



CIVIC

Council for International Visitors
Iowa Cities

THE CITIZEN DIPLOMAT

CIVIC's Quarterly Newsletter

Spring/Summer 2016

Twice the fun in one edition: Did you miss the spring newsletter? As you'll see from the recap below, the CIVIC staff has been busy, and we prioritized programming over publication! This edition covers CIVIC's last, incredible five months! We're paying special tribute to the members and volunteers who made it possible to host so many points of exchange with people around the world. Thank you for your amazing efforts to build global ties locally!

Visitor Recap: From March to July 2016, CIVIC received 55 guests on **IVLP programming** from 33 countries, including Afghanistan, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Chile, Croatia, Czech Republic, Ecuador, India, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Macau SAR, Moldova, Mozambique, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Poland, Russia, Serbia, Sri Lanka, Sweden, South Africa, Tanzania, Thailand, Turkey, Venezuela, and Ukraine, as well as a representative of the United Nations. Additionally, CIVIC collaborated with the University to host twenty-five **Mandela Washington Fellows** during their six-week stay. The fellows came from 18 countries: Benin, Botswana, Burundi, Central African Republic, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Nigeria, Republic of the Congo, Senegal, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. **All together, CIVIC hosted 80 visitors from 49 countries.**

Programs Hosted: We've hosted a diverse range of programs including, Trends in Higher Education; U.S. Agricultural Trade and Food Safety; Preventing Gender-Based Violence; Supporting Social Change Through Youth Engagement; U.S. Foreign Policy: the Decision-Making Process; Joanna Skrzypiec: International Journalism; Farm to Market; Supporting Social Change through the Arts; Enhancing the Lives of People with Disabilities, and the Mandela Washington Fellows, the premier exchange program in President Obama's Young African Leaders Initiative.

Other Events: The "Totally 80s" 5K Walk and Run was held on April 30th. On June 21st, CIVIC also hosted a **Meet & Greet** event for the Mandela Washington Fellows in collaboration with the UI Institute of International Business.

What's New at CIVIC?

Visit <http://iowacivic.org> to order your tickets for the **30th Anniversary, Founders & Future Dinner** at The Park Lodge, Terry Trueblood Recreation Area on Thursday, September 15th from 6:00pm to 8:00pm. Bid on silent auction items and enjoy an evening of international cuisine and cultural performances!

Thank you to the following **CIVIC volunteers** for their help in **March-May:**

Tom Baldrige, Liz & Alan Bergeron, Peg Bouska, Ann & John Christenson, Tammy Coverdale-Bauer, Nadia Doubiany, Megan Grubb, Martha Kirby, Don & Suzanne Kirchner, Path Kombate, Jane McMullen, Steve Merkel Hess, Kelly O'Brien, Harry Olmstead, Resmiye Oral, Concepcion Piragine, Amanda Potterfield, Ken & Gayle Royar, Paula & Omer Sanan, Jeanne Stoakes, Dave, Denise, & Mike Tiffany, Christy Weitz, and the CIVIC staff & interns

For a listing of our very busy **June - July volunteers**, see the "Anatomy of a CIVIC Visit" on the reverse side!



Home Hospitality dinner hosted by Dr. Resmiye Oral

Visit Profile:

Preventing Gender-Based Violence: A Regional Project

- Held meetings with the Men's Anti-Violence Council and Women's Resource and Action Center to discuss how men and women can create safer communities

- Home Hospitality with Dr. Resmiye Oral

- Met with Rape Victim Advocacy Program and Domestic Violence Intervention program staff to learn about counseling and hotline resources

- Visited Waypoint Services to examine comprehensive services for homeless, abused, and poverty-stricken families and children

- Learned about how the UI works with survivors of assault and sexual misconduct through the Office of Sexual Misconduct and Response Coordinator



Mandela Washington Fellows volunteering at Iowa Valley Habitat for Humanity

Member Profile



Christy Weitz

Christy is an English language teacher at Weber Elementary who loves to travel, read, and spend time with her family and friends. She previously taught high school Spanish and has started studying Arabic this year. She and her husband Mick have two kids - Eleanor (10) and Sam (8). Christy has escorted for several programs and the Weitz family has also hosted home hospitality dinners.

"Volunteering with CIVIC is an exciting way to engage with and learn from international leaders!"
-Christy Weitz

Why did you join CIVC?

I joined CIVIC because I enjoy meeting people from other countries. I wanted to learn more about them and also present a positive and welcoming image of Eastern Iowa. It's fun to see Iowa through fresh eyes after living here for most of my life.

What do you enjoy about engaging with CIVIC?

I like the personal connections. My perspective on many countries has shifted from generalities and assumptions to personal experiences and memories. The visitors' enthusiasm is exciting and contagious as well.

What visit has been your favorite and why?

I enjoyed meeting the recent group from Central and South Asia. Their theme was preventing gender-based violence. I was impressed by the work they are doing in their countries and had a great time getting to know them all!

Connect

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Anatomy of a CIVIC Visit

Part IV: The Visit/ the Volunteer Experience

The idea behind our newsletter's multi-part series *Anatomy of a CIVIC Visit* is to give members a window onto how CIVIC works. In four issues we've covered The Background, The IVLP Network, Proposals and Planning the Visit, and have now arrived at The Visit itself. While the quarterly newsletter has featured the perspective of the international visitor, Part IV showcases the CIVIC volunteer experience.

June and July produced a bumper crop of volunteer opportunities. In addition to three heavily programmed IVLP visits, CIVIC took on programming cultural excursions and volunteer service opportunities for 25 Mandela Washington Fellows during their six-week residency at UI. How could we possibly fill all the program escorting needs? In the end, 34 CIVIC supporters answered the call to be airport greeters, program escorts, and home hospitality hosts!

The first impression many international visitors have of Iowa occurs when greeted by CIVIC members at the eastern Iowa airport. This summer, Tammy Coverdale-Bauer, Jo Butterfield, Doug Hansel, Ken Royar, Newman Abuissa, Christy Weitz, Frank Wildensee, Thomas Panther, and Judith Higgs-Mayer all made trips to the airport. Iowa Nice is expressed by this small but lasting goodwill gesture.

The volunteer experience provides an exceptional opportunity to learn more about resources, programs and events going on in our very own community. When Christy Weitz volunteered to drive to the Oakdale prison choir on June 30th, she said she hadn't known the choir existed and wanted to learn more. Escorting international visitors is like taking a field trip. The volunteer is on a journey with a diverse group of people to a new place away from one's normal environment. How many of us get the chance to meet our city's mayor and councilmembers or visit the Mother Mosque? Would you jump at the chance to meet an Amish bishop and visit the 1875 Altmaier barn outside Kalona? Does the St. Ludmila Kolach Festival in Cedar Rapids make your mouth water? What better way to celebrate the 4th of July than by explaining America's pastime at a Kernels baseball game followed by fireworks in the stadium? Or spend Memorial Day at the Coralville Reservoir after a farm visit in Sutliff with the Bulgarian Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Food? Would you be interested in meeting the owner and chef of Salt Fork Kitchen in Solon or help pull garlic at Sundog Farm? Christy Weitz, Jeanne Cadoret, Peg Bouska, Alan Nagel, Ken Royar, Gayle Bray, Alisa Meggitt, Jennifer Blair, Tammy Coverdale-Bauer, Harry Olmstead, Ron McMullen, Dave Tiffany, Thomas Panther, Catherine Cashner, Jane McMullen, Frank Wildensee, Judith Higgs-Mayer, Art Mayer, Newman Abuissa, Jayne Finch, Jeanne Stoakes, Suzanne Kirchner, Amanda Potterfield, Brandon Jennings, Doug Hansel, and Concepcion Piragine experienced and shared the diversity of eastern Iowa with visitors from around the world by escorting visitors.

By far the best way to interact in depth with international visitors is at a Home Hospitality. Joni Jones co-hosted a dinner with Bev and Doug Weismann for 5 Mandela Washington Fellows. Joni wrote, "They barely had time to eat as we kept generating questions about their work and their countries. It was a gift to us to spend an evening with them." New CIVIC member Gay Blair hosted her first dinner with daughter Jennifer for the promoting social change through the arts visit. Guests at her table included a Mozambican actor, screen writer and current director of Gungu Theater and Television Company, a Russian arts curator, a Tanzanian choral director and an Armenian-Turkish culture and arts editor. CIVIC staff was frankly apprehensive about overloading our volunteers when lining up 7 home hospitalities back-to-back, but our members came through. Besides Joni, Bev and Doug, Gay and Jennifer, CIVIC thanks Megan Grubb, Don and Suzanne Kirchner, Ann and John Christenson, Jane and Ron McMullen, Martha and Bob Kirby, Christy and Mick Weitz and Dr. Resmiye Oral for opening their homes to guests from an astounding thirty-two countries this summer. **Join your fellow members by volunteering today!**

Volunteer Quote

"What a privilege it was to spend Saturday with the scholars! (We) were learning so much...at the Altmaiers. They had a New Holland combine and a baler set up for viewing after feeding us homemade bread and apple butter. They also saw some of the Amish inventiveness in the new chicken houses they are building...Thank you, too, for giving us this opportunity."

Judith Higgs-Mayer on the Mandela Washington Fellows' Kalona Excursion