



International Center of Worcester

June 2008

Annual Report

for the Fiscal Year

June 1, 2007 - May 31, 2008

prepared by

Royce Anderson
Executive Director

www.IntCent.org

The International Center of Worcester thanks the following for their support of its programs and activities:

- *the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA), U.S. Department of State*
- *U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)*
- *the Open World Leadership Center at the Library of Congress*
- *Astrakhan State University, Astrakhan, Russia*
- *contributing members of the International Center of Worcester*

Mission Statement

ICW's mission is to encourage mutual understanding and friendship between residents of Central Massachusetts, the international community and international visitors.

ICW fulfills its mission through "Citizen Diplomacy:" promoting personal contact between residents of central Massachusetts and citizens of other nations through social, cultural, educational, and professional programs.

Overview of 2007-2008

This year has been a real turn-around for ICW in terms of program activity. The International Visitors Leadership Program remains slow with flat government funding for Citizen Diplomacy programs and increasing program costs, resulting in lower number of international visitors.

The International Center of Worcester, however, has remained active through consistent activity in its fee-for-service programs (mostly with Astrakhan State University in Russia) and by becoming more competitive in the Community Connections Program. We have enjoyed a steady flow of programs all year.

The main challenge for ICW as we look to the future is to maintain program activity at an acceptable level while not overburdening our resources. Of primary concern is the number of homestay hosts, which limits our capacity to handle increased programs. Although we can increase office staff to face increases in programming demand, we have a limited supply of homestay hosts. Since several of our largest programs require homestays (Community Connections and the Open World Leadership Program), this is a significant limitation. If we could tap into a new source for homestay families, we could increase our program capacity.

ICW staff continues to work primarily on a volunteer basis. The Executive Director's base salary remains at 50% of full-time (with 50% of medical benefits also deducted), but additional program income this past year has made it possible to supplement this salary to essentially a full-time level. Nadia Anderson has taken a full-time job elsewhere, so Royce Anderson has depended on volunteer help – which has been given by a number of excellent volunteers in the office. Primarily, Vita Aronson and Mimi Berberian have provided consistent help in the office and we have had several excellent student interns. One of these interns, Sharon Olander, has been hired full-time in the office for the summer of 2008, paid by ICW on the basis of increased program activity. Ken Johnson continues to maintain the ICW website and also contributes significant time to help with visitor programs

As we look to the new year we hope to maintain our program activity and initiate new programs. Royce Anderson is now working with NCIV (National Council for International Visitors, our representative organization in Washington, DC) on an initiative to reach out to local businesses across the country. If this is successful it could mean a significant source of program and funding activity for ICW and its sister organizations across the country.

Programs

Citizen Diplomacy programs in which ICW participated this year are summarized below.

Special thanks to ICW Administrative Assistant, Sharon Olander, for editing and updating the information in this report.

International Visitors Leadership Program (IVLP)

The International Visitors Program is a professional exchange program funded by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) of the US Department of State. Typically, programs last for two weeks and visitors travel to Washington, DC as well as several additional cities like Worcester for a few days each.

- September 29-October 3, 1 visitor from Poland, *Defense Contracting*
- September 29- October 3, 3 visitors from China, *NGO Development*
- October 9, 4 visitors from Romania, *American Libraries*
- October 13-17, 8 visitors from Russia, *International Adoptions*
- October 15, 1 visitor from Poland, *Telematics*
- December 12-14, 5 visitors from Ukraine, *Community Foundation Development*
- May 4-7, 4 visitors from Angola- Mozambique, *Grassroots Democracy and Good Governance*

In addition to hosting groups, ICW participated in activities sponsored by the National Council for International Visitors (NCIV) in Washington, DC. ICW is one of 91 “Centers for International Visitors” (CIVs) around the US who are members of NCIV and who design professional programs for leaders in various fields selected by U.S. Embassy staff around the world.

- June 13-15, 2007 Ken Johnson attended the NCIV Regional Meeting, in Rochester, NY.
- February 11-12, Royce Anderson attended the Citizen Diplomacy Summit in Washington, DC, just prior to the NCIV Annual Meeting.
- February 13-16, ICW staff Royce Anderson and ICW volunteer Mimi Berberian attended the NCIV Annual Meeting in Washington DC.

Community Connections Program

The Community Connections Program is sponsored by the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and administered by World Learning, a program agency in Washington, DC. ICW was “pre-qualified” as a hosting organization this year without having to submit a proposal and was rated as “excellent” in its programming performance. With this pre-qualification, ICW is invited to submit separate proposals for groups of 10 visiting professionals. Each program is managed as a separate project. We were fortunate to have hosted three programs this year, which all contributed significantly to our financial success. These programs were:

- August 1 – 21, 2007, 10 public health professionals from Kazakhstan on the theme of Infection Control and Blood Safety.

- September 5 – 26, 2007, 10 people from the Ukraine on the theme of Industrial Waste Management.
- May 22-June 12, 9 people from St. Petersburg, Russia on the theme of Tolerance, Community Relations, and Minority Rights.

Additionally, we have been approved to host a group of 10 physicians from Azerbaijan in August 2008.

Open World Leadership Program

The Open World Leadership Program is administered by the Open World Leadership Center in Washington D.C. It is the only professional exchange program that is funded directly by Congress. It is administered by the Open World Leadership Center at the Library of Congress in Washington, DC. ICW has been participating in this program since its inception in 1999.

ICW hosted four groups under this program during this past fiscal year. This is quite unusual, since most organizations are only invited to host one group per year. One of these groups was another “special project,” following our first special project from the Russian city of Kaluga last year. We were also selected to host a double group of Russian judges as part of Open World’s Judicial program. Through this program, two Federal Court judges in Boston designed a Boston-based program which ICW then implemented and made all of the logistical arrangements for. In this case, most of the housing was in a Boston hotel, but ICW did provide homestays for the long weekend in Worcester – which the visiting judges remembered as their fondest memory. Thank you homestay families!

Activity this year under this program included:

- June 9-16, ICW hosted two groups of Russian judges from Moscow and Kazan. Boston-based program implemented by ICW.
- October 26- November 3, ICW hosted another group from Kaluga on the theme of Secondary Education as a continuation of the Kaluga program in 2006.
- February 23- March 2, ICW hosted 5 visitors from different cities in Russia on the theme of Secondary Education.

Looking forward, we have been invited to host another group from Kaluga in September, 2008.

Fee For Service Programs

ICW continues to develop its first major “fee for service” program with the University of Astrakhan in Russia. The program was entirely funded by the University of Astrakhan and ICW is organizing programs for them to help them establish ties with US universities and organizations. Astrakhan is located on the Volga River Delta on the north shore of the Caspian Sea. This is an area of economic growth, and the University of Astrakhan has been developing rapidly as a major center for international education, scientific research, and management training.

Activities this past year include:

- ICW organized a videoconference between Clark University COPACE (College of Professional and Continuing Education) and ASU through the Worcester Technical High School.
- December 11-22 Royce Anderson traveled to Astrakhan on behalf of Clark University to help open the Clark Branch Campus there, which began in January 2008.
- ASU representative, Professor Natalia Korchagina, visited the Worcester area for the summer of 2007, to work on the Clark University and other cooperative programs.
- Jan 24 – February 4, 9 ASU faculty visited Worcester for a professional training program that included work with Clark University and WPI. The program included trips to Boston, NY City, and Washington, DC.
- March 16- April 29, Viktoriya Zaripova, Head of the International Projects Dept. at ASU, participated in the Fulbright Program in NY City and St. Paul Minn. Royce Anderson helped her write the application for the program. She visited Worcester for a week of meetings with Clark University, WPI, and Mt. Wachusett Community College as part of her program.
- March 21, ICW organized a videoconference between Clark University and ASU with Clark President John Bassett and Clark COPACE Dean Thomas Massey. The videoconference served as a Convocation ceremony to initiate the Clark program at ASU.
- April 19-29, second group of ASU faculty visited Worcester for training and meetings with Clark University, WPI, Wachusett Community College and, in NY City, with Columbia University and the NY School of Visual Arts.
- ASU representative, Professor Natalia Korchagina, is again visiting the Worcester area for the summer of 2008, to work on the Clark University and other cooperative programs.

Pushkin Sister City Program

ICW continues to nurture the relationship between Worcester and the town of Pushkin, Russia. Last year ICW celebrated the 20th anniversary of the Worcester-Pushkin relationship at our June 2007 Annual Meeting. The year 2010 will be the 300th anniversary of the town of Pushkin (Tsarskoye Selo) and the City Administration of Pushkin is already gearing up for these celebrations. We would like to create some programs in anticipation of this historic anniversary. Unfortunately, there has been no activity with Pushkin this year, although we continue to communicate with them about future ideas.

Twinning with Worcester, England

This year has shown a revival of the relationship between Worcester and Worcester, England largely through the stimulus of several articles by Jaime Flores and through the efforts of ICW volunteer Mimi Berberian. The newspaper articles bemoaned the inactivity in the relationship and stimulated meetings with Worcester Mayor Konstantina Lukes and others. A list of interested persons was generated by the Mayor and through the ICW email distribution list. Mimi made contact with them and initiated some preliminary meetings. The result is that a new committee has been formed under the ICW umbrella chaired by Deborah Nurse. The committee has connected the All Saint's Church choir with the Worcester UK Twinning Committee to help the

choir with homestays and cultural events during their August 2008 visit to England. We hope this represents the beginning of a continual series of activities between the two Worcesters.

ICW Organization

This year has been one of change in the ICW office. Most significantly, long-time Project Manager and volunteer, Nadia Anderson, left to accept a full-time position at Babcock Power in Worcester. We wish her well in her new career. Also, Program Officer, Anna DeMulder, discontinued her volunteer position at ICW to focus on family and other activities. She and Nadia will both continue on as volunteers, time permitting.

Membership Manager, Vita Aronson, continues to volunteer several days per week and also helps significantly with other ICW tasks and activities. Miriam (“Mimi”) Berberian, long-time employee at Clark University’s Marsh Institute, began volunteering one or more days a week this year. Although she is now taking a hiatus to help edit a book being written by a former Clark University professor, we look forward to her return.

We had some excellent student interns this year. After a junior year abroad in Germany and Poland, Clark student Iona Tice returned to ICW as a volunteer during her senior year. She is now on her way back to Germany for graduate school. In the spring 2008 semester we also acquired two more Clark student interns, Kevin Hunter and Sharon Olander, both Senior majors in International Relations. Sharon is now continuing with ICW full time for the summer as the Administrative Assistant. This summer, we also have a new Clark intern, Leah Coleman. Both Sharon and Leah graduated this May and will continue for their Masters degrees at Clark as part of the 5th year program.

In December 2007, two Clark University graduate students presented a strategic analysis of ICW as part of their class in Strategic Planning for Non-profit organizations, taught by David Jordan, Executive Director of Seven Hills Foundation. Royce Anderson, Kathy Rentsch, Nadia Anderson, and Mimi Berberian attended the presentation and the group’s final report is now on file. Some of their recommendations may be implemented during the ICW 2008-09 fiscal year.

On April 14, Royce Anderson and Kathy Rentsch attended a Greater Worcester Community Foundation seminar on Strategic Planning for non-profit organizations. More ideas came from this session. Strategic Planning by the Board will be a major theme for ICW next year.

In promotion, ICW produced another free 60-second spot on the local public radio station, WICN. On August 11, Royce Anderson appeared on WTAG’s show, the WPI Venture Forum with Bob Hokanson. Royce Anderson also recently accepted a position on the Board of the local community radio station WCUW. There are a lot of changes happening at the station, and we plan to create a productive alliance between ICW and WCUW.

Ken Johnson continues as the ICW Webmaster, improving and continually updating our website.

After a couple of other bookkeepers came and went, we have hired Diane Brewster as our bookkeeper. Our long-time bookkeeper, Catie Flynn, had been helping us out during the changes, but

she has recently gotten married and has now moved to San Diego permanently. Best wishes to her and her new family.

On a less positive note, we were again visited by a suit by David Bercume, whose truck and other property were damaged by one of ICW's Community Connections visitors in 2003 at a cost to him of at least \$3,000. Although the courts have stated (and confirmed again this year), that ICW is not liable, we have never received an answer from the U.S. government as to who carries liability for damages caused by visitors and why Bercume had to bear the cost of this incident. We are still pursuing an answer from Washington, DC.

We put out two editions of the ICW Newsletter this year; however, we recognize that we need to produce it more often. It continues to be a major challenge and we are trying to figure out how to leverage our volunteers to help produce more editions per year. We do use our website as a more flexible and current source for ICW news and information. Together, ICW members Manny Zax and Phyllis Estus are both mainly responsible for editing and publishing the ICW Newsletter. Manny also produces the fliers we send our members for special events.

We continue to use our email "Flashes" to communicate quickly with ICW members and friends about upcoming events and to make requests for homestay and other volunteer opportunities.

Membership

The number of ICW members has remained exactly level during this past year, ending the fiscal year with 108 individual and family memberships, representing a total of 162 people. Membership has been managed by Vita Aronson, who has been keeping the membership records and sending out the mailings for membership renewals and reminders. She has also revised the procedures and forms to make them more efficient.

Membership Activities

- June 21, ICW Annual Meeting. The keynote speaker, John B. Anderson, former Mayor of Worcester and Professor Emeritus of Holy Cross College, gave a presentation on "Beginning Twenty Years of Friendship" between Worcester and Sister City Pushkin, Russia. Business included election of the new Board of Directors and presentation of the Annual Report. A reception followed the meeting.
- September 16, ICW Member Event at the Museum of Russian Icons. Over 80 members, their friends, and other friends of the ICW attended the great event. Also in attendance were our 10 Community Connections visitors from the Ukraine and their homestay hosts.
- April 24, ICW Board and membership event at the home of Robert and Hildegard Armstrong with the faculty from the State University of Astrakhan, Russia.

Financial

This year was a banner year financially, mostly due to the fact that we had three Community Connections groups along with two major fee-for-service programs from Astrakhan State University and a steady flow of other programs. This is compared to a break-even year in FY 2007 and a loss of \$7,109 in FY 2006.

A major accomplishment this year was the development of a budget format that is convenient for reporting to the Board. This format was developed by Henry (“Hank”) Rose and is reflected in the year-end financial statement attached here. We have prepared a projected budget for FY 2009 based on this format, which will be submitted to the Board for approval at their September 2008 meeting.

Final financial figures are not yet in since the books will not be reviewed by our CPA, Ron Rosen, and the books will not be officially closed until the fall. Preliminary numbers, however, indicate that we have increased our cash position by at least \$45,000 this year. This figure is overstated due to the fact that, because it is on a cash basis, the report does not recognize expenses that will be paid out to the May 22 – June 12 Community Connections program that spanned the fiscal year; so some of that apparent surplus will need to be paid out in expenses already incurred in June. But, conservatively, we will see an increase in our cash position of at least \$33,000 this year, which puts us in good condition going into the next fiscal year. The challenge will be to maintain the same momentum into the future.

The attached financial report also points out a discrepancy between the year end operating surplus and the change in cash position of \$2,660 (see note 1). This is most likely due to year-end adjustment between the previous fiscal year. In any case, the cause will be resolved when the books are closed and a final accounting is submitted.

The “take away” message this year is that we have pulled out of the financial slump caused by the severe decrease in programs since 2005. We hope to continue this success.

List of Officers, Board Members, and Staff at year end, May 31, 2008

Executive Committee

| | |
|---------------------|------------------|
| Co-President | Phyllis Estus |
| Co-President | Kathy Rentsch |
| Treasurer | Robert Armstrong |
| Assistant Treasurer | Jimmie Ames |
| Clerk | Nan Johnson |
| Member-at-large | Henry Rose |

Board of Directors

Term Expiring in 2010

Lynda Young
Kathy Rentsch
Deborah Penta
Anthony Olson
Melissa Moore
Linda Looft
Robert Armstrong
Jimmie Ames
Phyllis Estus

Term Expiring in 2009

Maureen Irish
Thomas Massey

Term Expiring in 2008

Nan Johnson
George Netch
Henry Rose
Cynthia Wood

Staff

Royce Anderson, Executive Director
Vita Aronson, Membership Manager
Ken Johnson, Webmaster
Mimi Berberian, Office Volunteer
Diane Brewster, Bookkeeper
Sharon Olander, Administrative Assistant