



worldchicago



2023 ANNUAL REPORT



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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear WorldChicago Family,

I am honored and excited to have been selected by the WorldChicago Board of Directors to serve as the new Executive Director! I am stepping into this role bringing with me an enthusiasm for WorldChicago's Mission and Vision which I've had the honor of bringing to fruition over the course of the past three years.

As I embark on this new chapter with WorldChicago, I am inspired by the incredible work that has already been accomplished over the past 70+ years and the potential for an even greater impact ahead.



One of my key priorities is to deepen our impact right here in Chicago and across all 77 communities. We have a unique opportunity to leverage our resources, expertise, and partnerships to address the diverse needs and aspirations of our local communities.

By engaging with residents, community leaders, educational institutions and organizations across the city, through our federally funded programs like the [International Visitor Leadership Program \(IVLP\)](#) or Professional Fellowships ([YLAJ](#), [YTILJ](#), [ProFellows](#), etc.) we can create inclusive spaces for dialogue, collaboration, and mutual learning.



With your support and collaboration, we will work to ensure that every neighborhood in Chicago benefits from our programs and initiatives. By strengthening connections, celebrating diversity, and promoting mutual respect, we can build a more vibrant, equitable, and inclusive city for all.

I look forward to working with you as we embark on this journey together. In the spirit of never wasting a good crisis, we hope you will join us as we look to enhance our programs with the addition of lessons learned from meeting the challenge the pandemic presented to international exchange.

Thank you for welcoming me into this new role with WorldChicago. I am thrilled to be part of such a dynamic and passionate team, and I am confident that together, we will achieve remarkable things.

With enthusiasm and optimism,

Jennifer Lundeen Dixon
Executive Director
WorldChicago



CITIZEN DIPLOMACY

The practice of Citizen Diplomacy encourages everyday citizens to shape the world of foreign affairs through their daily interactions with one another. Be it through engaging in conversations around international relations, setting a place at the dinner table for an exchange participant, or even just chatting about your lived experiences (and hearing others share their own), every person can be a Citizen Diplomat. WorldChicago is proud to support Citizen Diplomacy through a variety of professional and personal exchanges, in addition to our youth programming, that bring Chicago closer to the rest of the world - one handshake at a time.



We are all contributors to a global community and each of us has the power to make a positive impact on the world. Every connection we have, every bit of knowledge we share, every moment of embracing community - that is what makes us all citizen diplomats, working to make the world a better place.



LETTER FROM BOARD PRESIDENT

Dear WorldChicago Friends,

As we look back on the past year, I am filled with gratitude for the enthusiasm of our WorldChicago team, board and volunteers. I would also like to extend my deepest appreciation to all of our donors. Your generosity is instrumental in sustaining our programs and initiatives.

2023 was characterized by an exceptional level of exchange programming activity. This summer, we placed a special emphasis on youth.

New programs allowed us to welcome 21 young women from Cambodia, Fiji, Indonesia, Mongolia, Taiwan and Vietnam through the TechGirls program. This program was designed to empower and support young women (ages 15-17) from around the world, including the US, to pursue higher education and careers in STEM fields through hands-on skills development training with US technologists. Through Youth Ambassadors, we welcomed three groups of students aged 15-17 from Canada; Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Nicaragua and Panama; and France. This program aims to bring together high school students to promote leadership, civic engagement and mutual understanding.



Our sincerest appreciation goes to our homestay hosts, whose generosity makes a significant impact on these programs. Welcoming individuals from diverse backgrounds provides a unique opportunity to share cultural insights and develop personal connections. For many volunteers, including myself, these experiences are priceless.

Peggy Parfenoff's tenure as President concluded this year. As we say goodbye, we acknowledge the invaluable contribution of her enduring dedication to advancing citizen diplomacy, which will be greatly missed.

Looking ahead, I am inspired by new opportunities on the horizon with Jennifer Dixon as our Executive Director. I invite each of you to join us on this journey as we strive to foster mutual understanding through global dialogue and innovation, one handshake at a time.

With heartfelt thanks,

Lisa Harwood
Board President

STAFF



PEGGY PARFENOFF
Outgoing Executive
Director



JENNIFER DIXON
New Executive Director



ALEX GRAHAM
Program Fellow



KENDALL KARTALY
Program Manager



GLORIA LLENOS
Program Manager



MICHAEL MA
Program Coordinator



DONNA SADLICKI
Business Administration
& IT Manager



JULIA SOSNIVKA
Program Officer



MEGAN SPILLMAN
Director of International Exchanges

INTERNS

Maelys Bory
Northwestern University/Sciences Po

Izzy Horio
DePaul University

Abby Joy Neptun
Gustavus Adolphus College

Manuela Tapia Sasot
Sciences Po/Northeastern University

Anna Donko
University of Chicago

Emir Klebic
DePaul University

Sophia Pennex
Northwestern University

Madeline Strasburg
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Julia Gershberg
Dartmouth College

Maja Mitrovic
DePaul University

Malena Petronijevic
DePaul University

Jenny Uddenberg
Loyola University

Inga Usenko
Odesa University

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



LISA HARWOOD
Board Chair



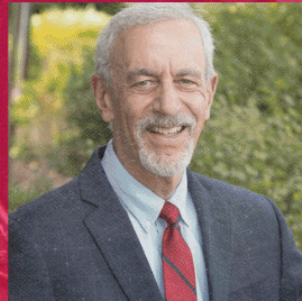
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Board Vice-Chair



SEVIL KUTAY
Board Secretary



KAREN BROWN
President
BridgeArrow



JOEL R. LEVIN
Adjunct Professor
Northwestern Pritzker School
of Law



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President
Soleil Global Communications Group



STACEY MANSKER-YOUNG
Senior Manager
Plante Moran



**BARBARA
BARRENO PASCHALL**
Commissioner + Vice-Chair
Illinois Human Rights Commission



JAMES V. PETITPREN, II
Chief Investment Officer
ORBA Wealth Advisors



ANTHONY PRESTON
Asst. Dean, Graduate Programs
Northern Illinois University



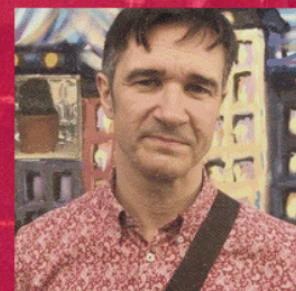
DR. USHA RAJ
Anjali Nayak Professor of Pediatrics
University of Illinois



BERNARD RAMOS
Vice President
Educational Perspectives



TATYANA SERGEYEVA
Vice President, Product Manager
Wells Fargo



DAVID WELLMAN
Associate Professor and Director
The Grace School of Applied Diplomacy
DePaul University

PROFESSIONAL RESOURCES

1871
Academy for Global Citizenship
Access Living
Adler Planetarium
Adroc Productions
Akerman LLP
Alliance Francaise de Chicago
American Arbitration Association
American Bar Association
American Library Association
Apna Ghar
Apparel Industry Board
The Arc of Illinois
Art Institute of Chicago
Attorney General of Illinois
 Civil Rights Bureau
Back of the Yards College Prep
Baha'i House of Worship
Barnes & Thornburg LLP
Beautiful Rind
Belarussians in Chicago
Better Government Association
Bridge Arrow
Bronzeville Winery
C2ST
CAN-TV
Central Asia Productivity Research Center
Chicago Bulls
Chicago Commission on Human Relations
Chicago Council on Global Affairs
Chicago Council on Science + Technology
Chicago Cultural Alliance
Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs +
 Special Events
Chicago Event Management
Chicago History Museum
Chicago Independent Media Alliance
Chicago Lighthouse
Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning
Chicago Police Department
Chicago Public Library
Chicago Public Schools
 Office of Social and Emotional Learning
Chicago Quantum Exchange
Chicago State University
Chicago Votes
City of Chicago
City of Chicago
 Business Affairs and Consumer Protection
City of Chicago
 Chicago Digital Equity Coalition
City of Chicago
 Historic Preservation Division
City of Chicago
 Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities
City of Chicago
 Office of Climate and Environmental Equity
City of Chicago
 Office of the Inspector General
City of Chicago
 Public Health Department
Civillian Office of Police Accountability
The Coaching Group
Coleman Foundation
Collaboration on Academic Social Emotional
 Learning
Columbia College
Consulate of France
Consulate of Turkey
Cook County Commission on Human Rights
Cook County State's Attorney's Office
CPS Lives
Cradles to Crayons
DC Central Kitchen
Delta Institute
Department of Justice
 Executive Office for Immigration Review
DePaul University
DePaul University
 Coleman Center
DuSable Black History Museum
 & Education Center
Elevate Greatness
Embassy of Mongolia
EMOS1
Energize Capital
Environmental Protection Agency
Region 5
Everly Marcario
EXPO Chicago
Fermilab
Field Museum
Fuego del Sol Global LLC
Future Founders
Gen Z VCs Future of Chicago Summit
George Washington University
 Elliot School of International Affairs
George Washington University
 The Office of Innovation & Entrepreneurship
Global Chamber of Commerce
Goode STEM Academy
Great Lakes ADA Center
Greater Englewood Chamber of Commerce
Harold Washington College
The Hatchery
Ignite Technology and Innovation
Illinois Institute of Technology
 Kaplan Institute
Illinois Department of Transportation
Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center
Illinois Institute of Technology
Illinois International Port District
Illinois Medical District
Illinois Science Council
Illinois State Police
 Forensics Lab
Innovare
Institute for Food Safety and Health
Institute for Nonviolence
Institute for Supply Management Chicago
Institute of Nonviolence
Intellectual Property Law Association of Chicago
International Press Club of Chicago
Kids First Chicago
Kurth Lampe
LanzaTech
Leannoleic Consulting LLC
Learning Dimensions
Loyola University
Loyola University Chicago
Mars Wrigley
Mason & Rice
Masters Law Group, LLC
MATTER
Meridian International Center
Metropolitan Peace Initiative
mHub
Natures Fynd
The Network
New Life Center
Newberry Library
Nigerian American Professional Association
North Shore Visitor and Convention Bureau
Northeastern Illinois University
Northwestern University
Northwestern University
 Farley Center for Entrepreneurship
Northwestern University
 The Garage
Northwestern University
 Kellogg School of Management
Not Just Cookies
Oak Park Public Library
Office of Senator Durbin
Partners in Health
Pilsen Food Pantry
Pilsen Public Art Tours
Pilsen Social Justice Murals
Plant Chicago
Preservation Chicago
PURE Unity Inc
REform for IL
Renaissance Living Room
Sage and Shea
Segundo Ruiz Belvis Cultural Center
Sikh Religious Society
Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill
The Silver Room
Street Level
STUDIO TMS
Success Junkie
The Tannery Row
Tellin Tales Theater
Thresholds
Thrive Scholars
Transform Capital
U.S. Department of State
 Office of International Visitors
Ukrainian Genocide Famine Foundation
Ukrainian National Museum
UN Women, Peace and Security
Unity Temple
University of Chicago
University of Chicago
 Urban Labs, Health Lab
University of Illinois at Chicago
University of Illinois at Chicago
 Great Cities Institute
University of Illinois at Chicago
 Tech Innovation Lab
Urban Gateways
Urban Rivers
Walgreens
WayBackInn
Wendella Boat Tours
West Town Bikes
Wild Mile
Windy City Paws
Workbox
Youth Chicago Authors

HOMESTAY + DINNER HOSPITALITY HOSTS

Dinner Diplomats and Homestay Hosts welcome international guests into their homes to share meals, stories, and friendship. We are grateful for the volunteers who graciously hosted global delegations in 2023.

Hussein Alnajar
Lucia Alvarado
Janet Austin
Coralia Barraza
Miles Bishop
Cheryl Boone
John Brockway
Karen Brown
Jody Butterbach
Jennifer Dixon
Kristin Faust
Dawn Fisher
Sarah Gullette
Lisa Harwood

Diane Judge
Steffi Kanzok
Rebekah Kohmescher
Roland Kulla
Kristina Lowenstein
Sarah Ma
Marjan Majd
Kerri McClimen
Winnie McDonald
Susan + Lou Mongillo
Betsy + Steve Shuman Moore
Megan Mozina
Dona + Mike Nishi
Marilyn Parfenoff

Peggy Parfenoff
Laura (Ana) Rodgers
Andrea Raila
Nilda Soto
Sindy Soto
Raymond + Laura Stukel
Alex Terrana
Paula Tironi
Bill Waddell
Dova Weinberger
Todd Wells
Astrid Xu



"Dinner was absolutely delightful last night. Great conversations, we learned so much about their work and challenges."

Deanna Shoss
WorldChicago Home Hospitality Host

WorldChicago Home Hospitality Hosts By the Numbers

552

Citizen Diplomats

790

Hours Volunteered

1200

Local Organizations



PROFESSIONAL EXCHANGES

In partnership with the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs, WorldChicago facilitates a variety of international exchanges, allowing people from all over the world to experience the culture and diversity of Chicago. Through these programs, delegations learn more about the people and history of the city and celebrate what bonds us together - even from across the world.

WorldChicago hosts professional exchanges throughout the year, most notably in conjunction with the Fulbright Program and the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP). Both of these programs have been in effect for decades, welcoming delegations from around the world.

The Fulbright Visiting Scholar Program is a flagship international educational exchange program sponsored by the U.S. government. This program provides a plethora of opportunities to international educators and researchers to study in the U.S. as well as participate in seminars and lectures to further their studies.

IVLP is the U.S. Department of State's premier professional exchange program. Through short-term visits to the U.S., IVLP encourages the building of cultural bridges between the U.S. and the world community, celebrating mutual understanding and the formation of long-lasting relationships.



Young Chicago Authors: Engaging Youth in Performing Arts



Creative Practices + Innovation in Secondary Education (IVLP)



International Visitor Leadership Program

U.S. Department of State

More than half of all WorldChicago's yearly visitors come to Chicago through International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP). IVLP participants, nominated by U.S. Embassies, and visit multiple cities across the U.S. to build relationships and exchange best practices with their American counterparts in a variety of fields. WorldChicago connects IVLP visitors with non-profit, business, and civic leaders in the Chicago area to spark meaningful dialogue and collaboration.

In 2023, WorldChicago managed 49 IVLP projects that brought 469 visitors from 110 countries to Chicago for short term, professional exchange experiences. Most visitors spent 4-5 days total in Chicago, with 2-3 meetings each programming day, as well as cultural activities and home hospitality.



To best support these delegations, WorldChicago partnered with over 200 Chicagoans representing 89 organizations, universities, local and state government officials, businesses, and individual entrepreneurs proud to meet with IVLP visitors.

2023 IVLP THEMES

- 21st Century Changemakers: Youth and Civic Engagement for Tomorrow's Leaders, a Project for Azerbaijan
- Adapting French University Post-COVID Study Abroad Programming to U.S. Demand and Shaping Sustainable Partnerships
- Addressing Historical Memory and Cultural Heritage
- AITC - Keith Demicoli - Malta - World Chicago
- Best Practices of U.S. Libraries and Research Institutions
- Building Influential and Impactful Ethnic Educators
- Collaboration on Cultural Heritage Preservation
- Creative Practices and Innovation in Secondary Education
- Criminal Justice Response to Law Enforcement
- Criminal Conduct
- Digital Innovation for Social Good + Ethical Use of Big Data
- Disability Rights Education in the Digital Age
- Edward R. Murrow Program for Journalists: Research and Investigation for the Indo-Pacific + Central Asia 21st Century Approaches to Print and Radio Journalism
- Engaging Youth through Performing Arts
- Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development
- Everyone Counts! Building Capacity in the Persons with Disabilities Community
- Food Innovation and Sustainability
- Hidden No More: Empowering Women Leaders in STEM
- Implementation of Sanctions and Export Controls
- Improving the Effectiveness and Resilience of Supply Chains
- International Parental Child Abduction
- Investigating and Prosecuting Human Rights Violations
- IPR Enforcement and Protection in the United States
- Kickstarting the Startup Ecosystem in Kansai, Japan
- Mediation in the United States
- Memorializing History Through Education and Museums
- New and Traditional American Media in the Digital Age I
- Non-Profit Organizations and U.S. Society
- Opportunities and Risks of 5G Networks
- Promoting Tourism to Historic Religious Sites
- Protecting Cultural Heritage through Innovation
- Renewable Energy Rule of Law and the U.S. Judicial System
- Science, Technology, and Innovation Policy
- Strengthening Cooperation at the Subnational Level on Climate
- Strengthening NGO-Public Sector Relationships
- The Climate Crisis: Working Together for Future Generations
- U.S. Food Industry: Policies and Regulations to Encourage Growth and Innovation
- U.S. Food Safety and Regulatory System
- U.S. Foreign Policy Formulation
- Women in Law Enforcement
- Women Leaders: Promoting Peace and Security
- Women Leaders: Promoting Peace and Security for the Indo-Pacific and Central Asia

PROFESSIONAL EXCHANGES

OPEN WORLD

In March 2023, WorldChicago hosted 8 participants through the Congressional Office of International Leadership's Open World Program. As this Program focused on Regional Museum Management for the Balkans and the opening of the First Kings of Europe Exhibition at the Field Museum, participants were selected based on their home museum institution's involvement in the First Kings of Europe exhibit.

This delegation was the first within the Open World Program to bring participants from multiple countries together for an exchange. Crafted around the exhibition's opening, participants witnessed the culmination of 11 countries and 26 museums coming together to tell a story and learn about modern technology in museums and museum management.



Open World delegation at the opening of the First Kings of Europe Exhibit at the Field Museum



SILEC Participants with WorldChicago's President Peggy Parfenoff



Meet America Poland Delegation

SILEC INITIATIVES

WorldChicago was proud to partner with Silec Initiatives, one of the most active Nigerian NGOs fighting against youth drug abuse. During their Chicago program, participants shared best practices and met with Chicago organizations that work towards youth leadership development and combatting drug abuse.

MEET AMERICA POLAND

Meet America is an international exchange program designed to develop new skills, knowledge, and connections while also helping to expand participants' understanding of the United States and American culture. This year, 12 professors and MBA students from Poland came to Chicago to discuss Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Work, meeting with leaders in academia and business during their stay.

U.S. EMBASSY SEOUL: DIGITAL CREATORS PROGRAM



Republic of Korea Program
Participant in J Dilla shirt.



Republic of Korea Program
Participants in traditional and
updated fashion.



Republic of Korea Program
Participants at White House in
Washington, D.C.

In September 2023, WorldChicago welcomed 12 participants from the Republic of Korea for a Digital Content Creators Program sponsored by the U.S. Embassy in Seoul. During this program, influencers from Korea traveled to San Diego, California; Chicago, IL; and Washington, D.C. to learn about U.S. digital creators, civil society organizations, civic activists, social media companies and experts, journalists, community members, and others using their voices to promote American values, address current social issues, and advocate for positive change. The group visited Google's headquarters in L.A., learned about Chicago's history through urban historians Dilla and Tonika Lewis Johnson, attended VidCon in Baltimore, and so much more. Through their social media accounts, millions of viewers watched the participants' experiences through their collaborative social media posts.

2023 FULBRIGHT VISITING SCHOLAR ENRICHMENT SEMINAR ON PUBLIC HEALTH



Fulbright Visiting Scholars at the
Illinois Medical District for a Site
Visit



Fulbright Visiting Scholar at Apna Ghar
for a Site Visit

In April 2023, WorldChicago hosted the Fulbright Visiting Scholar Seminar on Public Health in partnership with the Institute of International Education. During this seminar, over 95 Visiting Scholars traveled to Chicago and represented their home countries. The seminar in Chicago showcased to these educators and researchers how social justice impacts public health and how the effects are often experienced unequally by different populations across the globe and local communities. The seminar displayed how Chicago prioritizes health equity through a collaborative effort to detect social determinants of health and observe data and surveillance as an approach for innovations in public health. The seminar also showcased sub-themes of mental health, community health, violence interrupters, and domestic violence prevention.



PROFESSIONAL FELLOWSHIPS

The Professional Fellows Program is a two-way exchange program, sponsored by the U.S. Department of State. Designed to build partnerships between emerging leaders from foreign countries and the United States, participants are placed in four-week fellowships in nonprofit organizations and government offices across Chicago.

Representatives from Chicago host organizations later travel overseas to implement a joint project with their Fellows. Through this reciprocal exchange, young professionals gain practical experience and exposure to best practices in the U.S. while providing assistance and consultation at their host organizations.



BUREAU OF EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS



Monica Swope presenting at the Catalyze Summit in Croatia.

PROFELLOWS PROGRAM: CATALYZE ALUMNI

Catalyze is an alumni network of 150+ emerging leaders, entrepreneurs, leaders in innovation, social enterprise pioneers, and university professionals from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, and Slovenia who were a part of the Tech Innovation and Entrepreneurship Professional Fellows Program in Chicago. The Tech Innovation and Entrepreneurship Professional Fellows Program (PFP) is a program of the U.S. Department of State with funding provided by the U.S. Government, administered by WorldChicago.



YOUNG TRANSATLANTIC INNOVATION LEADERS INITIATIVE

The Young Transatlantic Innovation Leaders Initiative (YTILI) is the U.S. Department of State's flagship program for emerging entrepreneurs from Europe.

The YTILI Fellowship Program engages young European entrepreneurs, ages 25-35, in a series of professional development and leadership activities that are designed to strengthen the transatlantic relationship and encourage European businesses, governments, and civil society to develop their innovation ecosystems. The program includes an online and in-person entrepreneurship curriculum; a fellowship placement with a business or organization in one of nine U.S. cities; opening and closing conferences in Chicago and Washington, D.C.; and a regional Innovation Summit in Ljubljana, Slovenia.



YTILI Chicago Fellows at Chicago Bean



YTILI 2023 Opening



YTILI Program Participants and Professional Resources

In April 2023, WorldChicago welcomed a group of 60 Fellows representing 36 different European countries for the Young Transatlantic Innovation Leaders Initiative fellowship. During the Opening Program in Chicago, the Fellows visited several incubators (mHub, 1871, and the Connector), immersed themselves in workshops hosted by DePaul University, and engaged in extensive networking with local Chicago entrepreneurs.

After the culmination of the U.S.-based portion of the program, 3 mentors from Chicago were selected to participate in the Reciprocal Exchange: Matthew Woods (Street Level/Urban Gateways), Sophia Padgett Perez (CPS Lives), and Samantha Schwartz (Workbox). After visiting their Fellows in Armenia, Georgia, and the Netherlands respectively, the mentors participated in the capstone YTILI Alumni Summit in Ljubljana, Slovenia.

ytili SUMMIT

With the support of the U.S. Embassy in Slovenia and CEED Slovenia, WorldChicago conducted the first ever YTILI Alumni Summit in September 2023. Over 100 YTILI Alumni from 43 different countries across all cohorts from 2016 – 2023 participated in the Summit, which was the first opportunity for alumni to connect across the larger network in person.



YTILI Alumni Summit



Ambassador Harpootlian



YTILI Alumni Day

Highlights of the Summit included opening remarks from U.S. Ambassador Jamie L. Harpootlian and a presentation from David Henzel, the CEO of upcoach. Both European and American YTILI Alumni spent two full days networking, skill sharing, and discussing the goals and needs of the alumni network. The Summit received strong feedback from participants, many of whom reiterated what a special opportunity it was to be a part of a network of like-minded individuals, connecting across countries and continents.



YOUNG LEADERS OF THE AMERICAS INITIATIVE

In May 2023, WorldChicago welcomed 15 fellows from 11 countries through the Young Leaders of the Americas Initiative (YLA). YLA was established by the Obama Administration in 2015 under the Y-initiatives, welcoming over 280 entrepreneurs from the Western Hemisphere – Canada, the Caribbean, and Latin America – to participate in a 4-week fellowship. In May 2023, the 15 fellows in Chicago came from Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Curaçao, Dominica, Guatemala, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, and Peru.



YLA Closing Forum in Washington, D.C., with Program Certificates



YLA Fellows with Serita Love



YLA Fellow with WorldChicago Board Member, Usha Raj

These entrepreneurs represented business sectors of Education, Entrepreneurship, Arts & Culture, Agriculture & Animal Care, Disability Advocacy, Interpretation, Fashion, Health, and Community Development. While in Chicago, these leaders were partnered with organizations with similar focuses to learn about the approach Chicagoans take in their industries.

In addition to the partnerships, the fellows participated in Professional Fridays and a Solution Pitch Competition. During their Professional Fridays, the fellows attended professional development activities curated by the WorldChicago team, some of which prepared them for their Solution Pitch Competition. In their solution pitches, fellows identify a challenge their business faces and present their solution based on their experience in YLA. One Chicago fellow, Gemma Eintou Moreau, was selected as a finalist.



YLA Closing Forum



YOUTH PROGRAMS

WorldChicago youth programs provide hands-on workshops, skill training sessions, volunteer activities, and cultural events that inspire cross-cultural dialogue, build respect and mutual understanding, and boost civic engagement among Chicagoland teens and their international peers.

The leading youth program for WorldChicago is the Youth Diplomats Program, an eight-month experiential youth leadership program that engages Chicago-area high school students through hands-on learning opportunities. During their time together, students engage in cross-cultural conversations with international peers and attend lectures and workshops with global and Chicago-area academics, government officials, and community leaders.

This uniquely local program with a global mission includes an experiential learning visit to Washington D.C. to learn about government-facilitated public diplomacy and intercultural exchange.

Additionally, WorldChicago is a local coordinator for the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs' Youth Leadership Programs for international high school students and adult mentors. These short - yet dynamic - programs inspire cross-cultural dialogue, build respect and mutual understanding, and boost civic engagement among young Americans and their international peers.



Youth Ambassadors with Canada at St. Kateri Center of Chicago



Youth Ambassadors with Canada at Share Our Spare

YOUTH AMBASSADORS

FRANCE

In partnership with Global Ties K.C., WorldChicago welcomed 13 students from France and French territories for a Youth Ambassadors program focused on community service in July 2023. Over the course of 2 weeks, the participants traveled to Washington, D.C. and Chicago. Participants met with organizations across Chicago that focused on youth development, civic engagement, and volunteering. At the program's end, participants implemented a service project in their home communities using the skills learned in the exchange.



French Youth Ambassadors Program participants at Street Level, a Chicago youth media arts center.

LEGACY TECH GIRLS

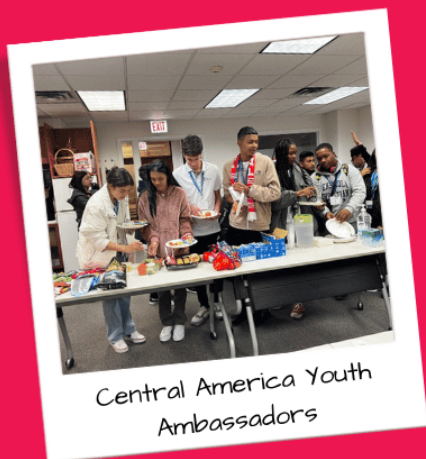
In July of 2023, WorldChicago welcomed 20 of the next generation of women STEM leaders, aged 15 to 17, from East Asia and the Pacific. During their time in Chicago, the participants met community leaders in each of their STEM fields of interest - including medicine, entrepreneurship, robotics, and astronomy - for skill-building workshops, mentoring sessions, and opportunities for cultural immersion. The participants spent five days and four nights in pairs with their homestay families, building lasting relationships founded in Citizen Diplomacy.



Legacy Tech Girls at Adler Planetarium

CENTRAL AMERICA

In partnership with Georgetown CIED, WorldChicago hosted 20 participants from five Central American countries to provide hands-on experience in building skills of civic responsibility, community leadership, and cross-cultural understanding in the areas of environment and entrepreneurship. Over the course of nine days, participants experienced the unique environments and cultures of individual Chicago neighborhoods, meeting with local NGO leaders and community members. In doing this, they learned more about how local needs are communicated about and collaborated on to spur the correct targeted responses from organizational leadership. Highlights included volunteering with the Pilsen Food Pantry, peer-to-peer exchanges at Back of the Yards College Prep, and a workshop on circular economy and Sustainability at Plant Chicago.



Central America Youth Ambassadors

CANADA

In August of 2023, WorldChicago hosted 15 teenage Youth Ambassadors from across Canada for 10 days to promote fostering relationships among youth from different ethnic, religious, and national groups. Additionally, the program worked to promote mutual understanding, respect, and collaboration between the United States and Canada, with a special focus on promoting the inclusivity of indigenous community members. Participants visited nonprofits and organizations across the city to learn how local leaders established missions in bringing members of their community together in meaningful ways.



Canadian Youth Ambassadors volunteering at Share our Spare

YOUTH DIPLOMATS

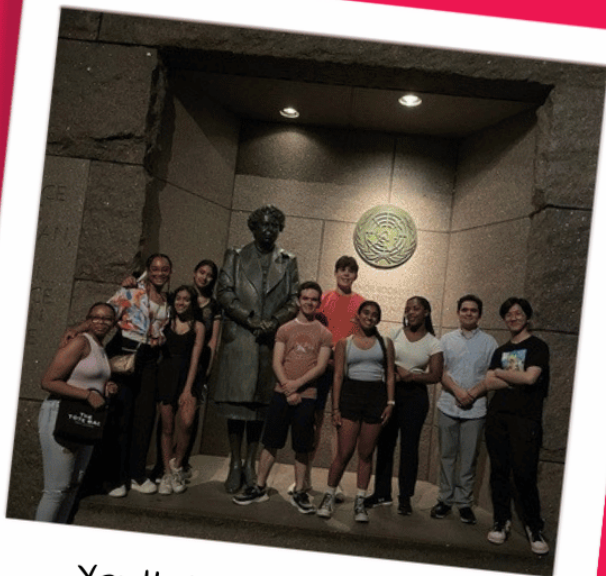
Each year, WorldChicago selects an average cohort of 35 students from Chicago and the Chicagoland area for an 8-month experiential learning program focused on citizen diplomacy, international affairs, and developing leadership skills. From January to August, the Youth Diplomats met with the Turkish Consulate in Chicago; engaged with fellows from Latin America and the Caribbean through the Young Leaders of the Americas Initiative (YLAi); learned about careers in international affairs; and engaged with students from Canada, France, Central America, and Southeast Asia. During this program, 10 students are selected to travel to the nation's capital to learn about foreign affairs through the Department of State, foreign embassies, state representatives, and nonprofits.



Youth Diplomats with YLAi Program Participants



Youth Diplomats at the Capitol Building



Youth Diplomats at the Eleanor Roosevelt Statue



Youth Diplomats with representatives of the Department of State

DONORS + SUPPORTERS

WorldChicago would like to thank our 2023 donors and supporters for their meaningful contributions.

INDIVIDUAL DONORS

Anonymous	Stephanie Leese Emrich	Denise Mattson	Virginia Russell
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Mary Baumeister	Elizabeth Garino	Wilmer Moreno	Priya Shah
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Karen Brown	Lisa Harwood	Peggy Parfenoff	LaNiece Thomas
Anthony Bruno	Margaret Johnsrud	Kristina Pauley	Karen Thompson
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GLOBAL CONNECTIONS

In 2023, WorldChicago welcomed more than 770 individuals to Chicago from more than 140 countries around the globe, sharing the people, culture, and city of Chicago with each one.



Albania	Columbia	Hungary	Malta	Senegal
Algeria	Congo	Iceland	Mauritius	Serbia
Antigua	Costa Rica	India	Mauritania	Sierra Leone
Argentina	Cote d'Ivoire	Indonesia	Mexico	Singapore
Armenia	Croatia	Iraq	Moldova	Slovakia
Australia	Cuba	Ireland	Mongolia	Slovenia
Austria	Czech Republic	Israel	Montenegro	South Africa
Azerbaijan	Denmark	Italy	Morocco	South Sudan
Bahrain	Dominican Republic	Ivory Coast	Mozambique	Spain
Bangladesh	Egypt	Jamaica	Namibia	Sri Lanka
Barbados	El Salvador	Japan	Nepal	Sweden
Barbuda	Estonia	Jordan	Netherlands	Taiwan
Belarus	Ethiopia	Kazakhstan	New Zealand	Tajikistan
Belgium	Fiji	Kenya	Nicaragua	Thailand
Benin	Finland	Kosovo	North Macedonia	Timor Leste
Bosnia Herzegovina	France	Kyrgyzstan	Norway	Togo
Brazil	Gaza Strip	Latvia	Pakistan	Tunisia
Brunei	Georgia	Lebanon	Panama	Türkiye
Bulgaria	Germany	Lesotho	Papua New Guinea	Turkmenistan
Burkina Faso	Ghana	Liberia	Paraguay	Ukraine
Cabo Verde	Greece	Libya	Peru	United Arab Emirates
Cameroon	Guatemala	Lithuania	Philippines	United Kingdom
Cambodia	Guinea	Luxembourg	Poland	Uruguay
Canada	Guinea-Bissau	Madagascar	Portugal	Uzbekistan
Chad	Guyana	Malawi	Republic of Korea	Venezuela
Chile	Haiti	Malaysia	Romania	Vietnam
China	Hong Kong	Mali	Saudi Arabia	West Bank

GET INVOLVED

Getting involved with international exchanges can be as simple as meeting a visitor for coffee, hosting an international professional to visit your office or joining with like-minded professionals to enhance your global network. Reach out to learn more about one or all of these opportunities.



HOMESTAY + DINNER HOSPITALITY HOSTS

WorldChicago homestay hosts open their homes to our international adult and youth visitors for short term homestays ranging from one week to one month. As a homestay or dinner hospitality host, you take on a special role as a cultural ambassador, with a unique opportunity to share our U.S. culture and at the same time learn about another part of the world.

Contact Michael Ma, ma@worldchicago.org, to learn more.



YOUNG PROFESSIONALS GROUP

The WorldChicago Young Professionals Group (YPG) brings together a diverse group of early-to-mid career individuals (ages 21-39) with a shared passion in international relations and citizen diplomacy. Through workshops, panel discussions, and networking events, Young Professionals learn the skills that will help them join the next generation of global leaders who will lead, engage, and promote citizen diplomacy in Chicago and around the world.

Contact Kendall Kartaly, kartaly@worldchicago.org, to learn more.



SHARE YOUR EXPERTISE

WorldChicago partners with local business, civic, and non-profit leaders to provide opportunities to share their knowledge and skills with emerging leaders here in Chicago and from around the world who are participating in professional exchanges or local programming.

By providing fellowship opportunities, leading a workshop, or grabbing a quick coffee, you can contribute to the journey of a WorldChicago participant, giving them a place to ask industry-specific questions and develop relationships with like-minded leaders.

Contact Julia Sosnivka, jsosnivka@worldchicago.org, to learn more.

FAREWELL PEGGY PARFENOFF



Dear WorldChicago Friends + Family,

I experienced citizen diplomacy and understood its importance early on when I was a student at the Sorbonne in Paris. It was clear to me that people meeting each other on a one-to-one basis changes minds and dispels stereotypes. I was happy not to be an Ugly American. This early citizen diplomacy experience eventually led me to join an international organization like WorldChicago. When I interviewed for the Executive Director role, it was right after 9/11 and I remember saying that citizen diplomacy was more important than ever. After 22 years, I can still say that today. As we look at our children who are growing up in a global community, and as we respond to social justice and inequality issues, WorldChicago will work to make sure that everyone in Chicago, in all our neighborhoods, can be a citizen diplomat.

There have been so many new and exciting programs - I am honored to have been a part of WorldChicago's growth and accomplishments. A SportsUnited grant for Brazil allowed us to take experts in Disability rights work to Brazil to discuss the upcoming Olympic games and brought teen athletes with disabilities from Brazil back to Chicago for a two-week exchange. We are all still active supporters of each other on Facebook and we have made life-long friends from that trip. The Professional Fellows program- matching entrepreneurs from the Balkans with Chicago --was transformative for our organization and one of my career highlights. The alumni network is one of the most engaging, outstanding groups of people I have

I am delighted to be handing over the reins of WorldChicago into Jennifer Dixon's capable hands. As Vice President at WorldChicago for nearly two years it has been a true pleasure watching her grow into the world of Citizen Diplomacy and implementing international exchanges.

To the many Chicagoans who have been my board members, mentors, homestay hosts, professional hosts, and to all our partners and supporters- thank you. You have made it possible for WorldChicago to grow and be a vibrant international partner.

I am especially appreciative of our amazing team - both staff and Board - and they are what I will miss the most. My entire tenure at WorldChicago has been with a committed, dedicated staff and Board with steadfast passion for our mission. The Global Ties network is the most supportive community I'm delighted to be a part of, and I look forward to remaining engaged with them!

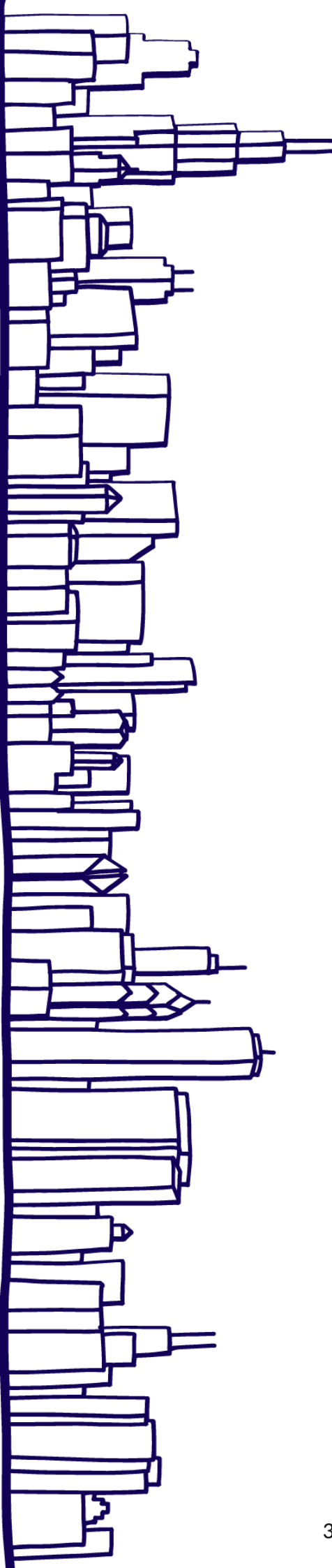


So, after 22 years I am excited to start a new chapter but am confident our paths will cross again soon ... maybe in Chicago, or another more remote part of the world. To echo the Murrow quote I opened with, nothing replaces the people-to-people exchange, so please keep raising your hand to host a dinner or a young person for a homestay - it is life-changing for you and the visitor, and it is a sure way to make our world a better place and be a citizen diplomat right here in our great city of Chicago.

Thank you for 20+ years of support,

Peggy Parfenoff

WorldChicago Supporter



309 W. Washington St, Ste. 450, Chicago, IL 60606