional expansion, and cultural immersion through individually designed fellowships, homestays, and international exchanges.



2021 - another year of the pandemic, and another milestone year for both WorldChicago and for me. 2021 marked my 20th year with WorldChicago. Over the last 20 years and over 16,000 handshakes later, I had the privilege to meet so many young leaders from nearly every country in the world. I am so proud to represent WorldChicago - an organization that is committed to citizen diplomacy and making our world a better place every day.

I am amazed at all our fabulous team accomplished over the past year - WorldChicago hosted 834 emerging leaders from around the world! Almost all the programs were virtual of course, but WorldChicago also had the opportunity to host two in-person delegations - 14 journalism professors from Georgia joined us in August to gain knowledge in teaching journalism and in building a free and transparent media. The second delegation was from Malaysia and came to Chicago to talk about water safety. Programs during a pandemic do bring new logistics and worries, but we are pleased to report that all delegations left Chicago healthy!

Some of the highlights of the year included our virtual exchange with 40 Caribbean teens and 20 Chicago high school students. They met each Friday for six weeks and learned about their home lives, their music, food, and culture. It was not the same as being together in person, but new technology tools like Padlet and Google Classroom allowed everyone to be a videographer and show life at home.

Another highlight was kicking off the Young Transatlantic Innovation Leaders Initiative (YTILI), connecting on entrepreneurship curriculum with our partner DePaul University Coleman Center for Entrepreneurship. We are excited to let you know that after meeting virtually for six months, the YTILI Fellows will have the chance to come to Chicago in May of 2022.

WorldChicago has been connecting the world to Chicago since 1952 and leading in citizen diplomacy whether holding in-person programs during a pandemic or trying new programming ideas through virtual exchanges. Emerging leaders from WorldChicago have gone on to grow their companies and their communities, to open discussions about important topics like LGBTQ rights and access to education for people with disabilities, and have shown the value of a free press and a clear and transparent government. The changes that our visitors have made around the world after their time in Chicago is the reason I am excited to go to work each day.

I certainly haven't been on this journey alone - like any great journey, I've had some amazing traveling companions - first and foremost thank you to our fabulous team on whose shoulders I stand each day: My staff support me through out the year and have a passion for international exchange and the important work we do: Donna Sadlicki, Jennifer Dixon, Jabari Smith, Megan Spillman, Julia Sosnivka, Ethan Reiss, Angela Beltran, Mary Sancibrian, Caheri Aguilar, and Gloria Llenos.

Thank you to our Board of Directors, a really wonderful group of people that so dedicated to citizen diplomacy and contributes so much of their time, talent, and treasure to making WorldChicago a successful organization.

I also owe a large thank you to our homestay hosts, professional hosts and dinner hosts. These amazing Chicagoans shared their love of our great city with all of our international visitors.

2022 is already an adventure-filled year with in-person programs returning and WorldChicago celebrating our 70th Anniversary! Join us throughout the spring and summer as we feature a decade each month, culminating in our 70th Anniversary Celebration on October 27. It will be a delightful evening in the style of the 1950s as we celebrate all the lives touched by WorldChicago and citizen diplomacy.

Thank you for traveling with me on this journey and I look forward to more miles ahead with all of you shining citizen diplomats.

Peggy Parfenoff

President
WorldChicago

PROGRAMS

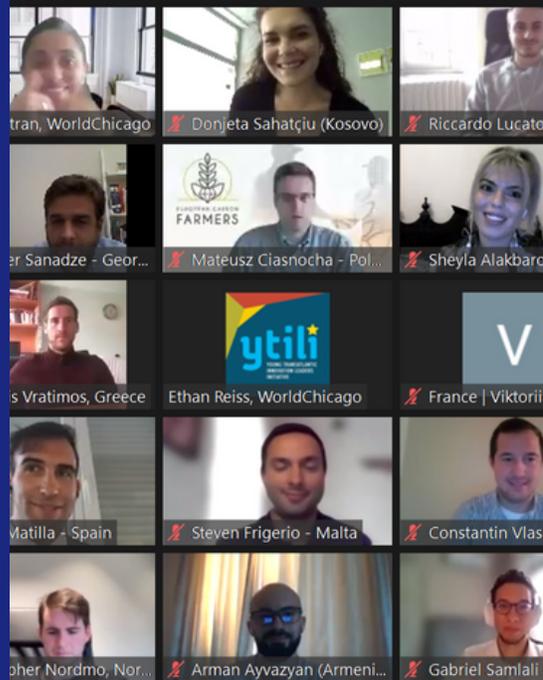
Professional Exchanges

Working with the U.S. Department of State, WorldChicago is a partner for the International Visitors Leadership Program (IVLP), which brings foreign leaders to the U.S. for short-term professional exchanges on topics ranging from women's empowerment to countering violent extremism. These transformative experiences help create cross-cultural communication, mutual understanding, and global engagement that positively shape participants' views of Chicago and the U.S. that can lead to a more peaceful and prosperous world.



Professional Fellowships

Through the partnership with the U.S. Department of State's Professional Fellows Program, WorldChicago connects emerging leaders with government offices, public policy-oriented NGOs, private companies, and university departments for short-term, intensive fellowships designed to broaden their professional expertise.



Youth Leadership

WorldChicago is a local coordinator for the U.S. Department of State Youth Leadership Programs for international high school students and adult mentors. These short programs inspire cross-cultural dialogue, build respect, and boost civic engagement among young Americans and their international peers. Additionally, WorldChicago has created the Youth Diplomats Program that offers hands-on workshops, skills training sessions, volunteer activities, and cultural events for Chicago high school students to help nurture leadership skills and engage this next generation with in developing a global perspective .



PROFESSIONAL FELLOWSHIPS



After over a year of delays, WorldChicago officially launched our 2021 Tech Innovation and Entrepreneurship Program with a virtual Opening Ceremony. This opening ceremony brought together members of the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Global Leaders Division, WorldChicago Board and Staff, and our SuperCohort of Professional Fellows.

That same week, we launched our Ashoka Systems Change course which was facilitated by Marc Carr from Ashoka. The specialized course focused on impact measurement, funding, and partnerships. Fellows were placed with local and national organizations and corporations for an intensive virtual fellowship that required them to complete a minimum of 30 hours of work over the course of four consecutive weeks.

Many of our Fellows continued working with their fellowship host organizations beyond the requisite 4-week window, which was a testament to the mutually-beneficial opportunity that these fellowships present for all parties involved. In our closing program survey, fellowship hosts rated the program a 9/10.

Amidst the spring months of 2021, WorldChicago proudly facilitated two development sessions for The Legacy International Professional Fellows Program which aimed to show fellows what it means to be a young professional in the city of Chicago. However, the Legacy Fellows Program extended beyond our Chicago Cohort, incorporating virtual fellows from Washington, DC and Austin, Texas.

Our first development session took place on March 17th and was led by Kyle Schultz, Executive Vice President of Business Development and Global Strategy at World Business Chicago.

This Economic Empowerment Learning Event familiarized fellows with some of Chicago's diverse economic programs, as well as numerous professional and entrepreneurial resources. The second session, held on April 18th, centered on networking in collaboration with our Young Professional Group's quarterly Adventure, Brunch, and Citizen Diplomacy (ABCD) International Networking Event. This informal event granted our Legacy Fellows the opportunity to connect with other young professionals from Chicago and around the world. WorldChicago and the Legacy International team's hard work has resulted in a successful and engaging program.





WorldChicago welcomes a new program.

The Young Transatlantic Innovation Leaders Initiative (YTILI) is the U.S. Department of State's flagship program for emerging entrepreneurs from Europe which is facilitated by WorldChicago. Through this program, a cohort of 60 young European entrepreneurs from 45 countries will participate in a robust fellowship program to grow their ventures, foster global partnerships, and positively impact the economic development of their communities.

More than 300 European alumni have participated in YTILI since 2016, growing their business skills and strengthening transatlantic partnerships through the fellowship program. YTILI offers an online and in-person entrepreneurship curriculum through DePaul University, a five-week fellowship placement in one of nine U.S cities, allowing fellows to gain firsthand exposure to the operations of a U.S organization in their professional sector, U.S based conferences, and an Innovation Summit & Reciprocal Exchange.

Partners

CEED Slovenia
Citizen Diplomacy International
Philadelphia
Coleman Entrepreneurship Center
at DePaul University
GEA College, Ljubljana, Slovenia
Global Ties Alabama

Global Ties Albuquerque
Global Ties Detroit
Global Ties Alabama
International House Charlotte
San Diego Diplomacy
World Affairs Council Seattle
WorldDenver



Meet the Fellows

Alexander Groesbeek
 Andreea Serban
 Aneida Bajraktari Bicja
 Arlind Haxhijaj
 Arman Ayvazyan
 Athanasios Vratimos
 Beka Tomashvili
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 Azerbaijan
 Belarus
 Belgium
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 Bulgaria
 Croatia
 Czech Republic
 Denmark

Estonia
 France
 Georgia
 Germany
 Greece
 Hungary
 Iceland
 Ireland
 Italy
 Kosovo
 Latvia

Lithuania
 Malta
 Moldova
 Montenegro
 Netherlands
 North Macedonia
 Norway
 Poland
 Portugal
 Romania
 Russia

Serbia
 Slovakia
 Slovenia
 Spain
 Switzerland
 Turkey
 Ukraine
 United Kingdom

YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS



"The Youth Diplomats Program inspired me to become more involved in my community."

- Olivia K., Youth Diplomat

Youth Diplomats Program

WorldChicago proudly offers the Youth Diplomats Program, a nine-month long opportunity for teens to expand as global citizens.

Participants partake in workshops, seminars, and volunteering, with the opportunity to attend speeches and lectures provided by government officials, academics, and other leaders. Students are also eligible to visit Washington D.C to learn about diplomacy and intercultural exchange.

In 2021, WorldChicago Youth Diplomats explored Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, Paraguay, and Venezuela with the Young Leaders of the Americas Initiative. Students were exposed to the cuisine, history, and music of fellows' home communities while expanding upon entrepreneurial topics.

Youth Leadership Exchanges

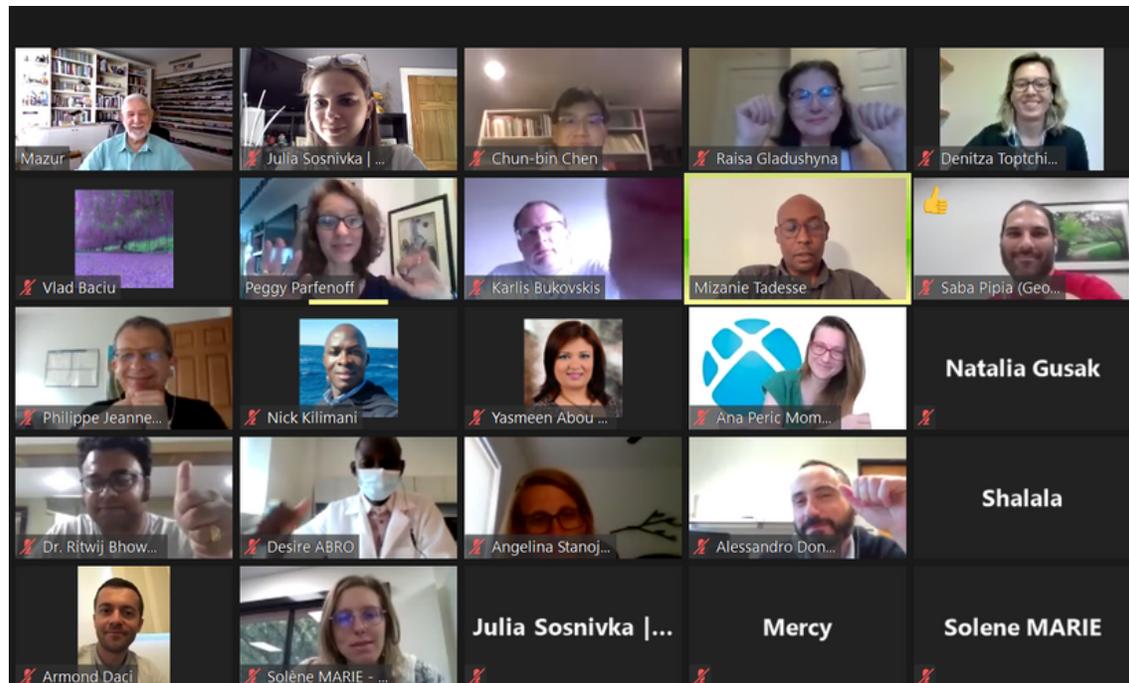
World Chicago also coordinated the U.S Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Youth Leadership Program for international students and adult mentors.

These programs facilitate cultural dialogue, encourage respect and understanding, and promote civic engagement.



International Youth Program Workshop

FULBRIGHT ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

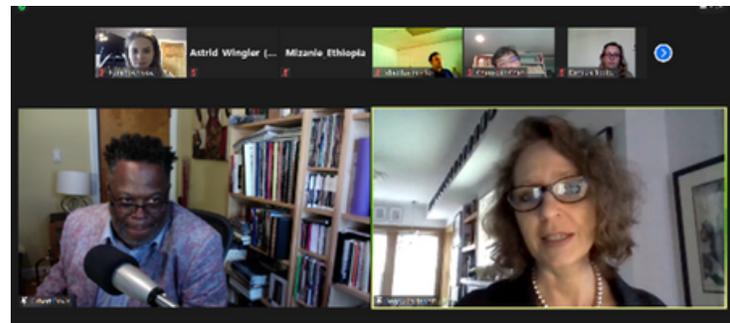


The Fulbright Senior Scholar Program granted Fulbright Scholars in the Midwest the opportunity to meet with WorldChicago professionals and learn about Chicago's rich history. WorldChicago facilitated the following programs to enhance the Scholars' experience in the United States:

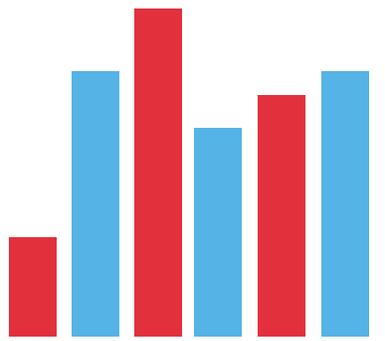
- The history of Native Americans within Illinois
- The history of Chicago from its founding to its contemporary lifestyle
- Chicago's history through the examination of popular food dishes and cooking demonstrations and the influence of jazz through musical examples
- Home Hospitality for the Senior Scholars hosted by Fulbright Alumni in Chicago

The program's activities were guided by guest speakers who are local Chicagoans well-versed in their professions. They were able to strengthen the scholars' eagerness to learn about Chicago's history and culture through interactive activities. Despite the online nature of the program, our program directors were successful in maintaining the Scholar's interest and keeping discussions lively.

Scholars were also granted opportunities to share their own traditions and culture with the group, helping them create interpersonal relationships and an environment that celebrates diversity. All these components, along with the hard work of our team, contributed to the event's overall engagement and success.



Co-Founder and Artistic Director of the Chicago Jazz Philharmonic, Orbert Davis, met with our Fulbright Scholars to discuss the history of jazz and its influence on modern music, locally and globally.



39 IVLP Programs

416 Visitors

Visitors from 116 countries

In June 2021, a regional project delegation focused on "Human and Civil Rights for Marginalized Communities" met with RefugeeOne on June 28th. Helen Sweitzer and Jim Porter gave an informative presentation on their services and strategies to support refugees. On June 30th, the delegation met with Diane Latiker from Kids Off the Block, who discussed the various ways the organization supports at-risk youth in the community. The virtual meetings were well received by the visitors.



A Japanese delegation participating in the U.S. China Trade Policy IVLP Program.

Six delegate members met with representatives from the State of Illinois Office of Trade and Investment.

WorldChicago participated in the Domestic Violence Salon Series for Alumni. In partnership with our colleagues in Sacramento and New Hampshire, we brought Maura McCauley from the Department of Family Support Services with the City of Chicago to the panel. Maura spoke about the Department of Family Support Services and municipal services provided to victims of domestic violence and how the Office of Domestic Violence has attempted to adapt and overcome barriers to municipal services, as a result of COVID-19. This panel was both encouraging and impactful for the participants and WorldChicago was delighted to be able to participate. This new style of virtual program also seems to be a successful format and a positive way to keep alumni engaged.

INTERNATIONAL VISITORS LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

PROFESSIONAL RESOURCES

WorldChicago is an important part of the Chicago community. We work with corporate, civic, education, and nonprofit organizations and professionals to share their Chicago work, their Chicago missions, and their everyday Chicago lives with their global counterparts. Through these unique experiences everyday Chicagoans are able to exchange innovative ideas, expose their organizations to a global perspective and viewpoint, share their successes and challenges. Below is a list of the Professional Resources that WorldChicago worked with in 2021. Contact us today to get involved as a Professional Host!

- 270 Strategies
- 1871
- 2112
- A3 Environmental Consultants
- Ada S. McKinley
- Agricycle Global
- Aileron
- All Campus
- Alliance for the Great Lakes
- American Enterprise Institute
- Apna Ghar
- Asian Americans Advancing Justice Chicago
- Asian Human Services
- Aspen Environmental Services
- AT&T
- Array of Things
- Better Government Association
- Beyond the Ball
- Bounteous
- BPI
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- CF Financial LLC
- Charles Ifergan Salon
- Chicago and Culture Language Diversity Opportunity
- Chicago Chapter of Illinois Association of the Deaf
- Chicago Children's Advocacy Center
- Chicago Food Bank Depository
- Chicago Foundation for Education
- Chicago Foundation for Women
- Chicago Hearing Society
- Chicago Justice Project
- Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights
- Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning
- Chicago Police Department
- Chicago Regional Growth Corporation
- Chicago Sinfonietta
- Chicago Sports Alliance
- Chicago Votes
- Chicago Women's Health Center
- Chicago Youth Centers
- Choice Furniture USA
- CHS Youth Connections
- Citizens' Climate Lobby
- City Incite
- City of Chicago Labor Standards
- City of Chicago Office of the Inspector General
- City of Evanston Parks, Recreation, and Community Service
- ClassKick
- Clean Energy Trust
- Colombia University
- Congress for the New Urbanism
- Cook County Human Trafficking Task Force
- Cook Memorial Public Library
- Department of Family Support Services
- DePaul University Coleman Entrepreneurship Center
- DeTour
- Dreams for Kids
- City of Chicago
- Diplomatic.Substack.com
- Discovery Partners Institute
- Eatiquette
- Edovo
- Education Pioneers
- Elevate K-12
- Environmental Consulting Group: Midwest
- Equip for Equality
- Ethos
- Exelon Corporation
- Exemplary Marketing
- Family Farmed
- Farmer's Fridge
- Forte Group
- Fringe Salon Chicago
- Future Founders
- Golden Apple Foundation
- Greater Chicago Food Depository
- HANA Center
- Happy Kids Chicago
- Heartland Alliance

PROFESSIONAL RESOURCES

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- Host TBD
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- Illinois City/County Management Association
- Illinois Education Association
- Illinois Green Alliance
- Illinois Intellectual Property Alliance
- Illinois Network of Centers for Independent Living
- Illinois Office of Minority Economic Empowerment
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- ISACA
- Jacques International Languages Academy
- Journalists Toolbox, University of Illinois at Chicago
- Judith Dunbar Hines
- Kids off the Block
- Larson Communications
- Latinos Progresando
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- LoadSys
- Luxebloom LLC
- Mayors Office for People with Disabilities
- McGuire Woods Consulting: Federal Public Affairs
- Media Literacy Now
- Medill School of Journalism, Northwestern University
- Merieux NutriSciences
- Metropolitan Planning Council
- MHub
- Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance
- Mondelez International
- Motion Agency
- National Council of State Boards of Nursing
- National Public Housing Museum
- Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship
- Northern Illinois University
- Northwestern University Interfaith Community
- One North
- One on One
- Outcome Health
- Packed With Purpose
- Plant Chicago
- ProPublica Illinois
- Public Narrative
- RedShelf
- RefugeeOne
- Resilience
- Restore Justice Foundation
- rMark Bio
- SDI Solutions
- Sente Advior
- Shriver Center on Poverty Law
- SILC of Illinois
- Skokie Public Library
- Sociality
- Sphera
- Startup Port
- State of Illinois Office of Trade and Investment
- Swerve Salon
- Technology & Innovation Council, IL Chamber of Commerce
- The Chicago Bar Association YLS Racial Justice Coalition
- The Chicago Council on Global Affairs
- The Chicago Lighthouse
- The Chicago Tribune
- The Corporate Responsibility Group of Greater Chicago
- The Food Foundry
- The Hatchery Chicago
- The People's Music School
- The Prairie Group Consulting: Government Relation/Lobbying
- Tock
- Traffick Free
- UChicago Law School Global Human Rights Clinic
- Ulta Beauty
- University of Illinois at Chicago
- University of Illinois at Chicago Office of Technology Management
- University of Chicago, Polsky Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation
- United Way Chicago
- Uptake
- Upwardly Global
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the 7th Circuit
- Walgreens
- Westside Justice Center
- Wish Your Price
- Women Tech Founders
- Women's Business Development Center
- World Business Chicago
- World Relief Chicagoland
- Vox.com
- YMCA of Metro Chicago
- YOUMedia
- YWCA's Racial Justice and Activism - Policy Review

OUR IMPACT

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Slovenia
South Africa
South Sudan
Spain
Sri Lanka
St. Lucia
Suriname
Switzerland
Taiwan
Tajikistan
Tanzania
Thailand
The Bahamas
Timor-Leste
Trinidad and Tobago
Tunisia
Turkey
Turkmenistan
Uganda
Ukraine
United Kingdom
Uzbekistan
Venezuela
Vietnam
Zambia
Zimbabwe

52

Cultural and Academic
Exchange Programs
implemented

834

Program participants
hosted in Chicago

140

Countries we built
relationships with, one
handshake at a time

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Peggy Parfenoff
Persida Louison
Phan Wan
Ravindra Marur
Rebecca Wellisch
Reva Minkoff
Richard Bobo
Robert Paddock

Robyn Palmersheim
Roland Kulla
Roslyn Dix
Roslyn Pollack
Sabine Schuller
Sally Hazelgrove
Sally Freeman
Scott Anderson
Scott Fetters
Sevil Kutay
Shannon Egan
Shannon O'Hern
Shelley Rosen
Simone Baptiste
Spencer Swensrud
Stacey Mansker-Young
Stanley Leibowitz
Stephanie Russell
Stephen Pinaire
Stephen Spigel
Steve Bynum
Susan Comstock
Susan Ohde
Suzanne Sahloul
Tatyana Sergeyeva
Teodora Preradovic
Tess Mattingly
Theodora Turula
Thomas Kimmel
Tim Ocasek
Todd Wells
Trent Lawrence
Virginia Russell
Wade Freeman

DIVERSITY, INCLUSION & EQUITY

“ *WorldChicago is committed to modeling diversity, equity & inclusion within the international nonprofit community and to provide informed, authentic leadership for cultural equity,*

”

WorldChicago Equity Policy (2020)

WorldChicago respects and values diverse life experiences, backgrounds, and heritages and strive to ensure that all voices are heard and is committed to modeling diversity, equity and inclusion within the international nonprofit community. The WorldChicago Equity Policy is one that helps to guide the organization in creating and maintaining an equitable workplace and programming.

At WorldChicago, an equitable workplace is one where all employees, volunteers, and program participants feels valued and respected, where differences are viewed as opportunities to explore creative interactions. We are committed to a nondiscriminatory approach in all our efforts regarding employment, advancement, and program participation. We respect and value diverse life experiences, backgrounds and heritages and strive to ensure that all voices are heard.

WorldChicago is committed to modeling diversity, equity and inclusion within the international nonprofit community.

To provide informed, authentic leadership for cultural equity, WorldChicago will:

- Connect diversity, equity and inclusion to our mission to ensure the well-being of our staff and the international community we serve.
- Understand and dismantle any inequities within our policies, systems, programs, and services, and continually update and report organizational progress.
- Challenge potential underlying, unquestioned assumptions that interfere with inclusiveness.
- Advocate for and support board-level thinking about how systematic inequities impact our work, and how best to address that in a way that is consistent with our mission.

Be a cultural leader by creating and supporting programs and policies that foster equity and equality throughout the organization, from the staff, to homestay hosts, host organizations, to the Board of Directors.

• Lead with respect. We expect all employees to embrace this notion and to express it in workplace interactions and through everyday practices.

WorldChicago abides by the following action items to help promote diversity, equity and inclusion in our workplace:

- Commit time and resources to expand more diverse leadership within our board, staff, committee, and advisory bodies.
- Pursue cultural competency throughout our organization by creating substantive learning opportunities.
- Generate and aggregate quantitative and qualitative research related to equity and equality to make incremental, measurable progress toward the visibility of our diversity, equity and inclusion, and equity efforts. Data will be publicly available on our website.
- Create and support programs and policies that foster equity throughout the organization, from the staff, to homestay hosts and other volunteers, to the Board of Directors, to suppliers, and partners.
- Develop and present sessions on diversity, equity and inclusion to provide information and resources internally, and to partners and participants.
- Develop a system for being more intentional and conscious of bias throughout our people selection process from recruiting to promotion. Train our hiring team on equitable and inclusive practices.
- Advocate for public and private-sector policies that promote diversity, equity and inclusion. Challenge systems and policies that create inequity, oppression, and disparity.

GET INVOLVED

Homestay & Dinner Hospitality Hosts

WorldChicago homestay hosts open their homes to our international adult and youth visitors for short-term homestays ranging from one week to one month. As a homestay or dinner hospitality host, you take on a special role as a cultural ambassador, with a unique opportunity to share our U.S. culture and at the same time learn about another part of the world.

Young Professionals Group

The WorldChicago Young Professionals Group (YPG) brings together a diverse group of young people (ages 21-39) with a shared passion in international relations and citizen diplomacy. Through workshops, panel discussions, and networking events, Young Professionals learn the skills and grow the network that will help them become a part of the next generation of emerging global leaders who will lead, engage, and promote citizen diplomacy in Chicago and around the world.

Share Your Expertise

WorldChicago partners with local business, civic, and non-profit leaders to provide opportunities to share their knowledge and skills with emerging leaders here in Chicago and from around the world who are participating in professional exchanges or local programming.



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