

Hosting Corner

MIAMI – The Honorable A. Jay Cristol: U.S. federal bankruptcy judge, naval aviator, attorney, author, and Open World host. A Renaissance man of the old school, Miami-based Judge Cristol has, according to **Annette Alvarez**, executive director of the Miami Council for International Visitors (MCIV), “accomplished in one lifetime what most people would need nine lives to do and he does it all with good humor and a genuine respect for and interest in his fellow man.” During a November 2007 rule of law exchange for Ukrainian judges he co-hosted with MCIV and the Academy for Educational Development, Judge Cristol was available to the program around the clock. He arranged every judicial appointment and courtroom visit and personally hosted the delegation at a Federal Bar Association luncheon. Alvarez reports that Judge Cristol’s work on the visit made a lasting impression on the Ukrainian judges. Judge Cristol in turn was impressed by the talent and professionalism of his Open World guests. Judge Cristol has been very involved with Russian rule of law groups, as well. In his words, “Open World has enabled me, and many other U.S. judges, to exchange ideas and procedures and develop friendships and understanding with our counterparts from Russia and Ukraine. My return visits to my Russian Open World delegates in Moscow, Petrozavodsk, and St. Petersburg have been enriching experiences, and I look forward to accepting my Ukrainian delegates’ invitation to visit them.”



U.S. Bankruptcy Court Chief Judge Emeritus A. Jay Cristol

Making a Difference

WASHINGTON, DC – On March 14, 40 Russian Open World delegates—most from government or nonprofit social service agencies—met with **Laura Green Zeilinger** of the Executive Office of the Mayor/Office of the City Administrator for an informative session on social services in the District of Columbia. The meeting was part of the Russians’ D.C. orientation program. Zeilinger, a special assistant for health and human services, briefly reviewed the city’s social programs, then spent an hour fielding questions from the delegates. The Russians were surprised to learn that children with disabilities are encouraged to attend school (homeschooling of such children is still the norm in Russia), and that the District does not have the same numbers of homeless “street children” that some of Russia’s major cities do.

Local host organizations: Eastern Michigan University (MI); Friendship Force of Lincoln (NE); International Training & Consulting, Inc. (AZ); International Visitors Center of Chicago (IL); Magee Womancare International (PA); and Northcentral Technical College (WI).

“Open World has been forging lasting positive relationships between emerging and established leaders in the former Soviet Union and their American counterparts. The participants come from remote towns and urban centers, and each gains a better understanding of the practice of democracy and the rule of law. They are introduced to best practices in critical areas like sustaining NGOs, tackling corruption, promoting an independent judiciary, and so much more. I have seen firsthand how this important, cost-effective investment by the U.S. government is advancing democracy, building civil societies, and creating a better world for all of us. This is people-to-people exchange at its best.”



Melanne Verveer

~Melanne Verveer, Cofounder and Chair of Vital Voices Global Partnership (Open World grantee)

Open World in the Field



Dianne Liepa (back, far right), state director for Sen. Tom Harkin (IA), and Dave Campbell (back, far left), district representative for Rep. Leonard Boswell (IA), with Tajik lawyers.

DES MOINES, IA – Four leading Tajikistani defense attorneys traveled to Des Moines, IA, March 8 for an Open World program on the rule of law. Their professional activities included a roundtable with Iowa’s assistant attorney general and a meeting with state appellate judge **Larry Eisenhauer** and members of the Iowa Bar Association’s International Law Section. State **Sen. Daryl Beall** of Fort Dodge and state **Rep. McKinley Bailey** of Webster City led the delegates on a tour of the capitol, and Sen. Beall had them introduced on the floor of the Iowa Senate, where they received a standing ovation. After meeting with Iowa Ombudsman William Angrick, who emphasized the crucial role of his office in contributing to a responsive, quality government, the delegates discussed strategies to promote the development of an effective ombudsman office in Tajikistan. Iowa Sister States and World Services of La Crosse, WI, hosted this exchange for Open World.

Announcements

◆ The U.S. Embassy in Moscow will accept applications for the Alumni Small Grants Program on a rolling basis until Sept. 1, 2008, or until funds are exhausted. Any alumni of U.S. Government exchange programs or organizations working with USG alumni are eligible to apply. Please contact Open World’s Chang Suh at csuh@loc.gov for more information.

◆ The 2008 Russia Civic Hosting Program Grant Guidelines are now available at www.openworld.gov.