



## **BACKGROUND**

The Open World Leadership Program began in 1999 as the Open World Russian Leadership Program. The program originally focused on Russia, however in 2003 the program was expanded to include participants from other Eurasian countries. Since its inception, more than 6,265 young political and civic leaders from Russia have participated in professional exchanges to the United States. These delegates come from all of Russia's 89 administrative regions and represent 55 ethnic groups. By 2003, young leaders will have visited more than 900 U.S. communities in all 50 states, as well as the District of Columbia.

The Academy for Educational Development (AED) and Sister Cities International are partners in supporting the Open World Leadership Program. The partnership began in early 2002 when AED received a grant from the Library of Congress to place 100 Russian delegations across the United States. AED worked with SCI to place delegations with sister city communities and with other local organizations.

In 2002, AED and SCI placed almost 110 Russian delegates in nearly 20 sister city communities. The program brings groups of four or five Russian elected officials, political candidates, and emerging political or civic leaders, along with a facilitator, on a ten-day visit to the United States for a hands-on introduction to American democracy and free enterprise. The aim of the program is to promote ideas of accountability, transparency, and citizen participation in government. Each participating delegation focuses on a particular theme such as women as leaders, rule of law, health issues, environment, federalism, economic development, education, and youth issues.

In 2003, the Library of Congress announced a special librarian project, in which AED and SCI were able to participate and involved eight sister city communities. The librarian project introduced Russian delegates to the American library system, as well as to American culture. The sister city communities hosted the librarians in their homes and organized professional and cultural programs for the visitors. In addition, by the end of 2003, more than 20 delegations will have traveled to their sister city communities to attend professional meetings and to continue their exposure to American culture.

## **PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

The primary objective of the Open World Leadership Program is to introduce visitors to the United States for the first time through a substantial professional program that addresses the relationships between local, state, and national governments; businesses; civic organizations; and individual citizens. Sister city programs participate by hosting delegations and/or nominating their Russian counterparts. Delegations travel to the local communities based on the themes and time frame in which the local communities were able to provide accommodation. Communities developed professional and cultural programs; they housed the emerging Russian leaders in their own homes; and provided transportation and interpretation. Under the sister cities program, the

delegates were able to visit a variety of institutions central to American life, such as city hall, city councils, local Chambers of Commerce, banks, hospitals, and universities. They also attended a wide range of activities, including roundtable discussions with city council and Congressional representatives; forums with federal judges; and dinner receptions at various clubs, organizations, foundations, and private homes. Russian delegations also participated in a variety of cultural events that brought about an even greater understanding between the local hosts and the emerging Russian leaders. Visitors were able to experience for the first time, baseball games, potluck dinners, and BBQs, street fairs and museums, and city tours and coastal excursions.

At the end of 2002, AED provided an opportunity for sister city communities to nominate their own Russian counterparts for the Open World Leadership Program. In 2003, delegates will travel to their U.S. sister city communities, strengthening their sister city ties through the Open World Leadership Program. Many of the communities are already planning outstanding programs for these nominees, which represent either a continuation of existing sister city projects or have become a catalyst for new projects and ideas.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

SCI is proud to partner with AED on the Open World Leadership Program sponsored by the Library of Congress. The following is a thematic summary of the accomplishments sister city communities have achieved through the program.

- *Women as Leaders*

**Bloomington/Normal, Illinois (Vladimir); Blount County, Tennessee (Zheleznogorsk); Great Falls, Montana (Sharya); and Jacksonville, Florida (Murmansk)** developed programs for women leaders. Local communities provided opportunities for delegates to deepen their understanding of key issues, such as the prevention of domestic violence, the development of civic organizations, companies, and specialized centers; and developing their skills in management, organizational development, and grassroots political leadership.

- *Rule of Law*

**Great Falls, Montana (Sharya)** hosted a group of judges and professionals from the Russian judicial system. The Russian parliament is considering a number of wide-ranging judicial reforms that will include such elements as expanded jury trials, immunity for judges, and judicial ethics. In visiting their American counterparts, the Russian delegates were able to attend judicial hearings, sit on a trial case, and tour the local courthouse.

- *Health Issues*

**Albany, New York (Tula); Charlotte, North Carolina (Voronezh); Oakland, California (Nakhodka); Oak Ridge, Tennessee (Obninsk); Richmond, Indiana (Serpukhov); and Rochester, New York (Velikii Novgorod)** introduced the American health care system to Russian professionals and practitioners in this field. To build a strong civil society, a vibrant and a functioning healthcare system is important. Delegates were exposed to the workings of the health care system in America and to the issues government, educational systems, health care providers, NGOs, and the business community face on a daily basis. Some of the programs focused on drug and alcohol abuse, especially as it relates to today's youth.

- *Environment*

**Anchorage, Alaska (Magadan); Tooele, Utah (Kambarka); Colorado Springs, Colorado (Smolensk); Chattanooga, Tennessee (Nizhnii Tagil); and San Diego, California (Vladivostok)** introduced environmental issues that American society deals with to the delegates. Access to environmental information and the role of partnerships among government, the private sector, and NGOs dedicated to improving environmental quality were some of the issues addressed. Program participants explored federal, state, and local efforts in the management of environment issues, the securing of access to appropriate information, and the importance of environmental education.

- *Federalism*

**Charlotte, North Carolina (Voronezh); Long Beach, California (Sochi); Salt Lake City, Utah (Izhevsk\*); Toledo, Ohio (Tomsk\*); and West Jordan, Utah (Votkinsk)** developed a program for federal, regional, and local officials. The United States has a strong tradition of decentralized government, grassroots activism, and reliance on the non-government sector, highlighting the federal system. Participants were exposed to the issues of economic and community development, citizen participation in governance, and the issues of coordination and jurisdiction that officials face in different levels of the government.

- *Economic Development*

**Albany, New York (Tula); Canon City, Colorado (Valdia); and Toledo, Ohio (Tomsk\*)** created programs for various business, local and regional leaders to learn about market reform that is increasingly important to understanding the fundamentals of economics. Delegates learned about regulatory issues, how to attract investment, how to build ties between local government and industry, how to encourage the development of small and medium businesses, the importance of entrepreneurship for local growth, and how to promote a market economy on various levels. In addition, the delegates shared their Russian business expertise with their U.S. counterparts.

- *Education*

**Blount County, Tennessee (Zheleznogorsk); Los Angeles, California (St. Petersburg); and San Diego, California (Vladivostok)** hosted participants from local, regional, and federal levels of Russia's educational system. Education in Russia has a proud tradition and has produced a level of learning and literacy that is considered one of the strongest in the world. After the break—up of the Soviet Union, the education system suffered. As part of the program, delegates learned from elementary to graduate level about universities and schools are structured, their financial support, use of technology, training techniques, hiring practices, educational policies, and the role of distance and vocational education.

- *Youth Issues*

**Colorado Springs, Colorado (Smolensk)** hosted a group of individuals to focus on the issues that affect today's youth. The U.S. Ambassador to Russia, Alexander Vershbow, has asked the Open World Program to focus on activities in this area, which included social, educational, and work-related initiatives. Open World participants explored community, state, and federal programs in a wide range of areas including education, after-school programs, continuing education, drug, alcohol, or other substance abuse, volunteerism in youth organizations, mentoring, access to information, and youth leadership development.

\* In the process of officially becoming a sister city partnership.

**LIBRARY OF CONGRESS**  
**2003 OPEN WORLD RUSSIAN LEADERSHIP PROGRAM**  
*Expression of Interest form*

**Contact information:**

We, \_\_\_\_\_, are interested in participating in the 2003 Open World Program sponsored by the Library of Congress.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization/Committee: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (office/home): \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (cell): \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Questions:**

Why are you interested in hosting or nominating?

\_\_\_\_\_

Number of groups you would like to host: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred time frame for hosting (months or weeks between April - Nov 2003. There will not be any travel in August): \_\_\_\_\_

Thematic preferences (*list in order of preference*): \_\_\_\_\_

How will this program benefit your community?

\_\_\_\_\_

What would you like to get out of this program?

\_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to see similar programs from SCI? If yes, why?

\_\_\_\_\_

\*Please attach additional information regarding past exchanges or projects you have conducted with your sister community to this form. If you have any questions, please contact Arisha Dmitriyeva at [eurasia@sister-cities.org](mailto:eurasia@sister-cities.org) or you can call at 202-347-8252.

## **Open World Leadership Program Workshop**

Thank you very much for participating in this workshop. We trust that you enjoyed the presentations and the introduction of this membership opportunity.

We are asking you to share your information with SCI so that we can further develop this opportunity and improve our services. **Please complete the information below and give this sheet ONLY (you can keep the top section) to the volunteer at the door.**

Name/Title \_\_\_\_\_

Sister City Organization/Committee: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Country (if outside the U.S.): \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Questions:**

I would like more information about this program sent to me: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Would you be interested in participating in this program? If yes, why

\_\_\_\_\_

How will this program benefit your community?

\_\_\_\_\_

What would you like to get out of this program?

\_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to see similar programs from SCI? If yes, why?

\_\_\_\_\_

### **Additional Comments:**

**Thank you again!**