



**CIVIC**  
Council for International Visitors  
Iowa Cities



## 2019 Annual Report

### Building Global Ties Locally

26 E. Market St., Iowa City, IA • (319)-569-1115 • [civic@iowacivic.org](mailto:civic@iowacivic.org) • [iowacivic.org](http://iowacivic.org)

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AT THE CENTER OF INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE



# 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.

### 2019 Key Impacts

**75 volunteers gave 1,150 volunteer hours**

**350 student-visitor interactions**

**2,958 professional points of contact**

**103 professional appointments**

**5,904 meals purchased locally**

**42 Iowa Table Dinners**

**673 hotel rooms**

### 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.



2019 Mandela Washington Fellowship celebrating their graduation

# A Message from the President



Greetings, Citizen Diplomats!

2019 was a year full of change and new beginnings, starting with the move to our new home at Old Brick, 26 E Market Street, Suite 241. Few people know how a small “Space Force” committee labored for six months to make the case for maintaining CIVIC and ICFRC on campus. Our appeal to the university that CIVIC impacts and fosters internationalization at Iowa and employs and engages UI students, faculty and staff was strong, but failed. Fortunately, we had searched for rental office space for just such a contingency. The move to Old Brick took place over May and June, in the middle of

programming two IVLP visits (U.S. Food Policy and Haiti: Combating Trafficking) and on the eve of the Mandela Washington Fellowship arrival! Thanks to Jo Butterfield, our staff, the board and many volunteers for their hard work making this difficult yet successful transition. Losing access to university computers and Information Technology Services meant purchasing new computers and starting the complicated task of transferring files and changing CIVIC’s email address. New board member Tracy Jon Sargeant lent his IT expertise and generously donated and installed operating systems to get us up and connected. If you haven’t already done so, please note CIVIC’s new email address **civic@iowacivic.org** and phone number **(319) 569-1115**.

CIVIC also faced a change in leadership in 2019. For the past five and a half years, Jo Butterfield served as CIVIC’s eminently capable Executive Director. Under her leadership, CIVIC welcomed a record number of visitors, increased its membership and volunteer base, and grew financial reserves to their highest level. Without a doubt, Jo’s warm interpersonal relationships with the CIVIC board and member volunteers, her sharp management skills, valuable mentorship to student interns, and her deep commitment to citizen diplomacy have strengthened CIVIC during her tenure. Jo has taken a position at the UI Center for Human Rights in educational and student support. While no longer the ED, she remains a member of CIVIC, ever passionate for global engagement. CIVIC looks forward to having Jo answer future volunteer calls for program escort or Iowa Table host. Or we tap her as a professional resource to meet with international visitors at the UI Center for Human Rights.

When CIVIC’s board learned of Jo’s career move, we quickly convened an ED Search Committee and conducted a comprehensive hiring process in the fall. Saunia Powell was hired as the new Executive Director on November 18. Both outgoing and incoming EDs were recognized at the Annual Membership Meeting, held earlier to coincide with the start of a new membership year. Scheduling the Annual Meeting in November instead of January or February makes good sense, will hopefully avoid hazardous winter weather and should encourage larger turnouts.

I regret to inform our membership that on February 25, 2020, Saunia Powell submitted a letter of resignation, effective immediately, to attend to needs that have arisen in her personal life. We wish Saunia all the best. The board is now taking steps to secure a new ED and will keep our membership updated on that progress.

Lastly, I want to extend a special thanks to our dedicated and hardworking student interns who have carried out much of the day-to-day work during our leadership transition. In relation to this Annual Report, Communications Coordinator Emilie Wilson deserves our deep appreciation for creating a polished, professional document that is both informative and interesting to read. We also have Emilie to thank for designing our revamped CIVIC website **iowacivic.org**. Please spend time exploring the website and provide us your feedback!

In the midst of much change, we remain focused on the mission, vision and values of CIVIC and believe that this work matters more than ever. We look forward to working with you in the next year to support and sustain citizen diplomacy in eastern Iowa to build global ties locally.

- Jane McMullen, Board President



## 2019 At-A-Glance

CIVIC programmed **26** visits for **230** international delegates from **74** different countries.

### Local Economic Impact

\$	Total Impact	<b>\$250,455</b>
🛒	Retail Shopping	<b>\$148,883</b>
🚗	Transportation	<b>\$21,503</b>
🛏	Hotel Nights	<b>\$80,069</b>

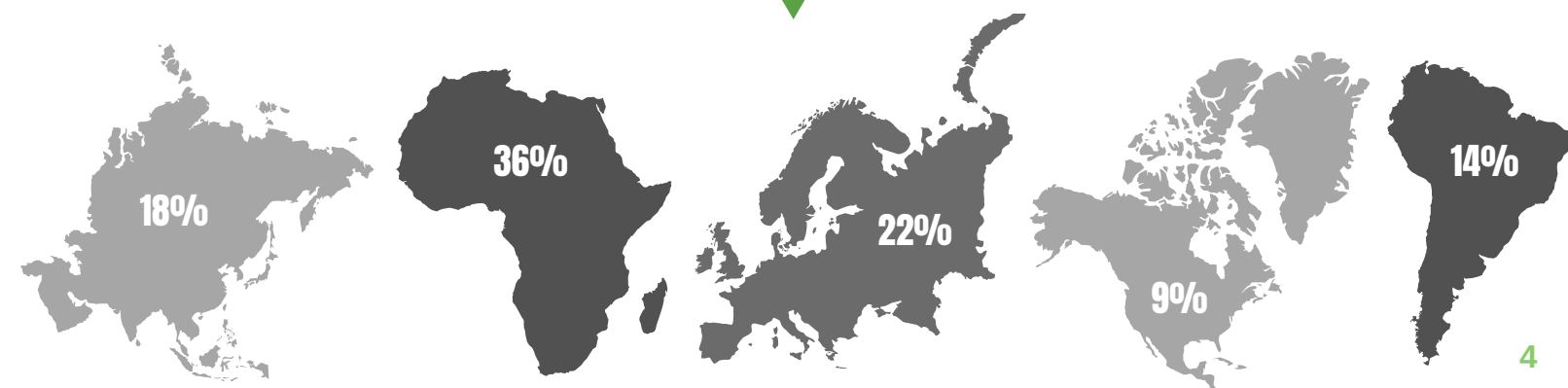


Mandela Washington fellows and Tess Knickerbocker, CIVIC intern

### Countries/Territories:

Albania	Malaysia
Argentina	Mali
Armenia	Mexico
Austria	Moldova
Bolivia	Mongolia
Brazil	Mozambique
Burkina Faso	Nepal
Cameroon	Nicaragua
Central African Republic	Niger
Chad	Nigeria
Chile	Norway
China	Pakistan
Colombia	Papua New Guinea
Congo	Paraguay
Costa Rica	Peru
Cote d'Ivoire	Portugal
Cyprus	Russia
Czech Republic	Rwanda
Dominican Republic	São Tomé and Príncipe
Ecuador	Senegal
El Salvador	Serbia
Estonia	South Africa
Ethiopia	South Sudan
Gabon	Spain
Gambia	Swaziland
Georgia	Tanzania
Ghana	Tunisia
Haiti	Turkey
Hondurous	Turkmenistan
Hungary	Uganda
Italy	United Kingdom
Kenya	Uruguay
Korea	Uzbekistan
Krgyz	Venezuela
Lativa	Vietnam
Lithuania	Zambia
Malawi	Zimbabwe

### Where did our international visitors come from?





## Committee Initiatives



**Jennifer Blair,  
Communications Chair**

The Communications Committee this past year included Newman Abuissa, Christy Weitz, Elena Osinskaya, and Jennifer Blair (chair). We are grateful for the work of CIVIC's communications staff, Emilie Wilson as Communications Coordinator and Tess Knickerbocker as Communications Intern. Emilie re-designed our website and then undertook the monumental task of migrating all information from our old site over to our new one. We are also grateful for the help of Board member Tracy Jon Sargeant in assisting with IT questions and issues on this migration. If you have not yet seen it, we encourage you to visit [iowacivic.org](http://iowacivic.org) to appreciate the work that went into this re-design.

Many thanks as well to Tess and Emilie, who were responsible for our publications this year, including the Newsletter, Annual Report, event programs, and flyers.

We serve as the planning committee for our annual Celebration of Citizen Diplomacy Dinner (CCDD), and we hosted our the 4th CCDD in April, with keynote speaker Lana Zak, ABC News Washington Correspondent and University of Iowa alumna. We are currently planning the 2020 CCDD, so please stay tuned for further information. We hope you will be able to join us this spring for it.

As we head into a new year, our Committee would like to gather CIVIC stories (both in video and written formats) from members and volunteers. If you have had a meaningful "CIVIC moment" when meeting with international visitors, please reach out to us ([jennifer-blair@uiowa.edu](mailto:jennifer-blair@uiowa.edu)). When we host delegations, citizen diplomacy happens along the way – walking visitors to a meeting, picking them up at the airport, or welcoming them for dinner. We'd like to gather examples of these moments to share with others, to help explain the personal value of the work we do.



**Amy Chastain,  
Membership Chair**

This has been another busy membership year with many members and volunteers going above and beyond to support citizen diplomacy in a big way in Eastern Iowa! Together, 134 members and 75 volunteers served an astounding 1,150 hours to promote citizen diplomacy. We thank each and every one of you and want you to know that you are valued for the role you play both through your membership renewals and with gifts of time and talent as we collectively hosted visitors from 68 different countries and left a lasting impact through our open hearts and minds!

Many of you, individually, volunteered over 20 hours and were recognized recently at our annual meeting. We want to thank you again here: Liz Bergeron, Peg Bouska, Gayle Bray, Grace Bryant, Jonathan Buswell, Joni Jones, Ron McMullen, Alisa Meggitt, Jane Murphy, Mark Schoen, Christy Weitz, Mick Weitz, Ed Williams, Alan Bergeron, Jeanne Cadoret, Amy

Chastain, Ken Royar, Channon Greer, Steve Merkel-Hess, Jeanne Stoakes, Jane McMullen, and Jo Butterfield.

It is our hope that you will all continue to find your niche within CIVIC to play your important role in welcoming the world to eastern Iowa and engaging visitors to make a positive, lasting impact on our world far beyond our state's and country's borders. With this in mind, we have updated what was once called Home Hospitality to better reflect our mission to engage with our visitors around a common table and have introduced Iowa Table—opportunities to share a casual meal with visitors and exchange stories and friendship. Also, in that spirit of friendship and common interests, it is our hope in the coming year to bring some planning to fruition and offer an opportunity for our members to enjoy a social event together. Watch for this invitation and come out and engage with other CIVIC members who share your passion for global citizen diplomacy. See you in the new year.

# Building Global Ties Locally: 2019 Highlights

“

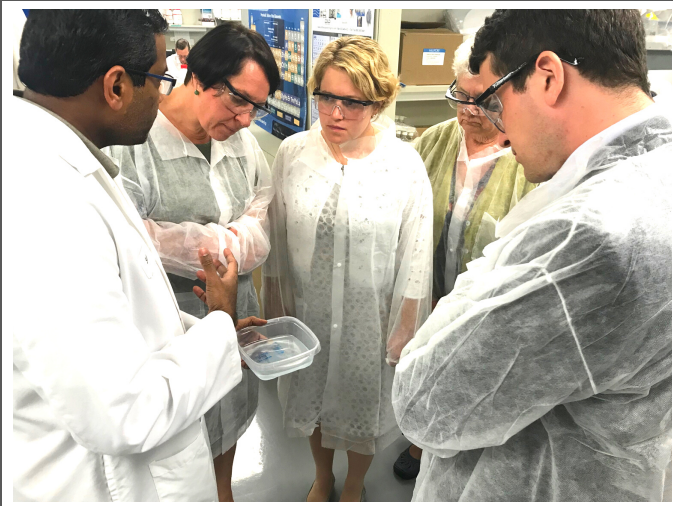
Intercultural exchanges such as these help break barriers, let people get to know each other and build bridges of understanding among people.

”

*-Jesus Amado, Venezuela*



Italian journalists visiting The Daily Iowan



U.S. Food Policy delegation visiting the UI Center for Biocatalysts and Bioprocessing



Social Change Through the Arts delegation visiting United Action for Youth



Multi-regional Disaster Preparedness delegation meeting with Johnson County Bomb Squad



Edward R. Murrow Media Responsibility delegation creating literacy kits with United Way



## Building Global Ties Locally: 2019 Highlights



African Vice Chancellors visiting the New Bohemian Innovation Collaborative



Human Trafficking delegation from Haiti taking a selfie at their Iowa Table dinner



Mandela Washington fellows at an Iowa Table dinner hosted by the Weitzes

“

Our overall experience was highly positive. I felt welcomed and the program was inspirational.

”

*-Petra Kacapirkova, Czech Republic*



Georgian delegation visiting Iowa City West High School



Turkmenistan Renewable Energy delegation learning about solar energy



# 2019 Treasurer's Report



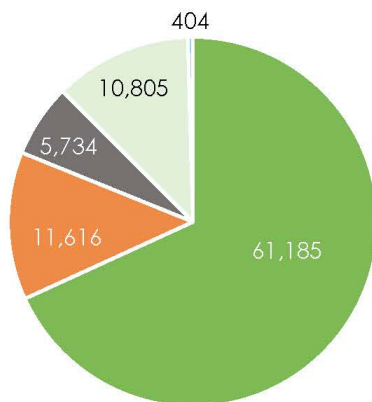
**Newman Abuissa,  
Treasurer**

CIVIC hosted a record number of visitors this year because of unique opportunities to host several large fee-for-service delegations. The largest, a group of 33 English language teachers from across Latin America, provided additional income of nearly \$22,000. This extra funding has been essential to our ability to continue to strive. Without the support provided by the staff, board, interns, members, and volunteers, which made it possible to execute the programs successfully, things could have been very different.

The expanded programming permitted CIVIC to meet the over \$8,000 in costs necessitated by the loss of University of Iowa space, computers, phone, and IT support. The Department of State grant remains essential to our financial well-being. However, these funds were delayed again in 2019; we expect the same in 2020. While our current financial position is strong, the coming year is likely to be leaner. We lost

two months of potential visits due to the government shut-down at the beginning of the year. Additionally, the embassies in Latin America are not currently sponsoring the fee-for-service programs we've enjoyed the last couple of years. The number of visitors, and therefore funding, is very likely to be less than the past several years. As a result, the board has been cautious in its spending and diligent about ensuring that we have sufficient, accessible funds to operate in the event of reduced and delayed funding. For the past 33 years, CIVIC's success has depended on its dedicated, internationally-minded members and donors. Thank you in advance for your continued support.

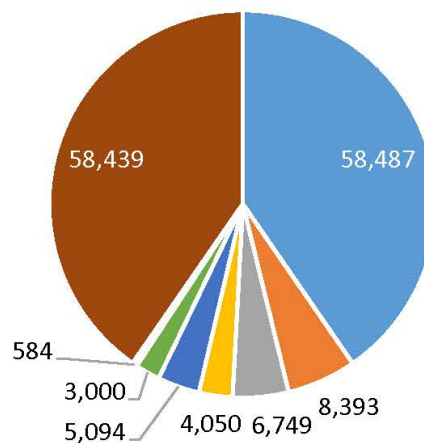
**Total Expenses FY2019 \$89,744**



- Personnel
- Fundraising cost
- Program expenses\*
- Uncontrollable expenses
- Controllable expenses

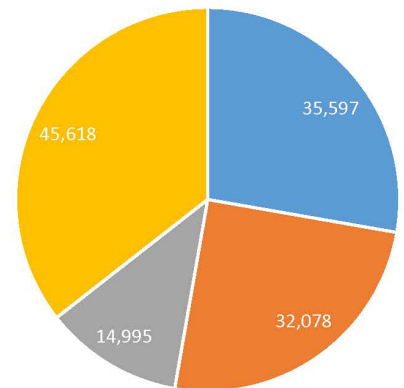
\*Includes only expenses that were not reimbursed program expenses (IVLP and Fee for Service)

**Total Income FY2019 \$144,796**



- Fee for Service
- Donations
- Membership
- Interest
- Fundraising Event
- Partnership Program
- UI International Programs
- Global Ties

**Statement of Financial Position  
FY2019 Total \$128,288**



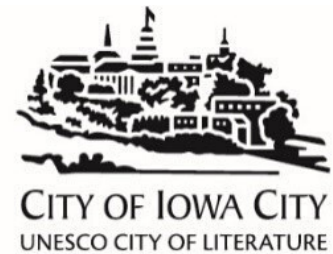
- CDs
- Endowment
- Savings
- Cash & Cash Equivalent

## Our Sponsors

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



**GreenState**  
CREDIT UNION



**Edward Jones**  
MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING  
Todd M. Nash



hotelVetro



CIVIC programs make a significant cultural and economic impact in our community. International visitor program funding is one of the shared responsibilities 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](http://www.iowacivic.org) or by contacting the CIVIC offices at **319.569.1115**.

## 2019 CIVIC Volunteer-Member Awards

Save the Day  
Steve Merkel-Hess

Hit the Ground Running  
Ed Williams

Second City  
Jane Murphy and Mark Brookfield

Pineapple  
Joni Jones

Lifetime Members  
Ken and Gayle Royar

Flight Tracker  
Alan Bergeron

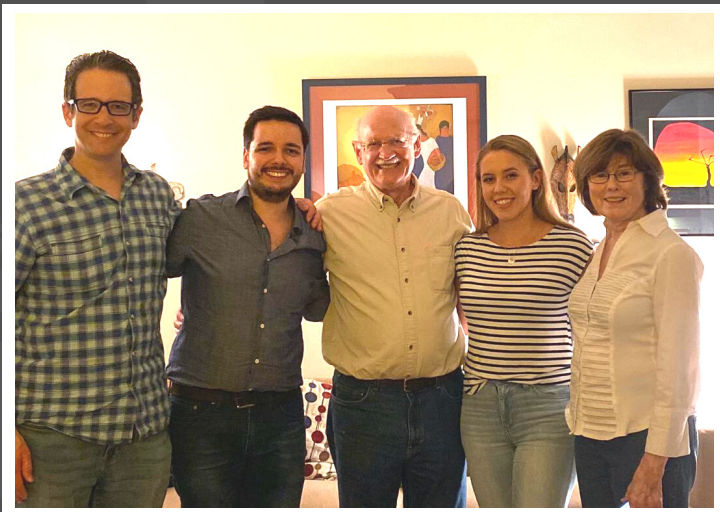


“

Ed Williams and Susan Aherns are very nice people. We talked a lot about soybeans and we really want to visit his farm. It's a pity that time is limited.

”

*-Xin Htz, China*



“

We visited Joni Jones' home. The food was delicious and the view was beautiful. We thank her for her hospitality.

”

*-Wang Youhi, China*





## Looking Back: Jo Butterfield's Directorship



## Looking Ahead: CIVIC's 2020 Staff & Board

### Board of Directors

President

**Jane McMullen**

Vice President

**Newman Abuissa**

Secretary

**Liz Bergeron**

Treasurer

**Martha Kirby**

Membership Chair

**Amy Chastain**

Communications Chair

**Jennifer Blair**

**Dave Tiffany**

**Mazahir Salih**

**Tracy Sargeant**

### Staff & Interns

Program Coordinator

**Mark Schoen**

Program Coordinator

**Grace Bryant**

Program Intern

**Chrissy Hoogland**

Communications Coordinator

**Emilie Wilson**

Communications Intern

**Tess Knickerbocker**

Membership Intern

**Holly Harris**



Explore CIVIC's **NEW** website: [iowacivic.org](http://iowacivic.org)



# 2019 Celebration of Citizen Diplomacy Dinner



Jennifer Blair and keynote speaker, Lana Zak



Mazahir assisting with the raffle



Abby Rustoni accepting Diamond V's award

## Save the Date

### 5th Annual Celebration of Citizen Diplomacy Dinner

**When:**

Monday, April 20, 2020  
6:00-9:00 pm

**Where:**

hotelVetro  
201 S Linn St, Iowa City

Join us to recognize the 2019 Citizen Diplomat Award Recipients with keynote address by Mariela Shaker.

**Emcee:**

Joan Kjaer, Director of Communications for UI International Programs and Host of WorldCanvass

Tickets \$60 for members and \$65 for non-members. \$480 for a table of 8.

Email [civic@iowacivic.org](mailto:civic@iowacivic.org) to reserve your tickets now or watch for an email invitation to purchase tickets soon.



Mariela Shaker is an accomplished violinist who survived the conflict in Syria and sought asylum in the US in 2013. She realized while completing a music scholarship at Monmouth College that she would not be able to return to her home country due to the ongoing conflict.

Mariela then decided to dedicate herself to using her unique voice as a talented musician and refugee to build bridges through music and raise awareness of the plight of the Syrian people. She has been supporting the work of UNHCR since 2015, performing at a recital at the Kennedy Centre in celebration of World Refugee Day and private fundraising events for UNHCR.

Mariela has also spoken and performed to highlight the refugee cause at various prestigious events and institutions including Lincoln Centre, Harvard University and Carnegie Hall. Mariela was also honored at the White House and named as Champion of Change for World Refugees by US President Barack Obama in 2015. Despite the challenges she has faced, Mariela remains convinced of the power of music to forge peace and continues her mission to deliver a message of hope and understanding through her work.