Citizen Diplomacy: Chicago as a Center of Cultural and Diplomatic Exchanges

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About WorldChicago

WorldChicago is a non-profit organization that works in conjunction with the U.S. State Department and U.S. embassies abroad in helping shape foreign relations "one handshake at a time." It is a member of the National Council for International Visitors and has served as Chicago's official host for U.S. Department of State-sponsored visitors since 1952.

"The vision of WorldChicago is that every resident of Chicago has the opportunity to become a more engaged citizen by taking an active role in discussions, cross-cultural exchanges, and educational initiatives that enrich our understanding of the world."

WORLDCHICAGO
What is Citizen Diplomacy?

CITIZEN DIPLOMACY IS THE IDEA THAT INDIVIDUALS HAVE THE RIGHT AND RESPONSIBILITY TO HELP SHAPE U.S. FOREIGN RELATIONS THROUGH PERSON-TO-PERSON INTERACTIONS WITH CITIZENS OF OTHER COUNTRIES.

- WorldChicago Homepage
Why Chicago?

~700 visitors per year, per WorldChicago's 2019 Annual Report

Chicago is a perfect amalgamation of interests including technological innovation, an economic hub, and is both historically and culturally rich. Almost anyone can come here and leave having learned something.
Professional Fellows
One-month fellowships for emerging world leaders with the goal of expanding professional expertise via job placement in a U.S. agency or organization.

International Visitor Leadership Program
Brings high-level professionals to the U.S. from all over the globe to meet with their professional peers to both learn and experience the U.S. firsthand.

Open World Program
Allows Eurasian leaders to engage and interact with American leadership and citizens in order to foster positive, professional relationships.
Dinner Hosting
Chicago citizens have the opportunity to host international guests for dinner. These guests can range from global diplomats to a young professional from across the world.

Homestay Hosting
Chicagoans can also opt to host an international guest throughout the duration of their stay in the US. Homestay hosting allows for a truly immersive cultural exchange - for both the guest and the host.

Volunteering
Interested Chicagoans can also sign up to volunteer to help with certain WorldChicago programs or work at a fundraising event.
OUTCOMES OF CITIZEN DIPLOMACY

Citizen diplomacy is a powerful tool in helping shape global foreign relations right here in Chicago.
MEGAN DELANEY

INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE

PROFESSIONAL FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

As a program assistant at WorldChicago, I had the opportunity to see the behind-the-scenes aspect of some of the programs that WorldChicago runs. My work was mainly focused on the Professional Fellowship Program, which saw 20 professionals from Montenegro, Croatia, Slovenia, North Macedonia, and Bosnia & Herzegovina.

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

I was put in charge of creating and curating the organization’s weekly newsletter, which compiled homestay and volunteer opportunities, WorldChicago events, and updates on our visitors among other things.

PROFESSIONAL FELLOWS

I worked closely with Program Manager Kyla in organizing and creating the Spring 2020 Professional Fellowship Program. This involved compiling and sorting through applications, making sure that all visitors had the proper documentation and visas, as well as researching cultural activities for the Fellows when they arrive in Chicago.

EVENTS

As a program assistant, I had the opportunity to attend different WorldChicago events, the most notable of which was a reception for an International Women of Courage award recipient, Shahla Humberova, an Azerbaijani human rights lawyer. I had the honor of not only meeting her, but also talking to her about her work and learning about the direct impact she has on her country.
WorldChicago.org
Used to reference organizational mission, definition of citizen diplomacy, & homestay opportunities. Slides 3, 4, 7.

WorldChicago 2019 Annual Report
Used to reference number of visitors WorldChicago hosts per year (estimate). Slide 5.

Youtube

Personal Experience
Data and information from my own time with the organization. Slides 6, 9.