



OPEN WORLD LEADERSHIP CENTER

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*Annual Report*  
2003

*As the Open World Program prepares for its sixth year of operation, I am pleased to present our annual report for 2003. This was a milestone year in which Open World grew in size, scope, and responsibility thanks to the vision and support of the United States Congress. This report chronicles our continuing work in Russia as well as our recently authorized expansion to other countries of the Newly Independent States and the Baltic republics.*

*On behalf of the Open World Leadership Center Board of Trustees, I want to thank our many partners who have made a year of record achievement possible: the U.S. embassies in the Russian Federation, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, and Lithuania and our network of host organizations and volunteer hosts in 50 states and the District of Columbia. The commitment and hospitality of our volunteer partners throughout America has consistently been a key to the success of the Open World Program.*

*To illustrate the distinctiveness of these local programs, we are highlighting in this year's report two exemplary American hosts and multiple host communities in Wisconsin. Participation in Open World has been rewarding to our U.S. hosts, as well as to our 7,500 Open World alumni. Profiles of three outstanding Russian alumni reveal how they have effectively applied the knowledge, experience, and friendships gained through Open World to build a civil society and the rule of law.*

*The 2003 Annual Report is a brief snapshot of a dynamic program that brings people from all over Eurasia to regions all over the United States. Please visit our website ([www.openworld.gov](http://www.openworld.gov)) to join or learn more about our work in 2004.*

*Sincerely,*



*James H. Billington  
Chairman, Board of Trustees  
Open World Leadership Center*

## **Board of Trustees**

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The Honorable *James F. Collins*, Former U.S. Ambassador to the Russian Federation

Mr. *George Soros*, Founder of the Open Society Institute



Senator Ted Stevens and Dr. James H. Billington announce key elements of the Open World 2003 Program at the U.S. Consulate in St. Petersburg, Russia.

## Program Overview

The U.S. Congress established the Open World Program in 1999 to bring emerging Russian political and civic leaders to the United States to meet their American counterparts and see American-style democracy and free enterprise in action. The initiative grew out of discussions between Librarian of Congress James H. Billington and Members of Congress, led by Senator Ted Stevens (AK), on ways to increase mutual understanding between the two countries and support Russians' efforts to create a civil society. In December 2000, Congress established a permanent, independent agency to house the program: now the Open World Leadership Center at the Library of Congress.

In February 2003, Congress in Public Law 108-7 expanded the scope of Open World to include the 11 other Freedom Support Act countries, as well as the Baltic republics, and authorized a new initiative for Russian cultural leaders. The year 2003 also saw the refocusing and strengthening of the alumni program for Open World's Russian participants, who now number approximately 7,500, as well as the launch of the new dual-language Open World website, which now allows hosts, prospective participants, and alumni to communicate with each other.

## Program Leadership

The Open World Leadership Center is an independent entity in the Legislative Branch governed by a board of trustees. Librarian of Congress James H. Billington chairs the Open World Leadership Center Board of Trustees, and Senator Ted Stevens (AK), the principal sponsor of the legislation creating and continuing Open World, serves as honorary chairman. Board members appointed by the Congressional leadership are Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (TN), Senator Carl Levin (MI), Representative Amo Houghton (NY), and Representative Robert E. "Bud" Cramer (AL). Citizen board members appointed by the Librarian of Congress to three-year terms in 2001 are former U.S. Ambassador to Russia James F. Collins, former

Representative James W. Symington, and the founder of the Open Society Institute, George Soros.

Open World's Board met on May 8, 2003, to review plans for the new Russian cultural leaders initiative and to decide which countries to recommend to the Congressional Appropriations Committees for the first expansion pilots: Lithuania, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.

## Program Management



The Open World Leadership Center Board of Trustees and staff gather for the May 2003 annual meeting, held in the Capitol.

Open World, although an independent entity, is housed at the Library of Congress. Staff in Washington, D.C., and at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow manage all aspects of the program collaboratively with Open World's logistical contractor, American Councils for International Education; Project Harmony (alumni relations); and The PBN Company (press relations). Geraldine M. Otremba is Open World's Executive Director. Washington, D.C.-based staff for 2003 were Aletta Waterhouse, Program Administrator; Britta Bjornlund, Vera De Buchananne, Lewis Madanick, Program Managers; Igor Inozemtsev, Designer; and Shelly Seaver and Donna Wilson, Program Assistants. Alexander Khilkov is Senior Cultural Affairs Specialist for Open World at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow.

*On behalf of my Open World colleagues in Washington, D.C. and Moscow, I want to thank our American host partners and our Open World alumni and 2003 delegates for their generosity, professional expertise, and commitment to the spirit and goals of Open World. Our deepest thanks are due to Dr. Billington for his continued leadership and devotion to the program.*

*Geraldine M. Otremba  
Executive Director*

## Program Objectives

*Open World is designed to enable emerging leaders from participating countries to:*

- Build mutual understanding with their U.S. counterparts.
- Observe government, business, volunteer, and community leaders in the United States carrying out their daily responsibilities.
- Experience how the separation of powers, the system of checks and balances, freedom of the press, and other key elements of America's democratic system make the government and society more accountable and transparent.
- Develop an understanding of the U.S. free enterprise system.
- Learn how U.S. citizens organize and take initiative to address social and civic needs.
- Share their approaches to challenges their U.S. counterparts also face.
- Participate in American family, community, and cultural activities.
- Establish lasting personal and professional ties with their U.S. hosts and counterparts.

### 2003 Civic Themes

- *Economic Development*
- *Education Reform*
- *Environment*
- *Federalism*
- *Health*
- *Rule of Law*
- *Women as Leaders*
- *Youth Issues*

## What Makes Open World Unique

*Open World exchanges are:*

*Selective* Participation is targeted to current and future political and civic leaders, who must be nominated by designated U.S., international, or in-country organizations, or by Open World alumni. Applications undergo multistage vetting by U.S. Embassy and Open World staff.

*Open to Non-English Speakers* English is not required, thus extending the scope of Open World to a different and untapped generation of leadership. Open World's grants allow a significant investment in professional interpretation for the delegates' programs.

*Intensive* Open World exchanges typically last 10 days (but cultural programs are somewhat longer), beginning with an orientation program in a major U.S. city. The core of the exchange is a working visit with a professional host in a U.S. host community.

*High-Quality* Visits are overseen by competitively selected U.S. nonprofit organizations and institutions with experience hosting foreign leaders. Program staff review and finalize all proposed agendas and monitor visits.

*Theme-Based* Open World organizes delegations in thematic groups in order to respond dynamically to each country's challenges. The 2003 themes for the civic Russia program were economic development, education reform, the environment, federalism, health, rule of law, women as leaders, and youth issues. Civil society was the theme chosen for the Lithuania, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan pilots.

*Individualized* Programs provide interaction with professional counterparts, and hands-on activities and high-level meetings that directly relate to delegates' interests. Most participants stay in private homes, allowing them to experience American family and community life, and to build personal as well as professional relationships in the United States.

*Open World hosted 2,120 participants from Russia, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan in 2003. In total, 7,547 participants have traveled to the United States on the Open World Program since 1999.*

## NEW PROGRAMS

### Cultural Leaders

In 2003, at the request of Congress, the Open World Leadership Center Board of Trustees approved an important new dimension for the core Russia program—the inclusion of cultural leaders. The cultural leaders initiative was recommended by Members of Congress and is a logical and appropriate addition to a program founded upon Dr. James Billington's and the late Academician Dmitri Sergeevich Likhachev's original vision of cross-cultural communication. Dr. Likhachev, who at his death in 1999 was one of the new Russia's most revered figures and who served as Open World's honorary cochairman in its first year, often stressed the importance of cultural interaction between Russia and the West as well as the political importance of cultural leaders in the Russian context.

The cultural program aims to forge better understanding between the United States and Russia by giving Russian cultural leaders unique opportunities to observe and experience American cultural and community life firsthand. Russian and American cultural leaders learn from



*Russian cultural leaders learn about the history of exhibits at the National Gallery of Art during their November 2003 orientation program in Washington, D.C.*

each other's experiences, discuss similar challenges—especially funding for cultural institutions—and develop collaborative projects, such as exhibit exchanges.

Forty-eight Russian cultural administrators, visual and performing artists, and cultural librarians participated in the 2003 pilot cultural initiative. Many delegates were from regional cultural institutions that, though less well known in the West than those of Moscow or St. Petersburg, are especially vibrant—institutions like

the Kizhi State Reserve Museum, the Kareliya Republic Center of National Cultures, and the Samara Regional Museum of Fine Arts. Participants spent three weeks in the United States in order to have sufficient time to collaborate with their counterparts and examine U.S. cultural management and funding in depth. The National Peace Foundation hosted the delegations for Open World, and the National Endowment for the Arts contributed valuable advice.

### Cultural Program – Host Communities

- *Asheville and Brevard, North Carolina*
- *Interlochen and Ann Arbor, Michigan*
- *Grand Rapids and Detroit, Michigan*

Participants enjoyed a specialized orientation in Washington, D.C., followed by an intensive local program in either Michigan or North Carolina, and wrapping up with a debriefing in New York City. Among the topics covered were fundraising, marketing, and staff development. From performing live on Interlochen Public Radio, to studying how to market indigenous crafts at the Oconaluftee Indian Village in North Carolina, the delegates had many opportunities to share their talents and see

how their American counterparts expand cultural participation in their communities. Participants learned valuable and transferable cultural management techniques. Visiting with Representative Charles H. Taylor, who had first proposed the cultural initiative, in his home in Brevard was a special highlight for the North Carolina delegates.

### Ukraine

The Center's Board of Trustees wanted to implement one pilot in a country within the European sphere of the former Soviet Union, and a second in Central Asia. Ukraine was selected because of its strategic position in Eurasia and its potential to contribute to regional stability.



*Dr. Sergiy Korsunsky, Minister-Counselor of the Ukrainian Embassy, meets with visiting delegates from Ukraine.*

The overarching theme for the first 2003 Open World Ukraine exchange was “civil society.” Open World selected this theme after thoroughly reviewing bilateral relations and U.S. assistance programs in Ukraine, and consulting with State Department officials, staff of the U.S. Embassy in Kyiv, and Ukraine policy experts. Each delegation concentrated on one of three aspects of civil society: NGO development, independent media, or electoral processes.

Open World hosted its first delegations of leading Ukrainian journalists, lawyers, and NGO representatives in December 2003. Delegations were hosted for their professional programs in Atlanta, Georgia; Cincinnati, Ohio; Memphis, Tennessee; Washington, D.C.; and Youngwood, Pennsylvania. The Academy for Educational Development; Friendship Force International; the International Institute of the Graduate School, USDA; and Vital Voices Global Partnership served as the host organizations.

Highlights included meeting with Ambassador Carlos Pascual, Coordinator of U.S. Assistance to Europe and Eurasia and former ambassador to Ukraine, in Washington, D.C.; with the director of *CNN World Report* at CNN headquarters in Atlanta; and with the mayor and city council of Memphis. Discussions focused on the role of the media during an election cycle, the development of effective NGOs and advocacy campaigns, and the role of a vibrant free press in a democratic society. Most delegates had home stays, which allowed them to participate in American family and community life.



Former Ambassador to Ukraine Carlos Pascual (center foreground) meets with Ukrainian NGO leaders.

## Ukraine Program – Host Communities

- Atlanta, Georgia
- Cincinnati, Ohio
- Memphis, Tennessee
- Washington, D.C.
- Youngwood, Pennsylvania

The U.S. deputy chief of mission in Ukraine, Marie Yovanovitch, met with Open World alumnae, who returned to Ukraine enthusiastic to contribute further to their country’s democratic transition. One of the alumnae stated, “It was important for us to see American women in leadership positions—self-confidence promotes leadership qualities.”

## Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan is a Muslim republic that fell within the former Soviet Union’s reach into Central Asia. Encouraging democracy and a market economy in Uzbekistan is central for stability in the entire region.

The Uzbekistan pilot focused on the theme of “civil society,” with concentrations on economic development, health, and independent media. Open World selected this theme after thoroughly reviewing bilateral relations and U.S. assistance programs in Uzbekistan, and consulting with State Department officials and staff of the U.S. Embassy in Tashkent, as well as representatives from Uzbek organizations.



Independent journalists from Uzbekistan meet with Washington Post foreign editor David Hoffman (center) during their December 2003 Open World visit.

Immediately before the Uzbek delegation left for their Open World visit to the United States, Open World held a press conference in Tashkent that was attended by more than 35 journalists, a number of whom wrote articles on the program. The first 48 participants from Uzbekistan arrived in Washington, D.C., in December 2003 and included senior representatives from Uzbekistan’s Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Public Health, and Central Bank; prominent journalists; NGO leaders; and

entrepreneurs, many of whom were women. Delegates were hosted for their professional programs in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania; Cleveland, Ohio; Des Moines, Iowa; Grapevine, Texas; Huntsville, Alabama; Kent, Ohio; Lexington, Kentucky; Los Angeles, California; Santa Cruz, California; and Seattle, Washington. The American International Health Alliance, the Academy for Educational Development, and Rotary International served as the host organizations.

Highlights of the various delegations' visits included meeting with *Washington Post* foreign editor David Hoffman, holding discussions with Lieutenant Governor Katherine Baker Knoll of Pennsylvania, meeting with Representative Jim McDermott (WA), and participating

in a roundtable with Huntsville broadcast journalists. The Uzbek visitors focused discussions on the role of government in economic reforms; investment and international cooperation; women in business; rural health; TB/HIV and drug abuse prevention; and a democratic media. All delegates lived with host families, who introduced them to American family and community life.

## Uzbekistan Program – Host Communities

- *Bethlehem, Pennsylvania*
- *Cleveland, Ohio*
- *Des Moines, Iowa*
- *Grapevine, Texas*
- *Huntsville, Alabama*
- *Kent, Ohio*
- *Lexington, Kentucky*
- *Los Angeles, California*
- *Santa Cruz, California*
- *Seattle, Washington*

Former U.S. Ambassador to Russia James F. Collins, a member of Open World's Board of Trustees, met with many of the delegates during a recent trip to Uzbekistan. The new alumni commented on the value of making professional contacts in the United States and seeing how American society addresses challenges that also face Uzbekistan. They also appreciated having the opportunity to educate Americans about Uzbekistan. Ambassador Collins heard how alumni are putting their Open World experience to work in their communities by writing articles for the local press, establishing Rotary clubs, drafting proposals for developing child and maternity health care services, and planning new programs for children with disabilities.

## Lithuania

Lithuania was selected for a pilot because of its commitment to democracy and market economy and because of

Congressional interest in including a Baltic republic. The first Lithuanian delegation—made up of mayors, district administrators, youth activists, newspaper editors, company directors, and other political and civic leaders—arrived in the United States in February 2004. “Civil society” served as the pilot's main theme, with entrepreneurship, the environment, local administration, media, NGO development, and youth issues among the subthemes.

## Lithuania Program – Host Communities

- *Burlington, Vermont*
- *Chicago, Illinois*
- *Detroit, Michigan*
- *Fort Collins, Colorado*
- *Moorhead, Minnesota*
- *Omaha, Nebraska*
- *Portland, Oregon*

The Academy for Educational Development, Friendship Force International, and the International Institute of the Graduate School, USDA, hosted the inaugural Lithuanian delegations in Burlington, Vermont; Chicago, Illinois; Detroit, Michigan; Fort Collins, Colorado; Moorhead, Minnesota; Omaha, Nebraska; and Portland, Oregon. Highlights of these programs included briefings at the *Chicago Tribune* and the *Chicago Sun-Times*, a roundtable at Colorado's Court Appointed Special Advocates Organization, and visits to Lithuanian cultural centers.



*Jeff Nelson, Executive Director of the U.S.-Baltic Foundation, speaks at the first Lithuania Program orientation, with facilitator Jolanta Taruskiene translating.*

*In 2003, a total of 1,201 families in 542 host communities in 46 states provided home stays for Open World participants.*

## OPEN WORLD HOSTS

Seventeen nongovernmental and governmental organizations from across the United States received grants in calendar year 2003 from the Open World Leadership Center to administer the program's community visits. All were competitively selected for their expertise in conducting international visitation programs. These national hosting organizations either provided the programming themselves, or worked through a network of local organizations and institutions, such as universities, community colleges, civic groups, sister-city associations, and non-profit education and training corporations.

At the local level, hosts planned and carried out the professional programs, and they arranged participants' housing, local transportation, meals, and after-hours community and cultural events. Much of this support was provided as an in-kind contribution by the host organizations and the many host families who welcomed Open World participants into their homes. In 2003, a total of 1,201 families in 542 communities in 46 states provided home stays for Open World visitors. Fully 83 percent of Open World's 2003 participants resided in private homes during their visits, enabling them to participate in American family and community life.

Open World owes a special debt of gratitude to the dedicated individuals who coordinated local hosting for the program in 2003; to the federal and state judges who so willingly gave of their time to serve as judicial hosts for the specialized rule of law program in the past year; and to the host communities and host families who provided such warm welcomes to their Open World guests. The hosts and host communities presented here exemplify that generous spirit.

### Dot Cada

*Profession: Certified Financial Planner*  
*Host organizations: Rotary International and Friendship Force International*  
*Host communities: Northern Colorado and Wyoming (various cities)*  
*Delegations hosted: 7*  
*Host since: 1999*  
*Sister-city relationship: Saratov*

Coloradoan Dot Cada is one of Open World's "pioneer" hosts. During the program's initial 1999 pilot year, she served as host coordinator for two of the exchanges conducted by Rotary District 5440, and assisted with



*An October 2002 political rally in Colorado provides an introduction to American-style electioneering for Russian Open World participants hosted by Dot Cada (back row, left).*

*27 U.S. Members of Congress, 8 state governors, and 70 mayors were actively involved in the Open World Program in 2003.*

another three. Her report on her hosting experience that year helped shape the next stage of the Open World pilot. In 2002-2003, Cada organized local programs for a total of five economic development and health delegations hosted by the Northern Colorado chapter of Friendship Force International. By design, nearly all the delegates Cada

has welcomed since 2002 have come from Saratov, a place with which she has a special connection. In 1996, two years after she had visited this large industrial city on the Volga River for the first time, Cada returned to start a micro-credit project that has led to the creation of new businesses in a range of industries. She received Rotary International's Service Above Self Award in 1999-2000 for her work on the project, which is ongoing.

Cada has found Open World an ideal vehicle for exposing Saratov's emerging leaders to American-style free enterprise and civic activism. A certified financial planner by profession, she helps her delegates visualize and plan for their own and their city's future using the expertise she developed working with her clients. And whenever she returns to the place she now considers her second home, she always makes sure to check on how "her" alumni are implementing the ideas and insights they gained during their Open World visits to Northern Colorado. Below are some of her thoughts on hosting Open World participants.

#### *On Open World delegates ...*

The Open World Program helps me to really get the very best young talent to experience our market-driven economy and also the humanitarian nature of Americans. I can't say enough about how Open World's additional screening for community involvement produces candidates that tend, in my opinion, to be the forward



thinkers, the ones who can get above the problems now and see a better Russia.

### *On host families' Open World experience ...*

Almost everyone, even those that have hosted Russians from other programs, have just felt like their efforts were so worth the time and inconvenience. They also seem to have more hope for Russia because of these young leaders.



*Dot Cada (left) with Russian delegates Dmitry Sakseltsev (center) and Svetlana Timoshok (right).*

We had some of the delegates tear up at the way hosts and Friendship Force members just tried so hard to fill all their desires. They did not realize the capacity we as Americans have to give, and thought that I was just the unusual one.

### *On Open World home stays ...*

This is absolutely, in my opinion, the way to bridge the gap of understanding. Participants see how a real American family works and how, usually, the men in the household help with "housework" and the women may shovel the snow or take trash or recyclables to the curb. That recycling observation is something we try and encourage families to fit in. We also try to have some progressive suppers so they get in at least two or three other homes in the group. If there are children in the host family, we try and have the participants take lunch with them at school. We have been lucky that there has usually been a fund-raiser of some sort or a health fair or other community event, so they see how some of the higher government officials are right there with the local mechanic.

I'd guess about half of the delegates that have e-mail are still in some form of contact with their host families. Also, I end up delivering photos and small gifts from the

*838 Russian judges and legal professionals have been hosted by 74 U.S. federal and state judges as part of Open World visits focused on the rule of law.*

Americans and usually taking gifts back from the Russians for their host families. The alumni always ask me if I've seen their hosts and how they are.

### *On Open World's experiential approach ...*

This firsthand experience has been a "light bulb" coming on to most. That is the moment that is most fulfilling to me. The participants can see how all the theory ties together and how people like themselves have "made it." They get excited about the new concepts and know that I will be coming to see what they were able to Russify into their situation. They love to show me how they have adapted an idea they picked up here to work under their system. It's amazing to me, that sometimes it seems even better.

### *On what participants learn from the host community ...*

In 2002 it was election time, and our visitors that year absolutely could not believe they could just go up and talk to candidates without days of contact effort. They had pictures taken with many of them at a political rally. They really all seem to come away with the knowledge that we in the end have the same needs and cares for our families and countries and world peace.

## Judge Michael M. Mihm

*Profession: U.S. District Judge*

*Host court: U.S. District Court, Central District of Illinois*

*Host community: Peoria, Illinois*

*Delegations hosted: 3*

*Host since: 2001*

*Sister-court relationship: Vladimir Region Court*

Judge Michael M. Mihm of Peoria, Illinois, has been involved with the Open World Program since 2000, when, at the request of Dr. Billington, he helped design a specialized rule of law program for Russian jurists.

Through his past service as chairman of the U.S. Judicial Conference's International Judicial Relations Committee, and as the Committee's Russia liaison, Judge Mihm had gained the trust and respect of the most senior members of the Russian judiciary.

Judge Mihm not only helped design the program and ensure its acceptance by both his Russian and his American colleagues, he also served as one of the hosts for the inaugural specialized rule of law exchange in July

2001, hosting his delegation in his home. Since then, he has cohosted a delegation headed by Russian Supreme Court Justice Yuriy Ivanovich Sidorenko, Chairman of the Russian Federation Council of Judges, who has become a close friend, and hosted another composed of judges from the Vladimir region in central European Russia. Judge Mihm's court now has a sister-court relationship with the Vladimir Regional Court, and he visits "his" alumni there and elsewhere in Russia regularly.

Judge Mihm has been honored by the Council of Judges for his work with the Russian judiciary, and in summer 2004 he will receive the U.S. Agency for International Development's Outstanding Citizen Achievement Award. Some of his reflections on hosting Open World rule of law program participants are below.

### *On the strengths of the Open World Program ...*

Open World is such an unqualified success because it involves the "total immersion" of the Russian visitors into our judicial, legal, and social systems. The two-day orientation in Washington is a good introduction to our legal system, and it gives our Russian colleagues the opportunity to observe the status of judges in our nation's capital. Often the members of a delegation have the opportunity to meet their host judge in Washington, so friendships are already being forged before the delegation travels to the host city. The heart and soul of the program begins when the large delegation splits into smaller delegations on the first Saturday and the judges travel to wherever: Brooklyn, Minneapolis, New Haven, Nashville, Chicago, Cleveland, Tampa, Seattle, Los Angeles, Peoria, etc. In the host community the Russian judges quickly come to understand who we are as people, how we perform our jobs on a daily basis, how we interact with other segments of the community, the respect that we receive from our fellow citizens, what others expect of us and what we expect of ourselves. We bring them into



*U.S. District Judge Michael M. Mihm (right) accompanies Russian Supreme Court Justice Yuriy Ivanovich Sidorenko (left) during a visit to Chicago, which local Russian-American attorney Olga Loy (center) helped conduct.*

our homes as honored guests. By the time they leave a week later they are members of the family.



*Judge Michael Mihm (second from right), and his wife, Judy (center), attend an event at the Russian Academy of Justice in Moscow with three of their guests: (from left) Judge Vladimir Poletov, Judge Yuriy Sobina, and facilitator Vladislav Nepovinnov.*

### *On the impact of Open World onsite experiences ...*

The onsite aspect of the Open World Program is absolutely essential. There is no other way that we could even begin to adequately describe who we are as people and how we live our professional and personal lives, any more than they could do the same. Living in the American community for a week lets them see how our courts "really" function, warts and all. They see how we interact with other people. Again, they see the considerable standing we have in our communities. They come to understand that when we rule, even if the ruling is very unpopular, our people abide by the ruling. Thus the phrase "Rule of Law."

### *On reactions from other Open World U.S. host judges ...*

The American judges who have hosted an Open World delegation will tell you, almost without exception, that the experience has been one of the most rewarding and enjoyable experiences of their lives. In fact, many have used the same words—that it was a "defining moment" in their professional and personal lives. Interestingly, if I am with a group of American judges who have hosted Open World delegations, and we are talking about their visits, most of us get teary eyed in the process. When I am in Russia and meeting with a group of Open World alumni, they are all teary eyed.

### *On judicial reform in Russia ...*

I am very optimistic about the future of the Russian judiciary. The judicial reforms that were enacted in 2001, such as empowering judges to sign arrest and search warrants, limiting how long a person can be held with-

out being taken before a judge, extending the use of jury trials in certain cases to the whole country—these are major accomplishments. A lot of observers look at Russia and say, “It has been 10 to 12 years, and still they have all these problems.” On the other hand, I would say, “Russian judges have accomplished many important goals in the past 10 years. My Russian friends tell me that much still needs to be accomplished in the future to reach the day where they will be satisfied with the state of their judicial system, but they will not rest in their efforts until that day arrives.”

### *On Open World memories ...*

My favorite moments from hosting three Open World delegations in Peoria have all occurred in our home, where my wife, Judy, and our children and grandchildren have made an effort to make our Russian guests truly feel like part of our family. Before the first delegation

*Open World has brought 153 members of the Russian Federation Council and State Duma to the United States.*

arrived in 2001, my wife and I panicked a few days before the arrival. We worried that our cultures were too different to interface on a home-stay basis. (We later learned from our new Russian friends that they were even more worried than we were. They thought living with us in our home for a week would be a disaster and would ruin their great adventure.) Instead, it was one of the most wonderful experiences of our lives. Making *pelmeni* (Siberian dumplings) from scratch in our kitchen; planting a tree in our front yard to commemorate their visit (we now have planted three “Russia Trees”); my wife, Judy, presenting each of them with a real key to our front door—these are memories that warm the heart on the coldest nights. All of our Russian guests are often in our thoughts, and we know that we are often in theirs.

## Selected Examples of 2003 Delegates and Program Activities by Theme

THEME	POSITION	ORGANIZATION	U.S. PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY
Economic Development	Director	Ust-Kut City Job Center, Irkutsk Region	Director of government relations for the Employment Security Commission of North Carolina discusses workforce development and labor market issues such as occupational wage rates and long-range employment trends.
Education Reform	Director	Kaliningrad College of Social and Pedagogical Studies, Kaliningrad Region	President of Panola College in Carthage, Texas, reviews the community college's role in meeting the needs of people in its area with services like distance learning.
Environment	Department Head	Nizhniy Tagil Medical Epidemiological Control Center, Sverdlovsk Region	A water-treatment program manager at the Tennessee Valley Authority briefs delegates on major water-quality problems and related research and development efforts.
Federalism	Head	Kandalaksha City Administration, Murmansk Region	Budget director for the governor of Wisconsin gives a presentation on how the governor's budget was shaped with local governments and services in mind.
Health	Chief Physician	Center of State Sanitary and Epidemiological Control in Kikvidzensk Provincial District, Volgograd Region	U.S. Public Health Service official conducts training in Bethesda, Maryland, on preventive health practices developed by the National Institutes of Health and other medical research institutions.
Rule of Law	Chief Judge	Chuvashiya Republic Supreme Court	Federal judges in Springfield, Illinois, and delegates participate in a roundtable on the American jury system and jury selection process.
Women as Leaders	Deputy Administration Head	City of Ryazan, Ryazan Region	City commissioners of Great Falls, Montana, discuss the role of women in public administration and politics.
Youth Issues	Chairperson	Parents of Disabled Children Association, Pskov City, Pskov Region	Administrators and teachers at a middle school in Denver, Colorado, illustrate how the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) influences the services they offer to special needs children and their families.

## Profile of La Crosse and the Fox Cities, Wisconsin

World Services of La Crosse, Wisconsin, and its president and chief executive officer, Sandra McCormick, first came to Open World's attention in December 2000, when the *New York Times* reported on the groundbreaking work in Dubna, a small city about 100 miles north of Moscow. Thousands of medical professionals, community leaders, and ordinary citizens in La Crosse and Dubna had been working together since 1992 to address, on a micro level, some of Russia's most pressing health challenges, including heart disease, declining birth rates, alcohol and substance abuse, and domestic violence. Thanks to this remarkable partnership, Dubna had set up a women's wellness center; medical facilities for diabetes, renal dialysis, and cardiac rehabilitation; and a comprehensive program for preventing domestic violence.

McCormick and her Wisconsin colleagues wanted to do more. They had learned valuable lessons in Dubna, and they had a vision of creating similarly dynamic partnerships between other American and Russian communities. In 2002, World Services applied for the first time to host Open World exchanges, and the organization included a promising model for community development in its proposal. Multidisciplinary teams would be recruited from the same community, with an effort made to include one or more government officials. During their visit, members of a given team would focus on specific issues already identified as priorities by their community, and do intensive planning for follow-on activities that they would undertake as a team on their return, with technical support from their U.S. partner community. Ultimately, in 2002-2003, World Services hosted 323 participants for Open World. During its first year alone, World Services hosted Open World delegations in 10 different communities.

With help from Open World, World Services has extended its reach across the United States and Russia to establish these vibrant, committed sister-city partnerships:

- Appleton/Fox Cities, Wisconsin • Kurgan/Shchuchye, Kurgan Region
- Livermore, California • Snezhinsk, Chelyabinsk Region

- Los Alamos, New Mexico • Sarov, Nizhniy Novgorod Region
- Blount County, Tennessee • Zheleznogorsk, Kursk Region

These partnerships extend the idea of "wellness" far beyond health care to embrace education, economic development, environmental protection, and civic development—all issues central to Russia's efforts to build a civil society. And the Americans involved have benefited as well. Assessing the impact on the citizens of her own hometown, McCormick says, "La Crosse volunteers have given generously of their time to achieve successful outcomes in Russia, but there is no one involved who does not believe that what we have gained by our experiences has far surpassed our contributions."

The culmination of McCormick's vision for a new model of community development came in October 2003. That month, World Services and the Fox Cities/Kurgan Sister Cities organization hosted a major conference in Appleton, Wisconsin, that brought 37 Open World political leaders from the five partner cities to work intensively with their American colleagues and each other to refine the model so that it might be used broadly in Russia to address major issues in health, education, and the environment. The environment was a major focus at the conference because two of the partnership communities, Kurgan city and nearby Shchuchye, are home to enormous stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons—stockpiles so poorly guarded that the United States is building a huge disposal plant there. Meanwhile, Shchuchye's citizens lack safe water, reliable power supplies, and any dependable warning system for environmental emergencies.

Open World is fortunate to have participants hosted by the dedicated, generous, and farsighted communities of the Fox Cities and La Crosse. The cooperation that links Wisconsin to Russia has provided an opportunity for Open World to help strengthen the new generation of political leadership in multiple communities in Russia, while allowing the five partnered American communities to coalesce around the gift of good work.

### FOX CITIES

- *City of Appleton*
- *City of Kaukauna*
- *City of Menasha*
- *City of Neenah*
- *Village of Combined Locks*
- *Village of Kimberly*
- *Village of Little Chute*
- *Town of Buchanan*
- *Town of Freedom*
- *Town of Grand Chute*
- *Town of Greenville*
- *Town of Menasha*
- *Town of Neenah*
- *Town of Vandenbroek*



*Senator Bill Frist (TN) compares notes with fellow heart surgeon Dr. Natasha Filinova (right), as other members of a World Services delegation from Zheleznogorsk look on.*

## EMBASSY PARTNERS



*U.S. Ambassador to the Russian Federation Alexander Vershbow (center) and Open World Program Manager Vera De Buchananne prepare to address the librarian alumni conference in St. Petersburg in November 2003.*

“Through our public diplomacy programs, especially our cultural and educational exchanges, we work hard to expand ties between key institutions and ordinary citizens in both nations. The Open World Program has made an extraordinary contribution to this effort, bringing 2,100 of Russia’s emerging political and civic leaders to America last year alone to see first-hand how our society confronts the challenges of democracy.

Open World participants take the lessons they learn about our democratic society back to Russia. My colleagues at the Embassy and I have been very pleased to personally meet with many of Open World’s 7,500 alumni throughout Russia this past year to learn first-hand about the important work they are doing to shape Russia’s democratic future. I am grateful to the Congress of the United States for continuing to support the Open World Program at this important juncture in U.S.-Russian relations.”

*Alexander Vershbow  
U.S. Ambassador  
to the Russian Federation*

“Last year, 48 citizens of Uzbekistan got the chance of a lifetime to participate in the Open World Program. For these Uzbeks, Open World provided the only opportunity many of them may ever have to experience life in the United States. Open World plays a critical role in exposing promising young people to many of the values that we believe are important for any country to reach its full potential in the world. Uzbeks want and need to know more about the U.S., and Open World is one of the best ways to do this.”

*Jon R. Purnell  
U.S. Ambassador to Uzbekistan*

“The expansion of the Open World Program to Ukraine comes at an important stage in Ukraine’s transition to a democratic society. Bringing together U.S. and Ukrainian political and civic leaders assists in this transition and strengthens bilateral relations. I personally met the first group of Ukrainian Open World delegates and was impressed by their professionalism, enthusiasm and commitment to democratic reform in Ukraine. Our meetings with the alumni since their return from the United States have confirmed that exchange programs such as Open World inspire young leaders and serve to reaffirm their commitment to democracy.”

*John Herbst  
U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine*

“In November 2002, President George Bush stood in Rotuse Square in Vilnius and spoke about the cooperation between Lithuania and America. The Open World Program is an invaluable opportunity for continuing this cooperation and allowing more Lithuanians and Americans to become acquainted through home stays and meetings.

The Open World Program has been one of the most effective public diplomacy programs the United States government has created and funded. When, as ambassador, I learned that Congress and the Open World board proposed to expand the Open World Program to Lithuania, I recognized at once the important opportunity the Embassy had been offered. I know that our first delegations found warmth, insight, and new ideas during their visits to the U.S. The unique Open World intense, practical focus has benefited not only the participants building a civil society in Lithuania, but also the communities and organizations these leaders head in Lithuania.”

*Stephen Mull  
U.S. Ambassador to Lithuania*



*U.S. Ambassador to Lithuania Stephen Mull and Open World Program Manager Britta Bjornlund greet the Lithuanian delegates in Vilnius before their trip to the United States.*

EMBASSY PARTNERS

## OPEN WORLD LEADERS

### Environmental Leadership – Aleksandr Eduardovich Vrishch

For Open World alumnus and ecologist Aleksandr Eduardovich Vrishch, a typical day at the office means fighting poachers and combating the illegal wildlife trade. From saving the Siberian tiger population to coordinating biodiversity conservation projects, Vrishch, through the Vladivostok-based Phoenix Foundation, is taking on urgent environmental issues facing the Russian Far East.



*Aleksandr Eduardovich Vrishch studies the Alaska fishing industry during his March 2003 Open World visit.*

In March 2003, Vrishch traveled to Alaska on an Open World exchange, heading first to the former gold-mining town of Girdwood to take part in an international conference entitled “Sustaining the Bering Sea.” The conference itself, an excursion to the Alaska coast, and a visit to a local fish-processing facility stood out as especially worthwhile experiences. “I valued the opportunity to speak with the directors of the fishery and fishermen,” commented Vrishch. “They were so open and honest, very specific and detailed.”

The Open World trip allowed Vrishch to share environmental ideas with his American counterparts and to brief them on the ecological dangers of the increased tanker traffic from the oil and gas fields off Sakhalin.

His host, Jennifer Castner Eyres, Russian Program Officer for Pacific Environment, noted that “based on his experience fighting poachers in the Russian Far East, Aleksandr Vrishch brought a unique perspective to the discussion about ways of combating the illegal fishing that plagues the Russian side of the Bering Sea. Aleksandr stood out ... for his high-energy, enthusiastic participation in every aspect of the Alaska trip.”

At an Open World alumni conference on the environment held in October 2003 in Khabarovsk, Vrishch

spoke about his efforts to educate the public on the region’s unique flora and fauna and to defend the region’s wildlife. He shared his ideas on raising awareness about the environment—both its beauty and its frailness—among the general population, and children in particular. He spoke not just as an activist but as an educator, as he also teaches biology at Far Eastern State University’s college of preuniversity education. Vrishch is now working with other participants from the Khabarovsk conference to create a network for program alumni interested in environmental issues, develop strategic plans for the upcoming year, and design a website to house information about all their projects.

### Political Leadership – Olga Yevgenyevna Pak

Olga Yevgenyevna Pak moved from Moscow to her hometown of Novokuznetsk in Kemerovo Region several years ago intending to work full-time on promoting women’s rights and combating domestic violence, as she had done at the ANNA Moscow Crisis Center for Women. In 2002, she cofounded Clean World, an organization devoted to preventing domestic violence, and joined with other Novokuznetsk activists to provide outreach and services to affected women. When Pak applied that same year to take part in an Open World “women as leaders” exchange focusing on human trafficking, she had only recently started hearing that trafficking was a problem in her region.

*The Washington Post* described Pak and the 12 other delegates who arrived in the nation’s capital on October 24, 2002, as “leaders in democracy-building and in the fights against human trafficking, sexual exploitation, and domestic violence.” Their visit marked the first time that a delegation combining high-level federal officials and grassroots activists had come from Russia to



*Activist Olga Pak (third from right) and fellow members of her “women as leaders” delegation gather before a sculpture of pioneering U.S. suffragettes in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda.*

the United States to work on preventing human trafficking, which claims many thousands of Russian victims every year. Vital Voices Global Partnership, the delegates' host organization, lined up the most experienced and prominent trafficking experts in the United States to meet with the delegates. In addition to exchanging information with their U.S. counterparts, the delegates participated in sessions on legislative analysis, leadership, and advocacy.

Says Pak of her visit, "I was introduced to a new topic—the hidden world of organized crime and my countrywomen who become victims of this 'business.'" She had found a new mission.

Back home, Pak shared her trip experience with Clean World's three other cofounders, and they began strategizing on how to counter the "Employment Abroad" and "Marry a Foreigner" ads in local newspapers. Pak could understand the appeal of such ads in a region where constant downsizing in the largest enterprises—metallurgical works and mines—had left thousands of women unemployed.

Pak and her associates have undertaken a number of new initiatives since Open World inspired her to focus more of Clean World's work on trafficking prevention. Training and background information on human trafficking is being given to city crisis-hotline workers and school psychologists. Education and outreach materials are distributed to women at risk of being trafficked. Two informal surveys have been conducted among high school girls to assess their awareness of the danger. And Pak hopes to create a television show on women's issues that will provide a vehicle for alerting women to this human rights abuse.

## Judicial Leadership – Chief Judge Lyubov Fedorovna Olyunina

In St. Petersburg's Pushkin District, home of some of the czars' most lavish palaces, a modest brick structure houses the court of a jurist helping lead the way for judicial reform in Russia: Chief Judge and Open World alumna Lyubov Fedorovna Olyunina. Judge Olyunina is an Honored Jurist of the Russian Federation and a recipient of the Medal of Honor, one of the highest awards bestowed on Russian judges. In recognition of her leadership role, she was among eight St. Petersburg jurists Open World invited to visit St. Petersburg and Tampa, Florida, on a November 2002 rule of law exchange—an

exchange that also helped launch the joint celebration of the Russian St. Petersburg's 300th anniversary and its American namesake's 100th anniversary in 2003.

Judge Olyunina was part of a delegation hosted by then Chief Judge Elizabeth A. Kovachevich and U.S. Magistrate Judge Elizabeth Jenkins of the Middle District of Florida, St. Petersburg College President Carl Kuttler, Jr., and the Rotary clubs of St. Petersburg and Ybor City. The delegation's professional program responded to the many changes that Russia's judicial system was—and still is—undergoing as a result of major judicial reform legislation

enacted in 2001. A mock trial demonstrated evidence-presentation technology and gave the Russians, who were serving as jurors, a firsthand experience with jury-trial procedure. There was strong interest in this event, since Russia would begin adopting

jury trials for serious crimes on a nationwide basis in 2003. One-on-one and roundtable discussions with U.S. federal and state judges during the course of the visit allowed the delegates to ask questions about the fine points of the discovery process, pretrial detention procedures, case management, and other topics.

*Open World sponsored 306 alumni activities throughout Russia in 2003, including individual consultations, professional development workshops, regional thematic conferences, and information technology training seminars.*



Chief Judge Lyubov Fedorovna Olyunina.

The trip also provided the delegation with hands-on exposure to court automation processes, another area that Russia's judiciary is working to modernize to make its court proceedings more efficient and transparent. These demonstrations deeply impressed Judge Olyunina, who reports, "My visit to the U.S. provided me with an outstanding opportunity to see the high level of administration and automation in U.S. courts. As a result of my visit, my court has implemented processes to assign cases randomly by computer and the court's case processing statistics have been automated." Her court now also uses court clerks to handle all the intake of petitioners' cases, rather than having judges involved in the process.

Judges Kovachevich and Jenkins had the opportunity to observe these and other changes Judge Olyunina had made since her Open World visit when they spent a day in her court during a July 2003 trip to Russia. Judge Jenkins praises her Russian colleague as “a dedicated, compassionate jurist who strives to provide justice for all litigants and an efficient and supportive work environment for the judges and clerical staff in her court.” Both U.S. judges noted the respect accorded to her by all those associated with the court.

The progress that the Pushkin District Court has made under Judge Olyunina has earned her another, more tangible form of recognition: the Judicial Department of the Russian Federation is building her a new courthouse.

## Open World Alumni

In 2003, Open World continued its core commitment to maintain contact with its Russian alumni and provide opportunities for their personal and professional growth. A multifaceted alumni outreach program based in Russia now offers professional development workshops, thematic conferences, seminars, networking opportunities, web-based forums, and a newsletter to its past participants, activities designed to strengthen management and communications skills. The nonprofit organization Project Harmony, Inc., conducts the program with assistance from 26 regional alumni coordinators.

Open World collaborates closely with the U.S. Embassy in Moscow and other U.S. government programs in Russia to continue contact with its alumni. The intensive Open World U.S. visit is a catalyst for long-term communication.

Alumni conferences held in 2003 focused on the environment, information management, and health. Alumni from Eastern Siberia and the Russian Far East met in Khabarovsk to share projects, study strategic management, and develop an ecology resource network to encourage government, NGOs and business to cooperate on environmental protection. Library leaders from European Russia met at the National Library of Russia in St. Petersburg to consider

the role of libraries in the community. The conference was opened by U.S. Ambassador to the Russian Federation Alexander Vershbow; the Russian Ministry of Culture’s head of libraries, Evgeny Kuzmin; and Russian National Library Director and conference host Vladimir Zaitsev.



*Open World alumni from the Russian Far East and Eastern Siberia work on an exercise at the environmental conference Open World conducted in Khabarovsk in October 2003.*

The topic of health care brought Volga Region alumni to Novokuibyshevsk (near Samara) for the final conference of 2003, which resulted in plans to promote antismoking campaigns, curb the spread of infectious diseases, and develop a reform model for Samara’s regional healthcare system.

Open World’s alumni also remain engaged with the program, each other, and their U.S. hosts by taking part in in-country follow-up activities organized by members of the American International Health Alliance, Rotary International, and other Open World national host organizations; by participating in U.S.–Russia sister-court and co community-to-community health part-

nerships; and by forming their own independent alumni organizations, which now exist in, among other cities, Kaliningrad, Kaluga, Moscow, Perm, Samara, St. Petersburg, and Tula.

### Regional Alumni Coordinator Locations

- Barnaul
- Blagoveshchensk
- Irkutsk
- Kaliningrad
- Kemerovo
- Krasnodar
- Krasnoyarsk
- Makhachkala
- Nizhniy Novgorod
- Novgorod
- Omsk
- Perm
- Petrozavodsk
- Rostov-na-Donu
- Samara
- Saransk
- Saratov
- St. Petersburg
- Tomsk
- Tula
- Tver
- Ufa
- Vladivostok
- Voronezh
- Yaroslavl
- Yekaterinburg