

Mayor's Committee for International Friendship
Lincoln Council for International Visitors

MCIF News

50th Anniversary Celebration

Spring 2018

Thank you for attending this special celebration!

Members enjoyed the evening at Hillcrest Country Club and speaker, Mr. Doug Bereuter, former Congressman and retired president and CEO of the Asia Foundation. Mr. Bereuter reminded us as hosts and Nebraskans-of the many opportunities and resources unique to our state, especially agriculture and the warm welcoming nature of our residents. He encouraged us to not lose sight of these attributes and ensure each group of international visitors has the opportunity to experience these unique offerings.



Photo(left to right): U.S. Department of State Ms. Teta Moehs, Deputy Director, Office of International Visitors, Bureau of Educational & Cultural Affairs, MCIF/LCIV President Crystal Bock Thiessen, Mr. Doug Bereuter, former Congressman and retired CEO of the Asia Foundation, and Lee Rockwell, former MCIF/LCIV President and current member.

See page 3 for
additional
50th
Anniversary
photos

MCIF/LCIV 2017-2018 Elected Officers

Slate of Officers for MCIF 2017 -2018:

President: Crystal Bock Thiessen
Vice President: Jaine Merliss
Secretary: Paul Johnson
First Contact: Lisa Lee
Second Contact: Gary Heusel

Slate of Officers for LCIV 2016-2017:

President: Crystal Bock Thiessen
Vice President: Jaine Merliss
Secretary: Paul Johnson
Treasurer: Sherri Johnson
Public Relations: Cassidy Bohac
(including newsletter)

Nominee for Board of Directors:

Elaine Hammer for 3 year term

Carry-Over Directors:

Barb Hoppe (2 years)
Bob Wagner (1 year)

Nominating Committee for 2017-2018:

Cassidy Bohac
Gary Heusel
Lee Rockwell

PRESIDENT: New Year Summary by Crystal Bock Thiessen



Chúc mừng năm mới, 新年快乐, and Happy New Year of the Dog, everyone! Did you know that the Lunar New Year is celebrated by a quarter of the world for about 16 days? It is a time of cleaning, feasting, celebrating, and reuniting with friends and loved ones in hopes of a prosperous and happy year ahead. The coming year is thought to bring with it the characteristics of its corresponding animal from the Zodiac, so this year should be marked with loyalty, kindness, love, trust, and protection!

In the spirit of new beginnings for old traditions, I am happy to have been elected the newest president for both the Mayor's Committee for International Friendship and the Lincoln Council for International Visitors as we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the former. I have learned a lot from my past three years as vice-president, and look forward to creating and participating in new opportunities for global exchange with these groups. Currently, we are setting our goals for the new year ahead, which include expanding our membership base, increasing the number of international guests to Lincoln through visiting programs, and broadening our reach through social media and within the community.

Lincoln has had a long tradition of welcoming guests from all over the world, many of whom are here celebrating the Lunar New Year as you read this! We are proud that we can be partners of Global Ties U.S. and the U.S. State Department in order to connect international guests with local community members for learning and exchange opportunities like no other.

In uncertain political times like these, we can say, without a doubt, that citizen diplomacy has never been more important in building sturdy bridges instead of walls. It's yet another important and long-standing tradition that I know we will continue to build, value, and celebrate together!

INTERESTED IN BECOMING A MEMBER OF THIS ORGANIZATION?

Membership Dues for 2017 are: \$15 for a Single Membership; \$25 for a Family Membership. A Membership form can be found at the end of this newsletter.

MONTHLY MEETING SCHEDULE

Due to volunteer schedules, the monthly meeting time for LCIV & MCIF ***has changed to the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 6pm in the Mayor's Office conference room.*** We invite you to attend and learn more about the ongoing projects and visitor schedules.

VICE PRESIDENT: Jaine Merliss



Welcome to an exciting new year with LCIV! My name is Jaine Evnen Merliss, I am a fairly new member of LCIV, but found a natural fit between my personal commitment to multicultural diversity and inclusion, and our organization's focus.

As a Jewish woman of Russian descent, I grew up in Lincoln building a career and friendships in community that was predominated by mainstream demographics. From a very young age, I understood that coming from a culture that differed from my friends, colleagues and coworkers, brought a full compliment of challenges, as well as gifts. A keen personal interest in the intersection between understanding other cultures, while seeking to help others better understand my world, drew me to LCIV.

LCIV is growing by leaps and bounds, rapidly building relationships supported by social media, engaged members, and greater communication with like-minded organizations throughout the Lincoln area.

Our 2018 year started off with a *Meet and Greet* gathering in our home in January. What a great opportunity to appreciate the expanse of backgrounds, experiences, and interests among new and existing LCIV members. Even as LCIV seeks to widen our member representation, we are united in our appreciation for the opportunity to represent the community, and our country by providing our visitors with a warm and welcoming experience.

Looking forward to a great year and working with all of you.

Shalom U'vracha

Jaine Merliss



50th Anniversary Celebration

Photo Overview: Members and Guests enjoyed dinner and conversation at the 50th Anniversary Celebration of MCIF. Presentations were made by Mr. Doug Bereuter, Ms. Teta Moehs, out-going president Lee Rockwell and incoming president Crystal Bock-Thiessen.



Programs in Review

EUROPEAN SECURITY ISSUES

A Regional Project for Europe and Eurasia

July 19-22, 2017

5 International Visitors in Attendance, Accompanied by: Virgil Cioflec, Liaison

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Bulgaria

Mr. Mladen Rudi MLADENOV

Junior Expert, Ministry of Defense

Denmark

Mr. Thomas Kvistholm THRANE

Member, Danish Parliament, Danish People's Party (DPP)

Netherlands

Mr. Joel SERPHOS

Political Assistant, Office of Member of Parliament Han ten Broeke, People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD)

Norway

Mr. Shahzad ALI

National and International Research and Development RFD Coordinator, Norwegian Defense Research Establishment (FFI)

Romana

Ms. Madalina Anca MAN

Associate Nuclear Security Officer, International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

Information summarized by Mr. Virgil Cioflec, International Visitor Liaison:

Visitors were greeted by exceptionally hot nebraska weather! They enjoyed time at the state capitol and presentations by Lt. Governor Mike Foley and Secretary of State John Gale. The unicameral system was of great interest as well as the history of Nebraska. They were also presented certificates of Honorary Citizenship at the end of the meeting.

Visitors spent time at the Nebraska National Guard learning about the Army, Air and Emergency Management. European visitors were interested in similarities of their respective countries as well as the knowledgeable presentation.

Additional time included a visit with Ms. Elsbeth Magilton, from University of Nebraska Law school. Visitors then spent time at the U.S. Strategic Air Command; they were appreciative of the time spent with high-ranking officers and learning more about this part of government security.

In addition programmer Lisa Lee, was highly praised for her knowledge of the presentations and topic, as well as her pro-active and welcoming nature. "She was a perfect host throughout the stay in Nebraska."

Special Thanks to: Dolores Mather, Frank & Ann Sidles and Lee & Kay Rockwell for opening their homes to a night of dinner with diplomats.

**INNOVATION LAB TO MARKET
A Project for the Philippines**

August 16-19, 2017

4 International Visitors in Attendance, Accompanied by: Mr. Marek Kuzma, Liaison

Philippines

Jose Fernando Achacoso ESCALANTE

Policy Officer, Office of Senator Paolo
Benigno Aquino Senate of the Philippines

Mr. Harris Macaspac FULO

Intellectual Property Rights
Specialist Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines

Mr. Drandreb Earl JUANICO

Research Director
Technological Institute of the Philippines

Ms. Aisa Alvarez MIJENO

Co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer SALT
(Sustainable Alternative Lighting)

Summary provided by Mr. Marek Kuzma, International Visitor Liaison:

Visitors enjoyed time both in the capitol city as well as Grand Island during their stay in Nebraska. Professional appointments in Lincoln included: Food Service & Technology Department at UNL; the State Capitol, including Honorary Citizenship by Secretary of State John Gale; time with State Senator Adam Morfeld; and Innovation Campus, particularly Dr. Shane Farritor's company, Virtual Incision. Visitors also enjoyed home hospitality in the evening.

Professional Appointments in Grand Island included: time with Mayor Jeremy Jensen and the Office of Economic Development; and GIX Logistics. Visitors were also able to experience the solar eclipse! They were thankful for the many hosts who made their stay in Grand Island possible.

Though the visitors were in Nebraska only a short time, they were thankful for the busy schedule and unique experiences. Mr. Marek Kuzma concluded, "Thank you for sending us to Nebraska."

Special Thanks to Jake & Crystal Thiessen and Barb Hoppe & Bruce Johnson for hosting a dinner with diplomats.

Special events, such as visitors enjoying a social evening in Lincoln, are made possible by volunteers like you. Without the support of volunteers, our visitors would be limited in their experience. If you are interested in sharing your time with guests, please contact Lisa Lee (913) 219-3514 or lisarenelee@gmail.com . Any amount of time is valued!

#HIDDENNOMORE: EMPOWERING WOMEN LEADERS IN STEM

A Multi-Regional Project
October 14th – October 18th, 2017

5 International Visitors in Attendance, Accompanied by: Ms. Birte Codel, Liaison

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Curacao	Ms. Arrelis VIS Scientific Assistant, Faculty of Engineering University of Curacao
Indonesia	Ms. Hasnawati SALEH, Ph.D. Secretary General, Indonesian Young Academy of Sciences
Mongolia	Ms. Saulyegul AVLYUSH, Ph.D. Project Leader & Researcher Institute of Geography & Geoecology, Mongolian Academy of Science
Trinidad & Tobago	Ms. Joanne Jessica CHIN SANG Project Officer National Institute of Higher Education Research Science & Technology
United Kingdom	Ms. Jessica WADE, Ph.D. Post-Doctoral Researcher, Imperial College London

Visitors arrived on a home football game day and had an opportunity to witness the excitement of Nebraska Football in Lincoln. They were also invited to dinner at the home of Maxine Moul, and MCIF/LCIV volunteer, Elaine Hammer, accompanied the group.

During their stay, visitors had a full schedule including: Girls Who Code, Lincoln Girls Who Code and Girl Scouts Spirit of Nebraska. Additional appointments included: Dr. Susan Weller, Director of Nebraska Museum of Natural History, Professor of Entomology at UNL and Ms. Elsbeth Magilton, M.D., UNL College of Law and Executive Director of the Space, Cyber & Telecommunications Law Program. Visitors met high school students attending the ZOO program and spent time with Mr. David Martin, Nebraska Innovation Campus and Nebraska Innovation Studio. Rotary Club (#14) invited visitors to participate in a panel discussion at the Downtown Rotary luncheon sharing their work and learning of opportunities for women in STEM. Their final day in Lincoln concluded with the Henry Doorly Zoo, Omaha Stem Ecosystem and the University of Nebraska-Omaha.

Special Thanks to: Maxine Moul, Elaine Hammer, Dolores Mather and Crystal Bock Thiessen for their time and hosting dinner and conversation with visitors!

Home Hosting!

Home hosting opportunities are available with most every group; if you have interest in home hosting, please contact Jaime Merliss: jaineenvnen@msn.com

#HIDDENNOMORE: EMPOWERING WOMEN LEADERS IN STEM

Photo to Right:

Visitors with Randy Bretz (far left), President - Elect for Downtown Rotary - Pam Dingman, Lancaster County Engineer (in the middle) and Jennifer Brinkman (upper right), President of Downtown Rotary



Photo to Right: Innovation Campus - Maker Space with David Martin, Director Innovation Studios (top middle)



Photo Far Right: Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo. Pictured from far left: Amelia Squires, University, far right (middle): Elizabeth Mulkerrin



CONNECTING THE NEXT GENERATION OF AGRICULTURAL LEADERS

A Project for Japan

November 10th – November 15th, 2017

4 International Visitors in Attendance, Accompanied by: Mr. William Fine & Ms. Etsuko Good, Japanese Language Interpreters

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Japan

Ms. Mariko ENDO

Executive Officer, Telefarm Company

Mr. Takehisa NAGATANI

Director, Daikichi Shoten Company

Ms. Kaori NUKUI

Director, Nukui-En Corporation

Mr. Yuichi TOMARU

Managing Director, Tomaru Company

Interested in Volunteering? 3 Simple Ways...

1) Escort International Guests to meetings and activities 2) Join International Guests for a meal and learn more about their goals and experiences 3) Host International Guest(s) for a meal in your home

If you are interested in these opportunities please contact: Lisa Lee lisarenelee@gmail.com
Volunteers offer such a unique opportunity for International Guests to learn more about our midwest culture and experiences. Please consider volunteering today!

Summary of A Project for Japan:

Visitors enjoyed their time in Nebraska and had an opportunity to learn about the rich agricultural opportunities and innovation in our state. They arrived over a weekend and were able to participate in excursions including a tour at Whole Foods, where they experienced some regional Thanksgiving dinner menu items. This tour introduced an organic chain food store and not only how they selected their food products, but how much the consumer drives the decision making in product selection; i.e. the consumer's demand to know where their food was made and how it was made. They also learned how the family owned farmer versus the corporate food companies compete in this natural/organic chain food store.

Visitors toured the state capitol and learned some history of Nebraska as well as engaged in a meeting with Secretary of State John Gale and Governor Pete Ricketts. The Governor and his staff discussed their role in promoting Nebraska's products here and abroad and the importance of U.S. trade policy for the State of Nebraska. Susan Rouch, Export Development Manager from the Nebraska Department of Economic Development also participated in this discussion.

Additional appointments included Sunny Side Farms, Ficke Cattle Company, Nebraska Farmers Union and Quantified Ag. Visitors gained insight in large family owned production business as well as the importance of innovation in agriculture. They concluded their time in Nebraska with a meeting at Innovation Campus. Susan Rouch, Export Development Manager from the Nebraska Department of Economic Development, shared how the University of Nebraska, together with partners, seek and develop solutions to help the rural communities of Nebraska.

Visitors were able to participate in a home hospitality meal.

Special Thanks to: Tyler & Denise Manquist for escorting visitors to Whole Foods; Regina Werum & Martin Groeger, Andy & Jaine Merliss and Carl & Debbie Engstrom for hosting diplomat dinners.



Pictured: Home hosting dinner with (Left to Right): Lisa and Bob Rauner, Regina Werum, Mr. TAKEHISA NAGATANI, Mr. Yuichi TOMARU and Mitch Lee.

Pictured: Home hospitality at the Home of Carl and Debbie Engstrom. Joining them are Paul and Sherri Johnson .



Pictured: On the cattle farm with (Left to Right): Ms. Mariko ENDO, Mr. Takehisa NAGATANI, Ms. Kaori NUKUI, cattleman Del Ficke, Mr. Yuichi TOMARU and Ms. Etsuko Good.

CURRENT U.S. SOCIAL, POLITICAL, AND ECONOMIC ISSUES FOR YOUNG EUROPEAN LEADERS 1

A Regional Project for Europe

February 1 – February 6th, 2018

4 International Visitors in Attendance, Accompanied by: Ms. Cassie McGuinness, Liaison

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Austria	Ms. Katharina KUCHAROWITS Chairwoman, Social Democrat Party Youth, Young Generation
Czech Republic	Mr. Milos GREGOR Assistant Professor, Department of Political-Science Masaryk University
Greece	Ms. Sophia SAOURIDOU Municipal Councilor, Municipality of Pylaia-Chortiatis, District of Panorama, City of Thessaloniki
Malta	Ms. Miriam DALLI, Ph.D. Member of the European Parliament, Labor Party

Visitors began their appointments on Friday with Lieutenant Governor, Mike Foley. He shared history and background of Nebraska's unique Unicameral Legislature and engaged in conversation regarding current U. S. and domestic policy. While at the State Capitol, visitors were given a tour and met with Secretary of State, John Gale, who presented each with a certificate of Honorary Citizenship. Senator Adam Morfeld also shared his perspective as a Nebraska Senator on U. S. and domestic policy.

Visitors met with Vince Powers, Former Chair of the Nebraska Democratic Party and Kenny Zoeller, Executive Director of the Nebraska Republican Party. Each party gave their perspective on U. S. and domestic policy.

During their weekend stay, visitors engaged in a volunteer activity with the Lincoln Habitat for Humanity. They learned of the large refugee resettlement population in Nebraska. The weekend ended with a Super Bowl party at the home of Gary and Karen Heusel. LCIV members and friends also attended.

Their stay concluded with appointments at Nebraska Appleseed, Lincoln High School and NGage-Gage Area Growth Enterprise. Visitors learned how Nebraska Appleseed has advocated and affected change for minority and marginalized community members in Nebraska. At Lincoln High, they toured and shared in discussion with high school principal , Mark Larson. This gave visitors an opportunity to visit with a diverse group of students in a civics classroom and an ELL classroom. The final appointment in Beatrice, allowed visitors to learn about diversity and inclusion efforts in rural Nebraska and offered additional opportunities to discuss U.S. and domestic policy from a Nebraska rural perspective.

YOUNG EUROPEAN LEADERS

Photo: Visitors engaging in conversation at Lincoln High School.



Photo (above): Left to Right pictured-Sophia Saouridou (Greece), Milos Gregor (Czech Republic), Lt. Gov Foley, Katharina Kucharowits (Austria), Miriam Dalli (Malta)

Special Thanks to:

Gary & Karen Heusel for hosting a Super Bowl party at their home; Barb Ridder and Bob & Marilyn Wagner for opening their homes and hosting diplomat dinners.



Photo to left: Visitors volunteering at a Habitat for Humanity house in Lincoln.

GLOBAL & REGIONAL RESPONSES TO REFUGEE & MIGRATION ISSUES

A Multiple Regional Project
February 24 – February 28th, 2018

6 International Visitors in Attendane, Accompanied by: Ms. Teresita Bernales, Liaison

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Afghanistan	Mr. Sayed Rohullah HASHIMI, International Advisor, Ministry of Refugees & Repatriation
Czech Republic	Mr. Pavel BACIK Director Refugee & Asylum Administration, Ministry of Interior
Kenya	Mr. Kodeck Makori MOSE Head, Refugee Affairs Secretariat, Ministry of Interior
Malaysia	Ms. Deborah Priya HENRY Co-Founder & Director, Fugee School
Norway	Ms. Eirin STRIFELDT Associate Lawyer, Shah AS Law Firm
Turkey	Mr. Alper MAVI Field Coordinator, International Blue Crescent Relief & Development Foundation

Visitors started their stay in Lincoln by visiting West Lincoln Elementary school. Representatives from both Lincoln Public School District and the building principal discussed how the district meets and serves the needs of non-native speakers in the school district and specifically at West Elementary. Visitors toured the school, observed classrooms, met with parents participating in the Family Literacy Program and had lunch in the school cafeteria.

Next visitors met with Lutheran Family Services and the Nebraska Health and Human Services State Refugee Coordinator. They learned about Local refugee relocation re-settlement services; housing, job placement, health care, education and English as a Second Language classes in Nebraska. Visitors then met at the Midwestern African Museum of Art, Culture & Resource Center where they heard local refugee relocation success stories in Nebraska. This included examples of maintaining and celebrating native culture, educational programming and gathering spaces in Nebraska. Their first day ended at Nebraska Appleseed learning about Nebraska is Home, an affiliate of Welcoming America.

Additional appointments included the Nebraska History Museum, the Yazidi Cultural Center, a tour of the State Capitol and “Welcome to Nebraska” by Secretary of State John Gale. Visitors ended their professional appointments at TMCO, where they toured the plant and spoke with a few of the employees who came to the United States as refugees. The visitors learned first hand how a culture of hiring refugees makes economic sense from a business perspective in addition to “doing the right thing”.

Special Thanks to:

Taylor Gage, Katie Hile and Brooke & Damian David for opening their homes to diplomat dinners.



Top Photo (left): Diplomat dinner at the home of Katie Hile.

Right Photo: Visitors and students interacting at West Lincoln Elementary School.



Top Photo (right): Visitors and speakers at the Midwestern African Museum of Art

MEMBERSHIP DUES!

Membership Dues for 2018 are Now Due: \$15 for a Single Membership; \$25 for a Family Membership. A Membership form can be found at the end of this newsletter.

You may mail the dues to the address below.

We invite you to participate in the Lincoln Council for International Visitors.

There are a variety of ways to volunteer. Please contact us today!

www.lciv.org

Membership Form - Lincoln Council for International Visitors

This publication is funded by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the U.S. Department of State under the authority of the Fulbright-Hays Act of 1961.

Name(s) _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone(s) _____ Email _____

LCIV Annual Membership _____ Single \$15

(January 1 - December 31) _____ Family \$25

_____ Donation _____

(Make checks payable to Lincoln Council for International Visitors)

I would like to help by:

I have interest in the field of:

Send to:
LINCOLN COUNCIL FOR INTERNATIONAL VISITORS
Sherri Johnson
1415 N 41st Street
Lincoln, NE 68503

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