

Dear Members & Friends of SACIV,

The time that we spend with international visitors, sharing who we are and what we do as individuals and as a community are invaluable. We get to provide hospitality and to honor our neighbors around the globe. Our participation with the San Antonio Council for International Visitors (SACIV) gives us that opportunity to be citizen diplomats.



Again, thank you for your participation and support of this organization. Our hope is that these exchanges are the seed for future friendships and engagements in the various sectors of our city and economy.

We look forward to seeing you in the various activities and events this year. I wish you a meaningful and prosperous year 2018!

Sincerely,

Betsy I. Cameron
Chair, SACIV Board of Directors



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UPCOMING PROGRAMS

February 25th—March 3rd
Police Professionalization
Exchange Program I
Mexico

February 28th—March 6th
Global & Regional Responses to
Refugee & Migration Issues
Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Costa Rica,
Czech Republic, Finland, Honduras,
Ireland, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon,
Malaysia, Norway, Pakistan, South
Korea, South Sudan, Turkey

March 8th – March 13th
Global Economic Cooperation
Venezuela, Egypt, Gaza Strip,
Turkey, Guinea, Iraq, Jordan

March 15th – March 20th
Women Leaders: Drivers of
Economic & Social Change
Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Dominican
Republic, Guatemala, Mexico,
Paraguay, Peru, Venezuela

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

Visit us online at:
www.sacivtx.org/program-and-events



ANNOUNCEMENTS

The deadline to renew your SACIV membership is ***February 28th!***

Membership Levels

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

Please send checks to:
PO Box 6088
San Antonio, TX 78209

OR

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sacivtx.z2systems.com

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

REFLECTING ON THE DIPLOMACY BEGINS HERE SUMMIT IN AUSTIN

By Erica McNamara, Senior Program Associate for Communications
Global Ties US

Citizen diplomacy enthusiasts Texas-two stepped their way to Austin, TX for the third of four Diplomacy Begins Here (DBH) Regional Summits organized in 2017 by Global Ties U.S., Community-Based Members (CBMs), and the U.S. Department of State. The Summit convened more than 175 attendees from the diplomatic corps, private sector, nonprofit agencies, and the U.S. government, as well as 200 students participating in a specially-designed Youth Track for next-generation public diplomacy practitioners.

GlobalAustin, a Global Ties U.S. CBM, hosted the Summit on September 19 at the Texas State Capitol Building in partnership with the El Paso Council for International Visitors, Global North Texas, San Antonio Council for International Visitors, World Affairs Council of South Texas, and World Affairs Council of Dallas/Fort Worth.



The full-day event celebrated citizen diplomacy on the global stage and explored key topics including sports diplomacy, entrepreneurship, trade, immigration, and journalism. Principle talking points at the Summit were the vital role of citizen diplomats in creating a positive U.S. image in the world, the impact of U.S. foreign policy on local communities, and the role of individual citizens in advancing cross-cultural dialogue.

Stacy White, Director of the Office of International Visitors (OIV) at the U.S. Department of State, and Jacqui Shipe, Global Ties U.S. Board Chair, provided welcome remarks. White emphasized that “the world is safer when nations are not separated by borders, but together breaking bread.” Shipe spoke about the need for cultural competency in advancing diplomatic relations, stating “we have to be a good listener, and we have to be a collaborator” to be a successful citizen diplomat.

Rounding out the morning introductions was Representative Joaquin Castro of the 20th district of Texas. He underscored the importance of international exchanges as means to connect and engage with global communities, noting that “diversity is a strength” of the United States, and that aspiring citizen diplomats should “lend your voice to the conversation as tensions around the world and closer to home make this an important time to engage on international issues.”

A key component of the Summit was the Youth Track, aimed at high school and college students interested in learning more about the theory and practice of international diplomacy. The U.S. Diplomacy Center, a frequent partner of the DBH Summits, arranged a real-world diplomacy simulation that tasked students to think critically and collaboratively about a current global issue. The topic at this Summit was the refugee crisis.

Dimitris Kalavros-Gousiou, a 2013 U.S. Department of State International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) Gold Star alum from Athens, Greece, discussed how the exchange program impacted his professional development. Kalavros-Gousiou, founder of the TEDxAthens conference, returned to Greece after his program ended, where he launched both an alumni organization for Greek IVLP participants, and a tech start-up for corporations and entrepreneurs. He noted, “IVLP is a tremendous opportunity to expand your knowledge and your network. International exchanges inspire technology, talent, and innovation.”

The Summit concluded with a music diplomacy celebration featuring local Texan artists, including retired U.S. Ambassador and Austin-resident Greg Engle. Engle, a career diplomat, was joined by fellow musician Stephen Doster for a performance and discussion on their experiences as U.S. cultural ambassadors. Both men have performed and conducted workshops across Africa as part of the U.S. Department of State’s Arts Envoy program. A Texas-two step dance lesson closed out the event.

EDITOR’S NOTE:

In early 2017, SACIV began collaborating with GlobalAustin, our neighboring counterpart, to host a Global Ties US “Diplomacy Begins Here” Regional Summit in partnership with other Texas organizations. Together, we successfully hosted a celebration of citizen diplomacy for attendees from around the country.



Members' Corner

By Sarwat Husain
SACIV Board Member

In August 2017, SACIV hosted a delegation of four visitors from Spain (three from the Spanish enclave in North Africa, Ceuta, and one from Barcelona), participating in a project entitled "Empowering Communities to Prevent Radicalization Among Youth". The objective of their program was to learn about relevant topics (including NGO efforts to enhance the understanding of Islam, non-discrimination & diversity training for law enforcement & local government employees, promoting diversity, empowering marginalized youth, and a visit to Victoria, TX for a case study on a small town's response to a hate crime) from their counterparts and relevant organizations & programs here in the States as part of the US Department of State's International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP). The visitors were all advocates for their communities and were also committed to combatting religious intolerance, supporting democracy, and countering-extremists.

I was scheduled to meet with them, as President of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) - San Antonio to talk about the organization's work as an advocate for justice, to enhance the understanding of Islam, encourage dialogue, protect civil liberties, and empower American Muslims, as well as our work dealing with government affairs and government relations. As a frequent columnist & speaker on inter-religious & Muslim issues for several local media outlets, I discussed CAIR's civil rights & advocacy initiatives as well its role in discussing issues of importance with elected representatives, government agencies, or other stakeholders.

Since I am also a Board Member of the San Antonio Council for International Visitors (SAICV) I accompanied them on the bus trip to Victoria, TX. They visited the Victoria Islamic Center, which in January 2017, was destroyed in an arson attack as a hate crime. Donations to rebuild it surpassed \$1 million from an online fundraising page and financial contributions from groups and individuals of various religious and ethnic backgrounds.

Visitors had an opportunity to meet with the Victoria Islamic Center's leadership and other local religious leaders in the community (including the Victoria Islamic Center's Board Members & Imam, the "Go Fund Me" campaign organizer, the architect for the new mosque, and Victoria's Chief of Police & Fire Department Chief) to learn about how a hate crime targeting the Muslim community resulted in a show of support and solidarity across the country.

They all were very impressed to see the compassion showed by four churches and a synagogue that welcomed the city's Muslim community to hold its services in their buildings. There were about fifteen members of the community present at the meeting at the Victoria Mosque, including a rabbi, a priest, and an imam. The chief of police was there too, and the architect who is designing the new mosque (a Christian). The community already had a strong interfaith group before the attack on the mosque.

A Christian woman told the story of its origins, when her daughter was having a sleepover with the daughter of one of the Muslim community leaders, and she overheard them talking. One girl asked the other, "Is your God the same as my God?" and the other answered, "I think so, but we call him Allah." "And do you pray too?" "Yes, but we have to get down low on the floor, and we do it more often." And the mother realized she wanted to live in a community where it would be as easy for adults to ask each other questions as it was for those little girls, so she made some phone calls and they started an organization so different religious groups could become educated about one another's faiths while building personal relationships, which they do in some cases by participating in joint charity work, like feeding the poor.

It was an inspiring meeting and the visitors were touched to know how American Muslims feel so much at home in their adopted country, where all different faiths and cultures are warm and welcoming and live together in harmony, where at times it is hard and challenging in the present political climate.

“Visitor Quotes”

Urban Management

“We participated in home hospitality and enjoyed finding out about American life and telling them about our traditions... I had some ideas about Texas before the trip but seeing it was an even better experience.”

-Ananmurat Jumakuliyev (Turkmenistan)

Change Makers: Women in Political & Social Sector

“Home hospitality was the climax of our tour in San Antonio. The family of Mr. & Mrs. Scott had lived in Kenya many years ago. They called over their friends and interactions were amazing. I got to meet people who were very warm and really interested in my country and my family and I got to learn more about their lives... I commend the place and people we got to visit and meet. I can almost see a replica of the issues tackled with those in Kenya and the milestone achieved are achievable in my country... It was my absolute pleasure visiting San Antonio. The state is beautiful, not to mention the weather. I was really encouraged by all the women organizations and groups that are struggling to get more girls and women to be seen and heard. The work being done by the charity organizations on refugees and immigrants is commendable.”

-Jean Stell Wanja Njagi (Kenya)

“I participated in home hospitality and enjoyed it very much. The hosts were open and engaged and invited a number of people along. There was a great sense of occasion and great conversation... I knew very little about San Antonio before my arrival and the trip opened my eyes. I had presumed that Texas was where cowboy country but I now appreciate the diverse history and population.”

-Louise Glennon (Ireland)

Advancing Minority Rights

“I had very different ideas about Texas and San Antonio before my arrival, but they changed positively.”

-Saba Nur Cheema (Germany)

“I participated in home hospitality and Ms. Arlis Olson and her husband were so nice. They made a great meal for us and they invited friends. Good food, good discussion, welcoming people. Thank you for this opportunity to meet them.”

-Edlira Teferici Zepo (Albania)

The Global Economy

“The appointments met my professional objectives because they all showed how effect the measures are to developing the work-force, promoting small businesses, and supporting the city’s economic development.”

-Rasaon Razafindrakoto Lisiniaina (Madagascar)

“The appointments met my professional objectives because I am interested in trade, trade diplomacy, and financing SMEs, as well as how to facilitate start-ups and starting entrepreneurs. The program in San Antonio was all about this... Before I arrived, I did know that San Antonio was a warm city close to Mexico with strong Latin American influence, but I had not visited before. I liked the city very much, both the program and the atmosphere. I think the city has a bright future.”

-Soltan Tamas Szabo (Hungary)

“I participated in home hospitality and it was fantastic to chat with a local family, they were lovely people... Thanks for all your help, it was a really fun place to visit.”

-John Ballingall (New Zealand)

“I participated in home hospitality and met Mrs. Mary Lou and Mr. Don Wilson. For me it was an amazing, lovely, peaceful, and very touching family experience and they had a lovely home. It was one of the best events in San Antonio... Thank you for the well-organized program, I wish I could come back again.”

-Nehal Mohamed Mounir Gamal Fouad (Egypt)

“The appointments met my professional objectives by providing ideas and serving as successful models to be taken into account in future personal projects... I enjoyed home hospitality a lot because for the first time, I had the opportunity to know directly how an American family lives, their tastes, their traditions, and their quality of life... I had some ideas about San Antonio before I arrived but now my vision is much more accurate and precise. It is a great city that combines American organization and modernity with the warmth typical of Latin America.”

-Laura del Carmen John Rangel (Venezuela)

Promoting Youth Entrepreneurship & Higher Education in the US

"The appointments definitely met my professional objectives. It was the way Texas and San Antonio in particular, are reaching the entrepreneurial issues and how this works from high school to college and in incubators and business supporters... It is quite impressive how San Antonio's entrepreneurial ecosystem works and the number of supports start-ups may find."

-Theodora Trachona (Greece)

"The appointments helped me to interact with innovation leaders across the board in business and academia. They also helped me to meet experts who link academia to business ecosystems."

-George Bithas (Greece)

"All the appointments were interesting to me, especially Trinity University. Furthermore, the meeting at Business Careers High School was an interesting experience to learn about a new model of creative education. And both the meetings at Trinity University and VelocityTX helped me to enrich my knowledge in the field."

-Naoum Mylonas (Greece)

"All of the appointments were very good and useful and met my professional objectives because we had the opportunity to see firsthand the operations of the offices and schools. The program in San Antonio was interesting and most useful."

-Theodoras Yagemas (Greece)

"The meetings provided me with useful information and have shown me ways and examples of promotion of entrepreneurship that could definitely be implemented in Greece, under certain circumstances and conditions."

-Vassilis Kostoulas (Greece)

"San Antonio was a great experience, the program was very well organized, and the visits were very interesting. The hospitality was great, thank you!"

-Spyridon Vougrous (Greece)

"I was positively surprised by San Antonio and enjoyed the city very much."

-Ioanna Koutsounanou (Greece)

Community Responsiveness: Law Enforcement Leadership

"The meetings met my professional objectives and gave me an in-depth understanding of vital issues such as drug trafficking, human trafficking, policing at the grassroots level, refugee issues, and more."

-Anshuman Bhomia (India)

Infrastructure Development

"The program met my professional objectives because our city has a lot of real estate assets and we were exposed to a number of ideas on how to get value out of them. The small business incubator concept will also assist us in dealing with the problem of poverty and unemployment in our country and city... The home hospitality experience shared with us was invaluable."

-Ndumiso Ngubane (South Africa)

Women as Political & Community Leaders

"I learned a lot from the speakers' experiences and saw many programs I could implement back home.... Before arrival, I didn't think San Antonio had a diverse population. I thought it would be like the 'Wild West'. The reality is that it has a beautiful spirit that I really enjoyed, especially while walking the Riverwalk."

-Fatima Almarri (United Arab Emirates)

"The meetings absolutely met my professional objectives. Most of them were similar to the work I do back home, especially when talking about domestic violence and empowering women in elected positions... San Antonio is an absolutely amazing city and I have enjoyed it the most so far."

-Aseel Shaban (Jordan)

"The appointments were effective and met my professional objectives because in my count, we, as women, face similar challenges and I benefited from the experience and will share it with relevant people in Jordan... I heard Texas was a nice State, but when I visited it I discovered that it is nicer than what I heard. It's a wonderful city."

-Abla Almarghieh (Jordan)

Coalition Building for NGOs

"All in all, it was a professionally successful program. I was able to learn about how organizations secure funding and amplify impact of their work by building coalitions with like-minded organizations. Moreover, it was great to know about their multi-pronged strategies for reaching out beneficiaries of the programs."

-Asshar Soomro (Pakistan)

"The appointments met our visit objectives because the meetings familiarized us with skill of fundraising, volunteerism, and knowledge about the effect of management of organizations... I am thankful for your hospitality and the meetings and appointments were very relevant. I felt much love and respect from the people of San Antonio and have love and respect for the people of the US."

-Muhammad Siddiq Khan (Pakistan)

"I appreciate the organizers for conducting such a great trip. I must say thank you to the SACIV team."

-Mehrab Ali (Pakistan)

"The appointments met my professional objectives. I learnt new ideas and best practices of NGOs and I will replicate these ideas in my area."

-Bushra Bibi (Pakistan)

"Thank you for your hospitality and all the arrangements you made. I have lovely and unforgettable memories of the US and learnt lessons about collaborating and networking. I now have a positive attitude of the people of the US and their values."

-Rana Asif Habib (Pakistan)

Young Lebanese Leaders Visit San Antonio

By Paige Brown, SACIV Program Coordinator

On October 25th, we welcomed eleven Lebanese visitors attending the IVLP program “Young Leaders Promoting Transparency and Accountability”. During their weeklong visit they met with organizations including the Bexar County Elections Department, MOVE San Antonio, City Year San Antonio, The Libertarian Party of Bexar County, and the City of San Antonio’s Office of the City Clerk. Upon the evening of their arrival, before embarking on these various meetings, the visitors attended SACIV’s “28th Anniversary Dinner”.

We were honored to include our visitors in welcoming Ambassador Reyna Torres Mendivil, Consul General of Mexico in San Antonio, as our keynote speaker and honor “International Leadership Award” recipient Mr. Marcos Fragoso. This was the perfect occasion to welcome

our visitors as the dinner provided the perfect opportunity to mingle with SACIV members, corporate sponsors, and local San Antonians. The occasion truly demonstrated to the delegation

our diverse community of individuals passionate about international exchange. What better way to kick off their stay in San Antonio?

The primary objective of the delegation’s visit was to gain in-depth understanding of the US political system and the decision-making process. Meeting with Drew Galloway, Executive Directors at MOVE San Antonio informed our visitors of their various methods of involving youth in local elections. Both the visitors and Drew expressed youth participation as a societal challenge in both Lebanon and the United States. Similarly, during a meeting with Ms. Jacquelyn Callanen the visitors learned of the current voting procedure, shifting away from the use of traditional ballots - with paper and pencil - to an electronic method of voter submission.

The delegation was particularly entertained by the meeting led by Matt Pina, from the Libertarian Party of Bexar County. While informative of Libertarian beliefs and practices, he entertained the delegations with hypotheticals of a libertarian government in the United States and Lebanon. The visitors in particular were interested in hearing the speaker’s opinion about the United States in-



volvement in the Middle East and his libertarian proposals. While shocked by the foreign concept of libertarianism, Matt’s down to earth personality and personable demeanor welcomed the visitors to challenge his views and exchange ideas, allowing a stimulating environment for fruitful discussion.

Following the week of meetings, the visitors concluded their trip to San Antonio with exclusive cultural activities. Due to the timing of their visit, they had the opportunity to experience the unforgettable spectacle San Antonio’s annual Día de los Muertos celebrations, as well as a local Lebanese Festival. Additionally, the visitors attended a guided Yanawana Mission Tour provided by staff of the “American Indians in Texas at the Spanish Colonial Missions”. (AIT-SCM), a nonprofit organization established by the Tap Pilam Coahuiltecan Nation who are descendants of the aboriginal people who populated South Texas and Northeast Mexico. It is safe to say that our visitors experienced a unique blend of politics and culture during their stay!



Programs Explore Common Theme of Women's Empowerment

By Paige Brown, SACIV Program Coordinator

The most common program theme we have hosted this year deals with the role of women in society. Just recently, we welcomed three groups of female visitors participating on the programs “Women as Political and Community Leaders”, “Change Makers: Women in Social and Political Sectors”, and “Women as Political Leaders”. A majority of these visitors are from the Middle East and Africa however, we did also host visitors from other countries, such as Norway and Ireland. Programs focusing on women as political leaders often include participants from countries where women's rights are more limited than those in the United States. Therefore, they are often invited on these IVLP programs to learn about women's empowerment in the US.

The 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution emphasizes that men and women shall have equal rights throughout the United States. This includes



equal economic and political opportunities for women. The United States explicitly states equal rights and opportunities for all because

women's rights are a fundamental human right. And at SACIV, we are honored to expose international women, who may not have access to such opportunities in their home countries, to successful political women here in San Antonio. And luckily, San Antonio is home to various successful female entrepreneurs, politicians, activists, and leaders.

The objective of these women leader programs intends to expose the delegation to women and organizations that advocate for female engagement in order to examine successful practices. Delegates take note of efficient skills or initiatives which they can hopefully apply back in their respective home countries. Specifically, the guests look for female participation at the local, state, and federal level, as well as women's access to education and jobs, leadership training, and networking skills.

The agendas for these programs usually include similar meetings comprised of specific individuals and organizations local to San Antonio. For example, meet-

ings with LiftFund and the Women's Business Center expose our delegation to resources available to female entrepreneurs. Along with these informative meetings, which are dense in skills and leadership training, meetings are arranged with individuals here in San

Antonio with profound stories of their political or economic success. In these informal and more intimate meetings, the speakers share with our visitors their trials as women and



how they overcame obstacles, many of which the visitors relate to. To name a few, Sheriff Susan Pamerleau, Councilwoman Rebecca Viagran, Politician Leticia Van de Putte, and Business owner Patricia Stout, have repeatedly taken the time out of their busy schedules to meet with our visitors attending these programs.

We hope that our visitors leave us inspired and motivated regardless of their specific objective in mind. Our goal is to expose them to people and organizations that promote skills and advocate for female involvement in any society. The recent “#metoo” publicity emphasizes just how seriously female discrimination is and how even in the United States, there are profound improvements to be made. Nonetheless, SACIV is proud to host so many women-leader programs and we hope to welcome just as many, if not more, this 2018.



SACIV Hosts Turkmen Delegations

By Paige Brown, SACIV Program Coordinator

Like many other countries in the world, Turkmenistan is currently experiencing significant growth in its urban areas. When planning for urban expansion it is important to take into consideration factors such as pollution, infrastructure, management of utilities, etc. For these reasons, SACIV welcomed not one, but two groups of visitors from Turkmenistan interested in learning about San Antonio's long term urban planning methods. The visitor's programs focused on the provision of vital services such as energy water, mass transportation, infrastructures & roads, and water.

In early June, SACIV welcomed four visitors attending a program titled "Urban Management",

and then welcomed another group of five visitors in late October, participating in the program "Water Usage". During

their visits, meetings were arranged with several organizations from each sector - energy, transportation, and water - to give our visitors a better understanding of how San Antonio tackles urban expansion. Meeting with representatives from City of San Antonio's Center City Development Office and Alamo Area Metropolitan Planning Organization provided broad overviews about urban planning, while meetings with VIA specifically addressed San Antonio's public transportation. CPS Energy shared conservation and allocation methods, and meetings with SAWS and Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance tackled the issue of water usage.

In particular, water management, conservation, and allocation has remained a long term issues in Turkmenistan due to previous Soviet irri-

gation systems. While San Antonio has never suffered from this particular issue, Texas in general suffers from frequent droughts and like Turkmenistan, faces rapid urbanization. Meeting the demand for water as cities expand, forces suppliers to consider additional or alternative water sources. However, this shouldn't be done at the expense of rural communities and wildlife that depend on natural springs and aquifers. This presents a challenge that both Texas and Turkmenistan share. Therefore, the exchange between the delegation and professionals that took place within the meetings provided invaluable insight to alternative practices that work to address these issues despite societal differences.

Many visitors in general, including the visitors from Turkmenistan are surprised to learn about the water usage fees implemented by SAWS. For many other countries water supply is free. Visitors from South Africa were also intrigued by this. While some visitors are



pleasantly surprised to learn this, others express confusion and disapproval. These systematic and idyllic differences are often a result of the political and cultural context of the home country of the visitors. Differences aside, hosting the Turkmenistan visitors yielded exposure to diverse funding streams, introduction to the concept of non-profit organizations, and exposure to municipally-owned utilities.

San Antonio Hosts Exchange of Police Professionals from Mexico

By Jason Buch

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Police instructors and academy administrators from nine Mexican states spent the week at the Alamo Area Regional Law Enforcement Academy observing and learning about U.S. police training.

The training is part of a program funded by the U.S. through its Merida Initiative aid package to Mexico that brings law enforcement officials from that country to the U.S. to learn about police academies here.



The San Antonio trip, the first in a four-part training process that includes internet courses, study tours and visits to Mexico by U.S. officials, was administered by the San

Antonio Council for International Visitors and hosted by the Alamo Area Council of Governments.

“The main idea that we have in this type of training is that we can have an exchange of the best practices used at the academies in the United States,” said Yomara Pérez García, head of academic services at the University of Security & Justice in Tamaulipas, the Mexican state that borders Texas from Brownsville to Laredo. “We identify which practices can serve us at our academies in Mexico and that we can implement with our students.”

Tamaulipas, which has been ravaged by drug cartel violence, is undergoing a major change in policing. A new governor, elected last year, is trying to overhaul the state police force, which has replaced municipal law enforcement in communities across the state. At the same time, Mexico is going through a major reform of its criminal justice system, making its court procedures more like the U.S. with open trials and presentation of evidence.

“Here in the U.S., you’ve had this system for several years,” Pérez said. “In Mexico, a change like this really

represents a shock. It’s difficult to adapt to something this new.”

Over the week, the participants went through classroom courses on

subjects such as ethics and law enforcement leadership. On Thursday afternoon, they were getting hands-on training in a simulator. A 180-degree screen allowed them to experience how U.S. law enforcement officers practice with stun guns and firearms.

Richard Bryan, the director of the academy, which trains cadets for local law enforcement agencies in the



region, said that while showing off the technology that’s available, instructors try to offer practical advice.

Simulation chambers might not be

feasible for every department, but recruiting drama students from nearby universities can allow cadets to experience real-life situations before they hit the streets.

Bryan said he learned that law enforcement agencies in both countries have a shared problem: budgets.

“There’s this perception that we should have the best-trained, most-experienced police officers doing the job,” he said. “Well, you need to have the money to provide that training.”



Visitors Explore San Antonio's Global Economy

By Paige Brown, SACIV Program Coordinator

On July 27th, a small delegation of visitors from seven different countries arrived in San Antonio to explore the role of local businesses in the global economy. Throughout their short stay, the visitors spent two full days in meetings exchanging practices on policies that support trade and small businesses, and methods that diversify the regional economy to create job opportunities.

Meetings with both the San Antonio Economic Development Foundation and the City of San Antonio's Economic Development Department both emphasized the diversification of the San Antonio regional economy through recruitment and expansion of quality employers. The delegation learned that San Antonio is making initiatives to establish quality workforce through various training programs and partnerships. Organizations such as Goodwill invest profit

from sales into training programs for employers while programs with Alamo Academies provide opportunities for individuals to obtain various certifications.

Next, the visitors learned about the local services provided to small business and entrepreneurs who do not have access to loans from commercial sources. Representatives from LiftFund, a non-profit organization that offers leadership and innovation to



the micro-lending industry, met with the delegation to explain eligibility and expectations for those seeking financial support. Additional insight into LiftFund's programs such as the Women's Business Center and LaunchSA emphasized their dedication to supporting entrepreneurs, especially women and minorities. These programs offer personalized

training and individual business counseling. From learning about the ways in which quality employees are molded and how small business emerge, our visitors then learned how these businesses expand compete internationally



In order to assess San Antonio's economy on a large scale, meetings with the Free Trade Alliance and the Department of Commerce's US Commercial Service emphasized initiatives that support international business. With employment training supported by the city's economic development programs and the skills and loans acquired from LiftFund, some small businesses successfully develop international markets. In this case, the delegation learned that establishments such as the Department of Commerce's US Commercial Service help to secure connections with foreign countries. Of the challenges that arise in this process, assistance is provided in navigating documentation challenges or creating market entry strategies. In similar effort to contribute to the diversification of San Antonio's economy and promote international business, a meeting with the Free Trade Alliance stressed the importance of attracting foreign direct investment.

In addition to the exchanges with private and public organizations in San Antonio that contribute the local & global economy, the visitors had the weekend to indulge in cultural activities. While San Antonio is economically diverse, here at SACIV we always encourage our visitors to experience the cultural diversity that the city has to offer. As most of our visitors do, the delegation visited the Alamo and strolled along the Riverwalk, however this delegation in particular was interested in making a special trip to Buc-ee's! I had never met a group of visitors so impressed by the expansiveness, cleanliness, and popularity of a convenience store. Perhaps we will keep that in mind when arranging meetings in the future!



Latina Entrepreneurs Welcomed to San Antonio

By Paige Brown, SACIV Program Coordinator

Over the summer, SACIV hosted multiple groups of visitors including, fourteen women from Argentina, Chile, Cuba, El Salvador, Mexico, Panamá, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Venezuela, interested in learning about entrepreneurship at the local level and efforts to engage youth to teach then entrepreneurial skills. The delegation spent two full day exploring these themes as they met with local organizations, followed by SACIV's "Summer Membership Mixer" and an additional day free for cultural activities before departing back to their respective home countries.

A meeting with staff and students of the Business Careers High School revealed the growing enthusiasm for



entrepreneurial careers amongst students in San Antonio. The delegation not only learned about the special classes offered,

including lessons on business etiquette, entrepreneurial skills, technology, and finance, they enjoyed the opportunity to meet with the students themselves to learn about their goals. This invaluable exchange allowed our visitors to share personal experiences and guidance on successful business practices. Aside from investing time in the youth involvement, the visitors were particularly interested in learning how current entrepreneurs in San Antonio strive in the local community and thus impact the local economy. Meeting with the leadership of the San Antonio Small Business Development Center revealed ways in which entrepreneurs obtain access to capital, one-on-one business advising sessions, and workshops.



Meeting with Ms. Yadira Medina-Torres, founder and director of Stepping Stones Pediatric Clinic was particularly memorable to the group of visitors. As owner of a successful rehabilitation facility for children with speech and learning disabilities, Yadira shared here personal and professional experience, providing both an informative and inspiring meeting with the delegation. She shared her initial struggle in finding appropriate care for her own special-needs child propelled her entrepreneurship career. She further shared her struggle in being a female entrepreneur and explained how local support mechanisms, such as the San Antonio Small Business Development Center, helped her achieve her goals and sustain a successful business.

The blend of personal and professional inspiration continued into the next day as the visitors participated in a

Roundtable Discussion led by Ms. Rebecca Hughes with the San Antonio Women's Chamber of Commerce, Ms. Saani Fong of the Free Trade Alliance, and Ms. Patricia Stout, founder of the Alamo Travel Group. Each of the



women provided an overview of their work before breaking into small groups with the visitors for more personalized mentorship discussions regarding different topics. Ms. Hughes emphasized the promotion of leadership and economic development of women business leaders, Ms. Fong focused on supporting international trade and her "Women in International" program, while Ms. Stout provided networking and mentorship for the women.

To conclude the series of meetings attended throughout their stay in the United States, Jim Eskin led the delegation in an interactive workshop that reflected on their three week program, encouraging the visitors to synthesize their thoughts and experiences. As a local facilitator with expertise in organizational development and leadership, Jim further encouraged the women to draw on the connections established throughout their trip that they'd like collaborate with in the future.

Finally, SACIV welcomed the delegation of Latin American women to our annual "Summer Membership Mixer" in order to honor our professional resources. Throughout the warm summer evening, SACIV board members, sponsors, community members, and international guests mingled over drinks and Mexican food at the infamous La Fonda on Main. Our guests got a taste of traditional Tex-Mex food while mingling with locals who share a passion for international exchange.



Summer & Fall Program ➤ HIGHLIGHTS ➔



In **June**, five visitors from **ALBANIA, BELGIUM, FRANCE, GERMANY**, and **POLAND** visited San Antonio for a program on **“Advancing Minority Rights”**. The program focused on examining *the local government role in protecting against discrimination, challenges facing immigrant communities, advocacy and organizing within Latino communities, LGBT rights & protections, perspectives of local minority faith groups, and indigenous community rights & challenges* through meetings with:

- **City of San Antonio’s Diversity & Inclusion Office**
- **State Representative Diego Bernal**
- **San Antonio Police Department**
- **MALDEF**
- **Haven for Hope**
- **Masjid Al-Madina/Muslim Children Education & Civic Center**
- **American Indians in Texas at the Spanish Colonial Missions**
- **RAICES**
- **Log Cabin Republicans**
- **Bexar County Republican Women**

Visitors also participated in home hospitality dinners at the homes of SACIV members and toured the San Antonio Missions.

In **July**, seven visitors from **MEXICO** visited San Antonio for a program entitled **“Mexico Political Party Exchange”**. Their program examined *Latino voting & elections, Latino elected officials, and Latino NGOs* through meetings with:

- **Mexican American Unity Council**
- **UTSA’s Dr. Walter Wilson**
- **Mexicans & Americans Thinking Together (MATT)**

Visitors also participated in a “Communal Home Hospitality” dinner with several SACIV Board Members and community leaders.

In **July**, five visitors from **KAZAKHSTAN** visited San Antonio and Laredo for a program on **“Improving Trade Across Kazakhstan’s Border”**. They examined *the effect of foreign trade zones on a border city and cargo forwarding and trade logistics* through meetings with:

- **Laredo Development Foundation**
- **TAMIU’s Texas Center for Border Economic & Enterprise Development**
- **Laredo Chamber of Commerce**
- **San Antonio Wholesale Produce Market**
- **UTSA’s San Antonio Small Business Development Center**
- **City of San Antonio’s Economic Development Department**
- **J. Canavati & Co.**

Visitors also toured San Antonio landmarks and participated in home hospitality meals.

In **October**, ten visitors from **GREECE** visited San Antonio for a program entitled **“Promoting Youth Entrepreneurship & Higher Education in the US”**. The program focused on examining this theme through meetings with:

- **Business Careers High School**
- **Trinity University**
- **VelocityTX**

Visitors also spent time exploring the city and attended a Spurs game.



In **October**, thirteen visitors from **BAHRAIN, EGYPT, IRAQ, JORDAN, KUWAIT, MOROCCO, PALESTINE**, and **SAUDI ARABIA** visited San Antonio for a program on ***“Women & Entrepreneurship”***. Their program examined *empowering young girls to pursue nontraditional career fields & entrepreneurship, support networks for women, the efficacy of micro-lending, and addressing the struggles of women and minorities through meetings with:*

- **Stepping Stones Pediatric Feeding & Speech Therapy Clinic**
- **LiftFund**
- **Launch SA**
- **Women’s Business Center**
- **Alamo Travel Group/Ms. Patricia Stout**
- **La Fuerza Unida**
- **Geekdom**

Visitors also participated in a “Project Closing Evaluation” session and dined on the Riverwalk.



In **November**, eight visitors from **BELGIUM, GERMANY, LITHUANIA, MALTA, SPAIN**, and **UNITED KINGDOM** visited San Antonio and Laredo for a program on ***“The Impact of Refugees & Migration on Domestic Policies”***. They examined *local border security & immigration law enforcement and legal services for immigrants* through meetings with:

- **Rio Grande Detention Center**
- **Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid**
- **MALDEF**
- **MATT**
- **US Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE)**
- **RAICES**

Visitors also explored the downtown, biked the Mission Trail, went salsa dancing, went to a Spurs game, and participated in a home hospitality experience.



In **November**, four visitors from **INDIA** visited San Antonio for a program entitled ***“Community Responsiveness: Law Enforcement Leadership”***. Their program examined *US police department operations, training, & community engagement, border security & anti-drug-trafficking partnerships, and community partnerships to prevent human trafficking and support trafficking victims* through meetings with:

- **San Antonio Police Department**
- **Southwest Texas High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA)**
- **SAPD’s San Antonio Fear Free Environment (SAFFE) Unit**
- **SAPD’s Training Academy**
- **Bexar County District Attorney’s Office**
- **RAICES**

Visitors also participated in police “ride-alongs” with on duty SAPD officers as they patrolled the city, as well as spent time exploring San Antonio and attending a Spurs game.



In **December**, eleven visitors from **PAKISTAN** visited San Antonio for a program on ***“Coalition Building for NGOs”***. The program focused on examining *NGO management strategies & fundraising at the local level, supporting the non-profit sector in rural communities, engaging youth in community development programs, advocating and lobbying for children’s rights, and the use of technology and social media in the non-profit community* through meetings with:

- **Martinez Street Women’s Center**
- **San Antonio Area Foundation**
- **Association of Fundraising Professionals**
- **The Non-Profit Council**
- **The Big Give SA**
- **Haven for Hope**
- **Mr. JD Salinas (AT&T)**
- **The Children’s Shelter**
- **MOVE San Antonio**

Visitors also enjoyed activities such as a bus tour of the San Antonio Missions & the Alamo and were guests of honor at SACIV’s annual “Holiday Party”.



In **December**, five visitors from **VIETNAM** visited San Antonio for a program entitled ***“Smart Cities”***. They examined *natural resource management, population growth, and alternative energy* through meetings with:

- **VIA Metropolitan Transportation**
- **City of San Antonio’s Transportation & Capital Improvements (TCI) Department**
- **CPS Energy**
- **City of San Antonio’s Department of Planning & Community Development (DCPD)**
- **SAPD’s Public Safety Answering Point**

Visitors also had the opportunity to tour a local solar farm, participate in cultural activities downtown, and celebrate the season at SACIV’s annual “Holiday Party”.





Event Highlights



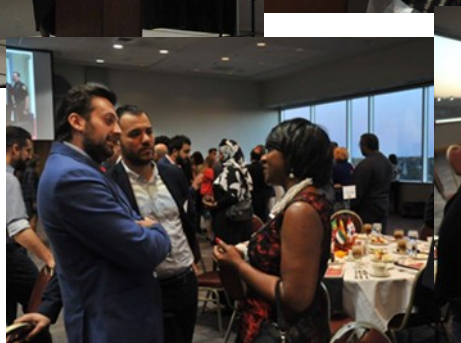
Summer Membership Mixer

On July 27th, 2017, SACIV hosted our annual "Summer Membership Mixer" at La Fonda on Main. Over Mexican inspired hor d'oeuvres and drinks, our members and the community mixed and mingled with our fourteen visitors from Latin America, participating in the "WEAmericas Program for Women Entrepreneurs". We also took the opportunity to honor and recognize our professional resources for meeting with our recent delegations.



28th Anniversary Dinner

On October 25th, 2017, SACIV welcomed our members, locals, and international guests to celebrate our history and impact in the community at our "28th Anniversary Dinner", which took place as a banquet dinner with entertainment and a program at UIW's Rosenberg Skyroom. We welcomed Ambassador Reyna Torres Mendivil, Consul General of Mexico in San Antonio, as our Keynote Speaker who addressed the confluence of cultures that is San Antonio, and honored "International Leadership Award" recipient Mr. Marcos Fragoso, Vice President for International Affairs at the University of the Incarnate Word, for his work to promote citizen diplomacy in San Antonio and to the community. The University of the Incarnate Word was also recognized for its support to SACIV over many years. Additionally, we welcomed eleven international visitors from Lebanon as our special guests, who were visiting the United States on an IVLP program entitled, "Young Leaders Promoting Transparency & Accountability".



Holiday Party

On December 10th, 2017, SACIV celebrated the season at our annual "Holiday Party" at the Wyndham Garden Riverwalk Museum Reach Hotel. SACIV members and the community had a chance to mix and mingle with our visitors from three separate IVLP groups, representing Egypt, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Morocco, UAE, Pakistan, & Vietnam. We also honored our home hospitality hosts for their generous dedication to our organization and to welcoming our visitors into their homes. Global friendships were formed over traditional local holiday food and cultural understanding was enhanced during the December festivities!



Ukrainian Visitors Explore Social Change

By Paige Brown, SACIV Program Coordinator

On November 15th, five visitors from Ukraine visited San Antonio in pursuit of examining strategies that support civic agendas, facilitate social movements, and build capacity for advocacy. The majority of the meetings arranged involved organizations that support various minority groups. Meeting with representatives from the Bexar County Veterans Service Office and the Wounded Warrior Project addressed the challenges and successes of supporting veterans. Meeting with these two organizations emphasized San Antonio's undeniable involvement & attraction to the United States' military, housing the nation's largest active and retired military populations. After all, we are known as the nation's "Military City". The visitors quickly found common ground with representatives from both veteran organizations in hopes of combatting the same issue in their home county. Since 2014, Ukraine soldiers and civilians have combated Russian military aggression, leaving soldiers disabled and citizens displaced. In fact, the staff at the Wounded Warrior Project was surprised to learn that Ukraine as a Wounded Warrior project of their own, called Wounded Warrior Ukraine!

Meeting with former mayor of San Antonio, Phil Hardberger, reminded the visitors of the displacement issue Texas repeatedly faces in the wake of destructive hurricanes. Throughout the meeting, the visitors and former mayor exchanged practices on effective services for individuals who have fled their homes, applicable to both those fleeing from conflict or natural disasters. Phil Hardberger successfully provided housing for thousands of evacuees from Hurricane Katrina and Rita, many of whom remain in the area today. Fortunately, San Antonio did not



have to prepare for such drastic measures in the recent wake of Hurricane Irma.

Lastly, the visitors met with representatives from Eva's Heroes and visited Morgan's Wonderland to learn the various ways San Antonio supports those with disabilities and developmental



delays. Eva's Heroes provides strategies for sustaining healthy, independent lifestyles through recreational and leisure opportunities. On the day of their meeting, Eva's Heroes hosted a dance event allowing the visitors to interact with the teenagers who rely on their services. Perhaps the most interactive meeting of all was the visit to the 25 acre theme park designed with special-needs individuals in mind, Morgan's Wonderland. Touring the park during open hours allowed the Ukrainian visitors to witness park guests utilizing the rides and interactive activities, sometimes even participating themselves! Truly one of a kind, Morgan's Wonderland is an international attraction, welcoming visitors from around the globe every year.



South African Delegation Examines Infrastructure Development

By Paige Brown, SACIV Program Coordinator

In November, five visitors from South Africa arrived in San Antonio in order to learn about our city's infrastructure and development. Their trip explored themes including urban planning and design, environmentally sound development, water resource management, and government transparency & accountability. The delegation met with employees of various departments of the City of San Antonio including the Center City Development & Operations Department, the Office of Municipal Integrity, and the Department of Planning & Community Development. Before embarking on their meetings however, the delegation was invited into the home of Janet and Sam Scott for dinner and true southern hospitality.



During their meeting with Richard Hernandez, the Human Resources Administrator at San Antonio's Office of Municipal Integrity, the delegation learned about the tools implemented to effectively govern the conduct of all City employees and maintain professionalism. Similarly, they also reviewed how to handle misconduct in the workplace as well as ways to prevent, detect, and correct such behavior.

Shifting the focus away from transparency and accountability, the visitors met with Mr. Pedro Analis and Ms. Sarah Esserlieur from the Center City Development and Operations Department, responsible for the development and redevelopment of neighborhoods, business, and cultural & public resources such as the Riverwalk. In correlation, representatives from the Department of Planning & Community Development Department shared how they tackle challenges of urbanization, pollution, and infrastructure problems in order to improve the quality of life and safety of San Antonio neighborhoods. For example, B-Cycle is a recent bicycle sharing project that San Antonio adopted, aimed at promoting clean and affordable transportation. One

current challenges expressed by these employees was the struggle attract service-providing businesses (salons, auto-repair, etc.) to the downtown San Antonio area as it is primarily dominated by restaurants and bars.

Meetings with Port San Antonio and the San Antonio Water System (SAWS) gave our visitors a glimpse into two very specific and successful contributors to San Antonio's economic development.

Port San Antonio's multi-purpose facility is certainly an industrial hub with two railroads, three interstate highways, and an international airport. Housing more than 70 companies with facilities, Port San Antonio has accumulated a great amount of economic activity, translating into revenue for infrastructure improvement and development. The guests seemed particularly intrigued with SAWS for their water conservation practices and expressed interest in adapting similar practices back in South Africa. The delegation was warmly welcomed to SAWS by several staff members of various departments and treated to fajitas during the presentation. This made for a very engaging and memorable meeting.



Colored San Antonio: Impressions from a Ukrainian Woman

Dear Ms. Cecilia,

My name is Svetlana Patra. From May 6th to May 27th, I had an incredible trip to the United States of America. I would like to thank everyone who has done everything to make this trip a reality and to everyone who has worked hard to share as much knowledge as possible during this trip, as we have had a practical experience in improving human life and have felt an incredible amount of positive emotions.

I am very pleased to share my impressions after visiting San Antonio within the framework of the International Visitor Leadership Program ("Integration & Advocacy for Socially Vulnerable Populations", A Project for Ukraine). The city of San Antonio is very colorful and interesting, not a week or even a year would be enough to fully acquaint me with it. I liked the Holiday Inn Riverwalk Hotel and enjoyed walking along the banks of the San Antonio River, as well as the old Alamo and the park around it. Of course, I not only rested, but also acquired new knowledge and experience. It was very useful to learn more about the role of local government in supporting the rights of people with disabilities, on independent living services, and on recreational services for children & young people with disabilities. This knowledge is invaluable for me and showed another side of human needs and opportunities. All this knowledge will be very useful to me in future work.



The most striking part of staying in San Antonio was the visit to the magical Morgan's Wonderland park. It was nice to see how children can play, regardless of whether the child has a disability or not. Gordon Hartman, who helped not only his daughter Morgan, but also other children with disabilities, opened the park and is a very inspiring example for all. This park really helps children and young people with disabilities play at the same level with healthy peers and to participate in activities like swinging, riding a carousel, and trying all kinds of fun on the water. And all this is accessible and safe for people with disabilities. I have to admit that my disease of brittle bones caused a panic in the fear of falls, which made it psychologically hard to climb the stairs or raise my arms at any height, and the language about the various swings or carousels did not help. And yet, I decided still to try to rock on the swing. And I liked it! I rocked on the swing for the first time in my life! What a weird life! To just ride a swing, I had to cross a good half of the earth. But I was not just entertained - I studied the successful US experience to bring back to Ukraine. To make education, play, and work life accessible to all!

Wherever we were in the US, we met representatives of the Ukrainian diaspora. I warmly remember the acquaintance with the Ukrainian community of San Antonio. I saw how Ukrainians in the United States are united around the most important thing - caring for the people in Ukraine.

At the end, I would like to mention people who were with us during the trip, not only during their working hours, but always whenever needed. These are our translators - Ms. Natalia Kononenko, Mr. Peter Wojciechowski, and Mr. Oleksandr Shepel. These people performed their work very professionally. In addition, they made many efforts to insure that we could get as much knowledge, experience, and opportunity as possible (and not only during the working hours). They also showed not only professionalism, but also human readiness to help. They provided tips and assistance in translating during walks and even during numerous flights. Without their diligence, we would not be able to gain so much knowledge and experiences as we did.

I also want to sincerely thank Ms. Cecilia, as well as all the employees of the San Antonio Council for International Visitors who joined this program, for the incredible impressions and extremely useful knowledge that I received from San Antonio.

While visiting the United States (and in particular San Antonio), I realized that nobody, except the person themselves, can build a happy future for themselves. The same applies to the government. Therefore, people with disabilities should not expect that the government will become accessible and tolerant in one magical moment. After all, people who live in it, who, until they encounter a certain problem, may not understand that existence. Consequently, it is necessary to speak clearly and loud about ones problems. And learn to be responsible for your life. And for your country.

Sincerely,

Svetlana Patra

EDITOR'S NOTE:

The following is a letter received by Executive Director, Cecilia Cross, from Ms. Svetlana Patra, a Ukrainian participant in SACIV's "Integration & Advocacy for Socially Vulnerable Populations" program in May 2017. As a journalist, Ms. Svetlana Patra regularly writes about people with special needs, focusing on their successes and triumphs. She is a graduate of Ukraine University, a school known for its progressive ideas in the area of education for students with special needs, and a committed advocate for inclusive education. Ms. Patra is particularly interested in education for people with special needs. She enjoyed exploring the roles that journalism, literature, music, and other cultural media play in supporting inclusion and advocacy for people with disabilities.

"WORLD VIEW"

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San Antonio Council for International Visitors (SACIV) was founded in 1989 as a non-profit, volunteer-based organization aimed at encouraging understanding and friendship between the community and visitors from abroad. SACIV provides information, hospitality, and assistance in making business and professional contacts for these visitors. SACIV is a member of Global Ties US in Washington, DC. This publication is funded by the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs of the US Department of State under the authority of the Fulbright-Hays Act of 1961.

San Antonio Council for International Visitors

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