

Chairman Bernard “Ben” Buecker’s Message



My last letter from the chairman spoke about the 25th anniversary of SACIV and my 25 years of service to this organization. As Honorary German Consul, I had the honor of organizing and hosting celebrations of the 25th Anniversary of the Fall of the Berlin Wall. In 1989, two months prior to this momentous occasion, I was attending summer school at the Technical University of Dresden, East Germany, and wrote an article of this experience copied in this newsletter. The following are my reflections on what I consider to be a most important event.

Freedom is just another word for nothing left to lose, the lyrics of Bobby Mcgee, Kris Kristofferson’s ode reflecting the mood of a man whose sole possession is lost love. Freedom is a changing constant, tempered by reality and driven by expectations and past experiences, but freedom for the citizens of the German Democratic Republic was easy to define, a people with a long history of excellence in creation of music and letters. Since the division of the two Germany’s, the German *volk* of the DDR were imprisoned by governmental policy that sanctioned and punished free thought, free exchange of ideas, freedom of travel, freedom of religion, freedom to work and study - the freedom of choice. Freedom for them meant something to lose: a job, a home, liberty, incarceration, sometimes life itself. One of the most honored German man of letters, a poet, writer, scientist, an intellectual without limit, Johann Wolfgang Goethe, was born in Frankfurt am Main, the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) and buried

in Weimar, Germany, the German Democratic Republic (East Germany). His soul and spirit were divided by a barrier so powerful and bold that it came to be referred to as the iron curtain.

Twenty five years ago, this man-made barrier, the only wall ever built by a nation to keep its people in, came down with a force of fury, fired by powerful winds of need and joy, so strong that its own architects looked the other way, with resignation dismay and with tethered joy merely proclaimed “it’s a free country”.

The celebration of the fall of the Berlin wall was a footnote in history. But to those millions who suffered in the despotic and mysterious regime, which, while at its worst, had neighbors spy upon neighbors, had children unwittingly report criminal deeds of their parents to their teachers (watching western TV e.g.), for those divided from their families, friends and communities overnight in that fatal day in 1963 with the sealing of the border, for them there was little to lose and much to gain.

Those affected and concerned can reflect with joy and thanks on the liberation of the German Democratic Republic, brought about after 25 years of hardship, by a failing system, a bankrupt economy, the citizens stirred to revolt in the German Democratic Republic, the brave leadership of Gorbachev, the decisive acts of Chancellor Kohl to take up the financial costs of the change, and the power of the US government, in persuading its allies to give Germany back to the Germans.

On another note, I wish to thank all of the members for their participation with SACIV in 2014. Please look forward to new and interesting events for 2015. Moreover, the work of our international visitors council in promoting international peace and understanding has become ever so more important, in the challenges for world peace we are now facing. ———

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1 *Chairman’s Message*
- 2 *List of 2014 International Visitors Programs, Announcements, Social Media Links*
- 3 *Greetings from Cecilia Cross, DAS Mara Tekach’s Visit*
- 4 *SACIV Hosts Annual Holiday Party & 25th Anniversary Dinner*
- 5 *Global Ties US: Letter from the President*
- 6 *SACIV Welcomes Visitors from Poland*
- 7 *Global Ties US: 21st Century Diplomacy*
- 8 *Thank You Corporate Members*
- 9 *SACIV Welcomes Visitors from the Middle East & North Africa*
- 10 *SACIV Welcomes Visitors from Argentina*
- 11 *SACIV Welcomes Visitor from Equatorial Guinea, Evaluation on Argentine Program*
- 12 *Global Ties US: #DigitalDiplomacy*
- 13 *Evaluation on Korean Program*
- 14 *Evaluation on Korean Program (Continued), Evaluation on African Women Leaders Program*
- 15 *Evaluation on African Women Leaders Program (Continued), Azerbaijani Ambassador’s Visit*
- 16 *Board of Directors & Staff Contact Information*

2014 International Visitor Programs

February 8th – 11th	<i>Human and Civil Rights for the LGBT Community: A Program for the Western Hemisphere</i>
February 15th – 18th	<i>Political Process & Foreign Policy: A Program for Mr. Tien-Lin Chao (Taiwan)</i>
March 2nd – 5th	<i>State & Local Governments: A Multiregional Project</i>
March 7th – 12th	<i>Rule of Law: A Project for Montenegro</i>
March 18th – 22nd	<i>Promotion of Regional Business Partnerships and Foreign Investments Opportunities: A Sub-Regional Program for Serbia & Kosovo</i>
April 27th – 29th	<i>Expanding Roma Opportunities Through Entrepreneurship: A Program for Bulgaria</i>
August 16th – 20th	<i>Promoting Women Business Leaders: A Project for Korea</i>
September 21st – 23rd	<i>African Women Leaders: Promoting Peace and Security</i>
October 15th – 18th	<i>Banking and Microfinancing: A Program for Mr. Marcus Ndong Okenve (Equatorial Guinea)</i>
October 28th – 30th	<i>Voluntary Visitors: U.S. Political System & the 2014 Midterm Elections (Australia)</i>
November 1st – 5th	<i>Preventing and Confronting Domestic Abuse and Violence: A Project for the Near East and North Africa</i>
November 12th – 15th	<i>Entrepreneurship and Cultivating Business Growth: A Project for Argentina</i>
November 17th – 22nd	<i>United States Department of State Consular and Postal Inspectors</i>
December 4th – 10th	<i>Wounded Warriors Assistance: A Project for Poland</i>

Total Number of Program Participants: 139
Total Number of Countries Represented: 50

Announcements

- ♦ Invoices will be sent out and are due by the end of February
- ♦ Upcoming International Visitor programs and events...
TO BE ANNOUNCED

JOIN THE CONVERSATION!

Make sure to check out our social media pages for important information on upcoming programs & events, photos, videos, and more!



facebook.com/pages/San-Antonio-Council-for-International-Visitors/1543961085823324



twitter.com/SACIVTX
@SACIVTX



linkedin.com/groups/San-Antonio-Council-International-Visitors-6778385

Greetings from SACIV's Newest Staff Member: Cecilia Cross, Administrative Assistant



Greetings to the SACIV community! I would like to introduce myself to those of you I have not yet had the pleasure of meeting: my name is Cecilia Cross and I am the new Administrative Assistant for the San Antonio Council for International Visitors. I joined the office in September and in the past five months have had the pleasure of aiding our Executive Director, Ms. Irma Reyes, and the Board of Directors in managing all number of tasks to secure the success of this organization.

From my first event with SACIV members at the home of Sam & Janet Scott, in which we welcomed a group of African women leaders, I realized how valuable the work we do is and I immediately felt right at home. The enthusiasm of each attendee at the reception provided our visitors with the warm welcome needed to make the evening a memorable and positive experience for everyone involved. At each of the many professional meetings and events with international visitors I have had the pleasure of attending thus far, I have been continuously touched by the hospitality, kindness, and eagerness to learn shown by our community. It's this rewarding experience – the new friendships forged, the cultures shared, and the embodiment of true citizen diplomacy – that makes me so pleased to be a part of this organization.

I hope I will get to meet every one of you in person, but for now let me say a few words about my background. I am a San Antonio native, dual (British) citizen, and have traveled extensively and lived and studied abroad. My education has culminated in my passion for international relations: I attended high school at the International School of the Americas (ISA) and the North East School of the Arts (NESA) and went on to attend Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, where I graduated in 2012 with a degree in International Studies and an area concentration in the Middle East and North Africa. My collegiate experience lead me overseas and across the country: in Paris, France I studied French for a summer; in Rabat, Morocco I studied and taught English for a semester; in Amman, Jordan I studied Arabic and interned for a semester; and in Washington, DC, I was an intern at the US Chamber of Commerce for a summer. Before coming to work for SACIV, I interned at the Free Trade Alliance San Antonio and worked (and still do work) as a hostess at Biga on the Banks on the Riverwalk. These international experiences have made me passionate about the mission of SACIV to build international friendships, facilitate the exchange of ideas, foster cultural understanding, and promote San Antonio as an international city.

Having worked on numerous office tasks and projects for SACIV over the past few months, including successfully coordinating my own program for Polish visitors in December (which you can read about in this issue) and compiling this Newsletter, I am now thrilled to be heading off to Washington, DC for the Global Ties US 2015 National Meeting in early February. This experience will no doubt allow me to learn about our network and resources, connect with like-minded colleagues, and grow as a citizen diplomat.

Looking forward, I am excited about the work ahead and new opportunities for SACIV, as well as the contacts and friends to be made. Thank you for continued support of the organization and please feel free to contact me at any time at ccross.saciv@gmail.com or 210.287.6328! ———

Ms. Mara Tekach, Deputy Assistant Secretary (DAS), U.S. Department of State, Visits with SACIV Board Members

By Betsy Cameron

SACIV Board Members had the honor of meeting with Ms. Mara Tekach, Deputy Assistant Secretary, U.S. Department of State, during her visit to San Antonio on November 13th. Ms. Tekach oversees Professional and Cultural Exchanges which includes the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) under the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. SACIV was the first international visitor council that Ms. Tekach met with since her appointment in July as DAS, and she had the opportunity to hear about SACIV's work with the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP). She even got to meet with IVLP visitors from Argentina who were in San Antonio attending meetings that had been coordinated by SACIV. Ms. Tekach emphasized how these programs increase understanding between Americans and people around the world in support of U.S. foreign policy initiatives. Since 1940, IVLP has brought to the U.S. established and up-and-coming foreign leaders and opinion makers to meet with their American professional counterparts and to experience America firsthand. ———



Ms. Betsy Cameron (Board Member and Program Coordinator), Ms. Mara Tekach (Deputy Assistant Secretary for Professional and Cultural Exchanges, U.S. Department of State), and Argentine visitors Ms. Maria Bearzi, Mr. Claudio Nicolas Cocconi, Mr. Gustavo Radic, and Mr. Juan Manuel Menazzi Canese visit the Free Trade Alliance San Antonio (left to right).

SACIV Hosts Annual Holiday Party & 25th Anniversary Dinner

By Cecilia Cross

On Tuesday, December 9th, 2014, San Antonio Council for International Visitors hosted our annual Holiday Party and 25th Anniversary Dinner at La Focaccia Italian Grill in SouthTown. SACIV members and board members ushered in the holiday season with a reception and a delicious three course Italian meal while mingling with our Polish guests, visiting San Antonio for a program entitled “Wounded Warriors Assistance”.



SACIV members Doris Townsend and Rita Heck (left to right).

Attendees also celebrated SACIV’s 25th anniversary as Ben Buecker, Chairman of the Board of Directors, addressed the triumphs of the past year: we successfully hosted a large amount of visitors and coordinated many more programs this year, as compared to previous years; we were delighted to welcome Ms. Sarwat Husain and Ms. Betsy Cameron as new members to the Board of Directors; we were grateful to pull founder and board member Irma Reyes from retirement to serve as Executive Director; and we were pleased

to hire Cecilia Cross as Administrative Assistant to aid Ms. Reyes with the office workload.

The evening was highlighted by the gratitude expressed by each Polish visitor for the warm welcome they received from our members. The visitors were a diverse and enthusiastic group of professionals who were pleased by the eagerness of our members to learn about their cultures and the work they do in Poland and touched by the hospitality they enjoyed as guests of honor that evening. Thank you to the attendees for the vital role you played in making the night a success as well as a memorable and positive experience for our international visitors. It was a rewarding experience for all involved as new friendships were forged, cultures were shared, and the embodiment of true citizen diplomacy was achieved. ———



Polish visitors mingling with SACIV members (left to right: Mr. Thomas Heck, Ms. Angelika Szymanska, Ms. Rita Heck, Ms. Anna Jaskiewicz, Ms. Angelika Jansen, Ms. Janet Scott, and Ms. Betty Berchermann).



SACIV’s Executive Director, Board Member, and Founder Irma Reyes, Administrative Assistant Cecilia Cross, and Board Member Angelika Jansen (left to right).



Polish visitors enjoying dinner with SACIV members.

Global Ties U.S.

Letter from the President: Reflections on the New Diplomacy

By Jennifer Clinton, Ph.D.

ExchangeMatters, November/December 2014



Change is in the air for diplomacy. It seems like every other week a conference is being held in Washington on the topic of digital diplomacy or diplomacy 2.0. Young, diverse, innovative, quick, engaging and wired mil-

lennials lead these conversations. They appear different from the stereotypical "buttoned-up" diplomat of days past. Someone asked me the other day for the meaning of our National Meeting theme "New Diplomacy." What is really new about diplomacy?

"You know it when you see it," was my first response. On reflection, I pointed out how the signs of the fundamental shift are everywhere—sometimes subtle, but often obvious. As an example, I cite John Kerry's strategic decision to give his first public speech to several hundred millennials at a university in Charlottesville, VA, in lieu of the more traditional Benjamin Franklin Room at the State Department. "Diplomacy matters as much at home as it does abroad," is the message he wishes to send. Our foreign policy will succeed only if we engage the millennial generation, the most global-minded of any generation in American history. Fast forward to November 2014, as we reflect on the major outcomes from President Obama's visit to China: joint agreements to limit greenhouse gas emissions and to extend visa validity for students and business people from both countries to five and ten years, respectively.

"Diplomacy matters as much at home as it does abroad."

Some weeks ago, I attended the Country Promotion Strategies conference in Washington, D.C. This annual event brings together the diplomatic corps, U.S. policymakers, business executives and public relations experts advise countries about deepening their ties with the U.S. while increasing brand recognition, which led to three recommendations:

- ♦ Tapping into local networks is vital. Countries need to build dense networks of personal relationships and partnerships with citizens and societies globally. They

won't succeed by limiting their links to bureaucrats.

- ♦ Countries are looking to normalize relations with the U.S. for economic growth. Jobs, investment, and trade relationships drive diplomatic activities more than ever.
- ♦ Finally, all of us must spend as much time as feasible outside of Washington, D.C., and the visit cities and town in which the networks and resources for economic development are really located.

These recommendations were the underpinning of our *Diplomacy Begins Here* summit in Phoenix, Arizona on November 14, which focused on the International Visitor Leadership Program and its effect on the business relationship between the U.S. and Mexico. Key political figures, students, and hardworking members of our network were on hand. We led another successful summit in Huntsville, Alabama on November 19, discussing youth and diplomacy, among other issues. This event featured the renowned pollster John Zogby, who discussed his experiences with International Visitors living in the Middle East. Visiting State Department diplomats spoke at both events, explaining how this invaluable program furthers American foreign policy—and how it wouldn't work at all without the support of the Global Ties network. For more information including recaps of past events and a schedule of upcoming summits in your community, visit <http://bitly.com/diplomacybeginshere>.

"Jobs, investment, and trade relationships drive diplomatic activities more than ever."

Global Ties U.S.'s National Meeting will give us the opportunity to flesh-out more ideas when we meet next February in the historic meeting hall of the Organization of American States in Washington, DC. Among the foreign policy luminaries planning to attend are former Under Secretaries for Political Affairs' Marc Grossman and Thomas Pickering. They will be joined by former U.S. Ambassador to Mexico James Jones, Representative Joaquin Castro (TX-20), and former President of Costa Rica and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Oscar Arias. Some surprise guests with household name-recognition will also be on hand to help us continue to define how diplomacy needs to evolve over the coming years and decades to meet the challenges and opportunities our new world order presents. ———

SACIV Welcomes Visitors from Poland for the Wounded Warriors Assistance Program

By Cecilia Cross

From December 4th, 2014 through December 10th, 2014, the San Antonio Council for International Visitors



Polish visitors Mr. Tomasz Kloc (center) and Ms. Angelika Sadowski (right) presenting Mr. Hector Villarreal (left) with a token of their gratitude for his role in arranging the speakers' series at UIW.

welcomed five professionals from Poland for a program entitled "Wounded Warriors Assistance". The program aimed to examine programs and organization that provide assistance and support for veterans and their families. The group of visitors included two orthopedic surgeons, a psychologist, a journalist, and the president of an association for wounded soldiers. All of the visitors came from military backgrounds and San Antonio provided a perfect setting to expand their knowledge of military issues and veterans affairs.

The program began on Friday with a full day of presentations at the University of the Incarnate Word, arranged by Mr. Hector Villarreal of the San Antonio Coalition for Veterans and Families. The speakers included Col. Alan Peterson and Rev. Dr. Chrys Parker, who both spoke on PTSD; Randy Parker from the Bexar County Veterans Treatment Court; Gilbert Gonzales from the Bexar County Mental Health Department; and Hector Villareal of SACVF. After the weekend, Monday and Tuesday were also full days of appointments. The visitors met with:

- ♦ Melissa Beach, at the **San Antonio Area Foundation**, to discuss the organization's military initiative and collaboration with the **Military and Veteran Community Council**
- ♦ Robert Murdock, to hear about the work of the **City of San Antonio's Office of Military Affairs**
- ♦ Richard Delgado, to visit **Texas A&M University San Antonio's new Patriots' Casa**
- ♦ Representatives at the **Brooke Army Medical Center**, where they visited the **Warrior and Family Support Center** and had an in-depth tour of the world renowned **Center for the Intrepid**
- ♦ Albert Mireles, who gave them a tour of the **Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 76**

The Polish visitors program was not solely comprised of professional appointments: they also had the opportunity enjoy much of what San Antonio has to offer. Over the weekend, they visited the Riverwalk several times, took a

bus tour of downtown and the San Antonio missions with SACIV member Kay Grosinske, and watched the Spurs take on the Minnesota Timberwolves at the AT&T Center. They were also invited to the annual benefit gala for the Father Leopold Moczygemba Foundation, a local Polish cultural organization with a specific interest in the heritage connections between the Silesia region in Poland and South Texas. The visitors also enjoyed the new sound and light installation, "The Saga", playing on the façade of the San Fernando Cathedral at Main Plaza downtown. Additionally, on the final evening of their visit, the Polish visitors were guests of honor at SACIV's annual Holiday Party and 25th Anniversary dinner at La Focaccia Italian Grill. They were able to mingle and meet with our member and delighted by the warm welcome and enthusiastic reception provided by the attendees.

The visitors spent almost a week in San Antonio, longer than most visits, and were pleased with the full and thorough program prepared for them while visiting our city. Their embraced each new experience with enthusiasm and curiosity and meet each individual during their professional appointments with excellent questions and sincere gratitude. This eagerness to gain knowledge about their program subject and the United States made each Polish visitor a pleasure to host in our city and there is little doubt they will use this positive experience in their personal lives and careers back in Poland. ———



Polish visitors Major Bartosz Zakowski, Mr. Tomasz Kloc, and Ms. Angelika Szymanska with Mr. Hector Villarreal and Polish visitors Ms. Anna Jaskiewicz and Mr. Jaroslaw Sadowski after their program at the University of the Incarnate Word (left to right).



Polish orthopedic surgeons Major Zakowski (left) and Mr. Sadowski (right) examining prosthetic limbs at BAMC's Center for the Intrepid.

—

Global Ties U.S. 21st Century Diplomacy

By Anthony Naglieri, Cultural Vistas
ExchangeMatters, November/December 2014

Climate change. Extreme poverty. Sustainable food production.

If we are to address the major challenges the world is facing, increased understanding and improved information sharing across borders is a necessity. And it all begins with people-to-people links and relationship building.

If you're reading this, chances are that this rallying call is nothing new. You have probably seen firsthand how international exchange programs can broaden perspectives and open doors that were previously shut.

The United States has always played a central role in bringing governments and people together around the world. Since 1940, the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) has been a tried and true testament to those diplomatic efforts by cultivating lasting personal and professional relationships, and successfully spreading the evolving story of America.

But the game is changing, and quickly. The pervasiveness of the Internet and technologies that connect people has forever altered the accessibility of information and how we communicate with one another.

As Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Richard Stengel put it: "We need a new 21st century toolkit for public diplomacy."

Today, practically anyone with an Internet connection any place in the world can share their point of view. With old boundaries removed, new opportunities abound to extend and amplify the impact of exchange programs through the use of technology.

Beginning this October, an important first step toward leveraging technology and innovation took place as Cultural Vistas, together with the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Embassy in Reykjavik, Iceland, launched the first virtual project in the International Visitor Leadership Program's storied history.

Think about that. After 75 years and nearly 200,000 exchange participants, it is not every day that one of the U.S. government's longest standing public and citizen diplomacy programs encounters a "first."

It's approximately 2,803 miles from Reykjavik to Washington, DC. During a time when our society is confronted with many environmental challenges, we are proud that neither our budgets nor geography will curtail efforts to work together and build lasting connections that help us become better stewards of our natural resources.

Over the course of this three-month IVLP project, professionals representing several of Iceland's leading environmental organizations are engaging with American counterparts via web-based video conferencing to discuss and explore key issues facing both nations.

The participants in this IVLP project are examining U.S. environmental policy and advocacy and exploring how NGOs operate, build local constituencies, and develop sustainable funding models. They are doing this through a series of facilitated discussions with Americans working on these issues from a variety of levels and perspectives.

To date, the participating Icelandic professionals have forged connections with everyone from representatives of the U.S.

Fish and Wildlife Service to a Fairbanks, Alaska-based nonprofit that spurred ideas around advocacy for Arctic preservation (if you're wondering, in the case of Alaska, that is a 9-hour time difference!).

Like all IVLP projects, this initiative also includes a staple of traditional people-to-people exchanges—cultural activities. This aspect of the program has posed a new set of challenges. How does one attain an authentic experience of America without being physically present? Thus far, our Icelandic participants have taken part in home hospitality with embassy staff, where they were treated to some old-fashioned American BBQ, and are slated to take a series of virtual field trips to major U.S. landmarks.

Virtual exchanges represent a cost-effective means of extending the reach of people-to-people interactions with the United States. While few experiences can replicate that of experiencing life in another culture firsthand, the ease through which technology can bring people together to share ideas and learn from one another should not be understated.

When it comes to establishing personal connections, face time and a firm handshake are not going anywhere. And neither is technology. ———



THANK YOU TO OUR CORPORATE MEMBERS



Founded in 1881 by the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, The University of the Incarnate Word (UIW) is the largest Catholic university in the state and the fourth largest private university in Texas. UIW's main campus is located in the prestigious Alamo Heights area with locations throughout San Antonio and Corpus Christi, a campus in México City and a European Study Center in Heidelberg, Germany. With over 130 years of tradition, UIW is known not only for its academic excellence but for its diversity and personal attention to the students who call UIW home. 4301 Broadway St., San Antonio, Texas 78209 (210) 829-6000.

J. Tullos Wells

Honorary Consul to Canada in San Antonio.



As Honorary Consul, I represent Canadian interests in San Antonio and South Texas in business, academic, cultural, economic and political affairs. Canada is the United States' largest trading partner and our success story of peaceful bilateral relations has spanned over 200 years. The ties between our two countries hold unlimited potential for professional, personal, and commercial growth. Thank you for joining with us in continuing this success story and in commemorating the sacrifices of people in all armed conflicts on November 11, Canada's Remembrance Day.

tullos.wells@bgllp.com

210.299.3528



SA Scientific, Ltd. has proudly served clinical laboratories worldwide since 1984. We design, develop and manufacture a wide range of One-Step rapid tests for fertility and infectious diseases.

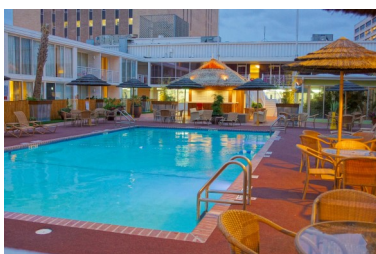
210.699.8800 service@sascientific.com



Chamberlain-Hrdlicka Attorneys at Law is a prestigious International tax and business law firm with offices in Atlanta, Dallas, Denver, Houston, Philadelphia, and San Antonio. Chamberlain-Hrdlicka attorneys have litigated hundreds of cases in many sectors of business, tax, and energy law in both State and Federal courts and foreign jurisdictions.

112 East Pecan Street, Suite 1450, San Antonio, TX 78205

210.253.8383 firm@chamberlainlaw.com



A time honored tradition the **El Tropicano Riverwalk Hotel** is proud to have been a part of the fabric of San Antonio for 52 years. We continue the tradition today and continue to support the community that has given us so much over the years through charitable contributions, sponsorships to the arts and strong community involvement.

110 Lexington Ave, San Antonio, Texas 78205



Holiday Inn San Antonio Riverwalk Hotel

217 N. St. Mary's St | San Antonio, TX 78205
Telephone: 210-224-2500 | Fax: 210-527-9589
Web-site: www.hi-riverwalk.com

SACIV Welcomes Visitors from the Middle East and North Africa for the *Preventing & Confronting Domestic Abuse & Violence* Program

By Cecilia Cross

On November 1-5, 2014, we welcomed international visitors from the Middle East and North Africa for a program on “Preventing and Confronting Domestic Abuse and Violence”. The thirteen visitors hailed from nine countries



Visitors from the Middle East and North Africa observing voting at a local polling center on Election Day.

in the region, including Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, the Palestinian Territories, Tunisia, and Yemen. Their credentials were impressive and their professional backgrounds diverse; many of the participants work in the judicial, law enforcement, legal, governmental, education, or nonprofit sectors within their home countries. However, they all came to the United States with similar objectives: to learn about preventing domestic violence and sexual assault; to examine best practices in prosecuting these crimes; to understand the roles that government, law enforcement, courts, local communities, and NGOs play in working together on this issue; and to gain knowledge about advocacy measures for and assistance to victims.

As such, they were able to visit with several professionals that work in the legal, judicial, law enforcement, and victim advocacy fields of combatting domestic violence:

- ♦ At the **Rape Crisis Center** they heard about counseling services offered to victims of rape as well as the organization's 24/7 crisis hotline.
- ♦ They were able to tour the facilities at the **Battered Women's Shelter (Family Violence Protective Services)**.
- ♦ They learned about the links that the **Bexar County Family Justice Center** provides between government agencies and nonprofits for those affected by domestic violence and sexual crimes.
- ♦ They discussed the judicial aspects of prosecuting perpetrators of domestic and family violence and abuse with **Bexar County District 13 Judge Monica Gonzalez**.

- ♦ Officers from the **San Antonio Police Department, Special Victims Unit** explained law enforcement strategies for responding to domestic violence.
- ♦ Representatives from the **Bexar County District Attorney's Office** discussed their legal role in building trials against those accused of domestic violence crimes.

In addition to these appointments with their professional counterparts in the United States, the visitors had the opportunity to learn about other aspects of American society and the San Antonio culture. They were very excited to be able to visit a polling site to observe the Midterm Election Day activities and where even able to observe a voter cast his ballot. Upon their arrival in our city, they were taken to a welcome reception at a local mosque. They also enjoyed a downtown sightseeing tour with a SACIV member. The highlights of this tour included a Riverwalk boat ride and the opportunity to participate in the “Dia de los Muertos” festivities at La Villita, which they found an intriguing and unique cultural tradition.

The visitors were an enthusiastic group and very receptive to all the information they acquired throughout their visit. They asked many important questions and expressed their eagerness to bring back all that they learned to their own countries in an effort to prevent and confront domestic abuse and violence. ———



A Jordanian visitor (left) with Office Bill Grayson of the San Antonio Police Department's Special Victims Unit (right).



An Egyptian visitor (left) thanking Mr. Carl Alexander (center) and Ms. Katherine Hayes (right) of the Bexar County District Attorney's Office for their speech.

SACIV Welcomes Visitors from Argentina for the Entrepreneurship & Cultivating Business Growth Program

By Cecilia Cross

On November 12th-16th, 2014, the San Antonio Council of International Visitors welcomed four visitors from Argentina for a program on “Entrepreneurship and Cultivating Business Growth”. The program aimed to provide exposure to new and growing businesses in the U.S., to explore small business growth, and to examine skills needed to foster entrepreneurship, innovation, and economic development. As such, the group of Argentine visitors met with many of their professional counterparts at organizations and institutions around San Antonio.

Their first appointment, at the Free Trade Alliance San Antonio, was a great success: the visitors discussed opportunities for future collaboration and partnerships in Argentina, learned precise details about how to set up a company in San Antonio, and were given new tools about

client services to add to their repertoire. Their visit with a representative from the Bexar County Small, Minority, and Women Owned Business Enterprise program proved fruitful as they were provided with lots of material and information to share back home. At the Institute for Economic Development at UTSA, the visitors learned about the Small Business Development Center, discussed the

prospect of collaborating on replicating this model in Argentina, and were also invited to an event in Buenos Aires in December. During their visit to Accion Texas’ office at the San Antonio Central Library, they learned about the organization’s loan program, and at their visit to the San Antonio Women’s Chamber of Commerce, they heard about the chamber’s educational projects and programs for women. They also visited the San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, which provided them with an excellent history of commercial relations between Mexico and the U.S. and furthered their understanding of the Mexican business presence in San Antonio, as well as provided the visitors with ideas for areas of collaboration and the benefits of belonging to a chamber.

In addition to meeting their professional program

objectives with these visits, the Argentines also had the opportunity to meet with Ms. Mara Tekach, the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Professional and Cultural Exchanges at the U.S. Department of State, who happened to be in town on business. In her role as Deputy Assistant Secretary, Ms. Tekach oversees a variety of programs including the International Visitors Leadership Program, of which the visitors were taking part in. They were able to speak in Spanish with Ms. Tekach about their positive experience as participants of the State Department program and enjoyed conversing about Argentina with Ms. Tekach, who spent time working at the U.S. Embassy in Buenos Aires.

Their visit to San Antonio also provided them with a cultural immersion of our city and an opportunity to meet with some of our members. As Manu Ginobili fans, they were thrilled at the opportunity to take a private tour of the AT&T Center where they visited the Spurs locker room. They were also impressed with the new sound and light installation, “The Saga”, at the San Fernando Cathedral, which portrays the history of San Antonio. Despite a cold and rainy

Saturday, they eagerly enjoyed a bus tour of downtown, the Alamo, and several Missions with SACIV member Patricia O’Connell. They learned much about the history of our city from their experienced guide and ended the tour with a celebratory birthday lunch (complete with tres leches cake) in

SouthTown. They finished their visit to San Antonio with much appreciated home hospitality dinners at the homes of

SACIV members Dr. Linda Psalmonds, Ms. Patricia O’Connell, and Betsy & Stuart Cameron. ———



Interpreter/liaison Ms. Sarah Guth, Argentine visitors Mr. Radic, Mr. Cocconi, Ms. Bearzi, Mr. Canese, and interpreter/liaison Ms. Johanna Parker in front of the Alamo (left to right).



Interpreter/liaison Ms. Sarah Guth, Argentine visitors Mr. Cocconi, Mr. Radic, Mr. Canese, Ms. Bearzi, and interpreter/liaison Ms. Johanna Parker visiting Mission San Jose (left to right).

SACIV Welcomes Visitor from Equatorial Guinea for the *Banking and Microfinancing Program*

By Cecilia Cross

In mid-October we welcomed Mr. Marcus Ndong Okenve from the small African country of Equatorial Guinea to



From left to right: James Glick (State Department interpreter/liaison), Irma Reyes (SACIV Executive Director), Marcus Ndong Okenve (visitor from Equatorial Guinea), Cecilia Cross (SACIV Administrative Assistant).

San Antonio to meet with his counterparts in microfinance, banking, and entrepreneurship. Mr. Ndong Okenve currently works as Assistant Manager of Micaja Microfinance Bank in Malabo, the capital of Equatorial Guinea. While in San Antonio he met with Ms. Rene Watson at the Bexar County Economic Development Department, Mr. Geronimo Gutierrez at NAD-

Bank, Ms. Jacqueline Jackson at the Center for Global Entrepreneurship (Business Development Department of UTSA), and Ms. Margot Fuentes at Accion Texas. Mr. Ndong Okenve and his liaison also toured downtown San Antonio, visited the Missions, and enjoyed dinner with SACIV Board of Directors Chairman Ben Buecker and former NADBank Director for Administration Henry Sauvignet. We were pleased that Mr. Ndong Okenve was able to conduct many of his appointments in a beautiful, pure Castilian Spanish, the official language of his country which was formerly a Spanish colony until its independence in 1968.

From our visitor, we were fortunate to learn much about his country, which is located on the west coast of central Africa and bordered by Cameroon and Gabon. While Equatorial Guinea is a nation at peace with the majority of its wealth a result of oil reserves, it has yet to reach its full potential, says Mr. Ndong Okenve. In fact, the uneven distribution of oil wealth has created a vast monetary disparity amongst its citizens, allowing only a small percentage of the population to benefit from this resource. Additionally, the authoritarian government controls most aspects of civil society and has prevented Equatorial Guineans from enjoying many



From left to right: Henry Sauvignet, Marcus Ndong Okenve (visitor from Equatorial Guinea), Bernard "Ben" Buecker (SACIV Board of Directors Chairman).

freedoms we take for granted in the United State, including establishing their own, independently owned businesses.

Our visitor was very passionate about his role in helping Equatorial Guinea become the more prosperous nation he would like it to be. His countrymen, he says, are lacking the knowledge to help themselves and their families. As a form of sustainable development, he hopes that educated citizens, like himself, will instill the ideals of entrepreneurship upon their fellow citizens. Through his work with microloans, he aims to help distribute wealth away from the elite and towards those who seize the opportunity to improve their own socioeconomic standing. Equipped with the tools and the knowledge that he learned from his visit to the States, we look forward to seeing the positive impact Mr. Ndong Okenve's work will have in helping to developing a more productive and prosperous society in Equatorial Guinea.

Evaluation for Argentina Program on Entrepreneurship and Cultivating Business Growth

November 12-15, 2014

Report prepared by: Sarah Guth
(Interpreter/Liaison)

City-by-City Description: San Antonio

Nice hotel, easy to get around town from there. Great driver. Nice to be able to walk to some of the meetings also. Good meeting load.

Free Trade Alliance San Antonio: Great opportunities for future collaboration. Claudio was especially interested. FTA already has partnerships in Chile, Colombia, Brazil, and Mexico, so the same model could be easily replicated. They learned precise details about how to set up a company in San Antonio, the benefits of incorporating there, services available. They also learned about services they believed they could add to their repertoire of client services/new tools in the toolbox. Adrian was very excited about this has his boss will be a presidential candidate.

Bexar County, SMWBE: This meeting started out a little rough, but ended wonderfully. Renee had tons of materials and information to share (ex. showed them publications with lists of women/minority owned businesses, how those terms are defined, how they get contracts, referral process, metrics, monitoring, 2nd chance for inmates program, government set-asides). She also got them a private tour of the Spurs stadium, which made them happier than little kids in a candy shop. Seriously.

Robert McKinley, Institute for Economic Development, UTSA: Robert is the State Dept-appointed person in charge of replicating the SBDC model abroad. The visitors were very excited about the prospect of collaborating to make that happen in Argentina. There was an SBDC event December 10 in Buenos Aires that he was going to invite them to.

Hispanic Chamber of Commerce: Gave us an excellent history of commercial relations between Mexico and the US and the Mexican business presence in San Antonio. He gave them all very good ideas of areas of collaboration (ex. health, oil, natural gas, textiles). Explained the benefits of belonging to the chamber.

Accion Texas: Interested about the loan programs they have, how they get mentors for everyone who wants to participate, and the space they used in the library.

On April 22, Diplomatic Courier Magazine hosted a half-day summit exploring the nexus between technology and social media and how they are changing diplomacy. Public diplomacy experts and leaders from the U.S. Department of State, embassies, and the business and nonprofit sectors discussed current trends and best practices and offered insight into the future of global engagement.

The future, more and more, is in the hands of those not in formal, official, and limited diplomatic roles. One striking statistic mentioned during the summit offered a case-in-point: 40 years ago, 80% of aid given to developing nations came in the form of government assistance. Today, government assistance accounts for only 10% of that total, largely because of the huge increase of private investment.

"Public diplomacy is about going to where the public is and... more and more, that means online and on social media platforms."

Almost half a dozen representatives of embassies in DC participated in Diplomatic Courier Magazine's summit. They touched on a number of themes, including how public diplomacy has changed. The crux of public diplomacy is going to where the public is and meeting them on their terms. Today, that means going online and going on social media platforms to engage. Large majorities of the U.S. population use Facebook and turn to the internet for information and news. One embassy's research found that people were getting news and updates directly from the embassy website rather than other channels.

Twitter, while not as widely used as Facebook or the web, was also a place to engage active and influential leaders in a variety of fields who in the past were difficult to identify and reach. During the summit, panelists stressed the need to have a clear goal and strategy for use of new technology tools, the need to be authentic and match the tone of the tool, and the need to engage with and respond to members of any social network from the "bottom-up," rather than "top-down."

Partnerships that cross boundaries and sectors are essential to addressing global problems. Access to better tools and technology for connecting across borders has been coupled with an increased desire to put them to use. Daniella Foster, Director of Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) at the U.S. Department of State, had practical advice for any person or organization interested in forging new partnerships and leveraging technology to solve pressing global challenges. She said to succeed you need to "start small and think big." Find a real unmet need, look for uncommon alliances that could meet that need, and start a pilot program to prove that a concept will work, she advised. And, importantly, don't reinvent the wheel. The best innovations come from improving existing "wheels."

"To succeed you need to 'start small and think big'."

While there will always be a need for formal diplomatic relationships between nations, one thing was clear by the end of the summit: governments are not the only ones building international relationships in ways that change the world. The individual citizen is more connected to the world than ever before. It is up to those not just in government, but in the business and nonprofit sectors as well, to work together in order to help connect them in meaningful and productive ways that foster a more peaceful and prosperous world. ———

**Our thoughts & encouragement
go out to the individuals who have
been ill recently & their families.**

- Cindy Buecker
- Diana Carroll-Wirth
- Luciana Cristadoro
- Irma Reyes
- The Family of Sarwat Husain

SACIV wishes you all a speedy recovery!

Evaluation for Korean Program on Promoting Women Business Leaders

August 16-20, 2014

Report Prepared by the Program Interpreters/Liaisons

Perception Change: Highlights

Among many positive comments about the U.S., Ms. Shin particularly was impressed with Accion in San Antonio where she had a good look at the details of microloan programs. This topic was the topic she had a keen interest in because she is a small business owner. After the meeting, she mentioned that there is an urgent need of this kind of organization focusing on microloan by non-traditional finance institution in Korea.

Ms. Yoon commented on how she was struck by the fact that Ms. Irma Reyes in her 80s, a local sponsor of San Antonio, still actively involved with the program. The Koreans were thankful to her who joined most of the appointments. **To the Koreans, Ms. Reyes showed the quintessence of volunteerism in America.**

Program in San Antonio

Economic Development Department of Bexar County: Ms. Watson, program manager was extremely friendly host. She made the Koreans feel at ease by providing sweets and drinks at the beginning. She prepared a lot of the food that the Koreans ended up taking for later snack.

Main theme of the discussion was about the programs of the local government like Bexar County that support the minority business people, especially emphasis on assisting woman entrepreneurs. To give the background of the government system, Ms. Watson explained the relationship between federal, State, and local government. She did a superb job to have the Koreans review the concept of federalism, which they learned already in Washington, DC. The Koreans were intrigued by the policies in place to systematically support the woman owned businesses in government procurement. They complained that small businesses women in Korea are not benefited by policies in the area of the government's procurement, lacking the assuring components of implementation of policies.

Accion Texas: Ms. Zurita, Director of Accion Women's Business Center, led a meeting with an interesting subject such as microloan to woman businesses. The organization is unique in a way that serves business women who are limited in access to loans by traditional banks. It was good to be exposed to an excellent model of micro loan, showing how small size of the capital actually can be a crucial help for the woman businesses in time of need.

Stepping Stones Pediatric Clinic: This visit was recommended by Ms. Zurita at Accion. The founder of the pediatric clinic, Ms. Torres, was the recipient of one of the women empowerment programs offered by Accion. The idea of on-site visit to clinic turned out to be a greater than expected. The Koreans had a tour to see the ways the clinic offers therapy services as feeding, speech and language to minors with multiple complications. It was touching to hear Ms. Torres' testimony that how the supports for women entrepreneurs through education and training offered by the Accion, when she started the clinic with a little knowledge and experience about the business. While the Koreans also commented that it was productive to view the clinic thoughtfully designed to meet the specific need of the children. Overall, the Koreans were fond of the visit to this one-of-a-kind facility in San Antonio. They felt lucky to have a rare experience as this visit.

Perpetual Change

During their three-week program, the visitors were elated to have been presented with numerous potential opportunities and programs that they felt could be tapped into, and were thus highly encouraged. They were also introduced to many organizations and projects during their stay, and talked about the possibility of starting similar projects once returning to Korea. They said that they were going back home with heavy luggage filled with goods from shopping as well as many good ideas.

They indicated that they had learned a lot about IPR from many interlocutors. Before coming to the America, they said that they had only a vague idea as to IPR, but that they would be leaving with more specific knowledge.

The visitors also felt that work-life balance challenge is equally shared by both countries. As to gender-equality, they were surprised to find that the US is facing a similar situation of disparity to that of Korea. They had been under the assumption that, since everything in America was so advanced, that this would include women's status in society.

This group of four ladies was unique in that they knew each other before coming to the US, some for several years, which made their group-camaraderie quite exceptional. They virtually spent all of their free time together - going to museums, shows, restaurants, and shopping. I dubbed the group the four musketeers - one for all and all for..... Well, you get the idea. This unusual makeup can have positive as well as negative implications.

Ms. Hyeyoung Cho said that two things stood out among her observations, the fact that, in general, trash is not separated by recyclable and non-recyclable, and, contrary to her preconceived notion, her realization that inequality between men and women still exists and is remains a struggle for women in America. And, she felt like she had lined up many interlocutors for potential interviews for her Women's News publication for years to come. **Among them was a lady who had opened a pediatric therapy clinic with the help of Accion.**

Ms. Joo Hyung Lim stated that, after hearing from so many interlocutors' assertion that they were lucky to have very supportive husbands, she now knows that a key to having a positive work-life balance is in finding a good husband. Also, the fact that gender-equality is still an issue in the US was quite surprising to her.

Ms. Sejin Shin indicated that she had expanded her knowledge through this program, and this was a great opportunity for her to have the perspective of looking in from outside, and to be able to view the big picture. She also said that, instead of complaining, "why don't they do it for me", she is now going to say, "I should find a way to do it". A couple of business expressions that she learned during her visit were "not in it, but on it" and "brain and heart have to go together."

Ms. Jiyeong Yoon said that she learned a lot through this program, and now views her business differently, and used this opportunity to reflect and contemplate on so many areas.

Continued on Page 14

Korean Program Evaluation

Continued from Page 13

She particularly liked the HEB corporate model of social responsibility program, where suppliers can participate. She liked the idea of, “if you don’t learn, you can’t grow”, as espoused by one of the interlocutors.

The visitors only wished that they had had more opportunity to visit sites - for instance, small businesses that had success stories. **To that end, they appreciated the chance to visit the pediatric clinic, Stepping Stone.**

Program in San Antonio

Bexar County Economic Development Department: Ms. Renee Watson, Program Manager, was a passionate interlocutor, and the visitors enjoyed the meeting very much. Among other things, they learned of the book which lists all companies’ information. Ms. Shin said that companies in Korea submit all of their data, but there is no such book where one can see how each company is doing, i.e., products, number of employees, sales, etc. To that Ms. Cho said, “maybe our newspaper should start to publish such a book.”

Accion Texas: After the presentation on the organization, the ladies were afforded the opportunity to visit a site where the owner was a recipient of the Accion Program. Ms. Yadi started a pediatric clinic, Stepping Stone, to serve children who have multiple disabilities with a therapeutic approach, rather than depending solely upon medication. While listening to her story, one of the visitors was so moved that she couldn’t stop the tears from streaming down her face.

Women’ Chamber of Commerce: The visitors seemed to enjoy their lively conversation with three interlocutors. One thing that they paid particular attention to was the Mixer Program. Since the Chamber values the personal relationship among members, they make an concerted effort to know members on a personal level and to forge a family atmosphere. The visitors thought that this is something that they should strive to emulate in Korea, rather than to just implement formal programs.

HEB Grocery Corporate: Pertaining to corporate responsibility, the visitors noted the Charitable Trust that HEB implemented. The Trust fund is contributed to by the suppliers, and managed under the stewardship of HEB. In turn, those suppliers can then have a chance to meet with either the CEO or executive of the company. The two CEOs among the visitors, Ms Shin and Ms. Yoon, thought that it was a good idea to enable suppliers to participate in the social responsibility, as well as to meet with the executives, because they seldom have that opportunity. They also were attentive to the remarks that HEB regards their employees as partners who share in the company’s spirit and culture.

The Center for Global Entrepreneurship: Paradigm shift was a great catchphrase for the visitors to take away from this meeting – not depending on the status quo, but to change and do it differently in business.

Free Trade Alliance: One of the programs that the visitors were apprised of while visiting the center was Global Student Competition. They thought that it was interesting that student groups of three or four submit their business plans. The students not only receive recognition, but receive prize money as well - anywhere from one to eight thousand dollars.

Cultural Events and Home Hospitality: On the day of the visitors’ arrival in San Antonio, they attended Fiesta Noche Del Rio along the Riverwalk. On Sunday, they enjoyed the city tour, visiting interesting missions and a bustling market. Two host families invited two visitors each for a Home Hospitality, while the interpreters were not requested to attend. All things indicated that they had had a great time. ———

Evaluation for Program on African Women Leaders: Promoting Peace and Security

September 21-23, 2014

*Prepared by: Judith Oringer and
Isabelle Parfait (interpreters/liaisons)*

Introduction

The 20 women in this project formed a harmonious group early on, despite language and age differences. Hopefully, they will continue to build on this network now that they are back home in Africa. The program was intense, well thought out and provided many good contacts and resources and much information. The only hitch was the difficult end due to the Air France strike and fire at Chicago O’Hare Airport but they weathered it. The organization of the entire project with approximately 90 participants must have been exceptionally complicated and ran quite smoothly. The groups interacted to a very limited extent and I’m not sure how helpful it is to have all the language and regional groups in the same project. But the visitors will have to tell whether they felt that the huge number of women facing similar challenges was directly beneficial to them.

Perpetual Changes

Some visitors admitted that they came to the U.S. thinking that Americans have no interest in others, and found it was the contrary. They thought it was “chacun pour soi” (each man for himself) “But I saw solidarity here,” one said. They appreciated the friendliness of American people—which they hadn’t suspected before coming here! They had to drop their notion that the U.S. economy doesn’t depend on the government. People’s enterprising activities go a long way to produce jobs. They thought everyone in America was rich! They couldn’t believe it at first that there were homeless people, people struggling, rape crisis centers. They thought there wouldn’t be any farmers at all! They thought they’d see more violence in the streets. They want to be in touch with former IVs. They liked seeing the transparency here and will maintain contact with the U.S.

Another View of Perpetual Changes

All of the members of the delegation were very happy to have the opportunity to interact with their African colleagues. Many mentioned the fact that they seldom had the chance to be gathered in a professional setting in order to discuss issues ideas and learn about other African countries.

On a general level, many of the visitors who were in the United States for the first time were surprised to witness such a diversity of people and cultures. They were also surprised, as they interacted with Americans, to hear that many personal opinions regarding political, social, religious and international issues differed from those they were accustomed to hear through the media in their native countries. Almost all delegation members said that they were quite impressed by the freedoms enjoyed by the American people, more specifically in terms of freedom of speech, existence of various political parties, democratic elections, and religious tolerance. Many women in the group were very interested in the tools needed to conduct free democratic and transparent elections, the tools needed for women to make their voices heard as well as the general organization of a political campaign and they were very impressed by the electoral controls in place at every level in the United States.

They were also impressed by the separation of powers and the strong system of checks and balance at the federal government level. Some of them even mentioned the fact that they were leaving with the impression that there is, and to a certain extent, a demystification of the concept of government, and that there is at all levels, a form of government operating on the basis of shared powers that is close and accessible to its people, as opposed to the distance that generally separates African governments from their peoples who feel there are inaccessible and unaware of the issues that concern them. One of the members of the group even stressed a contradiction that prevails in African countries where people have a tendency to wait for their government to act and bring about change while having very little hope that it will actually do so. This visit to the United States encouraged her to believe that people can bring about change without needing any assistance from their government.

African Women Leaders Program Evaluation

Continued from Page 14

In that regard, the numerous meetings this group had with civil society actors and organizations had a strong impact and gave the women hope that as civil society groups and organizations, they can themselves also have a large impact and bring about change in order to improve women's lives.

The delegation was very impressed by the decentralization and by the strong weight and presence of civil society in the United States. They mentioned that the active role played by local communities, non-governmental organizations and individuals is what Africa is most dearly lacking. They were given food for thought after visiting a number of different NGOs, as they realized that civil society groups can actually make a difference in and for the communities they serve, as well as make their voices heard by the elected officials of these very communities. One of the group's conclusions was that no country can truly develop itself without its people and civil societies being able to freely express themselves or participate in decision-making processes and changes.

Furthermore, the delegation was quite impressed by the open-minded academics and officials they met, and mentioned that in their countries, it was practically impossible to remove the "red tape factor" and no high ranking official, government representative or similar entity would be willing to open their doors and openly discuss any type of issues. On the negative side, the delegation regretted the lack of knowledge and awareness demonstrated by Americans regarding Africa and Africans in particular, and about world issues in general. In that regard, many indicated that they were very surprised to see that Americans are generally more focused on local issues that have a direct impact on their everyday lives than on international issues and news.

With respect to women's issues in particular, many visitors indicated that the main difference between American and African women is that in the United States, women have become aware of their rights even if they have not yet become equals to men in terms of political decision making, whereas in Africa, most women simply do not know their rights. However, many visitors stressed the fact that they were very surprised to see that women still face many issues in the United States and are far from having resolved many of the problems their African counterparts obviously face themselves (absence of political quotas, glass ceiling issues, salary inequalities, low political participation of women in the United States). They were expecting to see much larger advances in women's issues in the United States.

Program in San Antonio

This was a better situation logistically because at least this hotel, located at the beginning of Riverwalk, wasn't far from town. Everyone seemed to enjoy San Antonio. It felt like a small town but we were surprised to learn that it's bigger than Austin yet has retained a small-town feeling. It was a brief stay but a very good one.

Bexar County Family Justice Center: The African visitors really appreciated their in-depth discussion with Lieutenant Mark Padilla who surprised them with his candor. As promised, he has since sent them as gifts the attractive official badges of the district with an official letter from the (female) sheriff whom he mentioned. I distributed them to those visitors who were still in Chicago since the package arrived late, on Saturday afternoon (9/27) and will have the rest mailed to each respectively.

San Antonio Police Department: They loved the police ride-alongs. Each visitor was sure she had had the best experience of all. Some went on traffic control and watched police give out tickets. The visitor I accompanied was shown low-cost housing projects and areas where drugs and prostitution are rife. She was pleasantly surprised by the warm greetings given by community members to the policeman as we rode through the neighborhoods. This was one of the highlights of their stay.

Home Hospitality: The best highlight of all in San Antonio was home hospitality. Sam Scott had worked for U.S. AID in Africa for many years, and he and his wife Janet hosted all the visitors at their lovely home, and invited about 15 or so friends who also knew Africa. Amid African art and sculpture decorating the house, people introduced themselves individually and there was real conversation. The visitors were reluctant to leave this home as they had such a good time. Sam and Janet Scott opened up their homes and address books—their hearts were already open—and provided a beautiful evening of friendship, true conversation in large and small groups among our visitors and their guests, as well as good food and genuine hospitality. ———

Azerbaijani Ambassador's Visit to San Antonio

By Karla Saldivar & Cecilia Cross

On Friday October 10th, SACIV's Executive Director Irma Reyes, Administrative Assistant Cecilia Cross, and Intern Karla Saldivar had the opportunity to attend a lecture hosted by the University of the Incarnate Word which welcomed the Ambassador of Azerbaijan, the Honorable Elin Suleymano, who was introduced by Congressman Henry Cuellar. The team enjoyed learning much about the country of Azerbaijan and its relations with the United States.



Congressman Henry Cuellar (right) with the Honorable Elin Suleymano (left).

Azerbaijan is located in Asia on the western edge of the Caspian Sea. It is neighbored by Russia to the north, Armenia and Georgia to the west, and Iran to the south. Therefore, as Mr. Suleymano pointed out, it is strategically located between two geopolitical hotspots.

A former Soviet country, Azerbaijan was at war with Armenia during the 80's until 1994. Unfortunately ethnic strife with Armenians still taints Azerbaijani politics however the country currently enjoys relatively peaceful stability. To this point, Ambassador Suleymano discussed how diversity influences Azerbaijan to be a more potent country.

The Ambassador highlighted that the expansion of industries of petroleum and natural gas are becoming an imperative economic priority in Azerbaijan and the region. He also noted how business prospects are rising in Azerbaijan where there now exists countless opportunities for investment in new projects.

A question was raised about what he considers the United States is failing to do to strengthen relations with Azerbaijan, to which he mentioned important developments that are being carried out in the area of transportation and tourism.

Ambassador Suleymano also discussed how women in Azerbaijan enjoy the same legal rights as men and are constantly playing bigger roles in the business world. In fact, women were allowed the right to vote in Azerbaijan before they were able to do so in the United States. ———



The Ambassador of Azerbaijan, the Honorable Elin Suleymano, lecturing at the University of the Incarnate Word.



San Antonio Council
FOR INTERNATIONAL VISITORS

P.O. Box 6088 San Antonio, TX 78209

Board of Directors & Staff

Dr. Bernard “Ben” Buecker,
Chairman

mastholte@aol.com
210.454.7742

Justin Rice, Secretary

justrice@yahoo.com
210.738.8772

Terry Camacho

Terrycamacho18@gmail.com
210.789.3513

Betsy Cameron

Bcameron.saciv@gmail.com
210.663.8055

Irma Reyes,
Founder, Chair Emeritus
and Executive Director

sacivtx@sbcglobal.net
210.380.0377

Franco Cristadoro, Treasurer

cardingo@sbcglobal.com
210.735.7232

Marcos Fragoso

fragoso@uiwtx.edu
210.805.3014

Dr. Angelika Jansen-Brown

andelikajansen@yahoo.com
210.224.6011

Jose Luis Garcia,
Vice Chairman

Jlgarcia78205@sbcglobal.net
210.827.7863

Sarwat Husain

shusain@cair.com
210.378.9528

Mary Walsh

maryapples@gmail.com
210.497.3894

Cecilia Cross, Staff
Administrative Assistant

ccross.saciv@gmail.com
210.287.6328

San Antonio Council for International Visitors (SACIV) was founded in 1989 as a non-profit, volunteer-based organization aimed at encouraging understanding and friendship between the community and visitors from abroad. SACIV provides information, hospitality, and assistance in making business and professional contacts for these visitors. SACIV is a member of Global Ties US in Washington, DC. This publication is funded by the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs of the US Department of State under the authority of the Fulbright-Hays Act of 1961.

San Antonio Council for International Visitors

P.O. Box 6088 | San Antonio, TX 78209 | Office Phone 210.832.3259 | www.sacivtx.org