



CIVIC

Council for International Visitors
Iowa Cities

THE CITIZEN DIPLOMAT

CIVIC's Quarterly Newsletter

Winter 2016

Visitor Recap: From December 2015 to February 2016, CIVIC successfully hosted five programs and received 15 visitors from 8 countries, including Malaysia, Russia, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Germany, and the United Kingdom.

Programs Hosted: Human Rights Advocacy; U.S. Presidential Election Campaign —Mr. James Waterson; Dr. Matthias Bauer—International Trade, Agriculture & Agribusiness; School Management and Pedagogical Systems; Preventing Gender-Based Violence in the Russian Periphery

Other Events: CIVIC hosted the *Celebration of Citizen Diplomacy Dinner* in January at hotelVetro in Iowa City. Congratulations to the **2015 Citizen Diplomat Award Recipients:** KCRG TV9 & the Gazette (business/industry); The Islamic Center of Cedar Rapids (non-profit organization), and Dr. Nicholas Johnson (individual). The dinner featured a keynote address by **Dr. James Zogby**.

Thank you to the following **CIVIC volunteers** for their help with these programs:

Patrick Bourgeacq, Peg Bouska, Gayle Bray, Megan Grubb, Jane McMullen, Harry Olmstead & Barbara Stein, Elena Osinskaya, Concepcion Piragine, Ken Royar, Lisa Spellman, Dave Tiffany, Marianne Weiss, Christy & Mick Weitz, and the CIVIC staff & interns

CIVIC also held **The Savvy Citizen Diplomat Volunteer Training & Informational Session** on March 5th. If you weren't able to join us, but would like to receive information about program escorting best practices or home hospitality, email civic@uiowa.edu and we'll send them along.

Members and guests gathered on February 22nd for the **Annual Membership Meeting** at the Coralville Public Library. CIVIC honored outstanding contributions made by our citizen diplomat members. Check out <http://iowacivic.org> to see the full list of award winners. Members elected Robin Kash, Jacqueline Otting, and Brandon Jennings to the Board of Directors as well as re-electing Newman Abuissa, Ken Royar, and David Tiffany. CIVIC leadership offered reports detailing our work, financial status, membership, and communications initiatives.

What's New at CIVIC?: We're sponsoring our first ever **"Totally '80s" 5K Walk & Run on April 30th**. Show your support by registering to walk or run, convincing your friends or family to participate, or by volunteering. All profits will support CIVIC's **30 for 30 Campaign** fund.

SAVE THE DATE: Thursday, **September 15th** is our **30th Anniversary: Founders & Future Celebration Dinner (6:00-8:00pm)** It's a party to honor those who have planted and nurtured the spirit of citizen diplomacy in eastern Iowa the past 30 years.

We need your stories! CIVIC is working to document the past 30 years so that we preserve our amazing history. Do you have a favorite CIVIC story? Please share it with us, email civic@uiowa.edu!



Human Rights Advocacy program visits Executive Director Jo Butterfield's History of Human Rights class



Totally 80s 5K Walk & Run

April 30, 2016

Founded in 1986, CIVIC's been
Running Strong for 30 years!

WHERE:
Race begins and ends in Lower City Park Iowa City, IA

WHEN:
Check in: 8:15am
Start: 9:00am



MEDALS
awarded by division

PRIZES
for best 80s attire

T-SHIRTS
\$15

Get out the leg warmers, parachute pants, and scrunchies!

Register at iowacivic.org
#30strong

By April 1st: \$20; Before April 29th: \$25; Same Day: \$30

CIVIC is a local non-profit organization dedicated to promoting international cooperation and fostering mutual understanding across national borders through people to people exchanges

Visit Profile: Human Rights Advocacy

- Examined anti-bullying initiatives and tolerance education with the Director of Equity and Staffing at the Iowa City Community School District
- Visited the Women's Resource and Action Center to examine gender equality advocacy efforts
- Met with the UI Center for Human Rights to discuss human rights education
- Discussed the city of Iowa City's Human Rights Commission's public outreach programs and how the commission works with the city to implement recommendations
- Learned about the work of the Inter-faith Alliance of Iowa and the Iowa Chapter of the ACLU to promote human rights locally
- Enjoyed a Home Hospitality Dinner with Barbara Stein and Harry Olmstead

Member Profile



Megan Grubb

Megan is a senior at the University of Iowa studying International Studies & Spanish. After studying abroad in Uruguay, she plans to return to Latin America to work with an NGO and teach English. Megan enjoys meeting & interacting with visitors. She is involved with many organizations to promote engagement between international and domestic individuals.

"CIVIC has given me the opportunity to connect with individuals I would not have otherwise had the chance to meet!" - Megan Grubb

Why did you join CIVIC?

I wanted to take advantage of engaging with individuals from different cultures and learn about customs different from American culture to expand my cultural knowledge.

What do you enjoy about engaging with CIVIC?

I really enjoy having the opportunity to show visitors what a college student's life is like here in the U.S. Especially since Iowa City is so centered around the university, I think it is important to show visitors this side of our culture they might not always get to experience.

What visit has been your favorite and why?

I would say my favorite visit so far has been the group of educators from Malaysia. Having the opportunity to speak with them about their religion, Islam, was incredible! I was so grateful to learn more about Islam and discuss their views on how Islam is misconstrued in the U.S.

Connect

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Encourage your employer and establishments with whom you do business to become a corporate sponsor through CIVIC's Partnership Program and enjoy benefits such as employee memberships, promotional opportunities, and cultural competency training for employees.

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Anatomy of a CIVIC Visit

Part III: Planning the Visit

There's always a moment of celebration (staff and interns doing a little jig in the office) when we're contacted by a NPA (National Program Office), informing us that they're sending a visit our way. This means that the hard work that went into our proposal (see Winter 2015 Newsletter) paid off! Once we know that we have a program headed to eastern Iowa, the planning begins.

If you've been to the CIVIC offices lately, you likely would have noticed that the walls are adorned with white boards. The white boards serve as a planning space, but also offer us a way to communicate with one another about what remains to be done.

Did you know? Recently, the government decided that our visitors travel at the behest of the US government and as a result, the rates that are paid for hotels, etc. should fall under the GSA (Government Services Administration) rate. Instituted in 1949, the GSA was created to help control government spending. The GSA office determines a "fair and standard" price for services by zip code. The current GSA rate for a hotel night in Iowa City is \$89.

Each program has a dedicated white board that includes basic visit information, such as NPA contacts, and the number of International Visitors, State Dept. liaisons or interpreters accompanying them. Another column tracks logistics. Have we requested and confirmed GSA hotel rates? Have we received hotel confirmation numbers? Do we need to rent vans? If so, how many, and have they been reserved? Have the airport shuttle reservation, transportation, and lodging budget been sent?

The heart of each program board is the visitors' professional & cultural schedule. Each day has a dedicated column where we attempt to program their visit based on the resources the NPA has selected from our proposal. We organize visits by considering State Department appointment priorities, calculating meeting and travel times based on the type and location, as well as the number of visitors (i.e., more visitors equals longer meetings and transportation times). The meeting schedule is outlined, requested, and confirmed with a color-coded system so that at any given time, all of the staff will know exactly where we stand with each program. Using a dry erase white board makes the inevitable re-arranging of the schedule easier to visualize. In fact, we've re-worked a Prussian general's expression: "No good plan survives contact with reality."

The final piece of the puzzle is put in place by our dedicated member-volunteers who answer the call to escort our visitors to their professional appointments or to host a delegation for dinner in their home. Despite the fact that the IVLP is a professional exchange program, the most memorable part of visitors' experience in Iowa is nearly always the time that they've spent with you! Visit <http://iowacivic.org> to learn about our upcoming programs.

Visitor Quote

"I think the people are good, the place [Iowa City] is like an international centre where you can see people from other countries in the road and the restaurants also have international variety. I like this places. It gives a good impression to me."

— Ms. Surayya Abu Bakar, Malaysia *School Management and Pedagogical Systems*