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**COMMUNITY  
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**WORLD LEARNING  
COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS**

**COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER  
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## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS SPOTLIGHT ON VOLUNTEERISM



**“VOLUNTEERISM IS ALMOST LIKE A RELIGION HERE, YOU DO NOT NEED TO EXPLAIN ITS BENEFITS.”**

*Zhaneta Bachieva, CC/Russia Youth Initiatives program hosted by International House of Metrolina.*

Thanks to the excellent Host Organization programming initiatives, the Community Connections (CC) program has made great strides in successfully promoting the American concept of volunteerism. After a variety of hands-on experiences in the US, many of our participants have returned to their home countries not only with a change in attitude, but the impetus to initiate volunteer activities in their communities. The impression on our participants has been so significant that we have decided to dedicate a part of this edition of the Community Connections Quarterly to the impact that volunteerism has had on the CC Community.

*We hope you enjoy this edition!*

- THE WORLD LEARNING COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS TEAM

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## PRORAM SNAPSHOT: BRINGING VOLUNTEERISM HOME

*Supporting Development of Housing Sector, Uzbekistan 2008  
Hosted by WSOS Community Action Commission, Inc. in Fremont, Ohio*

A group of Uzbek housing reform professionals learned more than 57 new ideas to improve the housing sector in their home country, while learning the value and benefit of volunteerism from their three-week training in Ohio. Through the local chapters of Habitat for Humanity and the Neighborhood Housing Services, CC host organization WSOS Community Action Commission, Inc. arranged volunteer activities for the participants to build and renovate homes for economically disadvantaged families. The participants were so inspired by the active community involvement, they made concrete action plans to



*At the Habitat for Humanity in Findlay, Ohio, visitors helped with the framing of a new home and were invited to the "Raising the Wall" ceremony*

introduce this new concept in Uzbekistan by organizing volunteer programs similar to what they saw in Ohio. Their volunteer experience taught them to consider engaging in different partnerships, especially with leaders of their local community and government. They also learned the benefit of engaging youth to help implement their new ideas. The participants made connections with many individuals and organiza-

tions that may serve as potential resources for their future projects.



## THE SPIRIT OF VOLUNTEERISM INSPIRES CC PARTICIPANTS

*Marketing - Serbia 2009*

*Hosted by World Affairs Council of Oregon in Portland, Oregon*

The participants of the Serbian Marketing program brought home a new spirit of volunteerism after their three-week training in Oregon. At their in-country debriefing meeting back in Serbia, they expressed how impressed they were with the aspect of volunteerism in the US, and how they hoped to practice this in their home country individually and as part of their companies.

Various volunteer experiences were offered to the participants according to their interests and professions. Regardless of their activity of choice, they all expressed that volunteering was a valuable component of the program. The agribusiness group helped the Oregon Food Bank's Learning Garden plant vegetables and learned how the food bank uses volunteers to provide food to food pantries, shelters and other programs helping low-income individuals in seven counties. The ICT (Information and Communications Technologies) team assisted the technologically-based non-profit organization called Free Geek by checking their computer testing systems and building computers. They learned about the organization's innovative method of providing low and no-cost computers to individuals and community organizations throughout the world in exchange for community service.

Many of the participants commented that the culture and practice of volunteerism does not exist in the same way in Serbia, but could have great potential, especially if their children were taught about the spirit of volunteerism, perhaps through environmental consciousness. A few of the alumni said that they were both excited and prepared to proceed with their action plans. Stanko Nikolajev, plans to engage his furniture company in local community activities starting with a "desk" design competition at a local high school. The winning student will then have his or her design created by Stanko's company. Another alumnus, Sandra Dimitrejevic, plans to use her volunteer experiences and new marketing strategies that she learned in the US to organize a charity event that will raise funds and market her furniture business through artistically painting overstocked chairs from her company.

### LET THE ACTIVITIES BEGIN!



*Mirjana Nikolic plants sweet peas at the Oregon Food Bank's Learning Garden as part of the agribusiness volunteer activity on March 26, 2009*



*Svetlana Kovac and Aleksandra Popara help deconstruct some computer equipment during their volunteer activity at Free Geek on March 27, 2009*



## **A HANDS-ON APPROACH TO THE VOLUNTEER MOVEMENT**

*The Volunteer Movement - Belarus 2008  
Hosted by Project Harmony in Waitsfield, Vermont*

The American tradition of volunteerism was passed on to a group of Belarusian professionals through a variety of volunteer projects, community events, and fundraisers. Their service and hands-on learning at NGOs like Youth Build and DREAM Camp, the American Red Cross, and Vermont CARES gave them a valuable insight to volunteer training and community engagement, and the endless possibilities of partnerships with businesses, government, and the community. From delivering meals to the elderly and disabled to participating in fundraiser walks, the participants learned innovative ways that Belarus can effectively incorporate volunteerism into their communities. As the host organization reported, it was 'eye-opening' for the visitors to learn that businesses could and do make volunteerism a priority and a part of their companies' culture. The interactive training that took place during this Community Connections program may be the start of a new volunteer movement in Belarus.



*The Volunteer Movement group posing with the mascot for the COTS (Committee On Temporary Shelter) Walk fundraising event in Burlington, Vermont before the start of the walk*



*Belarusian professionals holding a discussion with a youth-run volunteer program from Northeastern Vermont during their attendance at the Governor's Community Service Awards presentation*



*Left: Vlad Kovrov and Oleg Survila work together volunteering to move rocks in the village of Adamant, VT while the others are busy with building and yard maintenance*



**A LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL CONNECTION  
from “A RICH GOODWILL VISIT”**

*A Thank You from the March of Dimes Foundation to CC Host Organization, Lift the Children in Sacramento, California  
Maternal & Child Healthcare - Russia 2009*

The March of Dimes Foundation - California Chapter was recently visited by Russian healthcare leaders on a Community Connections Maternal & Child Healthcare (MCH) program. The CC host organization, Lift the Children, received a thank-you note from the Foundation stating that the local Chapter had published their exceptional experience with the participants in the Foundation’s newsletter.

This program proved to be a true exchange of ideas and knowledge. Not only did the participants return home with a greater understanding of US maternal and child healthcare delivery, but the Americans benefited greatly from increasing their knowledge of the Russian MCH system including Russia’s current monetary incentives for having children. In the March of Dimes’ newsletter, Dana Edelman, the Director of Programs in San Francisco reported that “the day was a dynamic and thought provoking cultural exchange of ideas and practice.”



*Participants interviewing a high-risk maternity patient at the Sutter Memorial Hospital in Sacramento, California*



*Russian Health Professionals meeting with the March of Dimes Foundation - California Chapter in San Francisco, California*

The Associate State Director of the March of Dimes’ California Chapter, Leslie Kowalewski, expressed that she wished there were more opportunities like this international exchange for her organization and thanked Lift the Children for “a rich goodwill visit” that established a new professional connection and friendship with the Russian healthcare professionals. The visitors will be happy to hear that Ms. Kowalewski has kept her promise to help them find resources on Fetal Fibronectin testing for women in active preterm labor. She connected a representative of Hologic, a US and international manufacturer and supplier of this type of testing, to Lift the Children. The CC host organization is very excited to forward this contact to the Russian participants.



## ARMENIAN SOCIAL WORKER LENDS A HELPING HAND TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIM IN THE US

*Social Work Program - Armenia 2009*

*An excerpt from Host Organization, Cambridge-Yerevan Sister City Association in Winchester, Massachusetts*

While in Massachusetts, a group of Armenian Social Worker professionals learned in great detail about the US social work system firsthand. However, it was Ms. Arusyak Safryan who got to immediately apply her newly-acquired skills. After having just attended a session on domestic violence prevention and advocacy, Safryan encountered a woman and child on the streets of Boston who was suffering from domestic violence. Her training at REACH, a domestic violence and prevention organization, couldn't have occurred at a more perfect time. After having just left a training that introduced her to techniques to address issues of domestic violence, Safryan was able to advise the woman about the local advocacy organizations available to her and how to access their assistance. She also gave her REACH's contact information.

***“IT IS TRULY REMARKABLE THAT A COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS PARTICIPANT FROM A FOREIGN COUNTRY WAS ALREADY AT WORK HELPING SOMEONE IN NEED BY SHARING HER KNOWLEDGE ACQUIRED IN RECENT TRAINING SESSIONS. A TRULY REMARKABLE UNINTENDED RESULT!!”***

*CAMBRIDGE - YEREVAN SISTER CITY ASSOCIATION*



***Armenian Social Worker group at the Massachusetts State House of Representatives with State Representatives Alice Wolf (center rear), and Jon Hecht (right rear)***



## CC PROGRAMS AT A GLANCE

### JULY - SEPTEMBER 2009

#### JULY

**Azerbaijan - Economic Think Tanks**  
Valbin's Center for International Programs  
Washington, D.C.

**Belarus - Local Community Development**  
Colleagues International  
Kalamazoo, Michigan

**Georgia - Disaster Management**  
The Mississippi Consortium for International Development  
Jackson, Mississippi

**Serbia - Local Economic Development**  
Tulsa Global Alliance  
Tulsa, Oklahoma

**Tajikistan - Veterinarians for Livestock Program**  
Iowa Council for International Understanding  
Des Moines, Iowa

**Turkmenistan - Promoting Alternative Energy Technologies**  
Iowa Resource for International Service  
Ames, Iowa

**Uzbekistan - Regional Tourism Development**  
International Visitors Council of Columbus  
Columbus, Ohio

**Uzbekistan - Quality Improvement in Health**  
Heartland International  
Chicago, Illinois

**Ukraine - Educating Youth About Ecology**  
Global Education Services  
Seattle, Washington

#### AUGUST

**Belarus - Legal Services for Vulnerable Population**  
Foundation for Russian American Economic Cooperation  
Seattle, Washington

**Belarus - Strengthening of Primary Health Care**  
Northern Nevada International Center  
Reno, Nevada

**Georgia - Arts Festival Management**  
Council of International Programs USA  
Cleveland, Ohio

**Kazakhstan - Infection Control and Blood Safety**  
International Visitors Center of Chicago  
Chicago, Illinois

**Kyrgyzstan - Role of Local Councils in Community Development**  
Colleagues International  
Kalamazoo, Michigan

**Russia - Public Finance Management**  
World Trade Center Institute  
Baltimore, Maryland

**Ukraine - Volunteerism: Effective Recruitment, Training, Assignment, & Reward**  
International Visitors Council of Greater Kansas City  
Kansas City, Missouri

#### SEPTEMBER

**Russia - NGO Accountability**  
International Visitors Council of Metropolitan Detroit  
Detroit, Michigan

**Russia - Partnerships in Addressing Environmental Safety Issues**  
Vermont Councils on World Affairs  
Colchester, Vermont

**Russia - Anti-Corruption Awareness, Prevention and Prosecution**  
Citizen Diplomacy Council of San Diego  
San Diego, California

**Turkmenistan - City Management**  
International Affairs Council  
Raleigh, North Carolina

**Ukraine - Adaptation of Children and Youth**  
Legacy International  
Bedford, Virginia

**Ukraine - Emergency Rescue Services**  
World Affairs Council of Kentucky and Southern Indiana  
Louisville, Kentucky

## Meet the DC Community Connections Team!

Community Connections is proud to have a dynamic team of dedicated individuals with diverse international experiences and professional backgrounds heading the CC programs in Washington D.C. We are also fortunate to have World Learning's Director of Capacity Building Services, Colin Davies, as our key advisor overseeing all programs. CC Director Lisa Posner, leads the six-member team: Senior Program Officer Eric Corens; Program Officers Milena Alexander, Elena Bennett, and Tamar Mikadze; and Program Associate Christine Tran, who implement and manage CC programs across the US. We are excited to share more about our staff in the upcoming newsletters!



(Left to right: Elena Bennett, Tamar Mikadze, Colin Davies, Christine Tran, Milena Alexander, Lisa Posner Olocco, & Eric Corens)



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### Community Connections Quarterly

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## PROGRAM SNAPSHOT: ALUMNI CONNECTS WITH U.S. COLLEGE

*Vocational Education and Business Alliance Program - Georgia 2008.  
Submitted by Columbus International Programs, Ohio.*

The Columbus International Program (CIP) hosted the Georgian delegation on Vocational Education in September 2008. At the end of the program's first week, CIP held its annual fundraiser, the International Buffet and Silent Auction, featuring the Georgian group as Guests of Honor. The evening was a success and the guests enjoyed the delicious Georgian dish prepared by the group.

During the three-week program, our Georgian guests worked hard to build professional relationships. At the end of one visit at Hocking College in Nelsonville, Ohio, our delegate Silovan Chinchaladze, Director of the Imereti Employers Association in Kutaisi, was very motivated by what he saw and was intent on building a permanent relationship. Since Hocking College is nationally recognized as a premier technical college providing superior experiential education to its students and has a renowned culinary school, the Georgian educators took advantage of the possibility for collaboration.

As a result, a meeting was arranged to discuss a potential student exchange for culinary students from Kutaisi and Hocking. Since that time Silovan completed a letter of understanding with Hocking College to begin the pilot program. While funding is a challenge, Hocking has agreed to serve as host for the first students from Georgia. The final details are a work in process, but soon we will have Georgian cuisine prepared by our Georgian students. Hocking has continued to be very supportive, and we were honored to spend time with the President and founder of the University and Dr. Roxanne DuVivier, Vice President of Student Affairs. Soon, we will have more stories to share about the student exchange.



*Alum Silovan Chinchaladze's (center) visit at Hocking College in Nelsonville, Ohio.*



## THE AMERICAN CULTURAL MOSAIC

### Reflections from a CC Alum

Submitted by Astghik Simonyan, Film Making Program - Armenia 2009 and translated by PH International.

Hosted by the International Visitors Council of Philadelphia.

As our group of film making specialists was heading to the U.S for the professional development internship, we got our first impressions of the American people and culture on the London-Chicago flight on February 4, 2009. Never before on any other airline had we seen a middle-aged flight attendant, and the mere realization of the fact that the U.S. really promotes equal opportunities for all genders, ages and races was a pleasant gateway for our explorations on the professional and cultural journey. As we landed, the surprises of the unfamiliar culture continued to embrace and educate us.

Many Armenians love bells as these symbolize good tidings, so our group had brought bells made of clay as gifts. We were planning to present the International Visitors Council of Philadelphia with one of the bells but surprisingly, they were the first to present us with small bells on the first day of our arrival. It was then that we learned that bells were the symbols of Philadelphia, and many years ago the tinkling of bells declared Philadelphia's independence.

We believe that people can understand each other without words. I am not sure that Jeffie Abbott, my American "mom," knew about this simple truth.

However, it was obvious that my little English was more than sufficient for us to interact and understand each other. I remember the night when I was watching an American movie with Clint Eastwood on one of the local channels. I could not understand the words, but I didn't care much as I could easily guess their meaning. However, my host mother sat next to me and started to translate it from English

into her own words in English and it worked!

This wonderful cultural mosaic born from our U.S. Community Connections program is indeed rich with many recollections. These stories make us laugh and smile as we remember them. It brings us a unique feeling of friendship with our American counterparts as one of the program's most valuable legacies.

We hope to share the fond recollections and our smiles with our American hosts when they visit us in Armenia, as they have promised to do.

Welcome to Armenia, dear friends!



***"Such culturally coincidental 'small discoveries' helped us to better identify with the American culture and establish closer bonds between us and the Americans."***

*CC Alumni of Film Making - Armenia 2009*



## ALUMNI SNAPSHOT FROM A HOST ORGANIZATION

*City Planning & Promotion - Ukraine 2008.*

*Submitted by Host Organization, International Hosting, Salt Lake City, Utah.*

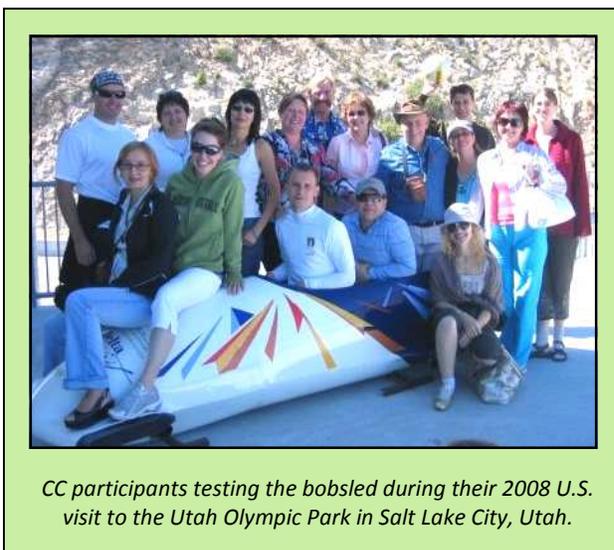
### CC ALUM IMPLEMENTS YOUTH SOCCER TOURNAMENT IN UKRAINE



*Young competitors from the 2012 Euro Cup Youth Soccer Tournament in Ukraine.*

The most dynamic international group I have hosted was the Ukrainian “City and Event Planning” group in August 2008. The delegates visited Utah to learn how to host large, international sporting events in preparation for Ukraine and Poland jointly hosting the 2012 Euro Cup Football (Soccer) Championships. I was impressed with the commitment the delegates gave to the intense program and the follow-on projects they have implemented. Never underestimate the amount of synergy which can be created and maintained by Ukrainians!

Although the individual professional backgrounds differed greatly among the group, each of the delegates immersed themselves in the program, seeking ideas they could modify and implement. One example was Vitaly Romanov, a representative of the Ukrainian Soccer Federation. Vitaly learned about Utah’s “One School, One Country” program which was created to involve youth in the preparations for the Games. Through this project, schools were encouraged to adopt a country and study the nation’s culture, language, history and geography. The challenge was to create not only national, but international, enthusiasm and involvement with local youth.



*CC participants testing the bobsled during their 2008 U.S. visit to the Utah Olympic Park in Salt Lake City, Utah.*

Vitaly returned to Ukraine, shared and modified the ideas learned, and obtained support and funding to organize a Ukrainian youth soccer tournament to mirror the 2012 Championship in his community, Dnipropetrousk. Each school was assigned to represent a specific country and international team. The students were taught the national anthem and customs of their newly-adopted country. The project gained the support from local and international leaders who helped host the event from Spring to Fall of 2009. In April 2009, the youth soccer competition began. It will conclude in October 2009 with the championship game, supported by appearances of Ukrainian soccer stars.



## ALUMNI DEVELOP EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM FOR HIV & STD PREVENTION

*Community-Based Health & Social Care Models for Vulnerable Populations, Russia 2008.  
Hosted by Northern Nevada International Center (NNIC). Story provided by PH International.*

Oxana Porshina and Inna Filippova have been busy since their return from the US, where they participated in the 2008 Community Connections program on the theme of Community-based Health and Social Care Models for Vulnerable Populations. The two alumni recently came to Moscow to train doctors in HIV prevention techniques, and, during their trip, a CC representative had the opportunity to catch up with them and learn about their extensive recent activities.



*Participants Alina, Pavel, Oxana, Vladimir, Alfia, Olga and Larisa pose with host family in Reno, Nevada. Also included are Anita Bevans, Vladimir's Home Host, and Program Coordinator, Joaquin Rocas.*

Oxana, who is the head of the Primary Preventative Medicine Department at the Orenburg Dermatovenerological Dispensary, and Inna, Deputy Head Physician at the Novotroitsk AIDS and Infectious Diseases Prophylaxis and Treatment Center, recently developed a comprehensive educational program aimed at HIV and STD prevention. As part of the program, there will be educational activities aimed specifically toward pregnant women with HIV and commercial sex workers. The program already has compiled

a list of specialists and an activity schedule, and patients have already begun attending its activities, which are being held at the Novotroitsk AIDS center. Oxana and Inna are also currently engaged in developing educational materials on HIV and AIDS, to be used for training medical specialists and in HIV prevention efforts among commercial sex workers and other at-risk populations in the Orenburg area.

Oxana and Inna attribute their time in the US with CC as the impetus for their current programs. They were not only exposed to American approaches of HIV and AIDS work, but were also provided the opportunity to enhance their strategic planning skills. Inna applied her newly-enhanced strategic planning skills to the grant application process, which resulted in her winning a "priority national project in health care" grant from the Russian Ministry of Health and Social Development for HIV prevention in the Orenburg region.

## ALUMNI IMPROVES TAJIKISTAN'S LIBRARIES

*Library Management - Tajikistan, 2008. Hosted by University of Nebraska - Lincoln.*

Only two months after their return home, CC alumni from the Library Management program put their U.S. training into practice. The group of five alumni Afgonov Kurbonj, Aslieva Musina, Kholov Bozorboy, Shosaidov Safar, and Toshev Sharif designed and delivered a 2-day workshop for Tajik librarians with the purpose of developing project proposals to improve the infrastructure of public libraries in Dushanbe, Tajikistan.

On January 27-29, 2009, the group facilitated a successful workshop for 30 public librarians and attracted representatives of USAID, American Councils, and the Ministry of Culture to their opening and closing ceremonies.

The workshop provided a unique learning opportunity in Tajikistan for library employees. The participants learned more about library management, sharing resources, and increasing networking between the libraries. It even influenced CC alum Kholov Bozorboi to plan a computer literacy course for libraries at his department at the Institute of Art. Workshop participants have already subscribed to different publishing houses in Tajikistan and started to receive new books.

The alumni's presentations were later published in the Tajik magazine *Farhang* and the newspaper *Sadoi Mardum* highlighting their study trip to the US and providing recommendations for school librarians on how to improve their activities based on US libraries.



*Alum Shosaidov Safar speaking at the Observation and Application of US Library Management Experience press conference in Tajikistan.*

The group also organized a press conference called the Observation and Application of US Library Management Experience for representatives of the library sector, the Ministry of Culture, mass media and international organizations. At the conference, the librarians presented their recommendations on improving the quality of Tajik libraries at the national level. All of this was possible due to the librarians' visit to the United States through the USAID-Community Connections program.

## USAID/EGAT ANNOUNCEMENTS

### USAID-EGAT Host Organization Site Visits

As part of USAID/EGAT's role to monitor the Community Connection's Program, Robbie Hayes, the Director of Training and Technical Assistance at EGAT-AQE, is visiting several groups to see the Community Connections programs in action! Ms. Hayes plans to make several visits in the coming weeks. Her decision to visit certain Host Organizations is based on a combination of factors, including timing and an ability to see variety of themes, countries and host organizations. This will be a great opportunity for Host Organizations to debut their hospitality and resources. Visits like this always leave USAID and World Learning staff alike with a real sense of amazement at the Host Organizations' dedication, professionalism and continued commitment to the Community Connections Program. We all know that without our Host Organizations this program would not be possible. Below is the tentative host organization site visit schedule. Please note that this list is subject to change.

COUNTRY	PROGRAM THEME	HOST ORGANIZATION	DATES OF PROGRAM	DATES OF SITE VISITS
Kyrgyzstan	Blood Safety and Infection Control	PH International, Waitsfield, Vermont	May 28 – June 18, 2009	June 7 – 11, 2009
Belarus	Role of Advocacy in Civil Society	Council of International Programs USA, Cleveland, Ohio	June 17 – 19, 2009	June 17 – 19, 2009
Ukraine	Combating Trafficking: Prosecution of Trafficking for Labor Exploitation Cases	International Visitors Center of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois	June 17 – July 8, 2009	June 22 – 24, 2009
Russia	Youth Initiatives	International House of Metrolina, Charlotte, North Carolina	June 25 – July 16, 2009	June 13 – 14, 2009
Azerbaijan	Economic Think Tanks	Valbin's Center for International Programs, Washington, DC	July 8 – 29, 2009	July 8, 17, and 27, 2009
Georgia	Disaster Management	Mississippi Consortium for International Development Jackson, Mississippi	July 22 – August 12, 2009	July 28 – 31, 2009
Russia	Public Finance Management in State and Local Government	World Trade Center Institute, Baltimore, Maryland	August 6 – 27, 2009	August 25 – 26, 2009
Ukraine	Adaptation and Integration of Physically and Mentally Challenged Children and Youth into Society	Legacy International, Bedford, Virginia	September 9 – 30, 2009	September 21 – 24, 2009
Belarus	Legal Services for Vulnerable Populations	FRAEC, Seattle, Washington	August 28 – September 18, 2009	September 15 – 18, 2009



**CC PROGRAMS AT A GLANCE**

**SPRING 2009**

**APRIL**

Kazakhstan - Judicial Reform

*World Affairs Council of St. Louis - St. Louis, Missouri*

Moldova - Investigative Journalism and Corruption Prevention

*Citizen Diplomacy Council of San Diego - San Diego, California*

Ukraine - Public Monitoring of Government Assistance

*Tulsa Global Alliance - Tulsa, Oklahoma*

Ukraine - Preservation of Historical and Social Environment of Cities

*International Center of Worcester - Worcester, Massachusetts*

**MAY**

Azerbaijan - NGO-Municipality Cooperation  
in Community Development

*World Services of La Crosse - La Crosse, Wisconsin*

Belarus - Professional Associations Empowerment

*Cleveland Council on World Affairs - Cleveland, Ohio*

Kazakhstan - Anti-Trafficking

*International Visitors Council of Los Angeles -  
Los Angeles, California*

Kyrgyzstan - Blood Safety Infection Control

*PH International - Waitsfield, Vermont*

Russia - Maternal and Child Health

*Lift the Children - North Highlands, California*

Russia - Community Based Assistance to Vulnerable Children

*Council of International Programs at Loyola University, Chicago -  
Chicago, Illinois*

Serbia - Agricultural Cooperatives and Associations

*Columbus International Programs - Columbus, Ohio*

Uzbekistan - Development of the Housing Sector

*WSOS Community Action Commission, Inc. - Fremont, Ohio*

Uzbekistan - Effective Farming Management

*West Virginia Council of International Programs -  
Morgantown, West Virginia*

Ukraine - Citizen Dialogue for Promotion of  
Social Responsibilities

*Iowa Resource for International Service - Des Moines, Iowa*

**JUNE**

Armenia - Social Work

*Cambridge -Yerevan Sister City Association, Inc. -  
Boston, Massachusetts*

Azerbaijan - Traffic Safety

*World Trade Center Institute - Baltimore, Maryland*

Belarus - Role of Advocacy Groups

*Council of International Programs USA -  
Columbus, Ohio*

Georgia - Media Advocacy

*World Affairs Council of Kentucky/Southern Indiana -  
Louisville, Kentucky*

Moldova - Local Economic Development

*International House Davis - Davis, California*

Russia - Rural Economic Development

*Bryant University - Smithfield, Rhode Island*

Russia - Youth Initiatives

*International House of Metrolina -  
Charlotte, North Carolina*

Turkmenistan - Promoting Effective Local Governance

*International Visitors Council of Columbus -  
Columbus, Ohio*

Ukraine - Odesa Trafficking

*International Visitors Center of Chicago -  
Chicago, Illinois*

Ukraine - Public Health: Sexually Transmitted Infection

*World Services of La Crosse - La Crosse, Wisconsin*



## GETTING OUT THE WORD ABOUT COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

World Learning would like to remind the Community Connections Host Organizations about the importance of generating publicity for the USAID - Community Connections Program.

Presently, over 50 million dollars has been spent by World Learning on participant training programs at over 1248 training institutions throughout the U.S., money that has gone back into the community. Additionally, thousands of working relationships between Eurasian and American professionals have resulted from the training received by organizations like yours. Such relationships are the foundations for continued partnerships, for trade and for economic growth both at home and abroad, which is why our joint efforts deserve the widest possible publicity.

Newspaper articles, a television or radio program, or a web-page article can be extremely effective in telling our joint story. No amount of statistics and reports that we produce will ever be as effective as a human interest story showing the impact of training programs on your community. So please send us any articles or references that you are successful in generating.

You can help to generate media coverage that can be used by USAID and World Learning to continue to justify and defend the virtues of foreign assistance. Below are a few helpful reminders of what USAID considers to be effective press coverage:

### **1) Crediting the Funder**

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is the sponsor of this program, and should be referred to in any publicity obtained. (World Learning is correctly referred to as the Programming Agent.) Please make sure that all trainers, host institutions, and any other staff members involved in this program understand the respective roles of USAID, World Learning, and your organization, and give appropriate credit to the sponsor. I am sure you understand why this is necessary!

### **2) The Story**

Find an angle. Determine why the program is worth reporting to the public. How does the story relate to the lives of the local readers? How does this story relate to larger national or global trends? What is it that makes the story interesting? Is there an angle that may appeal to the interests of a local media professional?

### **3) A Press Release**

Make it clear, concise, and above all, AN ATTENTION GRABBER. State the basics and let the editor decide how to weave the ideas together.

### **4) The Contact**

Call local newspapers, radio and TV stations, ask who the information should go to. Sometimes you can get the name of a reporter who writes stories related to the story, other times you will have to send the press release and other information to an assignment editor who will determine if the story is newsworthy.

### **5) The Pitch**

Call media professionals early in the day, before assignments are given and the day gets hectic. If you are able to speak directly with the reporter, be personable; introduce yourself. Ask if the reporter has a minute or if they are under deadline. Give a *brief* synopsis of the story, and why the story is worth their time. Tell them you will send them the press release and call back in a day or two after they have had a chance to review the information.

### **6) Follow-Up**

Call your contact after they have received the story information. It is okay to ask them if they will include your story. If they intend to run the story, ask if they need anymore information, a photo, an interview etc. Ask when it will run so you can be sure to obtain a copy.

### **7) Sweet Success**

When the story runs in a newspaper/journal/magazine be sure to make a copy of it including the writer, date and publication name. Please send us a copy for our files. When a story is covered on the Radio or TV, please inform us of the date and the name of the media outlet. We are always especially appreciative of a host organization that can attain positive publicity for our programs. The right kind of media attention not only gives our project a good public image, but is proof to politicians in Washington, DC that USAID programs are worth funding.

## Welcome to Community Connections Quarterly Newsletter!

Welcome to the first edition of the *Community Connections Quarterly*! This newsletter is intended to provide information about the Community Connections (CC) program with Host Organizations and their homestay networks, USAID, and the World Learning Field Partners. We all play a vital role in the overall success of the CC program and we felt it was time to share our successes with each other. This newsletter will hopefully serve as a forum to disseminate information about our programs, participants, and the community - to - community linkages that are developing as a result of our hard work.

We look forward to making this newsletter newsworthy. Therefore, don't be surprised if you are contacted by our editor for possible submissions for future editions of the *Community Connections Quarterly*. On behalf of the World Learning Community Connections staff in DC, we look forward to another successful year of collaboration.

Sincerely,



Lisa Posner Olocco  
Director, Community Connections  
World Learning



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Community Connections Quarterly  
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## PROGRAM SNAPSHOT

### *Beekeeping Associations - Uzbekistan 2008* Hosted by Northern Nevada International Center, Reno, NV

The Uzbek Beekeepers told World Learning that *"It was amazing to see the level of tolerance, community engagement, openness, freedom of speech and democracy in the US. People are patriotic and display it through flags and elections."*



In addition to learning American beekeeping techniques, Northern Nevada International Center afforded the beekeepers an opportunity to see democracy in action. They met with Heidi Smith, President of the Washoe County Republican Party, volunteers of President - Elect Obama's campaign, and former President Bill Clinton at a rally.



*Uzbeks inspecting beehives in San Francisco, CA with no protective gear. Uzbeks have more of a holistic approach to bees and beekeeping. The Uzbeks believe that a bee sting is good for joints and arthritis and sell bee stingers for curative purposes.*



## ALUMNI SNAPSHOT

*Infection Control and Blood Safety, Kazakhstan 2007  
Hosted by International Center of Worcester, MA*

### CC ALUMNI BUILD NEW MEDICAL CENTERS IN KAZAKHSTAN



*Participants observe an HIV Quick Test demo of AIDS Project Worcester in the Worcester Evening Free Medical Clinics program.*

In July of 2007, the International Center of Worcester hosted a very successful program for a delegation of Kazakh laboratory technicians and infection control managers from hospitals and clinics, as well as representatives from the Kazakh Ministry of Health. Due to a 2006 HIV outbreak among children in the Southern Kazakhstan Oblast, these healthcare professionals were anxious to learn more effective ways to improve infection control procedures and increase the Kazakh healthcare reputation among its citizens.

By firsthand observation of blood transfusion procedures and meetings with counterparts at the Massachusetts Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Public Health HIV-AIDS Bureau, American Red Cross Blood Services, the New York Blood Center, and NGOs such as the AIDS Project Worcester, Inc., the Kazakh delegation learned systems of implementing effective infection control and prevention measures to deal with HIV/AIDS, TB, and unsafe blood transfusions.



*Delegates watch a blood donor and learn about management and control of the blood banking system in the NY Blood Center.*



*The Kazakh group at a HIV saliva test in the Massachusetts State Laboratory Institute.*

In January 2008, two alumni, Drs. Marat Daumenov and Galymzhan Abish, drawing on their Community Connections experience, established a Medical Equipment Sterilization Center and a Blood Safety Center in Southern Kazakhstan. The doctors have credited their success to the American practices acquired in the U.S. The opening of these centers was such an important event that Kazakhstan's President Nazarbayev attended the ceremonial opening.



## REFLECTIONS OF A HOMESTAY HOST

*Submitted by John Holden, Homestay Host and Board Member of Heartland International, Chicago, IL*

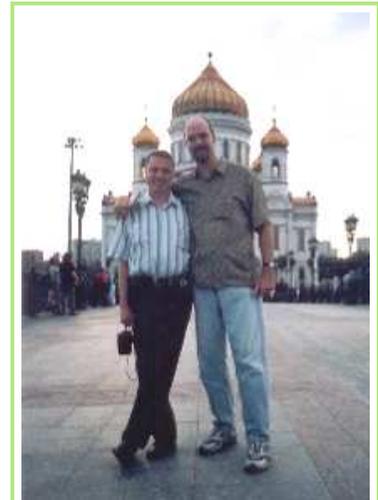
I have been involved as a home stay host in the Community Connections program for over 10 years. It is an experience that continues to grow in value in my life as more years go by. The simple act of opening your home to a foreign guest can lead to a lifetime of friendship and even adventure.

Of the dozen home stay guests I have hosted over the years, I still remain in close contact with more than half of them. To a person, they are all very eager to have me visit them in their native countries and allow them to reciprocate the hospitality. Thus far, I have been able to take one of them up on the offer. Shamil was my very first home stay guest and has remained a close friend. Seven years after his visit to Chicago, I was able to make time to visit him and his family in Moscow.

Additionally, I joined him on a two-week whitewater rafting trip in Siberia! It was definitely the experience of a lifetime. I am now looking for the opportunity to visit friends in Ukraine, Belarus and Indonesia.

I was surprised that the recent election of Barack Obama brought an almost immediate outpouring of well wishes from my Community Connections friends around the world, including one who remembered my 2005 prediction that Obama would likely be our next president.

From the time I was just out of college I got hooked on traveling around the world and meeting new people. But as the years go on and the responsibilities piled up, it became increasingly difficult to find the time to travel abroad. The beauty of the Community Connections program is that it allows you to make new friends around the world without ever leaving your house.



*CC Homestay Host of Heartland International, John Holden and CC Alum Shamil in Moscow, Russia - November 2008*

## ALUMNI REFLECTIONS.....

Belarusian delegates and local children at the Education Service Network, Chicago, IL.



***"This program helped me change my values about life. My definition of happiness was different. I used to think that one is happy when one does not have anything to do. Now I see that the true happiness is when one dedicates herself to doing something great. We have had incredible meetings."***

*Maryia Dusenka, Alumna of Prevention of Substance Abuse among Children and Youth - Belarus 2008. Hosted by IVC Chicago, IL.*

***"We have fundamentally changed [our ideas about] life in the United States, the Americans and their struggle with addictions for a healthy lifestyle.... After a visit to the U.S., I've become more aware of the importance of the relationship with civil society organizations, their place and role in public life."***

*Nataliya Zobova, Alumna of Healthy Way of Life for Youth - Ukraine 2008. Hosted by World Services of La Crosse, WI.*



**Ukrainian delegates enjoying an exchange of ideas and information with the University of Wisconsin, Madison research staff at the Center for Russia, East Europe and Central Asia.**



## ALUMNI AND COUNCIL OF INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS USA (CIPUSA) COLLABORATE ON FIBER MILL PARTNERSHIP

*Handicraft Small Business - Kyrgyzstan 2007*

*Submitted by CIPUSA, Cleveland, OH*

Plans are well underway to finance and build a small fiber mill in Kyrgyzstan. As a result of the Community Connections Small Business Handicrafts programs conducted in 2006 and 2007, a partnership has developed among alumni, the Host Organization, and the Ohio-based Morning Star Fiber Mill (a business visited by the alumni during the US program). This partnership plans to work together to develop a milling industry at the cottage level for farmers and artisans in Kyrgyzstan through the establishment of a community-based Mini Mill. The collective Mini Mill partnership will create a central location to facilitate a more efficient method to process wool products. In addition to on-going fundraising efforts, proposals have been submitted to international grant makers and foundations, with plans to implement the project in 2010. CIPUSA staff and trainers, and one CIPUSA host family member, Harriet Russell, will travel to Kyrgyzstan to assist with the creation of the Mini Mill and subsequently offer business, handicraft, international marketing and English language training opportunities to alumni and other Kyrgyz handicraft artisans.



*2007 participants learning about a fiber-processing machine at the Morning Star Fiber Mill in Apple Creek, OH*

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION ALUMNI IMPLEMENT ACTION PLAN

*Submitted by CC Alumni to Host Organization, Lift the Children, Sacramento, CA*



*CC participants visited a police station in Sacramento, California to meet with Domestic Violence Prevention Collaborative, a community group of police, social services agencies and government agencies.*

Lift the Children, a CC Host Organization, provided the opportunity for a group of 10 Ukrainian health care professionals and social workers to examine issues surrounding domestic violence with a focus on policy development, law enforcement, and media. The group observed domestic violence court arrangements, batterers' rehabilitation programs, and participated in a simulation - *In Her Shoes*. Upon return to Ukraine, they quickly put their group action plan into action.

In November 2008, the alumni organized a large event dedicated to domestic violence with both government agencies and NGOs that attracted the media attention. CC alumnae Oksana Ponikarova, Director of the Zaporizhzhya Oblast Center of Social Services shared her experiences and Vadym Malyga of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, discussed new 2009 Ukrainian laws pertaining to domestic violence.

The event was the first of a 16-day series of seminars and trainings the group planned for teachers, law enforcement, medical workers, program administrators, home visitors, and children to raise awareness of domestic violence. CC alumnae Natalya Galustova, of TV-5 Channel and the Zaporizhzhya Radio Station, helped the group organize radio and TV features as part of the activities.



## A COLLECTIVE IMPACT

USAID Washington, with World Learning's assistance, organized three highly successful Cluster Meetings in Chisinau, Moldova; Kyiv, Ukraine; and Almaty, Kazakhstan in October 2008. As we enter the fourth year of Community Connections under the management of USAID, these meetings gave us an opportunity to recognize and learn from the successes and review the Community Connections program as a whole.

The meetings focused on theme and training plan development; participant recruitment, selection, and processing; Host Organization selection and program procurement; Experience America and cultural/volunteer planning and activities; action planning; and post-program follow-on. The knowledge and information shared from across the regions proved invaluable and will undoubtedly contribute to the development and implementation of even more far-reaching Community Connections programs in 2009.



*(Left to right) Ivanna Reed, PH International/Ukraine & Tamara Palyvoda, USAID/Ukraine in Kyiv.*



*(Left to right) Robbie Hayes USAID/EGAT-AQE, Inc. & Ethel Brooks USAID/EGAT in Almaty.*



*Staff from World Learning/DC & Serbia, PH International/Ukraine & Russia, and American Councils/Belarus in Kyiv.*



*Rabiga Baytokova, USAID/Kazakhstan, Tim Koss, American Councils Kazakhstan, and Hayrulla Mashrabov, USAID/Uzbekistan in Almaty.*



*Staff from World Learning, USAID/EGAT, PH International/Armenia & Russia, USAID/Moldova & Georgia, and American Councils/Tajikistan in Chisinau.*



*Staff from American Councils/Tajikistan & Kazakhstan, USAID/Kyrgyzstan & Uzbekistan, and World Learning in Almaty.*



## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS AT THE 2009 NCIV NATIONAL MEETING February 11-14, 2009 in Washington, DC

The National Council of International Visitors (NCIV) hosted its annual national meeting in Washington DC from February 11-14. This year's theme was *Citizen Diplomacy: Sharing America – Experiencing the World*.

In 2009, 19 of the 46 pre-qualified Host Organizations are NCIV members, so this national meeting is an annual opportunity for these Host Organizations, USAID/EGAT and World Learning to meet face to face. The Community Connections session, chaired by Dr. Carina Black of the Northern Nevada International Center provided a forum to share with the NCIV members CC program updates and successes; to answer questions; and to review the decisions and points of discussion from the CC Cluster Meetings in October. There was a valuable exchange of information and feedback from the Host Organization partners.

The conference also gave World Learning the opportunity to inform and encourage other NCIV member organizations to apply to and join the network of pre-qualified CC Host Organizations. World Learning anticipates being able to expand this pool over the coming year based on this networking opportunity.

### CC QUICK FACT

From 2005 through 2008,  
**2,154 professionals**  
have participated in  
**215 Community Connections**  
**programs**

## CC PROGRAMS AT A GLANCE

### WINTER 2009

#### JANUARY

Tajikistan - Hospital Management  
The International House of Metrolina

#### FEBRUARY

Armenia - Film Making  
The International Visitor Council of Philadelphia

#### MARCH

Armenia - Special Education  
The International Visitor Council of Detroit

Serbia - Marketing  
The World Affairs Council of Oregon

Serbia - Youth and Employment  
Heartland International

### BE IN OUR UPCOMING ISSUES!

We are always looking for more stories, pictures, and quotes about CC participants and alumni.

If you have some to share, please provide the details below with your submissions and we will try to publish them.

1. *Type of activity (follow-on, alumni event, host family contact, success story, etc.)*
2. *Names of alumni and/or host families, professional contacts, and other persons involved*
3. *Program name and year*
4. *Host Organization*
5. *Date of activity*
6. *Results of activity (if applicable)*
7. *Location of picture (if applicable)*

Submit to Christine Tran at [christine.tran@worldlearning.org](mailto:christine.tran@worldlearning.org).

Community Connections welcomes you to the new year. We look forward to bringing many more successes and accomplishments in the *Community Connections Quarterly*. In this issue, we have highlighted some alumni action plans, alumni activities, and international connections established from participants' rich CC experiences.

With all of our partners, we're ready to start 2010 by continuing our work in international development and public diplomacy. US Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton has eloquently addressed the importance of these programs in her pledge to meet the challenges of the 21st century, as stated in her speech delivered to the Center for Global Development in Washington, D.C. on January 6, 2010.

***"Development work is never easy. But it is essential to creating a world in which more people in more places have the opportunity to live up to their God-given potential -- a world that is more equitable, democratic, prosperous, and peaceful."***

**US Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton**

For the full article, visit [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/01/06hillary\\_clinton\\_on\\_development\\_in\\_the\\_21st\\_century](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/01/06hillary_clinton_on_development_in_the_21st_century)

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## PROGRAM SNAPSHOT: A GEORGIAN CONNECTION IN HOLLYWOOD

Film Production-Georgia 2008. Hosted by International Visitors Council of Los Angeles, California  
Excerpt from USAID report (<http://georgia.usaid.gov/index.php?m=27&newsid=164>)

USAID/Georgia recently announced a joint film venture between Georgian and American movie studios. This Hollywood production was the first big-budget film shot in Georgia. It was created by CC alumnus, David Imedashvili, a producer and studio owner from Tbilisi, and directed by Finnish American director Renny Harlin.

The film captures the experiences of an American journalist caught in the crossfire of the 2008 Russia-Georgia conflict. The working title is "Georgia" and it is scheduled to be released in May 2010.

Imedashvili was inspired to take on the project after participating in a 2008 Community Connections Film Production program with the International Visitors Council of Los Angeles. Thanks to the CC Program, Imedashvili fostered many connections that led to this joint venture.

***"My Community Connections exchange helped me understand the system of film production in the US and how Georgian movies can be marketed worldwide." - David Imedashvili***



David Imedashvili and Renny Harlin at a film shoot in Georgia.



*(cont. from p.1 "Program Snapshot: A Georgian Connection in Hollywood")*

Imedashvili has returned to the US several times to plan the film, eventually signing a contract with a Hollywood-based production studio. The film stars Val Kilmer and Emmanuelle Chriqui, and features Andy Garcia in the role of President Mikheil Saakashvili.

This movie presents an excellent opportunity to showcase Georgia's potential. By offering diverse landscapes within close proximity, low production costs, significant tax breaks, and other incentives from the government, Georgia hopes to become an attractive filming location. Another added benefit is Georgia's highly-skilled film professionals.

Georgia was famed for its film productions in the Soviet era, but many Soviet-trained directors are unaccustomed

to the more efficient, shorter production cycles of US directors. Imedashvili hopes that young Georgian talent will learn from this success and adapt.

Although the movie is still in production, Imedashvili is already planning his next projects, many targeted to his native Georgian audiences. One of his main goals is to develop a training program to teach modern movie production and management to Georgian movie professionals in an effort to breathe new life into Georgian cinema. "Film production is all about coordinated team work, so no matter how talented a director is, a professional lighting man is as important," he said. "With the right training, Georgia has unlimited potential to become a leader in the region."

## KYRGYZSTAN IN THE SPOTLIGHT

*Role of Local Councils - Kyrgyzstan 2009.  
Hosted by Colleagues International, Michigan*

***"I want to thank Colleagues International staff, interpreters, and host families. On August 31 is the Independence Day in Kyrgyzstan, the host organization and the host families organized a celebration for us and even played the Kyrgyz National Anthem."***

***Participant, Iusupov Abdusalom***

### KYRGYZSTAN DAY IN THE US

On August 25, 2009, the Mayor of the City of Portage, Michigan proclaimed it "Kyrgyzstan Day" in honor of the Kyrgyz delegation participating in the CC Role of Local Councils program who attended the City Council meeting. A news story was broadcast on local radio station WKZO AM-590 the next morning.



*Photos: The participants attended the Turk Countries Festival in Chicago where traditional costumes shown here were provided by the Kyrgyz government.*



## COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND RURAL SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION, GEORGIA 2008

Hosted by Legacy International, Bedford, Virginia

Submitted by alumnus Duri Shavishvili

### Vector for the Future

CC alumni Duri Shavishvili and Aslan Bokadze established an NGO called "Vector for the Future," which works to empower youths in the mountainous region of Georgia. The organization strives to increase students' education opportunities, access to modern education tools, students' performance at school, and professional and civic participation. *Vector for the Future* works collaboratively with different sectors of the community to reach these education goals.

On April 24, 2009, the CC alumni launched *Vector for the Future* and invited school directors, teachers, local government officials, lecturers from Batumi State University, and journalists from the local media to learn more about their unique approach to education reform.

*Vector for the Future* will hold week-long workshops for 30 students (9th-12th graders) from the Keda region, and five specialists and trainers from different sectors of the community. During the workshops, they will discuss and identify the needs of the students and the problems they face in their current education environment. The discussions will help the trainers create a plan to improve education and provide a better future for the youth.

Throughout the workshops, trainers will teach the students to design a website where they post information from their sessions, using it as a communication tool to reach out to and involve other students from different regions of Georgia. The NGO will meet with students and trainers every trimester and provide cultural activities such as an educational tour of Batumi and a photo tour of the touristic village Gobroneti in the Keda region.

*Vector for the Future* is currently using existing resources in Georgia to run this project but is also applying for additional funding from the US Embassy in Georgia.

Stay tuned for project updates in the next CC Quarterly.

### Vocational Courses in Georgia

Nana Didmanidze, a school principal in Western Georgia, inspired by the vocational courses in the schools that Legacy International introduced her to in southern Virginia, replicated the concept of a hands-on vocational course in "brick-laying" for her secondary school students. She and her fellow CC group members began this project as a group action plan in the US and, with the help of Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia, turned their idea into reality.

This "brick-laying" training was piloted in Nana's school to teach students how to build houses. Updates on the project's progress are expected in the near future.



Photos (top to bottom): Nana Didmanidze, Principal of Secondary School, instructs workmen on her concept; three alumni are proud of their creation, Nana Didmanidze, Duri Shavishvili, and Madona Tabatadze-Dvavishvili



## NGO ACCOUNTABILITY, RUSSIA 2009

Hosted by IVC Detroit, Michigan

Submitted by PH International and translated by CC Staff

The NGO Accountability program alumni reconvened at the St. Petersburg Charity Club meeting this past November in Russia. Accountability, transparency, and good governance were the hot topics discussed at this forum that brought together 25 leaders of local NGOs. At the meeting, alumni shared their CC experiences and knowledge acquired during their stay in the US.

Anna Orlova, presented a comprehensive view of charitable giving and NGO development in the US. Sergey Krutov reported on accountability measures employed by NGOs in the US. "During our professional training, I clearly gained an understanding of terms such as transparency and accountability and how it works not only for the benefit of the organization, but for the whole society," commented Sergey. Elena Guseva spoke about NGO good governance practices and volunteerism in the US. The volunteerism movement in the United States gave rise to considerable interest among attendees. Maria Zhevlakova added that she was impressed by the civic participation of the American people, their volunteer spirit and aspirations for charity work.



*Participants in Michigan*

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## CORRUPTION PREVENTION AND PROSECUTION, RUSSIA 2009

Hosted by Citizen Diplomacy Council of San Diego, California

Submitted by PH International and translated by CC Staff

Ten professionals from Russia took part in the **Corruption Prevention and Prosecution** program hosted by the Citizen Diplomacy Council of San Diego (CDCSD). The participants returned home very enthusiastic and inspired by the new knowledge and practices they had learned while on the Community Connections program.

On October 22, 2009, the alumni conducted a roundtable in the City of Krasnodar entitled **Anti-Corruption Practices in the USA: Glance from Russia**. The meeting brought together representatives from local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), journalists, and administrators who are engaged in anti-corruption efforts in the region.



*Alumni at round table discussion in Krasnodar, Russia*

The alumni shared their impressions about the program, as well as American anti-corruption practices. In his presentation, Mikhail Savva, Program Director at the South Regional Resource Centre, argued that **it is sometimes not enough to 'know' in order to 'understand,'** and that the CC program gave him the opportunity to see and understand how the anti-corruption laws should work in a democratic society. He highlighted the most important aspects of the anti-corruption efforts' success in the US, such as clear norms and regulations, free media and investigative journalism, and American citizens' perception of corruption. Mikhail also talked about work of agencies and NGOs the participants met with in San Diego, such as the Citizen's Review Board on Police Practices, the California Department of Justice, and the Office of the Attorney General.

For more information on the roundtable, photos, and audio in Russian, please, follow the link [http://www.kkoovrv.ru/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=1195&Itemid=53](http://www.kkoovrv.ru/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1195&Itemid=53)



## A SNOWBALL EFFECT FROM THE US TO BELARUS

Youth Drug Abuse Prevention-Belarus 2008. Hosted by International Visitors Center of Chicago, Illinois  
Reflection and photos submitted by Jack Irwin, President of International Snowball



*Belarusian delegates participating in team building activity.*

A group of 10 professionals from Minsk, Belarus, came to Chicago in November of 2008 and were hit by a *Snowball*. The CC/Youth Drug Abuse Prevention program introduced the participants to a US substance abuse prevention program called *Operation Snowball*, which is based on the concept that each individual, teen and adult, represents a snowflake which, together with others, form an ever-growing *snowball*. After attending a seminar presented by the program's President, Jack Irwin, the participants formed new friendship and professional partnership with him that would bring *Operation Snowball* from the US to Belarus.

As soon as the participants returned home, they attended a three-day Snowball retreat in Švenčionys, Lithuania, where they observed how teens and adults work together.

### **A reflection of Jack Irwin's visit:**

"They invited me to Minsk in October 2009 to provide two seminars. The first one was for the NGO Healthy Choice and the second for a group of psychologists, social workers, and teenagers. I trained youth involved in this seminar to provide a short skit on "enabling" to demonstrate to the adults the methods in *Snowball*.

At the end of the training, Natalia Varabei, one of the psychologists who was in Chicago said, "Let's start Snowball!" She works in a community center, which has some teenagers who were part of my presentation. To find funding for this project, Natalia and I are working together and have contacted the Rotary Clubs in their communities."



*Jack with Belarusian participants in Chicago.*

For more information on International Snowball, visit <http://web.mac.com/snowballorganizer>.

## A SUMMER VISIT

Cultural Preservation - Belarus 2008. Hosted by IVC of Chicago, Illinois  
Reflection submitted by Nancy Scannell, Associate Professor at the University of Illinois-Springfield

In the summer of 2008, the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency and Springfield Commission on International Visitors hosted an International Visitors Center of Chicago delegation of Belarusians. The group met Nancy Scannell, Associate Professor in the College of Business & Management at the University of Illinois-Springfield (UIS) and initiated a linkage between Nancy and Belarus State University officials, which culminated a year later in a decidedly successful cross-cultural educational collaboration supported by the US Embassy in Minsk.

In July 2008, Nancy was invited to deliver a finance seminar to MBA students in Minsk to further internationalize the university's curriculum and to afford development activities for three assigned Belarusian teaching assistants. Nancy also conducted two student recruitment sessions for UIS, which were attended by prospective Belarusian business students. Before returning to the US, she reunited with some members of the original delegation who recounted their fond memories of their adventures in Springfield.



*CC alumni reunited with Nancy in Belarus*

***"The collaboration fostered mutual understanding among peoples from around the globe."***



***A LONG-AWAITED VISIT***

*Small Business, Azerbaijan 2005.  
Hosted by Legacy International*

“Our trip was an experience of a lifetime,” says CC host, Debbie Lane, after visiting alumnus Samir Huseynov in Azerbaijan with his family. Samir invited his American host family to his country, returning the hospitality that he received in their American home. The son of the host parents, Kevin Lane, captured this memorable experience in his journal.

***“I feel a great sense of appreciation today for Samir and his family and friends. We have been given the best traveling experience imaginable, but I am more amazed and appreciative of how we have been taken in as family.***

***These are gifts of generosity, hospitality, sincerity, and the act of caring.”***



*The Lanes sharing a cultural dinner with Samir in Azerbaijan  
Photo by Kevin Lane*

***A PICTURESQUE GRATITUDE***

*NGO Accountability, Russia 2008.  
Hosted by IVC Detroit, Michigan*

The CC experience captured the hearts of many participants in the past years. Alumna Rima Sharifullina, from the NGO Accountability program, expressed her appreciation and recapped the group’s experience in a presentation. To view the video, visit <http://files.mail.ru/TXPLW7>.

***MAKING A DIFFERENCE***

*The Tajik Experience*

Tajikistan alumni speak about their successes in a video produced by American Councils. To view alumni experiences from the program **Hospital Management**, hosted by International House of Metrolina, visit <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N4KwyjR9408>. To view alumni stories from the program **Young Women Leaders**, hosted by Iowa Resource for International Services, visit <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M3EkRiuJUP0>.



*Gafur Kamilov before observing surgery during the Hospital Management Program in North Carolina  
Photo by International House of Metrolina*



*Khairinisso Elmurodova teaching girls to weave baskets at her children center in Bokhtar, Tajikistan.  
Photo by American Councils for International Education  
ACTR/ACCELS*



*Participants with IVC Detroit’s Project Director, Judy Kebl (front row, 2nd from left), in Michigan.  
Photo by IVC Detroit*



## A NEW CC GLOBAL NETWORK

In the upcoming month, World Learning/Community Connections will launch a web-based professional and social network for CC participants, alumni, host organizations, host families, and professionals to connect anywhere in the world. This site, called the *Community Connections Network*, was created to provide a shared space for news, updates, photos, videos, success stories, alumni activities, and other resources for the CC community. In its current pilot stage, it is in both English and Russian. We hope that you will find it to be a useful communication tool.

The *Community Connections Network* is a private webpage. Stay tuned for World Learning's invitation to join the network.

## THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF INTERNATIONAL VISITORS (NCIV) ANNUAL MEETING

The CC team will participate in the National Council of International Visitors (NCIV) annual National Meeting in Washington DC from February 10-13. The Community Connections Host Organizations Meeting will be held on February 10 from 4-5pm. You can also find us at the World Learning exhibit table throughout the week. For more information about the conference, visit [www.nciv.org](http://www.nciv.org).

## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS QUARTERLY SUBMISSIONS

We would like to hear your feedback and topics that you would like to see in our upcoming newsletters. If you have any ideas and/or suggestions, please send them to Christine Tran at [christine.tran@worldlearning.org](mailto:christine.tran@worldlearning.org).

If you have articles and pictures, please provide the following in your submissions:

1. *Type of activity (follow-on, alumni event, host family contact, success story, etc.)*
2. *Names of alumni and/or host families, professional contacts, and other persons involved*
3. *Program name and year*
4. *Host Organization*
5. *Date of activity*
6. *Results of activity (if applicable)*
7. *Photo description (names of person(s), location, & activity) and action shots are preferable.*

Thank you and we look forward to sending you the next edition of the Community Connections Quarterly.

### Contact Us

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## Christine Tran

**From:** Community Connections [Community\_Connections@mail.vresp.com]  
**Sent:** Friday, August 06, 2010 11:43 AM  
**To:** Christine Tran  
**Subject:** Test Message - HTML Format:CC Quarterly - Issue 5



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

**COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS**

### Community Connections Issue 5

Welcome, Christine.



#### Interfaith Issues in US and Republic of Tatarstan

In October 2009, US Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton visited the Republic of Tatarstan in Russia and lauded it as an example of multi-ethnic tolerance and peace. Subsequent to Secretary Clinton's visit, USAID decided to fund two Community Connections groups made up of professionals from this region's different religious, government, and non-profit communities to learn about interfaith issues in the US. [More »](#)

#### Alumni Enhance Role of Uzbek Youth in Blood Donation



On May 5, 2010, two Community Connections program alumni, Shukhrat Ochilov and Aziza Makmudova, presented the first comprehensive state program addressing the improvement of blood donation in Uzbekistan called, "Donors of Future" in Tashkent. [More »](#)

Videos Photos

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**CC Alumna Inspires Young Volunteers to Promote Healthy Lifestyles in Russia** [More »](#)

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**Alumni Action Plans** [More »](#)



#### Program Overview

**Location:** United States  
**Participant Countries:** Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Moldova, Russia, Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan

**Duration:** 2005-2010  
**Funder:** USAID

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Project Overview

Success Stories

Submit Your Story

## Theater Drama Boosts TB Awareness in Tajikistan



Tuberculosis remains a problem in Tajikistan with about 2,800-3,500 new cases reported each year, according to the National TB Control Center. The country's socioeconomic situation and lack of tuberculosis preventive programs have aggravated the situation. [More »](#)

## Ukrainians Tackle Intellectual Property Issues



Thirty-five alumni of the Community Connections Program in Ukraine convened at a two-day seminar outside of Kyiv to discuss Copyright and Intellectual Property Rights, Patent and Licensing Issues. [More »](#)

The Community Connections Program is funded by USAID and administered by World Learning. This email was sent by World Learning.



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