



2020 Annual Report

Building Global Ties Locally





CIVIC

Council for International Visitors to Iowa Cities

Who we are:

The Council for International Visitors to Iowa Cities (CIVIC) is a community-based, member-driven non-profit organization that creates, supports, and sustains citizen diplomacy initiatives in eastern Iowa's Creative Corridor.

What we do:

CIVIC coordinates people-to-people exchanges between international visitors and residents of eastern Iowa's Creative Corridor. As a member of Global Ties U.S., CIVIC collaborates with the U.S. Department of State's International Visitor Leadership Program to host current & emerging international leaders who work in both public and private sectors. By programming meetings between visitors and their professional peers, hosting Iowa Table dinners, and sharing the rich culture of our community, CIVIC builds global ties locally.

2020 Key Impacts

36 volunteers gave 209 volunteer hours

133 student-visitor interactions

518 professional points of contact

41 professional appointments

606 meals purchased locally

11 Iowa Table Dinners

210 hotel room stays

Mission Statement:

Through citizen diplomacy, CIVIC seeks to promote international cooperation, foster mutual understanding across national borders, facilitate the creation of global professional networks, and contribute to the global cultural education of area students and community residents.

Vision:

CIVIC seeks to strengthen our community's commitment to and participation in cross-cultural exchanges on professional and individual levels. We believe in the inherent value of cross-cultural interactions and that people-to-people exchanges contribute to the creation of a more peaceful world for which we strive.

Our Values:

In our day-to-day and long-term decision making, we seek to align our actions with our values. To do so, we ask: Is it globally-focused? Is it member-focused? Is it community-focused? We believe that affirmative responses support our mission and move us closer to our vision.



Edward R. Murrow: Media Responsibility in an Age of Disinformation group at the Old Capitol

A Message from the President, "Quarantine Edition"



Even with twenty-twenty hindsight, no one could have predicted the disruptions the pandemic would inflict on CIVIC in 2020. We started out the new year with a new Executive Director who soon departed leaving a leadership void. It was the board's wise move to turn to Janice Weiner who agreed to act as interim ED. This happened in March just as the State Department halted all IVLP visits. CIVIC's office was off limits when Old Brick closed its doors, moving all staff interaction and Board meetings to Zoom. Our veteran Program Coordinators Mark Schoen and Grace Bryant, along with former ED Jo Butterfield, deserve credit and thanks for showing Janice the ropes. And Janice was a quick study. Even before she put together a successful online team-building board retreat (with Mark's input and challenging trivia quiz!), it became apparent that Janice had the qualifications, passion and temperament to lead CIVIC, especially in the time of COVID. We are proud of how the ED, staff, and interns have adjusted to change amid uncertainty and pivoted toward virtual programming. Of course, everyone is eager for a return to the Mandela Washington Fellowship program and to in-person delegations, hopefully in the coming year. In the meantime, we are learning more about how to leverage technology to create and maintain connections.

At our Annual Meeting in November-another virtual first!- we recognized three board members who stepped down in 2020: Mazahir Salih, Martha Kirby, and Jennifer Blair. As of December, Tracy Jon Sargeant will also retire from the board. Each of these directors has contributed significantly to the soundness and dynamism of our Board of Directors. They will be missed and *will always be welcomed back*! 2020 marks a changing of the guard as four new members were elected to the board. Thank you to John Achrazoglou, Peter Gerlach, Alisa Meggitt, and Andrew Farley for your commitment to serve CIVIC. We expect great things to come during your tenure!

A final, heartfelt word of thanks to CIVIC's valued members, dedicated volunteers, generous donors and professional resources. Your support and gifts help CIVIC weather the COVID crisis and will ensure our operational and long-term financial security beyond a challenging 2020. Whether working remotely, sheltering in place, or meeting online, our resolve to promote citizen diplomacy remains strong. And more people are thinking globally!

- Jane McMullen, Board President



A Citizen Exchange Circle (CEC) for U.S. Electoral Process, a joint regional project for East Asia Pacific and South-Central Asia, hosted by Jane and Ambassador Ron McMullen.

2020 At-A-Glance

In the months leading up to March when all in-person IVLP visits were halted, CIVIC programmed **8** visits for **45** international delegates from **25** different countries.

Local Economic Impact

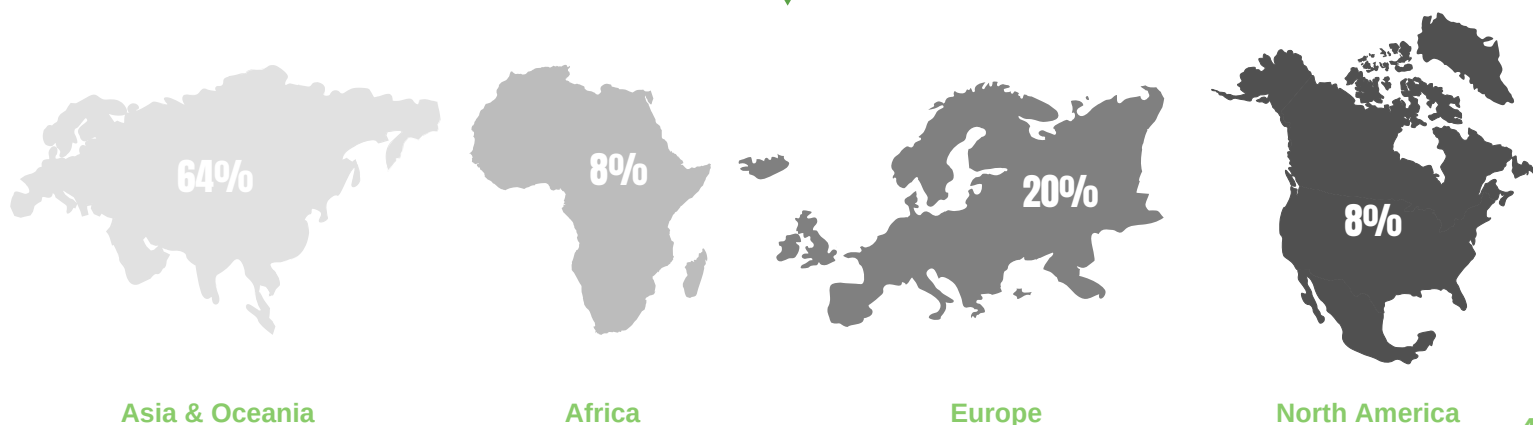
\$	Total Impact	\$28,932
🚗	Transportation	\$8,190
🛏️	Hotel Nights	\$20,742

Countries/Territories

Afghanistan	Hungary	Sri Lanka
Armenia	India	St Kitts and Nevis
Australia	Kyrgyz Republic	Taiwan
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Malaysia	Tajikistan
Brunei	Nepal	Thailand
Burma	Nicaragua	Turkey
Czech Republic	Republic of Korea	Uganda
Ethiopia	Slovenia	
Georgia	Spain	



Where did our international visitors come from?



Committee Initiatives



**Elizabeth Bergeron,
Membership Chair**

The membership team has expanded to include Rosie Russell, Elizabeth Daly, and Alisa Meggitt in addition to veterans Dave Tiffany and Steve Merkel-Hess. Holly Harris' support in the past year has been immensely helpful in maintaining connections with all of you.

While 2020 was certainly not the year we envisioned, even with a shortened fiscal year CIVIC's positive and enduring impact was felt in eastern Iowa and around the world. 122 members (including 6 new members) and 36 volunteers committed time, resources, and expertise to support 38 visitors from 26 countries. We are also grateful to those of you who opened up your homes for 'Iowa Table' dinners and joined us for informal social events. These are often the times when we share the most meaningful and memorable moments with our visitors.

Closer to home, maintaining global connections drives what we do, and we have been brainstorming how to maintain these vital relationships. We may find that it is easier than ever to broaden members' access to international connections and diversify our membership as physical barriers to participation become less relevant. While our Annual Meeting was our first virtual gathering, it was not our last. We are excited to now offer monthly virtual meet-ups to connect with IVLP program alumni in their locales, become more comfortable with virtual programming opportunities, and have some fun testing each other's knowledge of international trivia. Spending time together would be a delightful way to fill the current void in our lives while unable to welcome visitors or travel. Please watch for details on upcoming events and plan to join us!

It's been a year with unique challenges. One thing is for certain, the future of citizen diplomacy will not look like the past and we are excited to expand our exchange world. We look forward to a year with new and varied opportunities to connect with you!



**Amy Alice Chastain,
Communications Chair**

Thank you to committee members, particularly Jennifer Blair who led the committee before relocating out-of-state, Ann Christensen, Newman Abuissa and our staff and interns Emilie Wilson, Grace Bryant, and Tess Knickerbocker. And welcome new committee member, John Achrazoglou.

For all of us, 2020 was a year marked by change – from changes in leadership, both as an organization and as a committee, to COVID. Our committee drafted a number of one-off communications to the membership to let them know about those changes, and that work often took precedence over longer term plans, which we hope to pick up again in 2021.

On that note, we are happy to report a number of initiatives that were completed during this time: Annual Report, newsletters and website updates, including the shortened video on the home page; we also placed IPR ads and planned the Celebration of Citizen Diplomacy Dinner, as well as advertised IVLP's 80th Anniversary on the website and on social media.

Thank you to Emilie Wilson and Tess Knickerbocker for their tireless efforts in communicating with our members, community, and volunteers through constant contact, via area media outlets, and through social media. Social media continues to prove a strong driver of member engagement, particularly during peak visit times, with thousands of impressions per month. Continue to engage with us using #civiowacities.

Programming staff, Grace Bryant, sent out a questionnaire to past IVLP participants and we've received about 30 back. We will be exploring ways to feature these quotes and stories on social media, in newsletters, and in fundraising efforts in the coming year.

We continue to seek stories from you, our members and volunteers! Share your exchange experiences with us and help us spread the word about the power of citizen diplomacy!

Building Global Ties Locally: 2020 Highlights

“

Of all the stops of our IVLP tour, the one in Iowa City was probably the best one. The people we met were eager to share their experiences and very open to listen to ours. I will always have a fond memory of Iowa City!

”

—Giovanni Zagni, 2019



Edward R. Murrow: Media Responsibility in an Age of Disinformation



Edward R. Murrow: Media Responsibility in an Age of Disinformation Iowa Table



Georgia: Moving Towards Energy Independence



Georgia: Moving Towards Energy Independence



Kyrgyzstan: Countering Violent Extremist Propaganda group meeting with UI School of Journalism

Building Global Ties Locally: 2020 Highlights



Kyrgyzstan: Countering Violent Extremist
Propaganda Iowa Table



Kyrgyzstan: Countering Violent Extremist
Propaganda



Regional Responses to Refugee and Migration
Issues in the Indo-Pacific at UAY

“

I would recommend the city to people
who are interested in literature.
University was one of the most exciting
encounters of my IVLP trip.

”

–Sona Karapoghossyan, 2019



Regional Responses to Refugee and Migration Issues
in the Indo-Pacific: Visit with Cedar Rapids Mayor



International Woman of Courage: Zarifa Ghafari
visiting the University of Iowa Burn Treatment Center

2020 Treasurer's Report



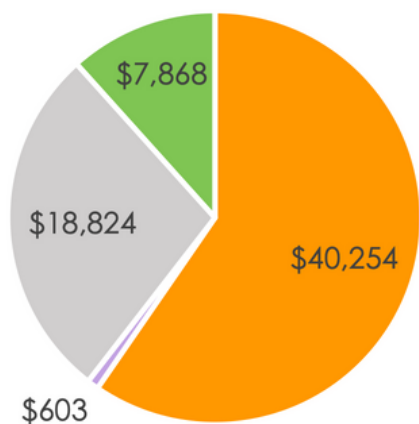
**Andrew Farley,
Board Treasurer**

After 2019's strong financial growth driven by a record number of visitors, 2020 was well, unique. As we all endured the global pandemic and its demand for change in our lives, CIVIC's financial activities mirrored this reality as expected. The fiscal year began in normalcy, but as lockdowns began in mid-March, CIVIC programs halted resulting in a dramatic drop in expenses and income for the remainder of the year. The halt of programming resulted in fee-for-service income being lost for the year, as the Mandela Washington Fellowship, a major summer program, was postponed at least a year. Yet, as the fiscal year ended, CIVIC managed to keep control of costs and ended the year with expenses only slightly higher than income. During the difficult year, other sources of income saw decreases as well, monies from partnerships were negligible, and donations decreased compared to previous years. Highlighting how financial support from our communities and individuals strengthen CIVIC and propel its mission. Thankfully, CIVIC finished the year in a stable financial position supported by grant monies from Global Ties.

Ending an unpredictable year in a stable financial position is good but what's encouraging is the change in programming underway at CIVIC. The abrupt stop in international visitors and acknowledgement that international travel will not return to normal in the short-term, CIVIC has pivoted towards virtual programming which will provide financial relief in the short-term. It will also act as an investment in CIVIC's long term financial health as virtual programming will continue to be offered after the pandemic diminishes. CIVIC certainly did not see this transition in programming at the beginning of the year and was in no way prepared to make the technology purchases required of virtual programming. Congress' re-purposing of funds originally meant for in-person programming were converted to one-time grants to cover technology purchases. CIVIC is on the way to benefit from this conversion and complete technology purchases in the first half of the new year.

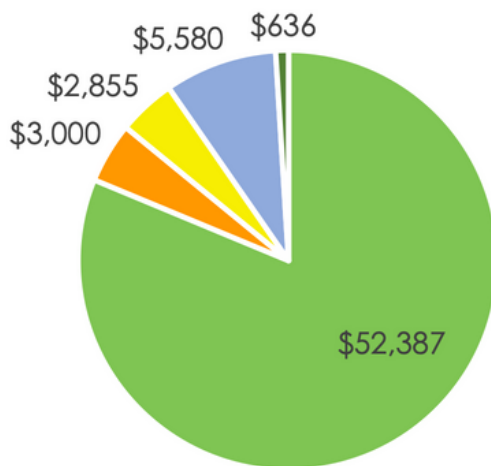
Thank you for your support, it helped CIVIC navigate an unprecedented year and allowed us to adapt to new realities, but we clearly need your support to regain a strong financial position in the coming year and continue the mission of CIVIC well into the future.

Total Expenses FY2020 \$67,549



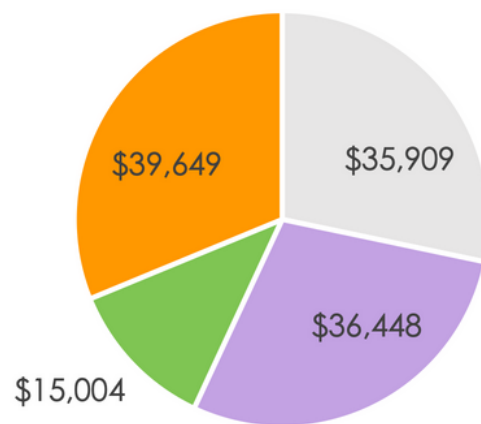
- Personnel
- Fundraising cost
- Uncontrollable expenses
- Controllable expenses

Total Income FY2020 \$64,458



- Global Ties+ earned inc
- UI International Programs
- Memberships
- Donations
- Interest

**Financial Position FY2020
\$127,010**



- Endowment
- CD's
- Savings
- Cash and cash equivalent

Our Sponsors

Thank you to the following organizations for their significant contributions supporting CIVIC's work.



CIVIC programs make a significant cultural and economic impact in our community. International visitor program funding is one of shared responsibility between our local community and the federal government.

Find out more about how businesses can demonstrate their support for building global ties locally at www.iowacivic.org or by contacting the CIVIC offices at 319.569.1115.

2020 Annual Membership Meeting

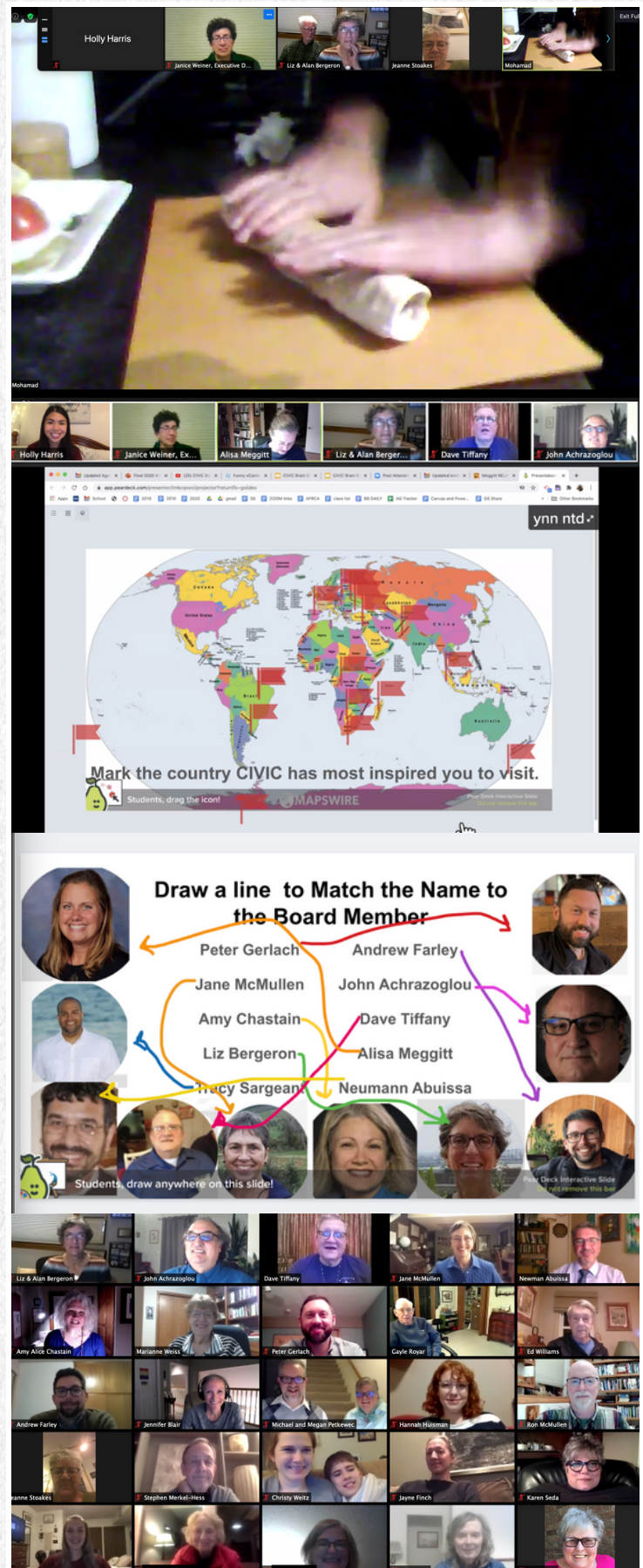
This year's annual membership meeting was, like almost everything else in 2020, different. We missed the opportunity to gather, talk, share international dishes and break bread together, but we found that, by gathering in a virtual space, we could at least get a feel for this, catch up on CIVIC news and see many friendly faces we have missed. Sincere thanks to Liz Bergeron for doing an outstanding job of organizing our first ever virtual membership meeting.

We showcased the year in pictures, thanks to our communications coordinator Emilie Wilson. In lieu of a potluck, Mohamad El Hallak demonstrated how to cook falafel, shared his recipe and made our mouths water (if anyone has tried making it, please let us know and send us pictures). Thanks to the digital creativity of new board member Alisa Meggitt, we celebrated CIVIC's wonderful volunteers. We introduced our team, including new members – both staff and board – and formally elected our newest board members, John Achrazoglou, Alissa Meggitt, Peter Gerlach and Andrew Farley. Amy Chastain's and Jane McMullen's 3-year terms were up and they were reelected to the board. We also took the opportunity to thank our outgoing board members and staff.

Our new executive director, Janice Weiner, offered us a window into the virtual programming in which CIVIC is participating – to date, we have hosted three programs – and acknowledged the challenges in finding ways to include volunteers and members in the virtual sphere. One of our next programs will include virtual "Iowa Tables", which will again offer us an opportunity to get to know visitors. She also laid out funding for the year to come, including a special one-time grant that will allow us to purchase the equipment we need to engage fully and professionally in virtual programming. Even after we return to in-person programs, virtual programming will continue, making it a worthwhile investment in CIVIC's future and the future of exchanges.

Finally, we announced the launch of monthly Meet Ups, so we can gather, learn from one another and guests, and keep up to date as CIVIC moves from an unusual 2020 into 2021.

Our sincere thanks to everyone who attended!



2020 Citizen Diplomat Awards



**Dr. Pamela Wesely,
Individual Award recipient**

CIVIC approached us about providing some professional development for teachers from South Africa and Brazil. We ended up having several sessions with them about innovation and how to make change within educational systems. It was less of a come here and learn from our wisdom, but rather, come here and let's talk together about some of these ideas that come from our different life circumstances.

For them to come here and tell us about their challenges and successes in their organizations has been really enriching for me. I can read case studies about other countries, but talking to practitioners is very different. Hearing them talk to one another about how they can work through things during our workshops was a great part of the program I was a part of.

- Dr. Pamela Wesely, UI College of Education Associate Professor



**United Action for Youth,
Nonprofit Award recipient**

We've been connected to CIVIC for about 10 years. I believe CIVIC reached out to our director, Stu Mullins, and of course we said yes.

I think that anytime you get to exchange ideas cross culturally it's inevitable that you are going to come across a new idea or approach that you haven't thought of before. I always walk away from our meetings totally rejuvenated about working with young people.

It's always been enlightening and interesting talking to people from around the world about what we do similarly and what we do differently. I've always been struck by the people that do LGBT programming. It gives me hope that the world as a whole is becoming a safer place for young people.

- Kylie Buddin, UAY Youth Development Director



**TPI Composites,
Business Award recipient**

I was approached by CIVIC and they said they had a group of people specifically from Georgia that were really interested in wind energy. When they came, we got to take them out on the production floor with all the safety gear on and show them our wind blades. To see them look up and be like 'Oh my gosh! That flies in the sky?' I remember that feeling when I first saw it, so it was really cool to experience that with them.

With the group from Georgia, I remember I gave them a presentation and told them about the wind blades. At the end of it, they gave me this handmade purse that was from their country that they brought all the way here and gave to me. I still have it at home and every time I see it hanging up I remember how it was such a fun experience.

- Katelyn Kolsrud, TPI Community & Associate Relations Coordinator

To view the full Citizen Diplomat Award interviews go to www.youtube.com/watch?v=cu57t7dyidY or scan the QR code to the right!



A Letter from the Executive Director



It's been quite the year. Since I came on board - as interim in March, then as permanent Executive Director in June - we have been constantly shifting gears. The good news: We're in good shape, we're hosting virtual programs and are looking forward to more in 2021!

I'm incredibly grateful to have such capable, flexible staff. Our committed programming coordinators, communications coordinator, interns and board members have kept CIVIC moving forward, into the new challenges and opportunities of IVLP virtual. We've all been patient with one another while we learn the ropes of virtual programming. As one Global Ties US leader described it, "We're flying the airplane as we build it."

I'm thankful for the vision of the State Department's Office of International Visitors and Global Ties US, who saw an opportunity and did the necessary leg work to convince Congress to re-program "in person" exchange funds to "IVLP virtual" grants for our community-based organizations. These funds will strengthen the network around the U.S.

We are so appreciative of the patience our members, donors and intrepid volunteers have shown. We would love to include you in our virtual programming and are seeking ways to do so.

To date, CIVIC has showcased this area's strengths via virtual programs on journalism; education in the digital age; and LGBTQ rights. We hope soon to share news with you about more programs.

Please feel free to reach out to us with thoughts on different aspects of our community that we can show the world. I'm particularly passionate about our non-profits, for example. They coordinated well pre-pandemic, and have now assumed extra loads, responsibilities, challenges and risks to help those who need it the most. They are a model that we can put out there for others to learn from and emulate. I'm sure there are others – give us your ideas!

In the meantime, thank you for wearing your mask, distancing, staying home if you can, and staying safe so that, collectively, we can all look forward to the resumption of in-person programming even as we continue to enjoy IVLP virtual.

- Janice Weiner, Executive Director

Looking Ahead: CIVIC's 2021 Staff & Board

Staff & Interns

Executive Director
Janice Weiner

Program Coordinators
Grace Bryant
Holly Harris

Communications Coordinator
Emilie Wilson

Communications Intern
Tess Knickerbocker

Fundraising/Membership Intern
Hannah Huisman

Board of Directors

President & Communications Chair
Amy Alice Chastain

Vice President
Peter Gerlach

Treasurer
Andrew Farley

Secretary & Membership Chair
Liz Bergeron

Jane McMullen
John Achrazoglou
Dave Tiffany
Alisa Meggitt
Newman Abuissa

