

Dear Friends,

Happy New Year to all of you. As the incoming Chair for the San Antonio Council for Visitors, I am honored in the trust placed in me to lead this organization. I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to Betsy Cameron for her leadership for the past three years. I want to also thank those Board Members who retired this past year for their long standing dedication to SACIV. They will remain a part of this organization in the Emeritus role. We value their contributions and look forward to their future advice and counsel. A special thanks to our founder, Irma Reyes, whose unconditional support through the years has kept this organization going. I look forward to meeting and interacting with our membership to ensure continuity and a complete understanding of our direction.



I want to welcome our incoming Board Members and look forward to working with all of you to continue to expand the reach of this great organization. We have prepared our 2019 budget for the Board to review at our next meeting and I am happy to say that we are in a good financial position.

Some of our goals for the coming year are to diversify and add to our membership, especially for the home hospitality program which is so critical in our mission. We all need to work on bringing more people into the membership program and to increase our corporate membership support. I would also like to see our organization get more media attention for the important work that is being done.

Several Board Members and staff are travelling soon to Washington, DC for the Global Ties US “National Meeting” and I look forward to hearing about their experiences at our next meeting.

There is much to do and I am excited about our future and working with our Board, staff, and membership to move us forward in 2019 and into the future.

Best wishes for 2019,

Jo Ann Andera  
*Chair, SACIV Board of Directors*

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# UPCOMING PROGRAMS

**March 2<sup>nd</sup>—March 7<sup>th</sup>**

***US Trade Policy***

Austria, Kenya, Palestine , Sri Lanka,  
Bosnia & Herzegovina

**March 5<sup>th</sup>—March 9<sup>th</sup>**

***Combatting Trafficking in Persons***

Argentina, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic,  
Ecuador, El Salvador, Panama, Peru

**March 6<sup>th</sup>—March 12<sup>th</sup>**

***Combatting Trafficking in Persons***

Bolivia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Ghana, Hong Kong, Ireland, Jamaica,  
Kuwait, Laos, Lebanon, Liberia, Malawi, Malaysia, Marshal  
Islands, Mongolia, Namibia, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Poland, Sri  
Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Togo, Uganda, Zambia

**March 7<sup>th</sup>—March 12<sup>th</sup>**

***The Contemporary US Economy***

Denmark, Germany, Moldova, Norway,  
Poland, Serbia, Spain, Sweden

**March 12<sup>th</sup>—March 16<sup>th</sup>**

***Women & Entrepreneurship***

TBD

**March 12<sup>th</sup>—March 18<sup>th</sup>**

***Interfaith Dialogue & Religious Freedom***

Egypt, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Sudan

**March 26<sup>th</sup>—March 30<sup>th</sup>**

***Economic Revitalization through  
Public-Private Partnerships***

TBD

**April 7<sup>th</sup>—April 13<sup>th</sup>**

***Police Professionalization  
Exchange Program I***

Mexico

**April 8<sup>th</sup>—April 13<sup>th</sup>**

***Regional Responses to Inter-American  
Migration Issues***

Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic,  
Ecuador, Guatemala, Peru

***Stay posted on our  
upcoming programs,  
as well as events!***

**Visit us online at:**

[www.sacivtx.org/program-and-events](http://www.sacivtx.org/program-and-events)



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

The deadline to renew your SACIV membership is ***February 28<sup>th</sup>***!

### Membership Levels

Student.....	\$15
Individual.....	\$30
Family.....	\$50
Sustaining.....	\$100
Corporate.....	\$500

**Please send checks to:**

PO Box 6088

San Antonio, TX 78209

**OR**

**Renew online at:**

<https://saciv.wildapricot.org>

***Support a worthy cause...***

***RENEW TODAY!***



***We aim to build  
international friendships,  
to facilitate the exchange of ideas,  
to foster cultural understanding,  
and to promote San Antonio  
as an international city.***



## Local Nonprofits and Civic Activism Engross African Group

In early November, San Antonio received a dynamic group of African NGO leaders and activists who brought their myriad perspectives on nonprofit development, partnership building, and social change to their professional appointments. The 14 visitors came from 13 different African countries including Benin, Kenya, Morocco, Nigeria, and Zimbabwe among others.

The group began by meeting with Scott McAninch of the Nonprofit Council at Big Brothers Big Sisters of San Antonio. Mr.

McAninch was able to dive into how the Nonprofit Council is able to represent the local NGO industry and harness their collective power for better policy, fundraising, and action. He also shared with them the signature effort of the Nonprofit Council: Big Give SA. The Big Give is a day of giving that seeks to unite hundreds of local charities under one common day of giving where individual donors, businesses, and groups are encouraged to donate to their favorite causes. The tremendous success of the project inspired our visitors to adopt similar methods in their respective countries. While meeting with Mr. McAninch at the Big Brothers Big Sisters offices, they were also able to talk to Armen Babajanian about the work of Big Brothers Big Sisters and the impact such mentor programs have on young people. Some visitors who work with youth in their organizations were intrigued to hear about the best practices uncovered by Mr. Babajanian throughout his career.

After meeting with Mr. McAninch and Mr. Babajanian last Thursday morning, the group departed for lunch at North Star Mall, and then returned for programming that afternoon at the Children's Shelter. The Children's Shelter is a regular stop for many different types of IVLP delegations that SACIV handles, and Anais Miracle, their Chief Public Relations Officer, always graciously welcomes the delegations. Last Thursday was no exception, as the 14-strong delegation of visitors and their four liaisons were welcomed to enjoy fresh fruit and a captivating presentation from Ms. Miracle about the family of services that the Children's Shelter provides. After exploring some of their programs and successes, the group then toured their 10-acre campus and saw the variety of recreational, residential,

health, and therapeutic facilities they have to offer. Everyone was thoroughly impressed by the scale and demonstrable compassion of the Children's Shelter's work.

Concluding their appointments in the community for the day, the group returned to their hotel for a professional sharing session. This session allowed the visitors to exchange ideas amongst themselves that they had found of interest before coming to San Antonio. Before arriving on Wednesday, the group had been divided between three cities for a short time. The professional sharing session allowed the group to come together and share what they found most interesting from their time apart that others had not experienced.

The next day, the group began with an appointment at Haven for Hope. The downtown homeless shelter and resource center allowed the group to tour their sizable campus, discuss a variety of topics with the Director of Volunteer Services, Melody McCrea, and engage in a community service activity sorting donations. The sheer scale of the organization and what they offer to their residents impressed the visitors and allowed some insight into running a massive nonprofit with a variety of programs.

After a break for lunch, the group met with Growing Empowered Together, a local nonprofit which encourages apathetic voters and citizens to get engaged in politics and society through art and various multimedia projects. Executive Director Lauren Browning led a discussion of how GET was organized and what major projects it has undertaken. Then, she was joined by Richard Wilmore, host of the Richard Wilmore Show, for some political trivia with the visitors. Lastly, Kinyo Laditan, a local poet, recited some of his work for the visitors. Mr. Wilmore and Mr. Laditan are active participants with GET and have contributed their talents toward the group's programming. The visitors were fascinated to hear their perspective on civic engagement and using art as a means of bolstering it.

Lastly, the group traveled to Texas RioGrande Legal Aid where they could discuss their work in providing legal services to the underserved dealing with a variety of issues from immigration offenses, domestic violence, environmental hazards, wage theft, and more. Mr. Ricardo Roman and Mr. Enrique Valdivia led a discussion on their programs and the issues they tackle. The broad range of their purview created an engaging discussion on U.S. society and the intersection of civic-minded NGOs with societal issues.

Overall, the visitors were overjoyed with the scope of their appointments and the information they were able to learn through them. Many suggested emulating components or strategies of the nonprofit organizations they met with in their home countries. Regardless of where they came from or what their area of focus is, all found intriguing new ideas and a renewed desire to make the world a better place.





## NGO Leaders from Iraq Exchange Ideas in San Antonio

From July 18th through July 24th, SACIV received a delegation of visitors from Iraq interested in learning more about NGO Administration. Their time in San Antonio featured many productive discussions and many opportunities to learn about new, fruitful ideas they could implement themselves.

The eight visitors began by meeting with Heather Diehl of the San Antonio Area Foundation. They not only discussed the structure and creative partnerships of SAAF, which they found to be a compelling model, but they were also able to learn more about her work leading the Association of Fundraising Professionals in San Antonio. This organization allows for an exchange of best practices and professional networks on a local level to better allow each non-profit represented through their members to succeed in fundraising goals.



Scott McAninch not only works to represent the San Antonio NGO community as a whole through The Non-Profit Council, but he also coordinates one of the city's most esteemed and appreciated fundraising efforts, Big Give San Antonio. Mr. McAninch was able to lend his vast expertise of the entire non-profit landscape of the county and show how a difference is being made through administrative reforms, new tactics, and hard work.

On Friday, the group had two productive discussions. The first was with Roy Maas Youth Alternatives. The group was inspired by the work RMYA does to provide shelter, education, counseling, and tailored approaches to at-risk or trafficked youth in San Antonio. RMYA was also very straightforward in discussing their organizational structure and the aspects of that structure that have made them so successful. However, the group was also able to meet with Chuck Rose, an alum of the Masters Leadership Program. The Masters Leadership Program provides training, networking opportunities, and support for a class of community leaders with the aim of making those individuals better non-profit board members when their education is complete. Many of the visitors expressed interest in replicating such a program in Iraq.

After a weekend kept full with cultural activities like a visit to the Texas Hill Country, the visitors returned to downtown San Antonio for a look at Haven for Hope. They explored the multi-agency campus, the robust organizational apparatus, and even participated in a community service project after a tour of the facilities. The impressive scope of Haven for Hope's efforts really impressed the visitors as did their meeting with Women's Global Connection. Women's Global Connection offered an international non-profit perspective for the group of Iraqi visitors and showed them how even relatively small staffs can have world-wide impacts.

Overall, the time these IVLP participants spent in San Antonio was tremendously successful. Each appointment contributed a new perspective and unique information for strengthening NGO management, improving accountability, building financial capacity, or increasing operational effectiveness. It was clear from the interest the visitors took in each appointment that the knowledge gained here in San Antonio not only impressed them but will make a difference in Iraqi civil society.

## Six Nations Represented for Youth & Civic Activism Program

This past July, SACIV received six international visitors for a Youth and Civic Activism program. The visitors are all leaders in different youth organizations attempting to educate, aid, or engage young people in their communities, countries, and world. Coming from Brazil, Burkina Faso, Lebanon, Malaysia, Nepal, and Paraguay, in San Antonio they were able to learn more about building a grassroots organizations, furthering minority-based advocacy, cultivating youth leadership, encouraging volunteerism, and developing creative interagency partnerships.

The group began with an extensive appointment at Haven for Hope. San Antonio's nexus of resources for the homeless population allowed our visitors a campus tour, a sojourn to the THRIVE Youth Center, and a wide-ranging conversation about the variety of programs at Haven for Hope. Our visitors were even able to participate in a community service activity with them.

That Monday afternoon, visitors met with YMCA of San Antonio to discuss their work to foster healthy relationships between young people and get them involved in their community. IVLP participants discussed the variety of camps and programming YMCA coordinates to engage young people around the city. They then followed that appointment by meeting with students, teachers, and community partners at the International School of the Americas. Principal Steve Magadance arranged a roundtable discussion of the civic engagement components of the ISA curriculum. Students were able to share their personal experiences inside and outside of the classroom serving their community, becoming global citizens, and celebrating inclusion. The visitors were very impressed by the selflessness the students displayed.

On Tuesday, visitors were treated to a discussion with the MOVE Texas team who elaborated on their efforts to get young people involved in national, state, and local politics. Whether it is issue education, grassroots building, or more fundamentally getting out the vote, MOVE Texas had myriad best practices and strategies to share. Important strategies on a different topic were shared that morning with San Antonio Education Partnerships at cafécollege. Their work to advance every child's education career through higher education provided a different and beneficial perspective for the visitors.

After having Tuesday afternoon free to see more of the city, the six visitors were invited to SACIV's Summer Membership Mixer. Joining their IVLP partners from our Global Economic Cooperation group, the delegation was able to make new friends in the San Antonio community from our invited professional resources and members. This event ended a great series of professionally-fulfilling appointments in San Antonio.



## Azeri Visitors Explore the Role of Youth Centers

Eight IVLP participants from Azerbaijan came to San Antonio in July to learn more about the role of youth centers and increasing their capacity and reach. All of the visitors were moved by the work of the myriad resources San Antonio had to offer and their ability to affect the lives of young people.

Their first stop was with SA Youth, a local non-profit who helps youth on a variety of fronts. Whether it is promoting healthy diets and lifestyles, enabling GED obtainment, after-school programming, or work skills training, SA Youth provides San Antonio with vital services at every level of childhood and adolescence. The visitors also observed youth centers dealing with more acute crises like The Children's Shelter. There, the visitors learned all about dealing with youth in a state of emergency like neglect, abandonment, or abuse, as well as the importance of intervention in their lives. Before the day concluded, they also met with Lauren Browning of Growing Empowered Together where they discussed their work to engage millennial and Generation Z voters especially through their signature Get Reel film series. All of these appointments provided a new lens with which the visitors could look at the role of youth centers.

Over the weekend, the group was treated to home hospitality with members of the SACIV community as well as a one-of-a-kind tour of the San Antonio Missions. Visitors really enjoyed seeing each of the missions and hearing about their significance as a World Heritage Site.

When the workweek resumed, visitors learned about Kinetic Kids, a local group working to ensure children with disabilities have access to tailored recreational and educational programs. This enrichment helps overcome deficits that would otherwise separate them from their peers. The Boys and Girls Club of San Antonio afforded the perspective of a national non-profit working to provide youth programming across the United States including for the youth of Bexar County. Suited specifically for young women, Girls Inc. was an original concept to the IVLP participants as they heard about their efforts to improve body image, foster healthy relationships, and advance career and college readiness for our community's girls. Visitors were able to talk to some of the young participants themselves and learn more first-hand from their triumphs.

When their last day of programming in San Antonio arrived, Haven for Hope opened their doors to another group of international visitors. At Haven for Hope, the visitors focused primarily on learning about the THRIVE Youth Center and their critical work with LGBTQ adolescents who may need educational, economic, or emotional support. After a tour and a roundtable discussion about programs at THRIVE, each visitor pitched in to help Haven for Hope in a community service activity. Next, they stopped at the Martinez Street Women's Center to learn about their program to help at-risk women and girls with particular attention paid to their Girl Zone Program. This program helps to encourage the healthy development of young girls to ensure a better future.

Each appointment provided a new perspective for the IVLP participants from Azerbaijan to learn from. Whether learning about civic activism,

women's issues, youth homelessness, recreational programming, or disability and minority advocacy, every meeting added something new. Afterward, it seemed clear that the members of the delegation were better equipped to serve the youth of Azerbaijan with the knowledge gained in San Antonio.



## Global Economic Cooperation is Focus of International Delegation

From July 12th-18th, we were lucky enough to welcome a delegation of international leaders from all across the world. The five of them came from Tunisia, Ghana, Mexico, Nigeria, and Nepal to learn about global economic cooperation including areas like emerging markets, links between financial systems, and the effect of the global economy on local businesses.

They began with a meeting at the North American Development Bank with Dr. Calixto Mateos who described in detail their work on cross-border infrastructure and development. All of the visitors were fascinated by the model the NADBank provided for international cooperation on economic projects. Later that Friday, the visitors were also able to meet with Ruben Linder from the Asociación de Empresarios Mexicanos (Mexican Entrepreneur Association). The appointment gave the visitors some insight into transnational work patterns and encouraging small business networking.



Over the weekend, the visitors were treated to the delights of Texas Hill Country with stops in Gruene, Fredericksburg, and Bandera. They loved the Grist Mill restaurant and found the time exploring the local countryside absolutely terrific.

It was back to work for them on Monday, though. Our five guests made a stop at the Bexar County Office for Economic Development and spoke to Pooja Tripathi about how the county tries to bring in foreign direct investment and new economic resources to the community. They then learned about business development programs, especially in enhancing import and export arrangements, from the UTSA Institute for Economic Development. Our visitors were all very impressed by the presentation from Assistant Director Doug Smith. Lastly, they concluded the meeting with a stop at Port San Antonio. As a leading platform for industry, technology, and import/export expansion, Port San Antonio was able to explain how their model for redevelopment had turned into a primary economic engine.

By that point, there was only one day left for our visitors. On Tuesday, they were able to meet with the San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce for an engaging discussion that covered much of the city's economic activities as well as some transnational partnerships the SAHCC has sponsored. The five and their liaison also stopped at R&I Solutions where CEO Alejandra Bueno elaborated on the unique structure of R&I that allowed them to work in the United States and Mexico to support energy-related projects across borders. Before joining the SACIV Summer Membership Mixer that evening, they also stopped at the San Antonio Economic Development Foundation. Since merging with the Free Trade Alliance, SAEDF has improved its ability to help local businesses cultivate an international presence while bringing more foreign investment to San Antonio.

Each visitor seemed impressed with the resources San Antonio had to offer, but they were also struck by the hospitality of the SACIV Summer Membership Mixer where SACIV members, professional resources, and IVLP participants from our Youth and Civic Activism delegation were able to mingle. All of the diverse participants lent their backgrounds and unique perspectives to an eminently enjoyable evening.

Throughout their stay in San Antonio, these selected leaders achieved their professional objectives to learn more about global economic cooperation, but they also witnessed first hand San Antonio's vibrant culture as well as its welcoming population.



## Visitors from Kazakhstan Learn About Digital Media

In August, SACIV briefly welcomed a group of international visitors from Kazakhstan for their one-day sojourn to San Antonio. The group had been learning about content development in Austin as part of their IVLP program on “Digital Media: Promoting and Monetizing Local Content.” They took a break from Austin to see what San Antonio had to offer in this growing field.

Upon arriving in San Antonio, the six visitors and their interpreters had some time to visit Mission San Jose and see what a real Spanish mission would have looked like as far back as three hundred years ago.

After seeing some of the cultural appeal of the city, they met with the local professional resources. The first stop was at URBAN-15. URBAN-15 is a cutting-edge, multi-disciplinary arts group which works to support emerging artists in San Antonio especially those pioneering the use of digital media to tell their stories. At their one-of-a-kind production studio, the visitors learned about their Josiah Media Festival and the unique forms of digital art presented through the festival each year while also seeing the behind-the-scenes works that goes into collecting, screening, and sharing these pieces.

They also had the chance to meet with Mr. Sho Nakpodia of TheMightyGroup and Dreamweek San Antonio. TheMightyGroup, as a digital marketing agency, has learned a lot about creating content for online spaces. However, they also seek to use this knowledge to improve their local community. Mr. Nakpodia has championed the 12 day summit of Dreamweek as a way to advance tolerance, equality, and diversity through social media and next generation engagement platforms. Visitors were struck by his commitment to using digital media to share as many different voices as possible.

Though their time in San Antonio has very short, the group really appreciated their appointments illustrating how to use creative industries for economic and social development, promote youth engagement online, and establish partnerships in the arts.



## Japanese G3P Fellow Comes to San Antonio

In a less common IVLP delegation, SACIV was able to welcome Ms. Yuna Natsumi to San Antonio to learn about foreign direct investment and economic development as part of the Global Government-to-Government Partnership (G3P). G3P exchanges are organized through the Department of State and the Office of International Visitors, but this specific IVLP program affords government officials from other countries the chance to live and work in the United States for up to one year as they learn more about the US and specific professional skills. As part of that program, Ms. Natsumi travelled with her liaison to several cities in the United States to learn about foreign direct investment from each and also experience the cultural activities each area had to offer.

San Antonio was Ms. Natsumi's first stop. After some initial difficulties with their flights, our visiting fellow and her liaison came to the UTSA Institute for Economic Development

where Doug Smith and Jaime Martinez shared their work both in local economic development and business incubation as well as in international trade and foreign direct investment assistance. Mr. Martinez in particular was able to elaborate on the work of the International Trade Center to facilitate investment in San Antonio.

Ms. Natsumi then met with representatives of Congressman Joaquin Castro at his district office including Congressman Castro's Chief of Staff Danny Meza. Together, they discussed the work of Representative Castro as co-chair of the U.S.-Japan Congressional Caucus, and how political leaders aided in promoting foreign direct investment projects like the San Antonio Toyota Plant.

Having learned a little bit about the circumstances regarding Toyota's investments in San Antonio, a tour of the Toyota plant commenced after lunch. Walking through the immense facility was fascinating, but of particular interest was Ms. Natsumi's conversation with Plant President Yoshihisa Nagatani. This allowed Ms. Natsumi to learn more about what brought Toyota to San Antonio and how the plant came to become a part of the local community.

Lastly, the San Antonio Economic Development Foundation opened their doors for the G3P fellow and discussed their work in bringing a variety of small and medium sized enterprises from around the world to San Antonio. Sarah Sanchez, Executive Vice President for Global Development, and Melina Gomez, Trade Development Manager, explained how the work of SAEDF has contributed over 5,200 jobs and \$300 million to the San Antonio economy. Ms. Natsumi was impressed by the robust impact of a small but committed staff. Participants from SAEDF also found the time useful to ask Ms. Natsumi for her thoughts on enticing investment.

On Tuesday, Ms. Natsumi and her liaison took a break from professional appointments to see the city. Together, they stopped at Mission San Jose, the Alamo, the Institute of Texan Cultures, and even saw the Saga in the evening. It was a fittingly impressive end for a successful program.





# Artists from Belarus Explore Community Arts Groups

Five artists enjoyed the wonderful art community of San Antonio from September third to September seventh and learned more about how different groups in our community are fostering community engagement through creative programs. These groups may be bridging generational, racial, socioeconomic, political, or sexual divides, but they have all found unique ways of using the arts as a platform for enriching their area.



This delegation began by venturing through thick rain Tuesday to the Carver Community Cultural Center to learn about the performances, exhibits, children's programs, and educational opportunities they bring to San Antonio's east side. Their primarily African American audience and artists are able to savor this one-of-a-kind and historic site in their community through jazz recitals, dance classes, and socially relevant visual art galleries. This keeps the Carver busy 325 days of the year with events.

San Anto Cultural Arts was the Belarusians' next stop. Now-famous murals on the West Side made by San Anto and their volunteer organization have become landmarks in otherwise disadvantaged or downtrodden neighborhoods west of downtown. The participants were fascinated by not only the tour they received of some local masterpieces but also how recruiting at-risk youth in their projects invested these youths in their community and encouraged them to stand up for these points of pride. The day was concluded by a meeting at ARTS San Antonio, where the President and Executive Director John Toohey explained the work they do in bringing performance art to San Antonio. Dissections Mr. Toohey and the Director of Marketing Jason Irle provided of venue selection, discount pricing, ticket revenue, advertising budgets, and administrative organization were very useful to our visitors, many of whom work in performance art.

On Wednesday, the visitors explored San Antonio's West Side further at Guadalupe Cultural Arts, the Esperanza Peace and Justice Center, and the Mujer Artes Women's Clay Cooperative. Jorge Piña, Belinda Menchaca, and Cristina Ballí of Guadalupe Cultural Arts welcomed our visitors with an informative tour of their facilities, a discussion about their events and performances, and an insightful tour of their exhibit entitled "The Other Side of the Alamo." Dr. Ruben Cordoba, the curator, guided our visitors through a fascinating group of photographs, paintings, videos, sculptures, and other excellent pieces. The visitors were also kindly invited to return for a dress rehearsal of the Guadalupe's upcoming flamenco program Thursday night before they left.

Hurrying to keep their appointment at the Esperanza Peace and Justice Center, the visitors learned more about their work in social justice and how they use the arts as a way to preserve underrepresented histories, raise funds for community projects, and preserve traditional cultural practices. They discussed with our visitors some of their projects and went into detail about how they are funded and administered. They also led our visitors on a tour of Mujer Artes. Here, the group was grateful to hear from the women working at Mujer Artes about how they were able to make money for themselves through their beautiful artwork there. Amelia Valdez and Susanna Seguro of Esperanza also showed our visitors how they had preserved century-old houses



nearby to show what life had been like for the poor Latino population of the time.

Before the visitors concluded their programming for the day, they visited Say Sí, a youth arts organization, after picking up some goodies at a local Mexican bakery. At that point in the afternoon, the visitors were able to interact with students participating in Say Sí's range of afterschool activities for at-risk youth. Programs can include theater and leadership courses, digital arts exploration, a middle school mentorship program, and specialized partnerships with other nonprofits like the Children's Shelter. The visitors found these interactions particularly impactful.

On Thursday, Musical Bridges Around the World welcomed our delegation with an amazing waited reception at the stunning Roosevelt Library. The presentation by Suhail Arastu proved very informative on every aspect of Musical Bridge's work from concerts at the San Fernando Cathedral to youth programs to piano competitions. Our visitors were also able to speak Russian directly to their counterpart, Anya Grokhovski, about how she founded Musical Bridges and has kept it running for two decades.

Reluctant as they were to leave such a warm reception, the visitors continued to their next appointment at Bihl Haus Arts. Bihl Haus is nestled into a senior living community and provides a unique opportunity for older members of the community to enjoy art classes with their neighbors. As the group entered Bihl Haus, they were able to see a class as a group of painters got to work on their canvasses. They were also welcomed by the executive director, Dr. Kellen McIntyre, to sit down in their gallery and take in their exhibit "10,000 Years of Love and Resistance." After Dr. McIntyre explained the nature of the work at Bihl Haus and their history, she introduced the visitors to the curator for the exhibit, David Zamora Casas, who explained the purpose of the current exhibit in recording aspects of the LGBT experience and encouraging attendees to think more deeply about their own self-understanding. He also introduced Joyous Windrider Jiménez who treated the guests to spoken word poetry in a space she had designed for this exhibit. This unequalled experience at Bihl Haus remained with our visitors and opened a dialogue about important social issues.

Concluding their formal appointments in San Antonio, our IVLP participants visited the Centro de Artes downtown in the historic Market Square. Once there, they were invited to tour the current gallery "159" with its curator, Dr. Teresa Eckmann of UTSA. Alberto Mijangos' work and the exclusive insight from Dr. Eckmann enraptured the group. Once they had seen the entire gallery, they joined Sebastian Guajardo and Stephanie Torres of the city's Department of Arts and Culture to talk about how they provide spaces like this designed to empower Latino voices. They also learned more about city administration and the role of the DAC in facilitating the work of other community-based arts groups.

Before they left on Friday, the visitors also saw the McNay Art Museum and attended a dress rehearsal at the Guadalupe theater. These cultural activities and the variety of professional appointments they enjoyed had a significant effect on the Belarusian visitors. Whether they were learning about programming for the junior or the senior community members; preserving heritage or painting an inclusive future; or the beautiful work of local residents, the entire experience in San Antonio was an unmitigated success.





## Iraqi Archaeologists Explore Missions and Cultural Heritage Preservation

From September 20th to 25th, SACIV was pleased to welcome a delegation of seven archaeologists from Iraq. While in San Antonio, they explored all of the efforts members of the community are engaged in to protect endangered cultural heritage sites and preserve all aspects of our shared history.

They began, necessarily, with an introduction and tour of the San Antonio Missions by the National Park Service. Susan Snow at NPS showed them the history and efforts to preserve the Spanish Colonial sites. She also sat down with our visitors after touring them to explain the work that the San Antonio Missions National Historic Park and the National Park Service do to ensure that future generations can appreciate the history of these places.



After a weekend of cultural activities, like touring Gruene and seeing the Alamo, the group was ready to visit more of their professional counterparts in San Antonio. The San Antonio Conservation Society told them about the role of a non-profit organization in preserving cultural heritage and elaborated on the specific projects they have undertaken to ensure historical sites are maintained and protected.

At UTSA's Center for Archaeological Research, the delegation learned from Dr. Paul Marceaux about their

work excavating, cleaning, identifying, and analyzing finds throughout the area. Their work can extend from paleolithic hunter-gatherer societies all the way to the Alamo and U.S.-influenced eras of local history. The visitors were impressed by the facilities at the Center for Archaeological Research including a stable isotope laboratory, specimen library, and report printing press. They also were very impressed by the stories and information Dr. Marceaux was able to provide about archaeology in the United States and in South Texas.

They concluded with their final appointment at the World Heritage Office of the City of San Antonio. The City's office championed the application process for the Missions' UNESCO World Heritage Site designation along with other groups like the Catholic Church, National Park Service, Visit San Antonio, the Chambers of Commerce, and the surrounding community. Having successfully achieved a World Heritage Site designation, Colleen Swain, the Office's director, explained that they are working to leverage the designation in ways that benefit the community economically and socially while also ensuring that new, strict guidelines for preservation and beautification are implemented in a buffer zone around the sites.

By the end of their stay in San Antonio, the visitors from Iraq had been able to explore the historic sites of San Antonio and the work required to preserve them from a variety of angles, whether academic, governmental, or non-profit. These approaches contributed to a fuller understanding of the best archaeological and historiographical practices while also allowing plenty of time for important person-to-person relationship building and networking.



## PPEP Comes to San Antonio for Further Law Enforcement Exchange

In September, SACIV was happy to host a new group of Mexican police officers for their Police Professionalization and Exchange Program (PPEP). This program is administered by Global Ties U.S. rather than through the State Department's International Visitors Office and is always an interesting change of pace from IVLP programs we handle.

The Alamo Area Regional Law Enforcement Academy opened their doors once more to the latest group of law enforcement officials to help train them and facilitate an exchange of ideas about best practices in modern policing. The experience was then introduced by Dr. Megan Augustyn, a professor at UTSA who has provided consistently informative presentations to visitors about the American criminal justice system. Her keynote address on policing and law enforcement in the United States provided a very useful foundation of knowledge to help our visitors understand the system in which the training they later observed would be applied.

Topics that they covered with their San Antonio counterparts included use of force, recruitment and vetting, crisis intervention, and de-escalation. They covered these fields with the Alamo Area Council of Governments, the San Antonio Police Department, and the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement.

Our visitors also enjoyed the hands-on experiences they had access to in San Antonio. Not only were they exposed to the hands-on exercises of basic crime scene investigations, but they also experienced the VirTra 300 Simulator which is always a favorite part of PPEP schedules in town. The virtual reality simulator allows police officers to immerse themselves in a recreated crisis scenario where they can practice effectively handling the situation with caution and speed.

Overall, the program was a success, and the participants came away with a better understanding of best practices, challenges, accountability, leadership, organizational hierarchy, professionalization, and partnership-building through their exchange with South Texas law enforcement officials and experts.





## Cyber Security is Focus of Canadian IVLP Group

In early October, a group of Canadian IVLP participants explored the cybersecurity scene in San Antonio to learn more about developing the personnel, equipment, programs, and frameworks for waging digital warfare and fighting back against hacking of all kinds.

The group began by exploring UTSA's cybersecurity programs. They were met by Dr. Lisa Montoya, who warmly welcomed them to San Antonio and introduced the ethos and academic programs at UTSA. They then met with Dr. David Dampier, Chair of the Department of Information Systems and Cyber Security at UTSA. He introduced them to some of UTSA's academic offerings in the world of cyberspace and the types of research projects UTSA sponsors. They then met with Dr. Greg White, Director of the Center of Infrastructure Assurance and Security. Dr.



White discussed some of their collaborative projects with groups outside of UTSA and how they used the work being done at UTSA to benefit the world at large.

After lunch, the group was treated to a tour of Rackspace's Customer Experience Center. Rackspace led our visitors on a tour of their one-of-a-kind facility which is made from a renovated shopping mall. After seeing the campus's food court, slide, and beautiful fields of flags, the Canadians and members of Rackspace's senior staff sat down to discuss how they protect their data and the data of innumerable clients who trust their information security to Rackspace.

Over the weekend, the group saw the LBJ Ranch, traveled to Gruene, participated in home hospitality, and took a bit of rest before resuming on Monday. Unfortunately, the group's timing coincided with Columbus Day, or Thanksgiving as they would have celebrated in Canada. This left them with only one appointment on Monday at the San Antonio Chamber of Commerce where Mr. Will Garrett introduced them to Cybersecurity San Antonio, an initiative by the Chamber of Commerce to propel San Antonio's cybersecurity industry into the future with consensus from local leaders in the field about best steps to take in the future. Cybersecurity San Antonio also helps attract new businesses to San Antonio to grow the local economy by showcasing all of the related amenities our city has to offer. Visitors were impressed by the combined ef-

forts of many different parties to encourage growth in cyber and were also glad to learn from Mr. Garrett about the state, challenges, and successes of San Antonio's cybersecurity firms.

After taking some time off on the rest of Monday to explore the San Antonio Missions, the visitors resumed their appointments on Tuesday with the Southwest Research Institute (SwRI). SwRI is a non-profit cybersecurity operation that seeks to tackle the largest problems in securing digital infrastructure for different government agencies, large corporations, or many other groups of various sizes. Though much of their work remains either classified or privileged, our group from Canada was still able to explore their campus and best practices for two hours and learn more about the compelling and important work SwRI does.

They then came to the SACIV offices for a meeting in our conference space with Air Force Cyber, the 24th Air Force. Squadron Leader Adam Simpson, an exchange officer from the Royal Air Force, had a lively discussion with our visitors about the work of the U.S. Air Force and their Five Eyes partners at Joint Base San Antonio. Our visitors really appreciated picking his brain to learn more about the offensive and defensive hacking done through the Air Force, the chain of command that supervises the cybersecurity apparatus, and the difficulties every government has in retaining cyber talent in a competitive field.

Before concluding their professional appointments, our visitors traveled to a very different locale in the form of Digital Defense Inc. Digital Defense provides cybersecurity products and services for a range of clients and offered to demonstrate some of their offerings to our visitors. CEO Larry Hurtado along with Mr. Gordon MacKay and Mr. Tom DeSot were all on hand to field questions from our visitors about the business practices of Digital Defense.

With that, their time in San Antonio ended, but each of the visitors walked away learning more not just about cybersecurity in the United States but also about the unique advances and strengths of San Antonio's cybersecurity sector. Between those productive appointments and their time over the long weekend to see the local sites and experience the flavor of South Texas, our new friends from Canada walked away glad to have come.



## Global Economic Cooperation

*"In San Antonio, I found that there is a dynamic economy and a lot of effort to keep it on track."*

-Bassem Hfaiedh (Tunisia)

*"It was great to meet our host who also invited friends to meet and dine with us. It gave a personal touch to San Antonio."*

-Akintunde Oyebo (Nigeria)

*"My knowledge of San Antonio was very limited. During my stay and from the interactions with different people what I learned is the city's drive and determination to excel and grow."*

-Sudip Bhaju (Nepal)

*"Home hospitality was an amazing experience. My hosts were great people and very engaging. The meal was great too!"*

-Barima Kwame Gyesaw (Ghana)

## Youth & Civic Activism

*"I thought Texas was more like a place full of ranches and cowboys just as I was used to seeing in Western movies, but San Antonio is a modern city with so many nice and historical sites to visit."*

-Ragnimwende Eldaa Koama (Burkina Faso)

*"Haven for Hope was amazing and also getting to meet teachers and students at the International School of the Americas was something I'll never forget . . . I am an educator and meeting with other teachers and hearing what works for them gave me a perspective on what I can do in my classroom. Furthermore, getting to know students and seeing what their passion is was a beautiful experience as well."*

-Ruth Gonzalez (Paraguay)

## Preserving Endangered Cultural Heritage Sites

*"The professional appointments were useful to understand protecting cultural heritage and raising awareness of research to improve tourism and sustainable development."*

-Aram Mohammed Amin Ahmed (Iraq)

## US Government & Society

*"These appointments met my objectives, because they provided the opportunity to learn about elections at the national, state, and city levels; to know how to empower women and young voters to participate in politics; and to understand how to protect the rights and interests of immigrants with different backgrounds."*

-Juan Wang (China)

## Advancing Regional Tourism

*"The process leading to World Heritage status and how people collaborate and cooperate were very helpful for me, because I'm currently in the same situation. I also liked having information from various people with different perspectives . . . San Antonio is not really famous in Japan, but I felt that there are many cultural resources and now I know why it's popular as a tourist destination!"*

-Harumi Tokuoka (Japan)

## Current US Social, Political, and Economic Issues for Young European Leaders

*"It was my first time in Texas and San Antonio. I found a vibrant city, culture, and history: a mix of peoples that creates a unique city."*

-Sergio Nazzaro (Italy)

## Improving Cyber Security Across Our Border

*"Meeting the Air Force officers was very insightful! Especially because it is really hard (or impossible) to meet these people outside of the program."*

-Karine Pontbriand (Canada)

*"I visited San Antonio over 10 years ago. Amazed at the economic and population growth!"*

-Jeremy DePow (Canada)

## Civic Education for Youth

*"The appointment met my professional objectives. They were a great source of reflection and inspiration for me to use in my future work. Because of it, I'm preparing a new project for civic education for youth in the next year."*

-Sylwia Gajownik (Poland)

## Open World Program: Government Funding & Oversight of Educational Institutions

*"It was very pleasant that the organizers took care of the professional experience of each participant in the program. I personally appreciate the fact that in addition to the main theme, inclusion and access to educational services for students with disabilities and special needs was included. And also, thank you for the opportunity to ask additional questions on these topics."*

-Lesia Valiaieva (Ukraine)

*"All the appointments were extremely interesting, useful and full of new information. I was able to ask different questions and clarify all the information while talking to the representative. I work in the sphere of higher education, so I was extremely interested in the mechanisms of quality assurance in both secondary and higher education. I was pleasantly surprised by how open and easy to talk to all the guests/hosts during the meetings were and how patient they were answering all of our questions."*

-Yana Chapailo (Ukraine)

## NGOs & Civic Activism

*"I would say I wish I had more time to spend in San Antonio, but it would never be enough, would it?"*

-Sila Samuel Mulwa (Kenya)

*"I participated in the hospitality program and met a really friendly and amazing couple. I learnt a lot about the history of San Antonio and enjoyed the amazing hospitality."*

-Musenge Musomali (Zambia)

*"As we got around the city and we had another view of the city through 'home hospitality,' it gave another taste of the American language, history, and culture."*

-Tarik El Gana (Morocco)

## Addressing Refugee & Migration Challenges in the US

*"I had never heard anything about San Antonio during my previous visits to the U.S. I believe that San Antonio is a great place to experience Latin cuisine and the American life style. I loved it!"*

-Yelda Gungor (Turkey)





# Event Highlights



## **Summer Membership Mixer ~ July 17<sup>th</sup>, 2018**

The mixer brought together professional resources who have generously given their time to various international delegations, SACIV's dedicated community of members, and two State Department delegations who were in town at the same time. The first delegation was on Global Economic Cooperation and brought representatives from Nepal, Nigeria, Mexico, Ghana, and Tunisia together to learn about San Antonio's work encouraging foreign direct investment and international cooperation. The second was a group of administrators seeking best practices for engaging and working with youth to encourage civic activism. All of the attendees at the mixer enjoyed having the opportunity to meet with these visitors at the Wyndham Gardens Riverwalk Hotel and build transnational friendships over delicious food.

At the mixer, we also had the chance to thank a sampling of the professional resources who make each of our delegations so impactful to the international visitors we accommodate. Without support from these groups and others in the community, San Antonio would not be the IVLP destination that it is. Each visitor also had the chance to introduce themselves in front of the crowd and talk a little bit about their work. The diverse array of backgrounds they brought to the event energized the experience for everyone. We were glad to see that everyone had a fun time and enjoyed the company of their next-door and global neighbors; it makes us even more excited for future SACIV events!



## **Annual Dinner ~ September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2018**

Our Annual Dinner to once more brought together members of San Antonio's internationally-minded community to exchange ideas, meet international visitors, enjoy a wonderful meal, and recognize the accomplishments in citizen diplomacy. At the University of the Incarnate Word's Grossman International Conference Center, attendees mingled, including SACIV members, leaders in international organizations, and our four IVLP visitors from Japan and China. Everyone had a wonderful time engaging in cross-cultural dialogue and discussing their own experiences forging transnational connections.

As the program began and everyone took their seats, the Chair of the San Antonio Council for International Visitors, Betsy Cameron, welcomed everyone to our event and introduced two IVLP participants: Ms. Juan Wang, who came to San Antonio as part of her program on U.S. Government and Society, explained the importance of her appointments in learning holistically about the United States and helping her create better international understanding for her job in the foreign office of Ningxia Hui in China. Ms. Aya Takeda introduced herself and the other participants from Japan as well as expressed excitement for her upcoming appointments dealing with regional tourism promotion.

After an invocation from Reverend Schellenberg, the meal began, and as attendees concluded their entrees, Betsy Cameron shared SACIV's new promotional video. The video, championed by Board Member Sandra Richardson, describes the mission and purpose of SACIV with photos from countless delegations over many years of active citizen diplomacy.

Chair Betsy Cameron then introduced the night's keynote speaker, Mr. Richard Perez, President and CEO of the San Antonio Chamber of Commerce. In his former role as City Councilman, he explained throughout his address, he had the opportunity to expand the range of person-to-person diplomacy options available to the City of San Antonio and the people it serves. He emphasized the importance of these cross-cultural connections not only from a business or networking standpoint but also as a way to increase mutual understanding. The speech was very well received and Mr. Perez's perspective reinforced the value of SACIV's work.

Irma Reyes, founder of SACIV, came to the podium to present Janet and Sam Scott with this year's International Leadership Awards. Together, they have been continuously active in supporting citizen diplomacy in San Antonio. SACIV was overjoyed to recognize their years of diplomatic accomplishments with our International Leadership Award.

As the night concluded with closing remarks from our Chair, we were glad to be able to host another honest, open gathering of citizen diplomats in San Antonio. Their interest in and support for international projects has made our work possible, and it is in events like this that their support is most visible. Thank you to all who attended and made the night so successful.



## **Holiday Party ~ December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2018**

SACIV was glad to host its annual Holiday Party at the home of International Leadership Award recipients, Janet and Sam Scott. They graciously opened their doors to a wonderful event where members, resources, staff, and Board Members of SACIV were able to mingle, celebrate the year's achievements, and enjoy good food with good friends. Guests were also treated to a catered buffet and hot chocolate bar. Many discussed the wonderful work of SACIV and the improvements made over the last year. As everyone was gathered in warm discussion, Executive Director Cecilia Cross took a moment to thank the Scotts for hosting, thank the Board Members for their continued work on behalf of SACIV, and thank our members, particularly those who had opened their homes and their arms to our visitors for "Dinner Hospitality." The night concluded with some caroling, more conversation, and awarding the winners of the silent auction. As a new year approaches, SACIV looks forward to continuing to work with our members, our international visitors, our non-profit partners, and our Board to ensure that more and more opportunities for international exchange are available to the San Antonio community.



# Visitor from China Learns About U.S. Government and Society

**Ms. Juan Wang** of China, a staff member of Ningxia's Foreign Affairs Office in China, was able to travel to San Antonio in September as part of a program on U.S. Government and Society. Although the program had originally been designed to include six other participants, Ms. Wang was able to make it a very successful program with her enthusiasm and keen questions.



After arriving in San Antonio, she began with her liaison, Ms. Jude Kieda, at the Bexar County Elections Department. Here, she was able to delve into a rich conversation with Ms. Jacquelyn Callanen who ad-

ministers the office. They discussed the differences in political systems, the issues and traits that attract voters, and how mobilization for Election Day works in the United States. Ms. Wang was also able to test out the voting machines that the Department houses and experience what an American election would look like to any voter.

Next, she made a stop at the San Antonio Police Department. Sergeant Lutton and Robert Looney at SAPD welcomed her into the Public Safety Headquarters to learn more about their community policing programs and modern issues in law enforcement in the United States. Ms. Wang was fascinated by the insight they provided into a variety of issues that are shaping the work of police officers and U.S. society generally.

Ms. Wang and Ms. Kieda enjoyed lunch at the famous Mi Tierra restaurant and then continued to their afternoon appointment. Saghar Roshan of Catholic Charities welcomed the two into their offices for a discussion about their refugee resettlement efforts which were of great interest to our international visitor. She was able to ask them all about how they work to acculturate diverse populations peaceably into the local community.

That concluded the days professional appointments, but Ms. Wang was able to have dinner with SACIV member Mary Lou Wilson. Ms. Wang found her to be not only warm and inviting,



but she also appreciated the candor with which they could discuss a variety of topics.

The next day, Wednesday, began with a meeting at the SACIV offices with the League of Women Voters. They discussed their myriad programs and fora to encourage members of the community to register to vote and then subsequently participate in the electoral process. The three representatives who met with Ms. Wang, Phyllis Ingram, Martha Lankford, and Linda Arronge, each provided a unique perspective on the League's efforts and the best ways to promote democratic involvement by the public.



This conversation segued perfectly into the next appointment with MOVE Texas. MOVE works to encourage young people to become more involved in their democracy at every level of governance. The conversation between the Executive Director of MOVE, Drew Galloway, and Ms. Wang allowed her to explore the reasons people do and do not vote. They also discussed MOVE's innovative strategies to engage young people through parties, person-to-person networks, and social media.

Before the day was out, Ms. Wang was also able to talk to Fatima Menendez at the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund. MALDEF was an invaluable appointment for shedding light on current immigration debates as well as the benefits and challenges of a multi-ethnic society like the United States. Exploring these issues created a great conversation between the two women.

Ms. Wang was also the guest of honor at the SACIV Annual Dinner that Wednesday night where she eloquently shared her IVLP experiences with our members, distinguished guests, and other global citizens. Being able to break bread with a diverse array of people from the United States definitely enhanced the trip and contributed to a broad, holistic understanding not just of the formal mechanisms of governance here but of the people that government serves.





## Polish Delegation Learns More About Youth Civic Education

In October, a group of IVLP visitors from Poland traveled to San Antonio to learn more about efforts local schools, non-profits, and educators are taking to enhance civic education and social awareness for youth. Through their appointments, the visitors delved into topics like media literacy, serving homeless youth, empathy training, and youth arts programs. All of these areas enhanced their knowledge and showed them new forms of education that are preparing future citizens in the U.S.

They began by meeting Ms. Lisa Barry, a teacher at Woodridge Elementary School in Alamo Heights, who has worked on creating a fifth-grade curriculum over 15 years that introduces students to the Holocaust. Her unique approach focuses on teaching children about other children and creating a sympathetic connection to overcome barriers of assumption and dehumanization. Visitors were very curious to ask more about addressing these issues with children in a sensitive, yet nuanced way.



The group then met with City Year at our downtown offices. In their meeting with City Year, they were able to discuss City Year's efforts to provide an

outlet for post-highschool and post-college young people in educating the next generation. The efforts of these City Year tutors and classroom aides can be life-changing for elementary-age children as they are helped through coursework by City Year staff members. Chief of Staff Stephanie Gargiulo and Team Managers Sergio Plaza III and Brittany Burns were very helpful in answering all of the questions visitors had.

After a quick break for lunch, the group traveled to the International School of the Americas, a favorite destination of our IVLP delegations. Principal Magadance welcomed them to learn more about their curriculum which heavily emphasizes social awareness, civic education, and student community service. These efforts in myriad forms really impressed the visitors, especially meeting with students to discuss the specific impact these projects had had on them.

This concluded their appointments for Friday, but over the weekend, the group was happy to see the sights of San Antonio and even travel to the Polish

Heritage Center at Panna Maria where the local Polish community graciously welcomed them for mass, lunch, and a warm reception.



On Monday, appointments resumed in the afternoon with a meeting at Trinity University with Dr. Aaron Delwiche. His expertise in media literacy was not only of great interest to the visitors but also very topical. He described the most important components of media literacy education and the methods he uses to relate these subjects to younger students. The exchange between him and the visitors showed that many struggles transcend national borders.

After that, amid on-and-off rain, the visitors went to Haven for Hope to learn about their THRIVE Youth Center and the ways in which they serve youth and provide community service opportunities for young people. After touring the campus, the group was also able to participate in a community service project.

They ended the day with a later appointment at SAY SÍ. The youth arts program which has impressed previous visitors continued to show off their impressive work to our Polish delegation. The visitors were most impressed by their conversations with students and the chance to learn more about how the arts programs offered by SAY SÍ have impacted them.

That, unfortunately, concluded the programing for this program, but through their diverse appointments, they were afforded a variety of perspectives on engaging youth with their community and society.





# Ukrainian Activists Examine Programs for Special Needs Children

This past October, a group of Ukrainian IVLP participants journeyed to San Antonio as part of their State Department program to take a closer look at the myriad programs San Antonio has to offer for special needs children. Although their time in San Antonio was unfortunately brief, they were still able to see all corners of the city as they explored what San Antonio had to offer.

The group began with a meeting at Mission Road Ministries. They were warmly received by Ms. Norma Gaitan and Ms. Anna Metaxas-Garcia in the campus's chapel. There, they were able to discuss the variety of programs for special needs individuals of diverse ages including summer programs, residential facilities, as well as their signature SOAR and MORE programs. The visitors also took a look at the healthcare, residential, leisure, and culinary operations of Mission Road in a quick tour before departing for their next appointment.

This next meeting was with Dr. Brandon Biery of Children's Association for Maximum Potential (CAMP). CAMP serves special-needs children by providing an authentic camp experience with a variety of program for children of all levels of need. Their facilities, specialists, and army of volunteers converge to make camp a fantastic experience for the children they serve.

After a break for lunch, the group then traveled to the humble facilities of TEAMability, an organization working to use the best evidence-based practices to serve children with multiple disabilities. Their unique approach and the opportunity to see multiple age-groups of children participating in their programs on-site was of immense interest to the visitors. They expressed their thanks to the TEAMability staff before concluding their programming for the day.

On Friday, they were in for a treat as they began the day exploring Morgan's Wonderland. The one-of-a-kind theme park allowed the visitors to see some totally original ideas for providing fun for special needs children. The park has grown tremendously in recent years and boasts 25 acres of rides designed to serve special needs children. They also have on-site therapeutic and educational facilities to complement their recreational work. The Ukrainian IVLP visitors were also accompanied for this appointment by Ukrainian participants in our OpenWorld program on Education and Government Oversight. All of the visitors had fun ex-

changing their thoughts on San Antonio and the United States.

After lunch, there were still plenty of appointments for our visitors to keep. They started with an hour at Eva's Heroes to discuss their important work enriching the lives of those youth with intellectual disabilities.

They also met with the Arc of San Antonio to discuss their broad continuum of services for children, adolescents, and adults with intellectual developmental disabilities. They were joined by representatives from Autism Lifeline Links to discuss how they work together to provide services for individuals and families.

Lastly, they met with an ever-ready partner and resource of SACIV, the Children's Shelter, who once again opened their doors and volunteered their time to meet with our visitors to discuss how they try to serve special needs children who pass through their nationally-accredited crisis shelter, residential center, therapeutic offices, and adoption services facilities. Although the Children's Shelter serves children from any background who are in need, the visitors were interested to hear about how they can work with those children whose disabilities may require additional attention and how they function as an adoption agency in the United States.

That concluded the majority of their appointments, but before they were done in San Antonio, the visitors volunteered their time at Camp CAMP at their temporary home in Comfort, Texas. There, they helped facilitate a trick-or-treat scavenger hunt for the children CAMP serves. It was a great experience for the visitors and the children as our guests from Ukraine were able to teach a couple Ukrainian phrases to the group and see the inspirational programming of CAMP in action.

Overall, they were able to experience a wide swath of programs available in San Antonio from myriad organizations. These organizations showed our visitors their best practices in housing, treating, serving, advising, and having fun with children dealing with all manner of disabilities. The visitors definitely appreciated the time and efforts of everyone at each organization who is engaged in such inspiring and important work in our community.





## Five from Indonesia Research Combating Trafficking in Persons

For a week in October, five international visitors from Indonesia explored the efforts of local groups to end human trafficking and raise awareness of its horrible methods and effects. These visitors were able to explore the issue from all manner of perspectives and deepen their understanding of its insidious ramifications in the United States.

The group began by meeting with the Equal Justice Center (EJC). The EJC is one of few organizations in Texas who are struggling against labor trafficking and the misappropriation of wages among immigrant communities. Their work intrigued the visitors as they sat down to learn more about how much they are able to accomplish and the legal services they offer to underserved clients.

Next, the delegation proceeded to the San Antonio Police Department Public Safety Headquarters. As they have welcomed so many visitors before, the SAPD opened their doors to this group to explain their work in fighting trafficking in persons at the local level. Their conversation delved into the work of the Vice Unit, Sex Crimes Unit, and the special training programs SAPD officers undertake to better prepare them to handle cases of human trafficking.

At SAPD, the visitors were also prepared for their ride-alongs. Later Thursday afternoon, they were given the chance to see police officers in action and ride with them as they patrolled the streets of San Antonio. This hands-on learning experience is always a highlight of visitors' time in San Antonio and the ride-alongs last week were no exception.

On Friday, the group began with a morning meeting at Homeland Security Investigations and Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Representatives of the Department of Homeland Security were able to explain how they track cases of human trafficking at or near the border while also remaining ready to pursue suspects throughout the country. This meeting provided IVLP participants with a better understanding of how federal agencies cooperate with local law enforcement and pursue through different avenues their important investigations.

Before lunch, the visitors were also able to meet with a much-valued resource in San Antonio's efforts to combat trafficking in persons. The Freedom Youth Project Foundation, a lynchpin of the Alamo Area Coalition Against Trafficking, met with our visitors for two hours to examine their detailed research and methods involving the trafficking of children and effective methods of prevention. This meeting allowed everyone to obtain a broad understanding of the risk factors, determinants, likely perpetrators, likely victims, and cycles of human trafficking. All of the visitors found Mr. Castellanos' presentation and answers to their questions very helpful.

The visitors then met with two more members of the Alamo Area Coalition Against Trafficking. The Bexar County Juvenile Probation Office provided more information about serving youth in the community who may have been affected by trafficking. Later in the afternoon, Magdalena House showcased their victim support services especially for mothers and families. Their programs include reintegration mechanisms for victims of trafficking in addition to their work fostering empowerment, education, and an end to the cycle of abuse.

Through these varied and impactful meetings, the delegation from Indonesia was able to explore San Antonio's successful efforts to combat trafficking in persons and reduce the number of people who are victimized by it. Each one of them found the appointments useful in improving their own efforts to fight human trafficking back home.



## European Leaders Explore Current U.S. Issues

A distinguished group of European leaders, including members of parliament, mayors, European Commission representatives, and non-profit thought leaders, traveled to San Antonio in October to take part in a program exploring current social, political, and economic issues afflicting the United States and the best approaches organizations in San Antonio and South Texas have found to tackle them.

The visitors began by meeting with the San Antonio Police Department where Sergeant Christopher Luton and Mr. Robert Looney met with the visitors to discuss a broad swathe of issues that the police department encounters and faces. The group was excited to discuss issues related to body cameras, firearm safety, immigration offenses, and drug trafficking. The police department was very helpful in addressing the diverse array of questions that our visitors had and explaining to them where they had found successes.

The visitors then moved on to an appointment with MOVE Texas. Given how interested the group was in American politics, their discussion with Mr. Drew Galloway of MOVE really excited them. They were able to discuss MOVE's innovative ways of engaging young people in politics and getting them to vote. Energy which MOVE brings to their voter registration and voter information efforts was contagious, and the 18 visitors couldn't stop singing their praises.



After a break for lunch, the group took time to meet with the American Indians of Texas at the Spanish Colonial Missions. This appointment provided a new perspective for the European visitors who came with varying degrees of understanding of the history and variety of Native American experiences in the United States. Having Mr. Ramon Vasquez

elaborate on these topics was very beneficial for them to understand the roots of current issues in the United States' minority communities.

That Monday evening, half of the visitors joined the police department once more for ride-alongs with patrol officers. They were able to travel with them and ask questions as they patrolled the streets of San Antonio. This unique and more on-the-ground experience enhanced their understanding of issues they had discussed with the SAPD earlier.

The next day entailed a lengthy trip south of San Antonio to Laredo, Texas. In Laredo, the visitors met with Texas RioGrande Legal Aid (TRLA) to discuss immigration and the evolving debate on a host of immigration-related topics. The visit was very useful in exploring this hot-button issue, and members of the staff from TRLA even traveled with the visitors as they stopped at the U.S.-Mexico border and the Rio Grande to see the physical location that has been the focal point of so much contentious debate.

Unfortunately, the group had to hurry back to San Antonio so that the other half of the delegation could experience the ride-alongs that others had had on Monday. However, throughout all of these appointments across their two days of programming, the visitors from Europe learned more about key issues that are facing the United States and the solutions local groups are finding to deal with them.



# San Antonio's Tourism Industry Impresses Japanese Visitors

The week before last we were glad to welcome a delegation of Japanese visitors to San Antonio to learn more about "Advancing Regional Tourism" through an exploration of San Antonio's impressive historical sites, hospitality industry, and educational programs.



The visitors began by a warm reception at our Annual Dinner where they were welcomed as guests of honor. Ms. Aya Takeda introduced the delegation to the assembled

guests and explained the purpose of their own IVLP group after some remarks from their fellow IVLP attendee, Ms. Juan Wang who participated in an individual project on "U.S. Government and Society."

When their program began in earnest on that Thursday, the participants from Japan began by visiting the Hotel Valencia. Given the background of some of the visitors in hotel management, they were interested to learn more from Hotel Valencia about how they serve domestic and international clientele at their premier facilities.

The group took a quick break for coffee before traveling to the Frost Bank Tower to meet with the City of San Antonio. Specifically, the group was pleased to sit down to meet with Ms. Colleen Swain of the City's World Heritage Office. The Office works to coordinate with many levels of government, members of the impacted communities, and non-profit partners to ensure that the Missions, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, are properly appreciated, integrated into the fabric of the nearby community, and create a responsibly managed economic impact. Visitors were keen to discuss the effect of this designation with Ms. Swain and explore the lengthy application process that the World Heritage Office coordinated.



After lunch, the group met with Dr. Sedef Doganer of UTSA's Department of Architecture. Dr. Doganer's expertise in envisioning and designing touristic spaces was very insightful. Her more academic approach helped the visitors imagine the broader impacts of situational factors to the success of tourist attractions and hospitality providers. Dr. Doganer was also able to contribute to a conversation begun at the previous appointment about leveraging a UNESCO World Heritage Site designation for maximal, yet respectful, economic impact.

The day of programming concluded at St. Philip's Hilton College of Hotel and Restaurant Management. This vocational training is built through the University of Houston and prepares a cohort of students with the necessary skills to work in San Antonio's thriving hospitality field. Representatives of the Hilton College were able to explain the variety of classes and preparatory work they can provide to students.



The next day, our Japanese delegation was thoroughly impressed by a tour of the Missions. Led by the American Indians of Texas at the Spanish Colonial Missions (AIT-SCM), the tour allowed visitors to not only appreciate the architecture of the Spanish Missions, but they were also able to learn more about the lives of the indigenous people and settlers who lived on these plots. Information, demonstrations, and performances by the AIT-SCM staff truly impressed the visitors while giving them a better understanding of the UNESCO World Heritage Site that they had heard so much about.

After lunch, they resumed programming at the San Antonio Riverwalk Association. Their meeting focused on preserving the historic beauty of the Riverwalk while developing the local shops into a true economic force. As the most-visited tourist attraction in the State of Texas, the Riverwalk Association certainly had plenty of valuable information to share with our visitors.

The day concluded at Visit San Antonio where they discussed public and private collaboration on promoting San Antonio to the world as a first-class destination. Their marketing strategies developed with funding from hotel occupancy taxes have helped boost the local economy by showing those around the world the options available in San Antonio, whether it is for conventions, leisure, or business.

Overall, these appointments suited the visitors and their goals by introducing them to the tourism and hospitality economies of our community whether from the perspective of a historic site, a city office, a local business, or commercial association. This multifaceted approach created a holistic, informational program for our IVLP participants.





# Delegation from Ukraine Explores Local Education Policy

We were happy to host a unique group of visitors from Ukraine who came as part of the U.S. Congress' Open World Program to learn about education and oversight of education institutions in the United States. They not only met with policy makers, educators, and professional peers, but they also had the time to truly immerse themselves in the local culture with plenty of cultural activities outside of the scheduled professional appointments.

For example after they arrived on Friday October, 12th, the visiting delegation was invited by the board of SACIV to a Welcome Dinner at SoLuna where they were able to discuss the exciting activities ahead and commence introductions. On Saturday, the group was busy seeing The Pearl, The Alamo, and the Riverwalk. In the evening, they headed to Bulverde where they were able to enjoy a Texas rodeo. The rodeo was a one-of-a-kind experience that each visitor found utterly enthralling.

On Sunday, the group ventured to Gruene away from the city of San Antonio. In Gruene, they explored the historic town center and enjoyed music at Gruene's famous dance hall. For lunch, they were able to eat at the Gristmill and savor the view of tubers passing by on the river below.

On Monday, they started with another look at the culture of Texas at the Institute of Texan Cultures. They enjoyed seeing the museum and gaining some more insight into the peoples of Texas. Later that day, their professional appointments could begin. That afternoon, they visited Alamo Colleges and discussed with professors, administrators, and students their vocational programs, oversight compliance, and college readiness programs for local high schools.

The next day, Alamo Heights Independent School District opened their doors to our visitors. The fascinating discussion that developed there centered around the special education programs they offer and their unique methods of engaging the community.

After lunch, the group resumed their appointments at Trinity University where they learned how the educational system in the United States can differ at private, liberal arts colleges. Trinity's unique educational approach, substantial endowment, and revised strategic plan were all of interest to the visitors. Also of note to them was Trinity's renewed emphasis on experiential learning. After Trinity University, the group went to San Antonio Education Partnership to discuss ways of promoting and easing entry into higher education. The information, resources, and expertise they provide for underserved families looking to help youth get a college education was inspiring to see.

A day later, State Representative Diego Bernal came to speak to our visitors and the SACIV and World Affairs Council Offices. He shed light on the varying levels of education policy and oversight and also explained how he has seen policy develop as Vice Chairman of the Texas House Committee on Education. That meeting was followed by lunch and then a trip to the Education Service Center for Region 20. This center is part of a statewide program to support school effectiveness by reviewing curricula, assessing health and safety, providing administrative and technological aid, and maintaining certifications and top-tier recruitment. The range of services they provide made this stop one of the highlights of the delegation's time in San Antonio.

Before their Wednesday appointments concluded, the Ukrainians stopped at San Antonio College's Victory Center, which supports veteran students by providing mental wellness programs, case management, Veteran Affairs services, and

grants options. This offers a one-stop shop serving those who have already done so much to serve us.

The night was concluded with a fantastic reception at Bar 1919 where the visiting guests were able to chat with SACIV members and the San Antonio community. It was a great chance for the exchange to transcend professional appointments and create friendships in addition to partnerships.

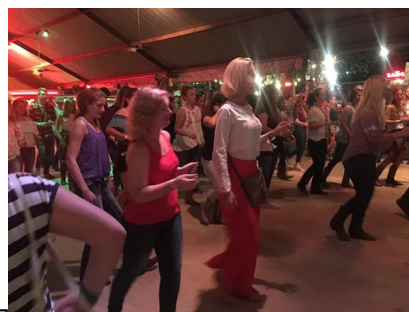
On Thursday, the visitors met with representatives from Business Careers High School, a business magnet school within Oliver Wendell Holmes High School. The school allows students to pursue their specific interests and cultivate leadership and business skills with tailored curricula. The visitors from Ukraine were especially captivated by their conversations with students from BCHS. Later that day, they were able to explore UTSA's Dreamers Center which provides unique information and resources to students who fall under Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals or DACA. These first generation immigrants can come to this Center on UTSA's campus for more information about how their legal status intersects with their educational options at a public university.

The last day of professional appointments began with a great conversation downtown with Councilman Rey Saldana. With him, they were able to discuss the work of South San Kids First, a community action group that seeks accountability in the South San Antonio Independent School District. Their discussion on these issues in addition to talks about fostering local leadership left a lasting impression. Afterwards, they continued to the Northeast Independent School District to converse with Superintendent Brian Gottardy about the pros and cons of current standardized testing practices. The superintendent has been critical of what he sees as a reductivist form of oversight, and the visitors were glad to hear his views on necessary changes to evaluation methodology. While at NEISD, they also spoke with the NEISD Council of PTAs to discuss the role of parents and the community in supporting their institutions of education. This provided yet another perspective on education, which our guests truly appreciated.

The Open World selectees then concluded their appointments with a concluding dinner at Paesanos on the Riverwalk. This allowed them the chance to share what they had learned and found most surprising while synthesizing this information into take-away best practices. Those members of the San Antonio community who had been able to spend a great deal of time with them were also able to say their goodbyes at this farewell event.

Overall, the program had the time and community partners to explore education from a variety of vantage points and delve deeply into what works and what doesn't. Visitors were also able to learn more about how government, community groups, and volunteers can aid their local educational institutions.

Additionally, engaged members of San Antonio's internationally-minded community were glad to have the time to spend with the Open World delegation at community activities around South Texas. Those from Ukraine and those from Texas were both glad to have spent this time together.



## Thanksgiving and Accessibility on Display for French Visitors

In November, we were pleased to welcome two visitors from France and their State Department liaison to San Antonio. Fortunately and unfortunately, they were slated to arrive in San Antonio the day before Thanksgiving and leave the Saturday after.

This unique timetable allowed them to join SACIV members for Thanksgiving where they were able to participate in the great American tradition of turkey, gravy, stuffing, green bean casserole, and mashed potatoes while thinking on the past year and all that there was to be thankful for. The visitors loved taking part in this celebration with members of our



community who had opened their homes to them.

This timing did mean that the options for our visitors in terms of professional resources were fairly limited. Many organizations and individuals were not open Saturday to meet with our visitors.

Luckily, however,

Morgan's Wonderland was able to open their doors to our IVLP participants last Friday and take them on a tour of their wonderful park. As the visitors stepped into the park, it immediately became clear that the non-profit, mission-driven climate of Morgan's Wonderland had created a whole new kind of amusement park. From adaptive monkey bars to a one-of-a-kind "Sensory Village" to wheelchair-accessible swings and rides, Morgan's Wonderland had innumerable innovations that demonstrated thought had been paid to every detail of the park.

Visitors were also treated to a tour of Morgan's Inspiration Island, the accompanying water park next door. Though it was currently in the off-season, they were still able to see the tweaks and accessibility-related changes that had endeared this new addition to their audience. For example, the water park includes, like similar parks, a bucket of water which will fill and then splash the playing children. However, for visually impaired children, they may not be able to see the bucket filling and dumping. So as to prevent accidents or unwelcome surprises, the bucket also has a soundtrack that accompanies it and speeds up until it warns when the water will splash.

The visitors were impressed by the attention to detail that accompanied every aspect of the park. They also enjoyed hearing from their guide, Danielle Henning, about the Academy at Morgan's Wonderland and the nearby medical services they have partnered to create. This makes Morgan's Wonderland not just a great place for children of any ability to play, but it is also a one-stop shop for parents, caregivers, and disabled children to seek a variety of complementary services.

Before leaving San Antonio, the visitors were also able to do some sight-seeing at the Riverwalk, the Spanish Missions, and the San Antonio Museum of Art. At the Missions, the National Park Service was able to talk to the visitors about how they have endeavored to make the park accessible and ADA compliant. The pair from France thoroughly enjoyed these trips as well in addition to their appointment at Morgan's Wonderland. Although it was a less busy program, they still found plenty of interest in San Antonio to help them improve inclusivity globally.

## IVLP Group Finds Global Commonalities in Serving Refugee Communities

This past November, three visitors from Turkey and Lebanon came to San Antonio to learn more about how groups in the U.S. are dealing with challenges related to refugees and migration. Although these visitors were accustomed to dealing with refugee populations on a much larger scale due to the influx of people from the Syrian Civil War, they were still inspired and intrigued by the work of their U.S. peers.

They began with a less intense day on Monday where they were able to talk to Margaret Costantino, the Executive Director at the Center for Refugee Services. The Center provides a one-stop-shop for refugees, many of whom live nearby, to find resources. Whether they need help reading mail, getting medical aid, securing good education, or simply asking advice, they can come to the Center and find volunteers and staff ready to help them. The hive of activity that surrounded the Center showed how vital it was to the surrounding community and allowed our visitors to see a very successful, refugee-serving organization in San Antonio.

After spending the rest of Monday sight-seeing, the visitors picked back up Tuesday with a full schedule. They began by meeting with American Gateways. American Gateways provides legal services to refugees and immigrants. They do this by sending members of their legal team to detention facilities around Texas to provide as much legal advice as they can. The visitors were able to hear from a variety of perspectives at American Gateways, including their outreach coordinator, Elizabeth Almanza, who seeks to raise awareness in the community about issues at the border.

After lunch, the group traveled to Catholic Charities which operates one of the largest refugee resettlement programs in San Antonio. Their philanthropic work helps newly arrived refugees find a home, employment, educational resources, and some donated supplies on their arrival. In their discussion with Saghar Roshan, Director of Refugee Reception, the visitors learned about her own personal story escaping persecution in Iran and arriving in the United States. They were also able to tour the offices and meet the "United Nations" that works at Catholic Charities, representing individuals from a variety of backgrounds who have come to help others be welcomed to the U.S.

Lastly, they stopped at MALDEF, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund. Here, Fatima Menendez, a Legislative Attorney for MALDEF, was able to explain in eloquent detail the nature of many current immigration and refugee policies. The visitors were really impressed by the clarity and depth of knowledge that she possessed as well as MALDEF's active role in lobbying, litigating, and educating on many issues, including immigration. It made for an excellent final stop in San Antonio.

By the end of their trip, these three visitors were able to learn from a variety of perspectives which legal, financial, and humanitarian problems were being successfully countered by the work of U.S. organizations. They were able to see the policy aspect, the legal side, as well as the on-the-ground work required to acculturate newcomers to our city. They were all very impressed and enjoyed their time in San Antonio.





## South Korean Delegation Looks at Developing Social Organizations

In October, a delegation of ten International Visitor Leadership Program participants from South Korea came to San Antonio to learn more about non-profit management and developing civil society organizations from leaders in that area in San Antonio.

They began by meeting with Ms. Anais Biera Miracle of the Children's Shelter Thursday afternoon. She welcomed them to learn more about how the shelter is run and administered through their presentation and discussion. Afterward, they toured the center to learn more about their operations. Before the day was out, they also met with Mr. Scott McAninch of the Non-Profit Council and Big Give SA. He was able to explain to the visitors some of what he has done to increase non-profit capacity, build networks and partnerships, increase contributions, and raise awareness. As they met at Big Brothers/Big Sisters of San Antonio, the visitors were very impressed by the way Mr. McAninch's groups had created large and sustained impacts in the civil society community of San Antonio.

On Friday, the visitors began by meeting at Haven for Hope. Although it was raining on and off, the group was able to tour the extensive campus and learn about the many groups and services that operate out of Haven for Hope to create a holistic approach to homelessness. After the tour, the group met with Ms. Melody McCrea to discuss the specific services and financial concerns of the organization. The group really enjoyed picking her brain about non-profit best practices before they left for a community service activity in the Haven for Hope warehouse. There, the visitors and liaisons sorted winter clothing donations for the Haven for Hope team to ensure it could be properly sorted later.

After their morning at Haven for Hope, the group stopped for lunch. This gave them a short break before jumping back into their appointments at SACIV's new home in the Finesilver Building. Once there, they met with Mr. Jim Eskin, an SACIV member and leader of Eskin Fundraising Professionals, to discuss ways to increase non-profit capacity and recruit donors. Although there were some technical issues

with the PowerPoint, the visitors truly appreciated the valuable insight Mr. Eskin had to share.

The visitors were then joined in the same room by Ms. Kathy MacNaughton and Ms. Jacqueline Jones of the Masters Leadership Program. The Masters Leadership Program helps prepare cohorts of potential non-profit board members for service to their community with dedicated training seminars, tours, informational panel discussions, and a directed exploration of the local non-profit community. This unique program and its many benefits for non-profit boards lucky to recruit an alum presented a new way of building non-profit capabilities to our South Korean group.

Throughout these appointments, our visitors were able to see many sides of San Antonio's non-profit community and learn from the best of the best in our area about how to further their individual missions.



### *“WORLD VIEW”*

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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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