

Chairman Bernard “Ben” Buecker’s Message



This will be my last newsletter while serving as Honorary German Consul. Five years ago I reached the retirement age in the German Consul Corps. At the request of the Consulate General, my service was extended twice, and at 70, I am ready for new adventures.

My interest in foreign service, international law and international relations developed during my upbringing by German immigrant parents. After WW II, my parents often sent Care packages to Germany, to our many relatives who were living in squalor in a country flattened by bombing and land warfare. My uncles and relatives were among the many innocent German victims of Adolf Hitler, victims whose suffering passed in silence.

Later, being a “60’s” teenager, my heroes of the 60’s were those who fought the battle for civil rights - Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King, Malcom X, Rosa Parks and Julian Bond, among many others. I had the good fortune to meet the great Julian Bond at an International Visitors conference in Atlanta some 10 years ago. He was kind, brilliant, interesting, delightful - a great human being. May he rest in peace.

These times and these experiences measured from evil to greatness, from the most egregious figure responsible for the holocaust, Adolf Hitler, to the most courageous fighters for justice.

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Greetings from SACIV’s New Executive Director

Dear SACIV Community,

It was with great pleasure that I accepted the position of Executive Director this past May. Having been with SACIV as Administrative Assistant since September of 2014, I feel confident in my new leadership role and foresee great things for the future of our organization.

It was also my pleasure to put together this latest issue of our “World View” Newsletter. These days one often gets tied up in the monotony of daily tasks and rarely has time to reflect. Writing and compiling the material for this issue gave me an opportunity to appreciate just how important our work is and the work of our counterparts around the country, especially this year, which marks the 75th anniversary of the International Visitor Leadership Program (see page 4).



Irma Reyes, Ben Buecker, Cecilia Cross, and Betsy Cameron (from left)

In addition to the positive results our work has on hundreds of visitors around the world, it is also important to remember that two-way exchange happens right here in San Antonio. It never ceases to amaze me how generous and welcoming our members are. From opening their homes for “home hospitality” to welcoming visitors with open arms at the recent “Summer Membership Mixer”, I am always touched by their generosity, kindness, and eagerness to learn from our international visitors.

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2015 Past Programs

April 26 th – 30 th	Cultural Heritage Preservation and Museum Management	Ecuador, Morocco, Poland, Vietnam
May 6 th – 7 th	IVLP Gold Stars' Tour: Alumni Connecting the World Mr. Yongsong Chen	China
June 16 th – 20 th	Combating International and Domestic Human Trafficking	Argentina, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela
June 16 th – 20 th	Human Rights, Civic Empowerment, and Minority Communities	Australia, Micronesia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, China, Singapore
July 17 th	America's Changing Energy Landscape	Germany
July 18 th – 23 rd	Accountability in Government	Cameroon, Chile, Zimbabwe, Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Africa, Nauru, Namibia, Dominican Republic
July 25 th – 29 th	Sustainable Urban Development and Third Places Mr. Sylvain Barfety	France

Fall 2015 Upcoming Programs

September 14 th	Women Leaders: Promoting Peace and Security	Benin, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Haiti, Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, Nigeria, Republic of South Sudan, Togo, United Kingdom
October 6 th -10 th	America's Multiethnic Society and the Role of the Successor Generation	Austria, Finland, Germany, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Russia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom
October 13 th – 17 th	Grassroots Democracy and Civil Society	Chile, El Salvador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, Panama, Paraguay, Uruguay, Venezuela

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



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[@SACIVTX](https://twitter.com/SACIVTX)

Greetings from SACIV's New Executive Director

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As I accompany visitors to their appointments, one of the most gratifying aspects is witnessing the presenter asking our visitors for their advice or best practices in their field of expertise and developing a professional rapport even after the visitors have returned to their home countries, creating a mutually beneficial experience.

Without an impressive array of innovative professional resources at home, our work wouldn't be affective abroad. As you will read in the following pages, I have been lucky to accompany many diverse groups of visitors to meet with local professionals and experts on a variety of topics. Our recent programs have examined the diversity & heritage of our city, sustainable urban development, minority empowerment, and other issues pertinent to our community. These opportunities have been rewarding in many ways, but one of the greatest benefits is getting to truly experience and appreciate all that our great city has to offer.

I recently stumbled upon a quote by District 8 City Councilman Ron Nirenberg that struck me as resonating message worth sharing. "I am proud to live in a city where we celebrate our international roots and our intercultural future," he said. "San Antonio's deep connection to the global community make us vibrant culturally and stronger economically," a sentiment I share.

So I'd like to thank all of our members, community partners, home hospitality hosts, professional resources, and network of friends for your role in helping us to build international friendships, facilitate the exchange of ideas, foster cultural understanding, and promote San Antonio as an international city.

Sincerely,

Cecilia Cross

Chairman's Bernard "Ben" Buecker's Message

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My second memorable exposure to international conflict was in 1969, while serving with the United States Air Force. Living in a suburb of Libya without Air Force authorization, I was caught in the cross fire of the Gaddafi revolution. At that time, following the 1967 Israeli war, Libya was considered a hostile zone. I was warned by most of my fellow airmen that living off base was life threatening, that the Arabs could not be trusted. Fortunately, this proved not to be the case, and I became involved in community affairs and developed friendships in the neighborhood.

Finally, after studies with the Heidelberg Faculty of law in West Germany, the Federal Republic of Germany, I enrolled in the Technical University of Dresden in East Germany, the German Democratic Republic. This provided a unique opportunity to experience that personal relations with people of a "cold war" nation behind the "iron curtain" can be a rewarding experience. Making friends leads to peace, one person, one handshake at a time.

Indeed, this is the motto of SACIV and all it's sister organizations. Suffering and injustice have no borders, the goodness of people have no political boundaries. The fight for peace and justice is international - as members of SACIV we do our part in this battle.

On a final note, in our last newsletter, you have read about our former Administrative Assistance, Cecilia Cross. We now welcome her as our new Executive Director. Congratulations Cecilia! - -

Announcements

*In memory of
JESSE REYES
1934 - 2015*



Jesse Reyes, husband of Founder and Board Member Irma Reyes, passed away in May. He spent much of his life supporting SACIV and will be greatly missed by the community.

THANK YOU...

...to the following "home hospitality" hosts for generously welcoming our international visitors this year!

* Betty Berchelmann
* Ben Buecker
* Rita Heck
* Nancy Price
* Irma Reyes
* Gloria Almaraz
* Terry Camacho

* Betsy & Stuart
Cameron
* David & Tamara
Dennis
* Nanette Le Coat &
Stephen Cross

IVLP Celebrates 75th Anniversary

By Cecilia Cross

For the past 75 years the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) has connected emerging leaders from around the world to the United States. As a part of the US Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, the flagship program invites rising foreign leaders working in the political, economic, educational, media, religious, and civil society sectors to experience American society and values and to build abiding connections with American peers. Through people-to-people exchange, it promotes international relationships that work to foster economic growth & development, champion democracy & human rights, expand tolerance & dialogue, assist at-risk populations, support public health, and propel climate change action.



The IVLP can trace its roots back to 1940 when the US Department of State began supporting people-to-people exchanges as part of the practice of diplomacy. In December of 1940, Dr. Aurelio Espinoza, rector of the Catholic University in Quito and distinguished intellectual leader in his country, arrived in New York for a two month visit and planted the seeds for IVLP. Since then, the program has provided opportunities for domestic and international emerging leaders to exchange ideas and collaborate on common challenges in order to build a more peaceful and

prosperous world. Its alumni include 385 current of former heads of state, 63 Nobel laureates, and thousands of leaders across the private and non-profit sectors. Today the International Visitor Leadership Program has brought more than 200,000 people from over 190 countries to the States to address critical issues, break down barriers, and find surprising similarities.

Essential to the success of the IVLP, both historically and looking forward, is the work of the seven implementing partners and the dynamic Global Ties US network of over 90 community based members across the country, including SACIV. This landmark anniversary offers an opportunity to celebrate the impact of the IVLP at home and abroad, and in doing so recognize the crucial role of American citizen diplomats. Every connection we make plants a seed and those seeds grow over time, both here and abroad. These connections allow us all to live in a safer, more peaceful, and equitable world.



For Americans, the IVLP is a great opportunity to bring the world to us and get an insiders perspective on places that we have never visited. The goal is to understand the importance of thinking globally and connecting locally as we work to foster a generation of citizen diplomats in communities across the US.

As we look back on what decades of exchanges have accomplish and the lessons we have learned, it's clear that there is still a great deal of work to be done to make the world a more secure and prosperous place. Public diplomacy is one of our greatest and most impactful tools because it is personal. How can we learn from the past and present to create the most effective future exchange programs? What will the next 75 years look like?

By connecting world leaders, we are building a better world. - - -



SACIV Welcomes Visitors for Program on Cultural Heritage Preservation and Museum Management

By Cecilia Cross

From April 26th through April 30th, SACIV hosted a group of four international visitors for a program on “Cultural Heritage Preservation and Museum Management”. The diverse group of participants was comprised of four women, including Mrs. Katya Cazar Almanche from Ecuador, an artist and the Director of the Fundacion Municipal Bial de Cuenca; Ms. Meryem Saadi from Morocco, a Communications Officer at the National Foundation of Museums; Ms. Monika Kapa-Cichocka from Poland, a curator and Head of Publications and Exhibitions at Warsaw’s History Meeting House; and Ms. Van Huynh from Vietnam, the Head of Cooperation and External Affairs at the Hue Monuments Conservation Center.

The visitors traveled to several cities across the country with objectives to explore best practices and new technologies utilized in the field of cultural heritage preservation and museum management in the United States; examine how public and private entities have effectively used cultural heritage to expand and enhance domestic and international tourism; discuss current strategies used to promote community awareness and interest in cultural institutions and heritage sites, such as fund-raising, special exhibitions and programs and special events; and highlight the diverse ethnic, cultural, historical and religious traditions in American society which are honored and preserved by cultural heritage sites and museums throughout the United States. To this end, the visitors participated in a full range of meetings and activities exploring these themes, as well as engaging in cultural activities and enjoying dinner with our members during home hospitality.

Upon arrival in San Antonio on April 26th, visitors were thrilled to have the opportunity to experience the last day of fiesta at the “San Jose MissionFest”. Joined by SACIV Members at a reception on the Mission grounds, they excitedly asked questions about the history of our city’s uniquely San Antonio tradition and were fascinated and impressed by the local enthusiasm to



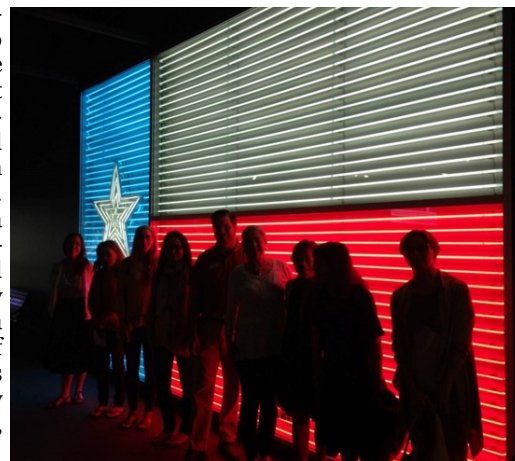
Visitors and SACIV Members enjoying the festivities at the San Jose MissionFest

preserve such living cultural customs. The group enjoyed listening to regional music, learning about “cascarones”, and purchasing the traditional fiesta flower crowns. They were even able to take pictures of a roadside cowboy complete with horse and saddle!

The following day, April 27th, brought them back to Mission San Jose to meet with Ms. Susan Snow, World Heritage Coordinator of the San Antonio Missions Historic Park. Ms. Snow discussed the history of the San Antonio Missions and led the group on a guided tour of the Mission San Jose grounds. She also discussed the process and stages of working with UNESCO for the current bid (at the time) being pursued to designate the Missions as World Heritage Sites. Ms. Huynh, of Vietnam, was particularly interested in this process as her work has also been to designate her hometown, Hue City, as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The group was impressed to learn of San Antonio’s role as a leader of the conservation movement over the past 100 years and the importance placed by the city’s leadership in preserving the cultural and human landscape. During a guided tour following the meeting, the visitors also had the opportunity to compare Mission San Jose to Mission Conception.

Later that afternoon, the visitors met with the staff of UTSA’s Institute of Texan Cultures (ITC). Ms. Joanne Andera, Director of Special Events, lead the group through ITC’s current & permanent exhibitions and archives while discussing their outreach & education programs and events aimed at

celebrating and promoting the understanding to Texas heritage. The group also learned about the goals of the museum’s collections and research activities from ITC’s Director Ms. Angelica Docog. As a curator, Ms. Kapa-Cichocka from Poland was particularly impressed with a behind the scenes tour of the upcoming “Los Tejanos” exhibit given by Ms. Lupita Barrera, Director of Education.



Visitors with the staff of the Institute of Texan Cultures

Next, the group visited with Ms. Beth Foulds, Education and Programs Manager, and Ms. Sharon Garcia, Marketing and Communications Manager, for a tour of the new Briscoe Western Art Museum. They were able to learn about the history of San Antonio’s newest museum and their focus on preserving the art, history, and culture of the American West.

The visitor’s day ended with home hospitality from SACIV Members. Ms. Gloria Almaraz hosted two visitors for dinner and arranged a private tour with members of the Esperanza Peace and Justice Center. Ms. Betty Berchelmann hosted the two other at her home and invited her friend and Director of the Witte Museum to discuss museum management with the guests. They ended the evening of with a visit to view the art installations along the Riverwalk’s Museum Reach. The next day, the visitors reported their pleasure and gratitude at having been met with such kindness, knowledge, and generosity from their hosts, rounding out a perfect end to a busy day.

Tuesday, April 28th, began with a visit to UTSA’s Center for Archeological Research (CAR). During a meeting with Education Program Coordinator Ms. Whitney Lytle, the group discussed community engagement and youth outreach methods utilized by the Center. The group also learned much about the conservation and preservation efforts undertaken by CAR through a tour of their lab with Director of the Center for Archeological Research Mr. Shawn Marceaux. A highlight of the visit for the group was participating in a “hands-on-activity” in which the visitors learned how to throw atlatl darts, used by ancient peoples in the region.

Following lunch on the Riverwalk, the international visitors then met with Ms. Nancy Hunt, Executive Director of the Paseo del Rio Association, who discussed the history of the Riverwalk and non-profit’s work dedicated to promoting , protecting, and preserving the San Antonio Riverwalk through activities such as fundraising efforts, advocacy campaigns, public-private partnerships, events, and volunteer work. They ended their day with a meeting at the San Antonio Conservation Society with Executive Director Mr. Bruce MacDougal and Chair of the Board of Directors Ms. Sue Ann Pemberton. There, they also discussed the importance of protecting our city’s cultural landscape and maintaining our character and civic pride through the preservation of our cultural and material heritage. Visitors were intrigued by the history of the Conservation Society and their role in protecting our diverse city’s unique buildings, objects, places, and customs, as well as their efforts to do so through educational outreach programs, events, tours, and the professional & research opportunities they provide to the public.

The last day of the delegation’s visit, April 29th, took visitors to the City of San Antonio’s Office of Historic Preservation to meet with Cultural Historian Ms. Claudia Guerra. There, they learned about the office’s role in protecting the historical, cultural, architectural, and archeological resources of the city and the impact of cultural preservation on the tourism and economic development of the city.

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The QDDR In Review: Americans Are Our Greatest Diplomatic Assets

By Robert Zimmerman

From Global Ties US "ExchangeMatters" Newsletter (May/June 2015)

During a speech he delivered on April 28, Secretary of State John Kerry unveiled the 2015 Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR), outlining the strategic priorities to be pursued by the U.S. Department of State and U.S. Agency for International Development.

It focused on four specifically: preventing conflict and violent extremism, promoting resilient democratic societies, advancing inclusive economic growth, and mitigating and adapting to climate change.

There's something here for those of us who practice citizen diplomacy, including a section emblazoned by a sentence encapsulating what all of us have known for years: "In this era American leadership needs the active engagement of nearly every sector of our society, economy, and culture."



Secretary Kerry hinted that tackling these challenges won't be easy, but it can and must be done. To be successful, the Department of State will have to ramp-up its "knowledge management, data and analytics." While acknowledging the value of traditional diplomacy and relationship building, the Secretary also

highlighted the importance of engaging foreign audiences outside the traditional corridors of diplomacy.

The Secretary's plans include marching orders for Department of State staff. Ambassadors are charged with negotiating agreements with foreign governments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. These will match a similar ramping-up of efforts designed to address such concerns in the United States.

Throughout the year, the hundreds of members who form our network make invaluable and sometimes unrecognized contributions to American diplomacy. These efforts are recognized in the State Department report.

"Facilitating person-to-person connections between Americans and people abroad" is labeled "a vital part of [the Department of State's] work."

"Americans are our greatest diplomatic and development asset around the world" stands out as the headline of another key section—indeed, it's the subtext to much of what this 90-page report contains.

Discussing American diplomatic achievements over recent years, the Secretary drew a path from the experiences of his father, a diplomat who took part in the invasion of Normandy in 1944. The senior Mr. Kerry would later serve in Europe during the days of the Berlin Wall. Then as now, Secretary Kerry noted that the challenges we face today require American leadership, as well as patriotism and dedication from the Department's workforce. He remains confident that the U.S. has the tools it needs to surmount these obstacles while creating a more prosperous world for the generations to come.

For more information on the QDDR, go to www.state.gov/s/dmr/qddr/. For more from Secretary Kerry, go to www.state.gov/secretary or follow him on Twitter at @JohnKerry. - - -

Reflections from the 2015 Global Ties National Meeting

By Cecilia Cross

In early February, I had the pleasure of attending the Global Ties National Meeting along with Board Member Betsy Cameron. The annual conference, which took place in Washington, DC, accomplished many things for me. It deepened my understanding of the role we all play in US public diplomacy and foreign policy; it strengthened my skills to maximize the impact of international exchange programs; it allowed me to build new skills needed to grow SACIV's capacity for increased global and local impact; and it created a space for me to develop closer ties with current and future partners.

Panel discussions and presentations outlined best practices with counterparts from other community based members around the country and addressed issues at the forefront of our foreign policy in various regions around the world. These insightful sessions provided me with professional development opportunities and focused on several specific skill sets, which I have since found invaluable and immensely beneficial to my work.

Some highlights of the National Meeting where the plenary events which celebrated and inspired leaders who shape

our common vision, spark new ideas, and push us to do more. One such event was at a luncheon with ambassadors in which Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, two-time president of Costa Rica, and IVLP alumnus Oscar Arias inspired the audience of citizen diplomats. Speaking about the immense impact of the IVLP, Dr. Arias said "Global Ties US



Dr. Jill Biden speaking at a State Department Reception

and the International Visitor Leadership Program are in the business of helping people see. Not because the United States has all the answers... but rather because the very experience of exchanging ideas in another country changes a person's world view forever. I have never forgotten my own time as a participant in the IVLP when I was a young Cabinet minister." Other notable events included a luncheon in which author Richard C. Morais, who was honored with the Citizen Diplomat Award, linked his writing to the mission of connecting with seemingly different people and finding what they have in common, and a reception, hosted by the State Department, in which I got to hear Dr. Jill Biden, wife of Vice President Joe Biden, speak about the importance of



Former President of Costa Rica and Nobel Laureate Oscar Arias

international education and the continued need for the enthusiasm of the networks' citizen diplomats. One of my favorite events was a reception hosted at the Czech embassy in which I was able to meet former IVLP participant and Czech Ambassador Petr Gandalovic, who I then met again when he visited San Antonio in March (see page 9).

Most memorable, was the invigorating energy I felt through the shared excitement among the hundreds of dedicated individuals who came together in the name of public diplomacy. I was surrounded by individuals who embodied the same dedication to citizen diplomacy as the members of SACIV and who came together with the desire to share and learn. These networking opportunities were key to building existing relationships with my colleagues and making new connections for future endeavors.



Meeting Ambassador Gandalovic at the Czech Embassy

I engaged in dialogue, made new connections, and witnessed the impact of the IVLP. Having seen the power of exchange on individuals and communities, and having been introduced to the progress towards peace that these exchanges enable, I returned to San Antonio eager to implement these innovating and inspiring ideas in to action. - - -

SACIV Welcomes Visitors for Program on Cultural Heritage Preservation and Museum Management *Continued from Page 5*

Following the meeting, the group was able to visit the historic Edwards Steves Homestead in King Williams with Museum Manager Ms. Farrah Varga. And finally, the group ended their day with a visit with representatives from the Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center to learn about their educational and cultural programs aimed at promoting and developing the arts and culture of the Chicano, Latino, and Native American peoples. They even had an opportunity to watch and participate in the Guadalupe Dance Company's "Viva Mi Cultura" interactive dance performance and demonstration.



Visitors with dancers of the "Viva Mi Cultura" performance at the Guadalupe

Overall, the visitors were greatly impressed with San Antonio's investment to preserve our culture and heritage through a variety of means, including arts, education, exhibitions, and conservation resources, and specifically with collaborative efforts between public and private sector partnerships. Our vast heritage is always changing and in order to maintain its integrity and authenticity, we must preserve while simultaneously managing change. - - -

Thank you to our new & returning 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, 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
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UNAM
SAN ANTONIO

Since 1944, UNAM in San Antonio has symbolized a tradition of academic and cultural collaboration between Mexico and the

United States. Their mission is to support the success of Mexicans in the United States through the development of linguistic and cultural competencies. They support bi-national understanding and integration through education, language teaching, cultural diffusion, academic extension, and synergy with other educational organizations in the United States.

600 Hemisfair Plaza Way, San Antonio, TX 78205
210.222.8626

The Lifshutz Companies have played a leading role in the redevelopment and revitalization of San Antonio's center city for the past 50 years. Selected projects have included the Blue Star Arts Complex, the Cadillac Lofts, the Andalusia Condominiums, the King William Townhomes, the St. Benedict's Condominiums, Hot Wells, Big Tex, and the El Tropicano Riverwalk.

Mr. James Lifshutz has served and is serving on numerous not-for-profit boards that promote and support the arts and humanities, economic development, services to underprivileged youth, and protection of the environment. He served as Honorary Consul to France in San Antonio from 2009 until 2014, and is very supportive of SACIV.



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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.

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CITY OF SAN ANTONIO INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS OFFICE

By Cecilia Cross

As a non-profit organization, SACIV greatly values all of the generous contributions from our Corporate Members. These companies, organizations, and institutions also provide the SACIV community and leadership with the opportunity to collaborate and participate together towards a variety of shared goals. In the past months, the team behind the City of San Antonio's International Relations Office has been gracious enough to invite the SACIV staff, Board, and Members to take part in three events geared towards achieving the shared goal of promoting San Antonio as an international city and welcoming international visitors to the region.

Here are some highlights from the events:

Riverwalk Barge Tour with Czech Delegation

On March 26th, 2015, the International Relations Office welcomed a delegation of 17 Czech business representatives and 12 government officials from the Czech Ministry of Agriculture and the Czech Embassy to explore the San Antonio Riverwalk with a barge tour reception. The group enjoyed experiencing the major tourist attraction, considered to be an important part of the city's urban fabric, and was able to relax before the next day's appointments with local business representatives from HEB and a seminar presented by the Free Trade Alliance San Antonio.



Board Member and former Executive Director Irma Reyes with Ambassador Gandalovic

SACIV Board Members Ben Buecker, Irma Reyes, and Betsy Cameron and staff member Cecilia Cross were pleased to be able to join the delegation as they enjoyed the Riverwalk barge tour. A notable member of the delegation was Ambassador of the Czech Republic to the United States Mr. Petr Gandalovic, whom Executive Director Cecilia Cross had recently had the opportunity to meet in February, at the Global Ties National Meeting in Washington, DC (see page 7). The group of SACIV representatives enjoyed meeting with Ambassador Gandalovic and learning about his experience as an alumnus of the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP).

Discussing the tremendous impact the program had on him as a participant in 1991 and how it helped him throughout his career, Ambassador Gandalovic said "I was humbled by the amount of time, effort, and funding the American Government expended on the program, which allowed me to visit the United States and really discover the country...Remember, under communism, Czechs were virtually forbidden from traveling outside of the old East Bloc states... when I was growing up." Having taken part in the 1989 Velvet Revolution, Ambassador Gandalovic later became a member

of the then Federal Parliament and served on the environmental affairs committee. "Looking back, it seems like a dream" he says about his visit, "(it) had a great impact on my perception of the United States. I enjoy hosting events at my embassy which related to the International Visitor Leadership Program. Remember, I visited your country only two years after the success of the Velvet Revolution."

Windhoek, Namibia and San Antonio, Texas Friendship City Agreement Signing Ceremony

On April 21st, 2015, SACIV Executive Director Cecilia Cross was able to witness as Mayor Ivy Taylor and Mayor Muesee Kazapua signed a Friendship City Agreement between San Antonio, Texas and Windhoek, Namibia. The Agreement allows the two cities to develop mutually beneficial cooperation by strengthening exchanges and promoting friendship between the peoples of both cities. It also encourages joint efforts to promote economic cooperation, bilateral trade, work force development, and cultural exchange.

Also in attendance at the signing ceremony and gift exchange were prominent local community members, including Councilman Ron Nirenberg, Honorary Consul to Belgium and Namibia Bob Braubach, County Commissioner Tommy Calvert, and Former Councilwomen Elisa Chan. They were joined by a Namibian delegation, including Ambassador Martin Andjaba and Windhoek Councilwoman Brunhilde Elke Cornelius.

The Friendship City Agreement marked our city's first formal relationship with an African municipality and the progressive city of Windhoek was a perfect fit, sharing many similarities to San Antonio. Windhoek, located in an arid climate similar to that of South Texas, has made great strides to secure sustainable water access for future generations with strategies comparable to San Antonio's water conservation and management practices. The Namibian city's cultural and ethnic diversity is also mirrored in San Antonio's population, specifically through the German heritage shared by the two cities. And both cities share a vibrant growing economy that relies in part on the tourism industry. Additionally, the challenges and opportunities presented by Windhoek's rapid urban growth are another parallel between Windhoek and San Antonio. The match is sure to lead to many beneficial economic and trade collaborations and the partnership will no doubt foster greater cultural understanding.



Delegation from Windhoek with former Councilwoman Elisa Chan and Mayor Ivy Taylor

Continued on Page 15

SACIV Welcomes Visitors for a Program on Human Rights, Civic Empowerment, and Minority Communities

By Cecilia Cross

From June 16th through June 20th, SACIV hosted a group of eight visitors from East Asia and the Pacific for a program on “Human Rights, Civic Empowerment, and Minority Communities”. The visitors represented seven countries, including Australia, Micronesia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, China, and Singapore. Their program was aimed at gaining an understanding human and civil rights issues in the US, examining the experience of minority and marginalized groups in the US and efforts to advocate for their concerns, and exploring the role of the of nonprofits and grassroots organizations in advancing civil rights and equal opportunity in the US.



Visitors at the Esperanza Peace and Justice Center

On the first day of their program, June 17th, the group drove to Buda, Texas to meet with Ms. Bobbi Ryder, the President & CEO of the National Center for Farmworker Health, where they were able to learn about the Center’s mission to improve the health status of the farmworker population and protect the rights of agricultural workers to access and receive high quality health care. Ms. Ryder also discussed the opportunities and assistance they provide to the marginalized population of migrant workers in the United States through their Migrant Health Centers and highlighted their focus on community development and provision of training and technical assistance to health centers, in order to assist them in being culturally and linguistically relevant in their service to the farmworker population. They ended the day by returning to San Antonio to meet with Sergeant James Serrato at the San Antonio Police Department. Sergeant Serrato highlighted the pertinent and sensitive issues surrounding nondiscrimination by the police, including how they train incoming officers and protect the rights of minorities, and also discussed efforts to maintain a strong relationship with minority communities and their community policing initiatives.

The next morning, June 18th, focused their program on support for survivors of domestic violence. As such, they visited with Ms. Deborah Valadez, Executive Direct of the Bexar County Family Justice Center, and learned about how the public office provides a central link of coordinated services between local government agencies and nonprofit service providers to survivors and victims of domestic violence, sex crimes, and human trafficking. Visitors were also able to ask about the Center’s legal & social services and empowerment & education initiatives. Following this meeting, the visitors met with representatives of the Family Violence Prevention Services, where they were very impressed with a tour of the Battered Women’s Shelter. They were able to gain insight into services the organization provides to survivors of domestic violence and sex crimes and were provided with an opportunity to learn about how they work to break the cycle of violence and strengthen families by providing the necessary tools for self-sufficiency through the delivery of emergency shelter, transitional housing, education opportunities, and early intervention with youth.

That afternoon, they visited with several representatives of the Esperanza Peace and Justice Center to witness how the community arts organization focuses on promoting civil and economic rights while honoring cultural heritage through many different mediums. Executive Director Ms. Graciela Sanchez discussed their programs and events geared towards advocating for women’s & gay rights, racial tolerance & understanding, and promoting peace by facilitating the exchange of ideas and encouraging education & empowerment, especially among minorities. A highlight for many of the visitors, the meeting ended with a tour by Ms. Sanchez of their Westside projects and a visit with members of the “Mujer Artes” women arts cooperative. The group came away with a strong sense of the work done by the Center to enhance pursuits that lead to cultural pride and civic engagement.



Visitor speaking with the women of the “Mujer Artes” art collective

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Women's Empowerment through International Exchange

By Robert Zimmerman

From Global Ties US "ExchangeMatters" Newsletter (March/April 2015)

Since its inception 75 years ago, 200,000 foreign nationals have taken part in the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP). That's 200,000 stories to be told about visitors learning more about America and making personal connections on their visit. And there are countless more stories beyond the participants themselves, from the Americans whose lives they touched on their journey.

Sadly, the vast majority of these experiences will never be broadly known. And while past stories have never been comprehensively documented and archived, today things are changing. As the Internet and camera phone become must-haves for everyone, everywhere, IVLP participants and the people who host them now have a platform to use to share their experiences both in their home countries and elsewhere.

The stories told by women IVLP alumni can be particularly compelling. For many, a visit to the United States opens doors and possibilities that either don't exist in their countries of origin, or have never been tried. Some alumni become inspired by their American experiences to try new things at home.



Meriam Haouami's story offers one such example. During her exchange program in America, this IVLP alumna from Tunisia shared best practices with the NGO and community leaders she met in our country. Later, Ms. Haouami visited Europe with assistance from the E.U. She then went on to create the first Model African Union. It was attended by the Tunisian Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs; the country's

Minister of Higher Education; and representatives from 23 African states. In recognition of her accomplishment, Tunisia's President gave her a role in her country's official delegation to an actual African Union meeting. This experience gave Meriam an opportunity to witness firsthand the work performed by heads of state and ministers, as well as a commitment by the organization to conduct a model African Union annually in a different capital city on the continent.

Ms. Haouami is hardly alone in being inspired by her exchange program experience. Jordanian teacher and journalist Samar al Shdaifat realized that a motivated individual like herself could make a difference in their lives, thanks to her experience visiting the United States as an IVLP participant.

The civil war in Syria has forced millions of refugees to flee to neighboring Lebanon, Turkey, and Jordan, where they survive under the most desperate of circumstances. After seeing how ordinary citizens in the U.S. volunteer or work for free to help their communities, al Shdaifat decided to do the same for the Syrian refugees living in her hometown, Mafraq. She reached out to Jordanian charities and businessmen from her country living in Australia. The result: 44,000 pounds of donations, including desperately needed food, clothing, and goods for babies and small children.

In Uzbekistan, a country with long-standing human rights concerns, Nargis Ziyavatdinova has become a pioneer advocate for the rights of children with disabilities in her country. Among other activities, this IVLP Gold Star alumna organized a puppet show modeled on the Minneapolis-based PACER Center's "Count Me In" initiative. Ziyavatdinova's project led-off a series of events designed to demystify her country's 5,000 disabled children.

As these and countless other untold stories demonstrate, women are high-impact players in international affairs. Women's role in foreign affairs will be one of the key themes of the forthcoming Discover Diplomacy Weekend, taking place May 1–3 weekend in Washington, DC. As part of the event, Global Ties U.S. will host a luncheon and panel discussion devoted to the role of woman's leadership in foreign policy. We hope to advance the discussion about how we can all play a role in making our societies more equitable, balanced, and just. - - -

SACIV Welcomes Mr. Yongsong Chen from China

By Cecilia Cross

On May 6th, SACIV welcomed international visitor Mr. Yongsong Chen from China as part of the “IVLP Gold Stars’ Tour: Alumni Connecting the World”. An alumnus of the IVLP, he first arrived in the US on September 12th, 2001, creating an unforgettable experience. Mr. Chen is the founder of EcoNetwork, an environmental NGO headquartered in Kunming, the capital of Yunnan province. In 2000, he joined an informal network of international NGOs focused on environmental issues and noticed that there were few Chinese participating. The lack of Chinese interest made him realize the importance of public participation in protecting the environment and



Mr. Chen describing his work in China during a meeting at the San Antonio River Authority

he continued to keep the NGO network alive as a mechanism to promote social responsibility around this topic. His IVLP on NGOs and volunteerism provided him with motivation and ideas to continue these efforts. After returning to China, Chen started recruiting university students as volunteers and created the Green Home for Youth - a project that provides training to both Chinese and international student volunteers. Chen seeks not only to protect the environment but also to change society through volunteerism, promoting awareness of two values that receive little attention in China: sustainable development and public participation.

His visit to San Antonio focused on the role of the government in environmental protection and education as well as new approaches to waste and environmental changes. At the San Antonio River Authority (SARA), he met with Mr. Steven Schauer to learn about SARA’s activities in regards to the development and conservation of water resources in the region. The meeting also highlighted the history of the San Antonio River and the Riverwalk and Mr. Chen was able to hear about SARA’s educational outreach programs, recreational & tourism offerings, and public transparency efforts that allow the San Antonio River to continue to be an economic and social driver in the region.

Next, Mr. Chen met Board Member Mr. Justin Rice and Mr. Ryan Smith, both with The Nature Conservancy, along with Ms. Annalisa Peace of the Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance and Ms. Julia Murphy of Green Spaces Alliance for lunch at The Pearl. The group shared their professional experiences with Mr. Chen who in turn, elaborated on his work in China to reduce trash and engage citizen participation through grassroots environmental stewardship.

After lunch, Mr. Chen then visited UTSA’s downtown campus to meet with Dr. Francine Romero (Associate Dean for the College of Public Policy), Dr. Heather Shipley (Interim Chair & Associate Professor of the Department of Civic and Environmental Engineering), and Dr. Patricia Jaramillo (Professor in the Department of Engineering). The discussion focused on the intersection of public policy, citizen participation, and environmental issues and Dean Romero was able to discuss her research on land use policy and reforms, as well as her role serving on the City of San Antonio’s Planning Commission and the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, as a representative on the Zoning Commission, and as the

Chair of the city’s Conservation Advisory Board. Mr. Chen was particularly interested in learning about the concept of participatory budgeting, which empowers people to decide together how to spend public money, as this is a concept that has not been approached in his home country of China.



Mr. Chen speaking to SACIV Members at a presentation about his work and experiences

His visit ended with a reception and presentation to members at the University of the Incarnate Word where he enthusiastically shared his message about the positive impact of his exchange experiences in the US and his work in China as the founder of an environmental NGO. - - -

Evaluations for Middle East & North Africa Program on Preventing and Confronting Domestic Abuse and Violence

November 1-5, 2014

**Report Prepared By: Mohammed Smadi
(Interpreter/Liaison)**

Perceptual Impressions

Many times the participants expressed how priceless this program was for them and how greatly it will help their careers. They learned a great deal about domestic violence prevention programs in the US sponsored by federal, state and local governments. They had the opportunity to visit many NGOs and civic society organizations, many shelters, victim and predator advocacy organizations and to learn about these programs that help both victims and predators of domestic violence in all the states we visited.

San Antonio, Texas

One of the most important meetings in San Antonio was with **Ms. Chloe Power, the Director of Community Relations at the Rape Crisis Center**. Ms. Power explained to the participants the programs this center provides to victims of rape and domestic violence and how this center played a major role in directing victims of rape and domestic violence to the services provided for them by different governmental and NGO's. Ms. Power accompanied the group on a tour of the facility and the hotline operation center. The participants asked many questions about financing and services available for victims of rape in San Antonio. They also asked about the hotline management and hours of operation.

The participants had a great opportunity to visit the **Bexar County Family Justice Center** in which they learned how the center serves as a (one stop shop services) to the victims of domestic violence. **Dr. Deborah Valdez, Executive Director**, explained to the participants how hard it was to provide services for survivors in the past and how the Family Justice Center alleviates the suffering of victims by having representatives of all the service providers in the same place. Dr. Valdez accompanied the group on a tour around the center and the group met with many of these representatives.

The meeting with the **San Antonio Police Department (SVU) Special Victims Unit** was a great opportunity for the participants to understand the police strategies in responding to domestic violence. They also learned about the victim advocacy and how San Antonio police department is prosecuting not only the perpetrators of domestic violence but also suspects of human trafficking. The participants asked many questions about the roles and the services provided by the police.

The participants had a chance to attend a court proceeding about domestic violence and they also met with the presiding judge (**Judge Monica Gonzales**). The Judge answered many questions about the programs offered to the perpetrators of domestic violence and how the effectiveness of these programs in making sure that the perpetrators will not commit another offense.

The participants had a golden opportunity to visit a polling center and observe an ongoing election. The judge who was supervising the polling center explained to the participants how the voting process works; he also asked one of the voters if the participants can observe him while he was casting his vote. The voter agreed and the participants witnessed the process. - - -

**Report Prepared By: Waleed Jenani
(Interpreter/Liaison)**

San Antonio, Texas

Irma met us at the lobby of Holiday Inn river walk, and went over the program with me. We saw her again at the **Muslim Education and Civic Center**, who generously hosted a dinner after sundown praying. On Sunday, some of the group enjoyed Mexican fiesta and Mexican "Dia de los Muertos" celebrations.

On Monday, they met with **Ms. Deborah Valadez**, who explained to the participants how hard it was to provide services for survivors in the past and how the Bexar County Family Justice Center alleviates the suffering of victims by having representatives of all the service providers in the same place. **Ms. Marta Palaez** accompanied the group on a tour around the **Family Violence Prevention Services and Battered Women's Shelter** and the group met with many of their representatives. She was very passionate about her work, standing up for more than 2 hours during the meeting, she was instrumental and engaging. Even Her family is involved in her work, a Physician husband, and three attorney sons.

On Tuesday, Election Day, we attended an open Domestic Violence hearing. **Judge Monica Gonzalez** was very accommodating and gracious enough to take us to her chamber and for more than one hour she stood and answered all interesting question about American jurisprudence procedures. The participants engaged in a dialogue with Judge Gonzalez about the local laws and how they benefited from their visits and some will implement the American Domestic Violence laws in their proposal to the Justice Ministries. At the polling station, the IVLPs asked so many questions about voting procedures and took a lot of pictures. At the **San Antonio Police Department, Lt. Rene Gallegos**, was so passionate about his work and the group really enjoyed his lecture using his white board in to explain how his unit (SVU) handles domestic violence cases.

SACIV Welcomes Visitors from Latin America for the *Combating International and Domestic Human Trafficking Program*

By Terry Camacho

On June 16th-20th, 2015, the San Antonio Council of International Visitors welcomed thirteen visitors from Latin America for a program on “International and Domestic Human Trafficking”. The program aimed to review how the U.S. government combats international trafficking in persons (and crimes against women and children). Visitors were also able to examine the roles that government, law enforcement and local organizations play in detecting, preventing, and prosecuting crimes as well as exploring initiatives to recognize, protect and assist victims of abuse and trafficking, including efforts to address the recovery and reintegration process of victims.

The first appointment of this energetic group was with the San Antonio Police Department (SAPD) where they were able to meet with officers in charge of the Police specialized unit to combat human trafficking. They were explained how victims are identified and assisted, and experienced rides along, accompanying officers making actual calls for service.

During their second day, the visitors traveled to Laredo, Texas where they had an intense and busy schedule visiting one of the busiest ports of entry in the world. They visited the three international bridges and were explained how people and vehicles enter U.S. territory and how they are processed and checked. They also visited a Detention Center, and were briefed on how federal agencies cooperate and exchange information with their counterparts to manage the number of trafficking cases along the Southwestern border. Even a couple of visitors had the opportunity to visit a Laredo organization that provides secure, temporary residential services to victims of domestic violence, and assists in counseling and connect victims to appropriate agencies.



On their last day in San Antonio, the visitors met with key representatives of the Alamo Area Coalition Against Trafficking (AACAT), who provided them with an accurate look at the macro perspective of human trafficking and their efforts to prevent it. In addition to meeting their professional program objectives the visitors were able to enjoy lunch with all these representatives and exchanged cards and telephone numbers. Even a representative from the Mayor's office attended. Likewise, all visitors enjoyed the hospitality of SACIV members who invited them to their homes or restaurants for dinner.

Their visit to San Antonio and Laredo provided these Latin American visitors the opportunity to know first-hand and examine the role of government agencies and other local entities in combating human trafficking.

Polish Professionals Gain Insight on Veterans Care

The International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) brought five Polish military professionals to visit the United States – a country they view as a leader in post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) research and treatment. During their 3-week program entitled “Wounded Warriors Assistance,” the group (consisting of two doctors, a psychologist, a journalist, and a disabled veteran) focused their studies on veteran care, community integration, psychological assessment, and ongoing medical treatment.



A highlight of the participants' experience was meeting with Representative Brad Wenstrup (Ohio – 2nd district), an Iraq war veteran and a doctor. Rep. Wenstrup foresees future collaboration between U.S. military doctors and their Polish counterparts in Forward Surgical Team (FST) training. The group agreed with his opinion that increased collaboration and engagement with foreign partners about the harsh realities of combat could mean less war in the future.



Two participants, both military doctors, were thrilled to meet with orthopedic surgeons at the Center for the Intrepid at the Brooke Army Medical Center (BAMC) in San Antonio, where they examined the newest achievements in prosthetics.

The visitors also examined policies and services aimed at helping to reintroduce veterans into family and community life. One example was a meeting with Jacksonville's K9 for Warriors, which works to match service dogs with veterans suffering from PTSD and/or traumatic brain injury as a result of military service post-9/11.

Overall, the program provided a balanced assessment of best practices and strategies used to support wounded warriors and increase public interest and awareness about their unique needs. The visitors were eager to get to work applying their findings and observations in their communities back home.

This article is from the media center of the US Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

CORPORATE MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: City of San Antonio, International Relations Office

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“Walk in US, Talk on Japan” Panel

On June 19th, 2015, SACIV participated as a Marketing Partner for the “Walk in US, Talk on Japan” panel session and event featuring a Japanese delegation at the University of Incarnate Word’s Rosenberg Sky Room. “Walk in US, Talk on Japan”, an outreach program directed by the Office of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, aims at increasing awareness about Japan in the US and developing beneficial US-Japan relationships through people-to-people diplomacy. Beginning with opening remarks by The Honorable Henry Cisneros, the high-level Japanese delegation addressed the San Antonio public on a variety of themes relevant to deepening the American understanding of Japan and strengthening the relationship between the two countries, as well as Japan’s challenges and opportunities in the twenty-first century.

The diverse delegation came from a variety of backgrounds and was led by former Ambassador Yasuo Saito, who spoke on the revival of the Japanese economy, Japan’s security policy, and the prospects for the Tokyo Olympics. Mr. Hiroshi Tsukamoto, advisor to the Japan External Trade and Investment Promotion and Organization and former Deputy Director General for the Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry, discussed Japan’s energy strategy, trade policies, and innovative efforts made in various industry sectors. Ms. Miyuki Kobayashi, a college teacher, English instructor, and lecturer, introduced the audience to the Japanese culture & people and the uniqueness of Japanese communication forms through a presentation on what to eat, what to do, and where to go when visiting Japan. Mr. Tetsuo Kitagawa of Toyota discussed Japan’s technology and manufacturing competition by highlighting his experience with Toyota in North America. And Mr. Takehiro Noma, a university student, talked about his gratitude towards America in the aftermath of the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake in his home town of Sendai. As the youngest member of the delegation and a recent participant of the TOMODACHI Initiative study program of the US-Japan Council, Mr. Noma’s enthusiasm for the Japanese-American friendship (“tomodachi” means “friend” in Japanese) touched the members of the audience and drove home the message of the importance of people-to-people diplomacy between the two nations. - - -

SACIV Welcomes Visitors for a Program on Human Rights, Civic Empowerment, and Minority Communities

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The following day, June 19th, focused on civic empowerment in the Latino American community. The group began their day with a visit with Mr. Fernando Godinez, President & CEO of the Mexican American Unity Council. He spoke about the organization’s efforts to organize for the economic and political empowerment of the large Mexican American population in San Antonio and also discussed the history of the organization and the work that their staff and community members do to provide guidance and services in education, housing, and community & economic development. Following this appointment, visitors meet with representatives of La Fuerza Unida, a community organization, founded as a sewing cooperative after the closure of the Levi factory, which aims to empower women and minority communities. Visitors learned about the work they do to empower women workers and their families to achieve social, economic, and environmental justice through education activities, advocacy initiatives, campaigns, and programs.

Next visitors enjoyed a meeting with Mr. Joaquin Abrego, labor organizer at the Southwest Workers Union, who outlined the union’s efforts to empower and organize its members through education, leadership development, and direct action. The visitors were particularly interested in gaining insight into how they meet their goals to use multi-generational grassroots power to create sustainable systemic change for social, economic, and environmental justice, especially in the border & migrant rights area. Their last appointment was also a treat, as they had the opportunity to meet with Texas State Representative Diego Bernal, a former civil rights attorney and San Antonio councilman. Highly relevant to the program and of particular interest to the group, was hearing about his efforts to promote the rights of minorities in San Antonio and the state of Texas and his role in leading the efforts to put in place the city’s “Non-Discrimination Ordinance”.

Their program ended with home hospitality hosted by Ms. Rita Heck and Ms. Betty Berchermann, who both enjoyed the passion expressed by each visitor when discussing the work they do back in their home countries. - - -

**SACIV is happy to welcome
back to the community...**

*Luciano Cristadoro
Diana Carroll-Wirth
Cindy Buecker
Doris Townsend*

**...after having recently
recovered from illness.**



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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

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