

Hosting Corner

ATLANTA & WASHINGTON, DC – Open World head **John O’Keefe** met on April 8 at the Center with Atlanta attorney **John E. Hall**, who chairs the **Atlanta-Tbilisi Sister City Committee**. Hall became involved with the Open World Program and the Atlanta-Tbilisi network in March 2007, when he and other members of his law firm home-hosted four lawyers participating in Open World’s first exchange from the Republic of Georgia. Hall briefed O’Keefe and Open World staff on a mutually beneficial relationship that developed as a result of this rule of law trip. During the visit, Atlanta Hawks center **Zaza**

Pachulia, a native of the Republic of Georgia, had provided a substantial in-kind contribution, as well as a memorable experience, when he hosted the delegates at a Hawks basketball game and a dinner. Pachulia later hired one of the delegates to represent him in Georgia. Hall told O’Keefe that there are a number of other joint projects that may result from the relationships developed during the March 2007 exchange, including the launch of a coffeehouse franchise and the importation of world-renowned Georgian wine. In March of this year, Hall and the Atlanta-Tbilisi Sister City Committee hosted an Open World exchange for Georgian university administrators that focused on education fundraising and endowment building. Hall says he appreciates Open World’s emphasis on home-hosting because it allows Americans to get to know the delegates individually. National Grantee: National Peace Foundation



From left, Atlanta-Tbilisi Sister City Committee Chairman John Hall, Open World Executive Director John O’Keefe, and Open World intern Olesya Zrezartseva.

Making a Difference

WASHINGTON, DC – Open World host **William Brock** of Urbandale, Iowa, discussed his and his wife’s support for the Open World Program during an April 3 meeting in Washington, DC, with **Rep. Tom Latham** (Iowa). The couple has home-hosted Open World delegates five times in the last four years for **Iowa Sister States**, which recently honored William Brock as Volunteer of the Year. “Open World is doing more to improve relations between the countries of the former Soviet Union and the United States than practically any other program my wife and I could envision,” Brock told the *Open World News*. Brock gives the example of an Uzbek Open World delegate who, during his delegation’s farewell dinner, apologized for having been indoctrinated against Americans by the Soviet government, as he had learned during his Iowa Open World trip that what the Communist authorities had said about the United States was not true. Open World appreciates the Brocks’ active support and looks forward to their continued involvement in the program.

“Often when I visit a region in Russia I notice that the people who have been most profoundly affected are those who have participated in Open World. The strength of Open World lies in its ability to build lasting and on-going ties and relations.”

~The Honorable William J. Burns

Ambassador of the United States of America to the Russian Federation



From left, Maura Shelden, Open World/Moscow Deputy Country Director Yelena Yefremova, and Open World/Moscow Country Director Alex Khilkov.

Open World in the Field

ST. PETERSBURG & MOSCOW – Open World Public Affairs Officer **Maura Shelden** spent March 26–April 2 seeing how the Russian side of Open World operates and following up with Russian alumni. In St. Petersburg, Shelden and Moscow-based Open World staffer **Yelena Yefremova** visited **TV-100** and **Ekho Moskvyy-St. Petersburg Radio** to meet with journalists who had traveled on 2007 Open World media exchanges. At TV-100, Shelden and Yefremova explored the subtitling and U.S. distribution of the alumni-produced documentary *Looking for Russian Alaska* (Open World News, Issue 1), filmed during a **Rotary**-hosted exchange to Alaska; at the radio station, editor **Natalia Kostitsina** described for her two Open World visitors how she became interested in American public radio and volunteerism during a trip organized by the **Long Beach-Sochi Sister Cities Association** and the **Academy for Educational Development**. In Moscow, Shelden observed an Open World Cultural Leaders predeparture orientation session led by Open World’s **Alexander Khilkov**, and had meetings with a USAID officer and the editor of the influential political and cultural journal *New Literary Review* to discuss submitting Open World news to their publications. Says Shelden, “Meeting Open World alumni and colleagues in person—sharing ideas, realities, a meal—is invaluable to understanding the Open World experience.”

CHISINAU, MOLDOVA – On March 20, **Ambassador Michael Kirby** sat down in his U.S. Embassy office with eight small-town mayors from across Moldova who had traveled to North Carolina together on Open World in November 2007. The mayors wanted to update Ambassador Kirby on the impact that their Open World experience has had so far in their communities. They stressed the importance of the contacts they made in North Carolina and reported on several collaborative projects already in progress. These projects include webconferences on tourism development, business management, and youth-oriented cultural center development, and a Moldovan elementary school to Kernersville elementary school computer e-mail linkup.

Local Host Organization: Forsyth Tech Community College; National Grantee: World Services of La Crosse