



International Center of Worcester

June 2009

Annual Report

for the Fiscal Year

June 1, 2008 - May 31, 2009

prepared by

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Sharon Olander, Office Manager

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 training programs.

Overview of 2008-2009

It's difficult to speak about making a "turn around" when the global economy is spiraling into a serious recession and international tensions are escalating everywhere. But ICW has, in fact, continued the turn-around that began last year. Although we did fewer large international visitor programs than we did last year, we maintained a steady flow of programs and other activities.

As we pointed out in last year's Annual Report, our main challenge for this year was to maintain program activity at an acceptable level while not overburdening our resources. Our most limiting resource is the number of homestay hosts we have. Some of our largest programs, specifically the Community Connections Program and the Open World Leadership Program (see the Program section below), require that we keep their international visitors in private homes for one to three weeks, depending on the program. The homestay experience is the most meaningful component of a visitor's time in the U.S. Over the past 10 years we have put together a list of wonderful and dedicated people who are willing to share their family lifestyle. As one visitor said, "I came as a stranger, and left as a friend."

Opening your home to a visitor takes some energy and attention, so we don't ask our homestay families to host more than once a year or so. And it is a challenge to find new families. As a result we have had to turn down several large programs because it we were afraid we would not be able to find enough homestay families. We very much need to expand this resource, and are planning a strategy to do so in the upcoming year.

Given this limitation, we have been able to balance our resources with our level of program activities this year. As a result, we have had a very good year financially, though not as good as last year (see the Financial section below). One of our goal for this coming year is to expand our local resources, especially homestay families.

Membership events were among the highlights of this past year, giving opportunities for ICW supporters to meet international visitors (see under Membership, below). We also had two events targeting local businesses as part of a new nationwide strategy to engage businesses in Citizen Diplomacy (see under Programs, below)

This report surveys our activities for the past year, divided into four sections. The proposed slate of next year's officers is also included:

1. Programs: Summary of our international visitor programs.
2. Membership: Summary of membership, outreach, and social events.
3. Organization: Developments in ICW governance and office.
4. Financial: Review of the year's finances.
5. Proposed Slate of ICW Officers 2009-2010.

Programs

Thanks to ICW Office Manager, Sharon Olander, for updating the information in this report.

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

International Visitors Leadership Program (IVLP)

The International Visitors Leadership 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, during which time visitors spend several days in Washington, DC and several other cities around the country, such as Worcester.

ICW is one of 91 “Centers for International Visitors” (CIVs) around the US that are members of the National Council for International Visitors (NCIV) and host international visitors. They, like ICW, design professional programs for leaders in various fields selected by U.S. Embassy staff around the world to participate in the IVLP.

Government funding for the IVLP has remained flat this past year, so our total number of visitors from the IVLP remained about the same as last year. There is some indication that funding for citizen exchange programs will increase next year, reflecting the State Department’s growing emphasis on public diplomacy and global outreach.

This year we hosted 25 visitors in 9 programs through the IVLP:

- August 6-9, 5 government researchers from China, *Citizen Participation in Governance*
- September 5, the Minister of Culture from Cameroon, Africa and 2 colleagues, *Advancing Economic Development Through the Arts*
- September 24-27, 3 government officials from Spain, *U.S. Political System*
- September 29- October 17, an Investigative Judge from Paris’ Counter-Terrorism Section, France, *Counterterrorism*
- October 3, 2 teachers from Romania, *Civics Education*
- November 6, third secretary for the United Nations from Slovenia, *Economic Development*
- March 3-7, 2 directors of medical centers from the Krygz Republic, *Health Care: Privatization and Primary Care*
- April 26-29, 1 government official and 2 university representatives from Oman, *Technology Parks*
- May 17-20, 5 youth center directors from the Ukraine, *Community Support for Youth Engagement*

In addition to hosting international visitors, ICW participates in activities sponsored by the National Council for International Visitors (NCIV) in Washington, DC. The premier activity for the year is the NCIV Annual Meeting in Washington DC, attended by local CIVs, like ICW, from around the country, State Department staff, and the National Program Agencies in Washington who work as intermediaries between the State Dept. and the local CIVs.

This year, February 11-15, ICW Executive Director Royce Anderson attended the Annual Meeting accompanied by ICW Board member Lynda Young, ICW member Robert Sorrenti, and ICW Office Manager Sharon Olander. Royce Anderson was invited to speak as part of a panel for a conference session on “Your CIV and Business - a Vital Partnership.” This session is part of a

strategy to engage businesses in citizen diplomacy. Royce presented findings from a survey he conducted for NCIV of other CIVs across the country to find out their experience with reaching out to local businesses. One of the main findings from this survey was that we should recruit business people to be on the Board.

We were very pleased that Congressman James P. McGovern accepted our invitation to speak to the NCIV Annual Meeting at a special “Breakfast on Capitol Hill.” His presentation was very well received.

Royce Anderson has been invited to serve on the planning committee for the 2010 NCIV Annual Meeting in Washington, DC, February 10-13, 2010.

Business Initiative

An important goal for ICW over this past and future years is to engage local businesses in citizen diplomacy. We want to raise ICW’s profile in the business community, provide services to local businesses, and expand memberships through individual and business memberships.

ICW’s local efforts are part of a nationwide effort through NCIV. This effort began two years ago when the keynote speaker at the NCIV Annual Meeting, Keith Reinhart, presented evidence of the declining reputation of American around the world and how US businesses need to take part in improving our image. Reinhart, an advertising executive from NY City, founded Business for Diplomatic Action (www.businessfordiplomaticaction.org) and has united large US corporations to support his efforts.

ICW’s Executive Director, Royce Anderson, is heading up an effort with NCIV to develop a marketing plan for local host organizations like ICW to reach out to businesses. He has put together a working team of Directors from other host organizations around the country and NCIV representatives. Last summer he designed and implemented an on-line survey of host organizations around the country asking their experience in reaching out to businesses. He has headed up several conference calls with NCIV member host organizations around the country on the topic.

As part of this initiative, on October 20 ICW organized a wine tasting event at KJ Baaron’s in Worcester, inviting all the businesses that have previously met with an of our international visitors. The Consul and Chief Science Officer to the British Consulate in Boston, Dr. Stefan Winkler, spoke about his experience in citizen diplomacy and international business. ICW members provided appetizers. The event was designed to recognize and thank our business partners and promote the importance of person-to-person diplomacy for businesses. Although attendance was small, it was a good start for our business initiative.

On the evening of April 7, ICW organized a Business Roundtable and dinner at the Crowne Plaza hotel in Worcester in partnership with the Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce, the Convention and Visitors Bureau of Central Mass., the WPI Venture Forum, and the Mass. Export Center. The keynote address, “Engage the World and Improve your Business,” was given by the Executive Director of the organization Business for Diplomatic Action, Cari Guittard. Over 40 people attended, including local businesses and business leaders.

As part of this business roundtable, ICW held an afternoon session designed to be a focus group discussion of ICW's business strategy and how ICW can better serve the business community. This session generated some ideas for the future development of ICW's business initiative.

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 has been "pre-qualified" as a hosting organization, which allows to submit proposals to host groups of professionals in various specialties. Each group of 10 professionals visits Worcester for three weeks, during which ICW arranges homestays and a full-time professional schedule. This year we hosted two groups. Both of these programs were very successful thanks to the help from our ICW volunteers and staff.

- August 6-27, 2008, 10 physicians and Ministry of Health officials from Azerbaijan on the theme of "Quality Improvement and Evidence-Based Medicine." Board member Lynda Young was very helpful in planning this program.
- April 24- May 19, 2009, 10 people from the Ukraine on the theme of "Preservation of Historical and Social Environment Cities." This program included a pot luck dinner on May 3 at the home of Board member William O'Brian.

We turned down the opportunity to bid on two ComCon programs scheduled for this fall due to the lack of available homestay hosts. As discussed above, homestay hosts are our biggest challenge in hosting these groups and we could do more if we could find more families willing to keep our international visitors in their homes.

We are approved to receive more Community Connections programs next year. These programs are ICW's "bread and butter," so our goal is to accept three of them next year. We have already accepted a group for October, 2009.

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.

This year ICW hosted one Open World delegation:

- September 19-27, 5 business people who are also elected members of the local Duma (city council) of the Russian town of Kaluga, plus their Russian facilitator, on the theme of "Accountable Governance and Economic Development."

This is the third delegation from Kaluga we have received through the Open World Program over the past three years. This program encourages us to develop an ongoing relationship with a region, so we anticipate more delegations from Kaluga in the future.

This program also requires homestays for the 10-day program. Thank you homestay families for your valuable help and participation!

We have been approved to host a delegation from our sister city town of Pushkin, Russia in December, 2009. We are very excited about this and have been approved by Open World to nominate our own delegates for this group. We are working with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Pushkin and Pavlovsk and the Pushkin City Administration to identify and submit applications for delegates. The theme will be "Law Enforcements and Community Policing."

Fee For Service Programs: State University of Astrakhan (Russia)

ICW continues to develop its first major "fee for service" program with the University of Astrakhan (ASU) in Russia. 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.

ICW implemented its first program with ASU in 2006, and the relationship has been active since then. Clark University has established a branch campus in Astrakhan as part of their joint program with ASU. WPI is developing faculty contacts and is considering sending students to ASU for their academic projects.

ICW has been working with Clark University COPACE (College of Professional and Continuing Education) on developing distance learning through real-time video conferencing. We helped COPACE organize a number of videoconference sessions over the past year, and now whole classes are being taught on-line using video technology.

Specific programs this past year include:

- ASU representative, Professor Natalia Korchagina, visited Worcester during the summer of 2008 to work on the Clark University and other cooperative programs.
- Two ASU (Astrakhan State University) faculty/administrators visited Worcester in December 7-13 for meetings with Clark University and Harvard University.
- Three students from ASU arrived in January to attend Clark U. during the spring and summer semesters. ICW arranged for their apartment and helped with their arrival, orientation, and assistance during their visit.
- ICW acts as ASU's representative in the US, helping with many smaller tasks. For example, we helped ASU get approved to be a testing site for the TOEFL computer-based examination (standardized Test of English as a Foreign Language).

This summer, 2009 13 more students will arrive from ASU for the summer semester at Clark U. ICW is facilitating their visit and is organizing their professional program. Our relationship with ASU will continue to grow, and is an important alternative to our government-sponsored programs.

Pushkin Sister City Program

The relationship between Worcester and the town of Pushkin, Russia has been quiet again this year. Most of our current efforts are aimed at next year and two main activities:

- December 10-20, 2009, the visit of five Pushkin public safety professionals under the Open World Program (see above),
- June, 2010, the celebration of the 300th anniversary of the town of Pushkin (Tsarskoye Selo).

The City Administration of Pushkin is already gearing up for the 300th anniversary. They have set up a new “Department for the Preparation for the Celebration of the 300th Anniversary of Tsarskoye Selo” which is now handling all international relations.

We would like very much to take a delegation of people from Worcester to Pushkin next June. Several people have expressed an interest and we are looking for more.

We would also like to create some program for this historic anniversary. We have had some conversations with Pushkin about some kind of artist or museum exchange, but there are no plans yet.

Twinning with Worcester, England

The relationship between the two Worcesters, after being revived last year, has also been quiet this year. The Worcester Twinning Committee was formed under the ICW umbrella chaired by Deborah Nurse and in communication with the Mayor of Worcester. There is a group of people interested in planning future activities, but they have not met since last summer.

There has been some activity this year:

- The choir of the All Saints Episcopal Church went to Worcester, UK last August for a successful visit with homestays and a concert tour.
- On November 5, Mayor Konstantina Lukes hosted a “High Tea” at City Hall to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the donation of two sets of armor from Worcester UK to Worcester USA. These armors are displayed on the wall of the central stairway in City Hall. Mayor Lukes used her personal collection of china teacups and service for the event.

ICW receives the Worcester UK’s Twinning Newsletters by email. If anyone would like to receive them, they may contact the ICW office.

Membership

The number of ICW members remains about the same at the end of this year as last year. Donations from members, however, increased to \$6,625 this past fiscal year compared to \$5,325 the year before. These funds are crucial to ICW’s work. We thank our members for their energy and dedication to Citizen Diplomacy.

ICW’s volunteer Membership Manager, Vita Aronson, has managed all our communications with members and all membership records this year. We use a “rolling membership” system, which bills each member during their month. Most memberships are due between January and June, but people have joined ICW at all times of the year. Vita sends out all renewal, reminder, and thank you letters.

Membership Activities

ICW members have told us that the main reason they contribute to ICW, in addition to believing in our mission, is that they love to meet and interact with international visitors. We provide membership activities and social occasions so our members can meet, talk to, and learn from our international visitors.

At the beginning of this fiscal year the ICW Board set the goal of having a minimum of 2 member events and 2 business events per year. We have exceeded that goal:

- June 17, ICW Annual Meeting and pot luck dinner at Clark University. Presentation by Professor Nataliya Korchagina, Chair, Dept. of World Economy, Head of the Russian-American Center of Education and Scientific Research, Astrakhan State University and coordinator of the Clark University program in Astrakhan.
- October 5, wine and appetizer reception at the D’Zian Art Gallery in Worcester. The guest of honor was Judge Philippe Coirre, an Investigative Judge in the Paris Counter-Terrorism Section. He spoke about current issues in counterterrorism.
- October 20 wine tasting business event at KG Baaron’s, designed as a “thank you” to business people who have supported ICW in the past. In addition to the ICW membership, we invited all the business people who have hosted our international visitors.
- December 7 ICW Holiday Pot Luck Dinner, at the home of ICW member and College of the Holy Cross language professor Helen Freear (Helen and Michael Papio). The event was co-sponsored by Holy Cross College’s Foreign Language Assistants program and was attended by 15 graduate students from 9 different countries (France, Spain, Germany, Italy, Mexico, Peru, Russia, South Korea and Malaysia) who help teach Holy Cross’ language courses.
- April 7 ICW Business Roundtable and dinner at the Crowne Plaza hotel. Speaker was Cari Guittard, Executive Director, Business for Diplomatic Action, San Francisco. See Business Initiative section above for more details.
- May 3, ICW pot luck dinner at the home of ICW Board member, William O’Brian. Guests of honor, the 10 Community Connections visitors from Ukraine who made a cultural presentation about Ukraine.

Special thanks to the members of ICW’s Social Committee and the other volunteers who worked hard to make these events a success.

Communication

The ICW Newsletter was published twice this year: once after the Annual Meeting in June, and again in December, which included a holiday greeting. We are ready now to publish another newsletter with news about the 2009 Annual Meeting. Many people contribute to the Newsletter, but ICW member Manny Zax and Co-President Phyllis Estus are mainly responsible for editing and publishing the ICW Newsletter.

In December we e-mailed holiday greetings to our members and friends on our “Flash” email list and also to our international alumni. We also sent printed greetings cards to our ICW lifelong members and to our homestay hosts. 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.

Ken Johnson continues to manage the ICW website, updating it as we get new programs. Ken also volunteers tremendously, helping us with logistics when international visitors are in town. The ICW website is the most flexible and current source for ICW news and information. The ICW website is now being updated to include links to the Worcester Committee of Foreign Relations, in accordance with a new agreement between them and ICW.

ICW Organization

Volunteers and Staff

ICW Executive Director Royce Anderson finished his 10th year working at ICW. Starting as a part-time volunteer with Nadia Anderson in 1998, he began working full-time in 2003. Nadia worked with ICW until 2007 when she accepted a full-time job at Babcock Power Company in Worcester.

Sharon Olander, who started as a Clark U student volunteer intern in January 2008, has transitioned to becoming ICW's full-time Office Manager. She worked for us full-time as Administrative Assistant last summer and again part-time during this past school year as she attended graduate school in International Development at Clark. She has now become our full-time as Office Manager and has become indispensable. We are confident that we can fund her position through October, 2009, and are working hard to generate the number of ICW programs necessary to support her position beyond that time.

ICW continues to enjoy a steady flow of excellent student interns from Clark University. Clark graduate student Leah Coleman continued with us through December 2008. For the fall 2008 semester we had two other Clark student interns, senior Rachel Ambrose and sophomore Olivia Lotstein. During the spring 2009 semester we had two new Clark interns, Tara Lewis from Bermuda and Kirtana Tanuku from India and Japan, both juniors. Now, for the summer of 2009, we have two new interns: Brittany Card from Anselm College in New Hampshire, and Matthew Thomas from University of Tampa in Florida. Both live in Worcester and are home for the summer. All interns are being managed primarily by Office Manager Sharon Olander.

Membership Manager, Vita Aronson, has volunteered several days per week this past year and has also helped significantly with other ICW tasks and activities such as homestay hosting and organizing social events.

Diane Brewster continues as our bookkeeper, working about 2 hours every two weeks to maintain our computer-based QuickBooks accounting records, doing the payroll, and working with our CPA Ron Rosen on year-end tax accounting and reporting.

ICW continues to be a member of the Visitor and Convention Bureau of Central Mass., the Corridor-9 Chamber of Commerce, the Worcester Rotary Club, and the Worcester Cultural Coalition. We have just rejoined the Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce. Royce Anderson and other ICW staff and volunteers attend various events and activities of these groups as a way to reach out to and maintain a profile in the greater community. Most important is to develop ICW's relationships with the business community.

Financial

We finish this fiscal year in good financial health. When we have received all revenues from programs now completed, we will be very close to our targeted surplus for the year. And we are getting off to a good start for the new fiscal year with two major programs already confirmed for the fall.

As always, final financial figures for the past fiscal year are not yet complete. There are still a few outstanding program expenses. ICW's financial records will be reviewed by our CPA, Ron Rosen, and the books for 2008-2009 officially closed in the fall.

The attached financial report gives our current position as of May 31, 2009. It adds our outstanding receivables for the programs we completed in the 2008-2009 fiscal year, to show a total expected year-end surplus of \$20,537.

List of Officers, Board Members, and Staff at year end, May 31, 2009

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 2011

Nan Johnson
Patricia LaRochelle
George Netch
William O'Brian
Henry Rose

Term Expiring in 2010

Jimmie Ames
Robert Armstrong
Phyllis Estus
Linda Loof
Anthony Olson
Kathy Rentsch
Lynda Young

Term Expiring in 2009

Maureen Irish
Thomas Massey

Staff

Royce Anderson, Executive Director
Sharon Olander, Office Manager
Vita Aronson, Membership Manager
Ken Johnson, Webmaster
Diane Brewster, Bookkeeper