



VERMONT  COUNCIL
ON WORLD AFFAIRS

“ If I were some kind of artist or poet, then [Vermont] is the best place to come and to live. ”

- Visitor from Kazakhstan

“ Hosting IVLP groups for dinner was one of the highlights of my summer. It was truly an engaging experience to learn and share about different cultures over a home-cooked meal. Many laughs, music, and stories about our times in college were exchanged. It was almost like traveling without leaving Vermont. ”

- Katie Hickey, VCWA Member

“ VLP was an amazing experience with amazing people. I felt privileged and honored to have been chosen as a participant. Our home hospitality visits were a highlight [from our time in Vermont]. We all had wonderful evenings with our hosts who provided us with delicious home cooking and delightful conversation. My only complaint was that the evening ended too early! ...And of course, there was the incredible cheese. ”

- Visitor from New Zealand

“ I’ve learned a lot about America, her people, and her values (social and business). The “can do” American spirit is not a myth! I leave here inspired and refueled. I look forward to future partnerships and collaborations with the contacts made... Vermont is gorgeous! I love the vibrant art community, the landscape. I will definitely be visiting Vermont again so I can get to see more of the state. ”

- Visitor from Nigeria



VCWA MAKES A DIFFERENCE

We are pleased to report on another productive year for the Council. This is the 64th year, of the founding of the Vermont Council on World Affairs by Vermont Senator Warren Austin, who later became the first U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, along with some fellow-minded Vermonters.

Patricia Preston completed her first full year as Executive Director. We welcomed a record number of 200 foreign visitors from the State Department and U.S. Congress programs this year. These visitors came from 70 countries. The informal motto of the Council is to “Bring the world to Vermont and Bring Vermont to the world,” and we certainly did this by introducing numerous groups to Vermont’s government leaders, business leaders and our wonderful environment.

We also hosted a very successful Ambassador’s Program graciously underwritten by Norwich University. Ambassador Robert Ford, the former U.S. Ambassador to Syria, spoke at a number of events, as did Ambassador Peter Kemc of Slovakia. There were public presentations as well as private dinners and receptions.

Our 8th annual Awards Dinner honored Congressman Peter Welch. It was a major success both financially and -more importantly- as a way to honor a Vermonter who exemplifies so well the core values of the Council.

Our hosting a record number of visitors could not have been accomplished without the work of Vinson Pierce, the newest addition to the staff. Vinson submits all group proposals and accompanies all visitors during their stay. Patricia and Vinson make an excellent team, and we express our thanks for a job well done.

Our coming year should be even bigger and better than our last. We anticipate increasing the number of visitors, and we look forward to welcoming five new members to the Board.

This is our final report as Co-Chairs. We will be stepping down in December and welcoming an excellent replacement, Leigh Cole. We are looking forward to the energy she will bring to the task.

Finally, no report on the activities of the VCWA would be complete without thanking the Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce for their consistent and enthusiastic support. Without them the VCWA would not be where it is today. Thank you to the Chamber and to all of our loyal members and supporters.



Eric Hanson, Co-Chair



Bill Mares, Co-Chair





Patricia Preston

Patricia Preston
Executive Director
VCWA

Over this last year, my first as the executive director of this organization, I developed a deep understanding of the needs of the Vermont Council on World Affairs as well as the important role we play in our state. As the year went on, I saw with greater clarity what an extreme need we have, now more than ever, for the VCWA. Our mission to promote awareness and understanding of the world and its people, places, and cultures through education and engagement is critical. The future of Vermont depends upon the world beyond our borders.

Our goal each year, in cooperation with the public and private sectors, is to promote an awareness and understanding of the world and its people through creating public forums, hosting international visitors, and working with our business community and educational institutions to develop programs for students, faculty, staff and community members. We have always maintained a commitment to nonpartisan civil discourse, and will continue to do so. This year we supported these meaningful conversations more than ever with our community partnerships and the doubling of visitors through our International Visitors Leadership Program.

Looking forward into the New Year, we are already planning essential programs on climate, political change in leadership around the world, the refugee crisis and more, including developing our high school international affairs work. We will continue to reach out to high schools and our partner colleges and universities with programs that “bring a world of ideas” to young people and to the community at large.

Thank you all for your continued support during this year of learning, growth, and expansion. And a special thank you to the Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce for their ongoing assistance with our efforts and mission. I look forward to working with all of you in the new year to expand our programming and inclusive dialogue. I cordially invite you to join us and take advantage of all of the new offerings the VCWA will bring in 2017!





Vinson Pierce
Manager of Global Engagement
VCWA



I am incredibly proud of all that we have accomplished over the past year. Between increasing our visitor numbers, welcoming two ambassadors, hosting numerous community events, and introducing almost 200 visitors to the state, I feel fortunate to have played a small role in showcasing all that Vermont has to offer.

Since taking on the role of Manager of Global Engagement in January, I have been struck by the incredible support from communities throughout the state. Whether meeting with delegates, inviting them over for a home-cooked meal, or hosting groups for overnight stays, I am grateful to everyone who has offered their time, effort, and expertise to serve as an 802 Diplomat and help the VCWA continue our mission of bringing the world to Vermont and Vermont to the world.

My role at the VCWA includes coordinating the International Visitor Leadership Program, a signature program of the U.S. Department of State, and the Open World Leadership Program of the U.S. Congress. This year we drastically increased the total number of delegates visiting Vermont, welcoming groups focusing on topics as diverse as Cartoons and Graphic Novels, Tourism and Economic Development, and Combating Poaching and Wildlife Trafficking. Thanks to everyone involved in our programs, each delegation has left Vermont with fond memories of the time spent in our state and lasting relationships with those who are fortunate to call it home. I look forward to what the next year holds and am excited to continue working to promote Vermont as a leader and innovator in so many different fields.





November 5-6: Eleven visitors from Europe visited Vermont to discuss the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership and meet with the Vermont State Commission on International Trade and State Sovereignty.

November 7-12: Seven visitors from around the world visited Vermont to learn about social entrepreneurship.

November 8-11: Five visitors from Cameroon visited Vermont to learn about women in politics.

March 30-April 2: Three visitors from France visited Vermont to learn about low carbon energy technologies.

April 2-7: 21 visitors from around the world visited Vermont to learn about inclusion of people with disabilities for the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

May 11-15: Sixteen visitors from around the world visited Vermont to explore the tourism sector and economic development initiatives throughout the state.

May 30-June 2: Three visitors from Kazakhstan visited Vermont to learn about youth leadership initiatives.

June 11-15: Eleven visitors from around the world visited Vermont to explore efforts to combat trafficking in persons.

June 16-19: Four visitors from Venezuela visited Vermont to explore initiatives addressing underserved and at-risk youth.

July 23-27: Six visitors from Russia visited Vermont to learn about comics and graphic novels.

August 7-10: Two visitors from India and Nigeria visited Vermont to learn about the role of the arts in community and economic development.

August 13-17: Six visitors from Central Asia visited Vermont to learn about the renewable energy sector and efforts to combat climate change.

August 24-27: Ten visitors from South Korea visited Vermont to explore the non-profit sector and corporate social responsibility efforts.

September 3-8: Three visitors from Australia visited Vermont to learn about efforts to adapt to climate change and promote the renewable energy sector.

September 13-17: Seven visitors from North Africa and the Near East visited Vermont to discuss refugee resettlement challenges.

September 15-18: Eleven visitors from Africa visited Vermont to learn about efforts to combat poaching and wildlife trafficking.

September 17-22: Five visitors from the Philippines visited Vermont to learn about programs that serve to support and promote women entrepreneurs.

LEADERSHIP PROGRAM



OPEN WORLD

LEADERSHIP CENTER

The Open World Leadership Center's mission is to enhance understanding and capabilities for cooperation between the United States and the countries of Eurasia by developing a network of leaders in the region who have gained significant, firsthand exposure to America's democratic, accountable government and its free-market system. The VCWA has been hosting Open World groups since 2000. These intensive, week-long programs give visitors the opportunity to delve deeply into a single issue. Visitors almost always stay with host families, enriching the experience on all sides. This year we hosted a wonderful group:

October 21-29: Six visitors from Kazakhstan visited Vermont to *explore the role of social media and access to information in establishing more accountable governance*. We kicked off the visit with a reception followed by meetings with representatives from Champlain College, the Burlington Police Department, Front Porch Forum, VTDigger, the Vermont Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security, the Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing, and more. Each delegate presented about their work in a very engaging program.

Thank you to all our host families, home hospitality hosts, speakers, and presenters!



PROGRAMS AND SPEAKERS

PROGRAMS

January

- Global Burlington Dinner Series (Ethiopian) with North End Studios
- Stanley R. Sloan on *Defense of the West* with the Vermont Humanities Council

February

- Screening of *Frame by Frame* with Speaker Baktash Ahadi, Associate Producer, with St. Michael's College
- International Jobs Career Forum with UVM and TetraTech ARD
- Global Burlington Dinner Series (Bengali and Indian) with North End Studios
- International Trivia Night with Hotel Vermont

March

- Global Burlington Dinner Series (La Francophonie) with North End Studios
- Cover to Cover Series, Clyde Prestowitz Author of *Japan Restored: How Japan Can Reinvent Itself and Why This Is Important for America and the World*

April

- *Refugee Crisis* in Europe with Speaker Dr. Marie-Thérèse Claes
- Haviland Smith, Former CIA Station Chief, on *Understanding Islamic Extremism*
- Global Burlington Dinner Series (Armenia) with North End Studios
- Cover to Cover Series: Marc Lynch Author of *The New Arab Wars: Uprisings and Anarchy in the Middle East*

May

- Asian Studies Outreach Program, Farewell Conference with Speakers Mr. Jeff Wang, Advisor to the President of the Asia Society, and Dr. Juefei Wang of the Freeman Foundation. with The University of Vermont
- Co-Sponsor of *Benefit for Syrian Refugees* Concert with Pianist Michael Arnowitt
- Global Burlington Dinner Series (Tibet) with North End Studios
- International Trivia Night with Hotel Vermont
- Community Night with Bluebird Barbecue

June

- VCWA Eighth Annual Dinner honoring Congressman Peter Welch
- Vice Admiral Thomas Rowden of the U.S Navy on *Global Sea Control*

July

- International Trivia Night with Hotel Vermont

August

- Olympic Opening Ceremony Meet-Up

September

- Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office Dinner
- *The Future of Korea* with Speakers Will Cobb, The Republic of Korea Unit Chief, U.S State Department; Hohyun Jang, Minister for Economic Affairs, Embassy of the Republic of Korea; Jenna Gibson, Director of Communications, Korea Economic Institute of America

October

- *A Syrian Love Story* with Vermont International Film Festival

November

- Giving Tuesday Event with Speakers Peter Clavelle, Edward MacMahon, and Karen Freudenberger

December

- VCWA Annual Meeting featuring Ambassador Ford, Mayor Louras, and Sean McMannon with Saint Michael's College
- *America in a New, More Dangerous World* by George Jaeger with the Vermont Humanities Council

AMBASSADOR SERIES

“Of all the groups I engage, I find the various World Affairs Councils the most intellectually curious, and they bring to their communities a wonderful commitment to understanding world events. I truly appreciate the Vermont World Affairs Council for hosting an event with students at St Michael’s, as they remind me that our future is in good hands.”

-Ambassador James Smith, former United States Ambassador to Saudi Arabia
November 2015

This one-of-a-kind program has just completed its 16th year. Where else can you interact with senior diplomats with years of experience understanding, negotiating and problem solving today’s and tomorrow’s global issues? At the same time, world leaders love coming to Vermont – a place well known for its beauty as well as its cutting-edge programs in areas like energy and the environment, healthcare and community building, a place where the citizenry is informed and engaged, and where public and private sector leaders are committed and accessible.

Featured Ambassadors

Peter Kmec

Ambassador to the U.S from the Slovak Republic

"Slovakia: The Current Geopolitical and Economic Trends and Relationship to the United States"

Robert Ford

Former U.S Ambassador to Syria

"Syrian Refugee Crisis"



ESTIMATED FINANCIAL STATEMENT

October 1, 2015 - September 30, 2016

INCOME	
Membership incl. board	\$9,095
Sponsorship and fundraising	\$20,059
PROGRAMS	
Special events and fundraising	\$58,572
Fee for Service	\$2,000
International Tours	\$9,585
GRANTS	
Community Partnership (IVLP)	\$24,852
Global Ties/WACA meetings	\$4,558
LCRCC SUPPORT	
	\$17,943
Miscellaneous	\$414
TOTAL	\$147,068

EXPENSES	
Salaries and benefits	\$108,756
Rent	\$10,175
PROGRAMS	
VCWA Programs/Events	\$12,194
International Tours	\$219
GRANTS	
Community Partnership Grant	\$122
Global Ties/WACA meetings	\$6,775
OFFICE EXPENSES	
Tel/fax/email/website	\$442
Postage	\$310
Financial management/ Form 990	\$1,765
Printing	\$380
Supplies and copying	\$447
Board Meetings/ Retreats	\$3,392
Global Ties/WACA dues	\$818
Transportation/mileage	\$298
Miscellaneous	\$975
TOTAL	\$147,068



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“It’s about the people. I’ve met a lot of people [in Vermont]. Listening to their life stories there are no words, just feelings... I’ve learned a lot from the people that I’ve met. I can say that this trip was an eye opener. It somehow changed my mind, my heart, my personality. It might sound very cliché but it’s true.”

- Visitor from Kazakhstan

Thank you to our sponsors:



and supporters:

**Town of Colchester
Colchester High School**



The VCWA is an affiliate of the Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce. VCWA is a proud member of Global Ties U.S. and The World Affairs Councils of America (WACA).

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