

The CIVIC Citizen

The Council for International Visitors to Iowa Cities

Last December our letter expressed the view that "CIVIC makes a difference in the lives of its members and in the memories of our visitors...It gives a small group of Midwesterners the opportunity to provide the hospitality, friendship and straight talk that can change the adverse opinions so often nurtured by government foreign policy, American films and television."

Four visitors from India and Pakistan were here in April and visited the Iowa State University extension office where they met with Jim Dane (center) and Gene Mohling (far right). Abid Sher Ali is a Member of the National Assembly of Pakistan; Dharmendra Pradhan is a Member of the Indian Parliament; Mustafa Nazir Ahmad is an Advocacy and Information Officer in Pakistan and Atul Bhatkalkar is General Secretary of India.



Mr. Mustafa Nazir Ahmad (4th from left in picture) of Lahore, Pakistan wrote on April 6, 2005:

"I think 'positive' is too small a word to capture my experience in Iowa City. From pick up at airport to a walk through this city, you meet with people with a big heart and soul. So far, nothing has impressed me more in the United States of America...

It is my firm belief that whatever you people are doing won't get unregistered - Almighty Allah (God) shall shower His bounties on you in this world as well as hereafter!

Ahmad and three south Asian visitors had dinner at the home of Jane Murphy and Mark Brookfield. Ahmad went on to say:

"Enjoyed it to the brim! I will sum it up like this: 'Love conquers all hatred. This is the ETERNAL truth! (Buddha)."

He continued: "I have never felt more at home outside of my home in Lahore, Pakistan. I wish I could ever repay you for this graciousness! Just a small offer – if anyone from Iowa City ever visits Lahore in Pakistan, he/she is my family's guest. We'll be honored!"

Similar feelings of welcome were also expressed by Katni Raid of Estonia, Liu Chenghui and Reverend Xu from the Peoples Republic of China (PRC) who were here at other times during the spring. During those visits Gail and Mark Nelson, Dan and Karen Younkin, David and Tamara Schoenbaum, Jane Murphy and Mark Brookfield and Ed Miller offered home hospitality and made a difference.

The Program Officer in Washington who arranged for the visit of Reverend Xu from the PRC wrote: "I do not always get feedback. Xu thought that since the U.S. is the most developed country, American people should be arrogant and would look down upon people from other countries, (but) he received a warm welcome from American people throughout his visit...Exchanging views and networking with his counterparts has provided abundant resources for his work in the future...He would especially like to thank Marianne Weiss, Program Coordinator from CIVIC...and your resources in the faith communities"

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Since the mailing of the last newsletter, Jeanne Cadoret has relinquished her membership on the Board of Directors after years of dedicated leadership. And our numbers and talents on the Board have been enriched by Newman Abuissa, Harrison Kane, Suzanne Kirchner, Tricia Knox, Dongwang Liu, Jean Lloyd-Jones and Pat Kelley.

Stay tuned to your e-mail to learn how you can help to welcome our visitors and create the memories that they will carry with them when they return home.