



# CIVIC

Council for International Visitors to Iowa Cities

## Annual Report 2012





# CIVIC

## Council for International Visitors

### Message from the President

Dear CIVIC Members,

Connecting and building friendships is what you did last year with almost 100 international visitors. This task would not have been possible without your active support and involvement. CIVIC's greatest asset is the active, knowledgeable, and internationally savvy Iowa City community. The countless donations, volunteer hours, and examples of support in planning programs were invaluable to CIVIC's efforts, and demonstrate the importance of an individuals like you to the successful execution of citizen diplomacy. We hope that current members will continue to provide the excellent support they have demonstrated time and again, and that new members of the community will consider joining our organization.

Citizen diplomacy is vital not only for Iowa City, but on a worldwide scale. In mid-February of last year, the state of Iowa was chosen as the centerpiece of a state visit for the Chinese Vice President Xi Jinping. This return visit highlighted the effectiveness of citizen diplomacy, with Mr. Xi visiting the same Muscatine family that had, in 1985, hosted the then governor of Hubei province in an exchange program to learn about American agriculture: exactly the type of program that CIVIC facilitates with every visit. In 2012, Mr. Xi was nearing his accession to the presidency of China, and in the state of Iowa, military rivalry was set aside and US-Chinese friendship was on display. This is the kind of relationship between nations that CIVIC works so tirelessly to engender, bringing professionals from Europe and Asia, Africa and Latin America, to Iowa to meet with and learn from real Americans.

2012 has been a great success for all us at CIVIC. The year has seen great transformations in our country, in our world, and in our organization that reflect all the more starkly the need for comprehensive efforts at citizen engagement in diplomacy. I am proud to say that CIVIC has proven itself more than equal to the task, weathering the challenge of multiple staff and director turnovers to emerge stronger than ever and poised to make 2013 the most successful year in our organization's history.

The Executive Director search committee was pleased to announce the hiring of Robyn Braverman as CIVIC's new Executive Director. She has been active since September, and has already begun moving the organization in exciting new directions, working to attract more visitors, engage the community more directly, and increase the public profile of CIVIC. We are very excited to have her on board, and to work with her in bringing CIVIC to new vistas of success.

It is worth remembering, as we welcome our new Executive Director, the immense and often uncompensated efforts of those who helped support CIVIC while it was undergoing the leadership transition: first among them must, of course, be former interim Executive Director and current board member Dave Tiffany.

Dave led the organization with panache and ability, conducting more than 17 visits with a total of 75 visitors, coordinating CIVIC's memorial day picnic, and helping to train a new generation of interns who would take on the work he had started.

Dave's commitment was exceptional, and his approach was hands-on, often involving personally escorting visitors to their programs. It is his example that highlights what is meant by citizen diplomacy: face to face meetings between dedicated, sincere Americans and their international counterparts. If the world were made up entirely of people as dedicated, warm-hearted, and capable as Dave Tiffany, there would be no need for a professional diplomatic corps at all.

His year-long voluntary tenure (September 2011 - September 2012) was an inspiring example of his energy and unconditional commitment, renewing the CIVIC spirit, and giving new meaning to the title Citizen Diplomat.

All in all, it is hard to look back on 2012 and not feel encouraged about the future of the organization, of citizen diplomacy, and of Iowa's global engagement in 2013. As we look to the new year, we will remember that the same vibrant, accessible community that makes Iowa City such a wonderful place to live also makes it a wonderful place to visit. We look forward to working with, and showing off, that community in 2013!

Sincerely,

Newman Abuissa  
President,  
Council of International Visitors to  
Iowa Cities





# CIVIC

## Council for International Visitors

### A community impact



### That engages Iowa

CIVIC's mission is not only to engage the rest of the world in interesting programmatic visits throughout Iowa, but to make sure that the Iowa City community is an active participant in the world-wide dialogue we foster, as reflected in our commitment not only to "brining the world to Iowa, but Iowa to the world."

2012 was a very successful year for community engagement. Despite a truncated visiting calendar, CIVIC visitors met with over 200 members of the Iowa City community, a figure that is really only the tip of the iceberg. Moreover, engagement with the University of Iowa was high this year, with more than 50 University personnel taking part in CIVIC visits in a mutual exchange of information and experience. CIVIC is very grateful for the support and resources that the university community provides, and is excited to continue our beneficial cooperation into 2013.

At the same time, Iowa was brought to the world more effectively than ever. Our visitors this year came from six continents (we're working on Antarctica), and brought back with them more than just memories. Several CIVIC visitors used their experiences in Iowa to contribute to articles and news reports in languages from Italian to Finnish to Kyrgyz.

CIVIC is looking forward to repeating our worldwide success in 2013!

### Key Impacts:

CIVIC Visitors met with over 200 Iowa City community members

Over 50 University of Iowa personnel engaged our visitors in tours, roundtable discussions, and lectures

11 news stories, articles, and presentations in places from Finland to Italy to Kyrgyzstan drew on experiences in Iowa

### An alumni network

"Iowa City was more quintessential "America" than Las Vegas, especially since Iowa is so important in campaigns because of its status as a swing state and the relevance of the Iowa Caucuses."

"The participants will cherish the warm hospitality extended to them during their stay in Iowa City. Iowa City truly is a must-stop for those who go through the Great Midwest and would like to get steeped in true American hospitality."

"...I do believe he felt he was in Disneyland. Over and over, he stated he wanted to move to Grinnell. In fact, all of our visitors were in awe of its people and charming small town appeal. A lot of perceptions about the American people were certainly changed during this stop."

"Being in Iowa City, Iowa is a mind-blowing experience. I now realize Washington, DC is just the capital. The real America is here."  
- Ms. Nadia Naqi, Pakistan.

### That spans the globe





# CIVIC

## Council for International Visitors



### 75 Total Visitors

“Many kind and dedicated volunteers made the Iowa City program memorable to the visitors. Local Program Officer Dave Tiffany provided the delegation with many cultural activities during their three-day Memorial weekend.”

- Korean Visitors  
Political Campaign Organization  
May 2012

**Poland –**

Citizen Activism

**Thailand –** Election Process

**Germany –** US Elections

**Bahrain –** Arts Management

**Indonesia –** Health Engagement

**Australia –** Politics and Reportage

**South Korea –** Women in Law Enforcement

**Thailand –** Environmental Monitor

**Australia –** Politics and Reportage

**Sri Lanka –** Tamil Diaspora: Post-Conflict Reconciliation

**Russia –** Campaign 2012: Youth Participation in the USA

**Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka –** Farm to Table

**Jordan, Bulgaria, Malaysia, Tunisia, Liberia, Vietnam –** Investigative Journalism

**Ecuador, Panama, Guatemala, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Bolivia, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay**

Sustainable Agriculture

**Austria, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Italy, Norway, Poland, Spain, Turkey**

Current US Social, Political & Economic Issues

**Angola, Guinea – Bissau, Mozambique, Sao Tome and Principe –** Youth & Civil Engagement

**Pakistan, India, Afghanistan, Krygistan –** Journalism & US Foreign Policy

**South Korea –** Campaign Organization

### 45 Countries Represented



“The Iowa City segment was superb with regard to local CIV volunteer commitment. Ms. Margee Miller provided a seamless web of support through her network of local volunteers and the visitors were accompanied to and from appointments throughout the entire program.”

- German visitors  
US Elections  
November 2012



## Council for International Visitors

### Message from the Executive Director

Robyn Braverman



My name is Robyn Braverman and I am the new Executive Director of CIVIC, the Council for International Visitors to Iowa Cities.

I have spent most of my adult life overseas working in the nonprofit sector- I started a small nonprofit while living in El Salvador, and more recently have been Country Director with Save the Children in various Latin American countries.

I am a native Iowa Citian, and have always been proud of my Iowa heritage. My grandparents came to Iowa City as young immigrants, and since then, our family has put down significant roots. My grandparents have always instilled in our families a sense of giving back, and of the importance of education. I feel that I carry both of these attributes into this job.

I came back to Iowa City with my husband, a photographer and journalist, and my younger son, for what was to be a brief respite from working overseas, but alas, our son found out how wonderful Iowa City public schools are, so he convinced us to stay while he finishes high school.

I am currently a part time executive director at CIVIC, hoping to build the organization so that they can have a fulltime Executive Director in the next year or so! I am very excited to help profile Iowa City and encourage expansion of our profile into Cedar Rapids and other cities in the Creative Corridor. We have a fabulous group of interns and a wonderful group of committed volunteers who really are the backbone of this organization. I look forward to helping build wonderful visitors programs and growing CIVIC.

## CIVIC Strategic Planning Priorities for 2013

The Board formed a small Strategic Planning Working Committee comprised of Alan Brody, Robyn Braverman, and Martha Greer. The working group will engage the CIVIC Board, membership, and stakeholders in a formal process to holistically re-examine the organization. We are beginning with the most fundamental of questions: Does the CIVIC mission statement accurately reflect the work of the organization? From there we will explore questions of intended impacts, organizational structure, and finally produce a comprehensive strategic plan to guide our organization through the next five years.

One area where CIVIC plans to expand its efforts is in finding corporate sponsors for the organization. CIVIC plans to offer companies the opportunity to promote good international relations while forging personal connections with worldwide professionals. If you or someone you know is part of a company that wants to make contact with people from other countries while receiving international training, as part of our affiliation with "Go Globally in Iowa," contact the CIVIC office. It's all part of being a corporate sponsor.

We thank those who have already contributed to this important process and look forward to further input and engagement from our friends and members.

## Get in touch:

[civic@uiowa.edu](mailto:civic@uiowa.edu)

(319)-335-0351

[icivc.blogspot.com](http://icivc.blogspot.com)

### NCIV News

The National Council for International Visitors (NCIV), the State Department's national visitor coordinating arm, has transitioned leadership and is working on developing strategic action plans for the next three years.

CIVIC will be working closely with NCIV to actively implement these goals in our visitor programming.

### Key priorities for NCIV:

- Helping local CIVS go from "good to great" with trainings for CIVs on how to build more effective visitors programs
- Have a robust and more effective communications strategy which can help expand and diversify its funding base
- Have greater advocacy and impact with our elected officials about the importance of exchange programs





Council for International Visitors

# CIVIC Membership Update

from board member Alan Brody

Where we are and where we're going

CIVIC has a core of formal paid-up members, who in 2012 numbered 77. CIVIC also operates a mailing list involving a wider circle of 531 associated persons who often provide other support in the organization and implementation of international visits. The number of paid members has declined in recent years, from a high of 116 in 2007.

In past years CIVIC did not emphasize the collection of membership fees, as it was able to rely on a State Department grant and considerable support from the University of Iowa to cover its major personnel and administrative costs. That situation has changed over the last few years, creating financial strains that in 2011 threatened the very survival of the organization.

In November 2012 the CIVIC Board, highlighting the important role that membership financial support must play in ensuring the organization's independence and strength, voted to set membership fees for 2013 at \$35 for individuals and \$55 for families, and to make concerted efforts to expand membership numbers. There is a 2013 goal to increase paid membership levels to at least 100-150 individuals and 50 households.

Increasing membership will enhance CIVIC's vitality both by serving as a means to further our connections with the greater Iowa City community, and to financially stabilize the organization. Membership drives must be one of CIVIC's priorities looking forward to 2013.



## Financial Highlights from Treasurer

### Else-Marie Breuer

As CIVIC evolves as a stand-alone organization, we have developed the need to have different financial controls in place. Some of the changes introduced into CIVIC's financial structure include:

- hiring a professional bookkeeper
- simplifying and bringing in-house the payroll system
- streamlining bank accounts
- regularizing our recordkeeping and making financial reports readily available
- developing an annual budget and setting forth smart goals for financial growth

Our full annual financial report will be made available at the annual members meeting in February.

## CIVIC's Three C's Committees

The CIVIC board has been busy developing working committees. The fundraising committee is meeting to discuss and strategize creative fundraising ideas to diversify its funding streams. The programming committee is meeting to re define its mission and to help build a more solid volunteer base of programming support for CIVIC. The membership committee is gearing up for a big membership drive, and sent off its first renewal letters mid December. If you are interested in being part of these fun committees, please let us know. [civic@uiowa.edu](mailto:civic@uiowa.edu)

## CIVIC

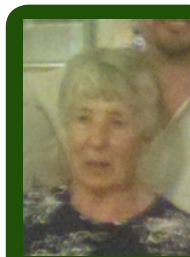
CIVIC is growing and is looking for new board members. If you have what it takes to be part of a growing, dynamic organization focused on citizen diplomacy, please let us know.

Thank you CIVIC board!  
Departing members

## Community

Community Engagement and creativity is our motto! Our community engagement has been extraordinary this year. From farms to campaign offices we have really put Iowa City and its warmth and openness on the big world map. We are always looking for new and creative ways to enhance our profile and get our visitors out to see more of Iowa City and the Creative Corridor.

Timothy Hyatt



Else-Marie Breuer



Bob Ross





# CIVIC

## Council for International Visitors

### Meet our student staff!

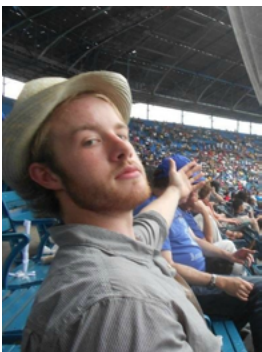
#### Miranda Nielson: Intern



Miranda is a senior majoring in International Studies, with an emphasis in International Politics and Relations, and an honors emphasis in Global Artistic Tradition and Change. She is minoring in Spanish and Religious Studies. After graduation, Miranda has several options that would allow her to work

within her academic interests. She thinks it would be fulfilling to work with new immigrants and international visitors as they go through the legal processes of attaining citizenship or visas. She is also considering teaching English in either China or Vietnam.

#### Thomas Ewing: Intern



Thomas Ewing is a native of Iowa City and a fourth year student at the University of Iowa, double-majoring in Political Science and Russian. In pursuit of a keen interest in foreign affairs, he has served as one of ICFRC and CIVIC's volunteers since the beginning of June 2012.

#### Marisa La Greca: Intern



Marisa is a senior double majoring in Italian and International Studies, with an emphasis in European Studies. Marisa was an intern with ICFRC and CIVIC last year, and is returning this fall until she leaves for Italy in the spring. She also works at the Office for Study Abroad. After her time at the University of Iowa, Marisa hopes to work with an international business organization out of Chicago after spending some time living in Italy.

#### Katherine Everett: Administrative Assistant



Katherine is a senior majoring in International Studies with an emphasis in Global Health. This will be her second year with ICFRC and CIVIC. After her time at the University of Iowa, Katherine hopes to either further her medical education, or to travel back to East Africa, the region of the world that she is most passionate about.

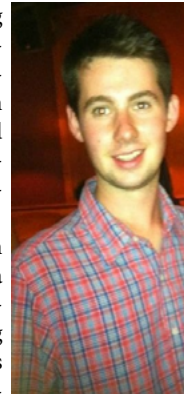
#### Tamás Szilágyi: Intern



Tamás, otherwise known as 'Tomi' (Toh-mee), comes from Budapest, Hungary in October to be an intern for ICFRC/CIVIC for the 2012-2013 academic year. His internship is sponsored by The Hungarian American Enterprise Scholarship Fund ([www.haesf.org](http://www.haesf.org)). In the past five years Tomi has studied English Language

and Literature, American Studies, Universal and Hungarian history, and Scottish and Comparative Literature. He comes to intern for ICFRC/CIVIC because he wants to "ensure that the Hungarian culture would be shared with the world."

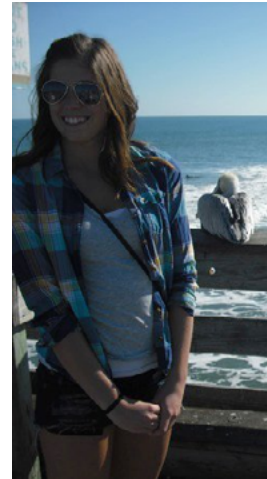
#### John Mahoney: Intern



John is a senior double-majoring in Political Science and International Studies; he is also minoring in Arabic Language. John began working with ICFRC and CIVIC this fall, and hopes to continue until he graduates this coming spring.

John has travelled extensively in the Muslim World, including a trip to Jordan this summer to further his Arabic studies. Following his graduation in May, he hopes to continue his travels in the region, combined with further studies in the area of international affairs.

#### Megan Wood: Intern



Megan is a senior double majoring in Spanish and International Studies, with an emphasis area in Human Rights. Megan worked with ICFRC and CIVIC for the 2012 summer, and will continue until she leaves for Spain in the spring. She also works at the Division of World Languages, Literatures and Cultures in Phillips Hall.

After graduating in Spain, Megan has very open career goals. She is interested in pursuing a number of things, such as: joining the Peace Corps, teaching English abroad, and/or working with International Policy Issues in any way possible.



# CIVIC

## Council for International Visitors

## Support CIVIC!

Become a CIVIC member! You can help contribute to our visitor programming, engage with international professionals from all corners of the globe, and contribute to Iowa City's premier citizen diplomacy organization. Becoming a member of CIVIC provides opportunities to meet with our international guests and form friendships that will last a lifetime. Members volunteer to host hospitality dinners and home-stays, drive visitors to their different activities, and show visitors Eastern Iowa and Iowa City from their own point of view. Joining CIVIC is a very rewarding experience, as it facilitates members' understanding of the impact of the world on their personal and professional lives, and opens the door to reciprocal hospitality opportunities abroad.

## Connect with the world



To join, fill out your information and send it to CIVIC at:

1111 University Capitol Centre  
Iowa City, Iowa 52242

civic@uiowa.edu  
(319)-335-0351

### New Member Information

Name

Address

City, State, Zip Code

Telephone

Email

### Membership plans

Student - \$10

Individual - \$35

Household - \$55

### Household donations

Sustaining Member -  
\$50-199

Patron - \$200-499

Diplomat - \$500+