

U.S. CENTER FOR CITIZEN DIPLOMACY

The US Center for Citizen Diplomacy is an organization whose time has come to serve in this globalizing world of ours. It is a much needed answer to the perceptions abroad of the United States and its citizens. Many people of other cultures and views see us as self-centered and arrogant, demanding, and intractable. They see us as a superpower no longer willing to consider the needs and opinions of other nations but determined instead to impose its will on the rest of the world.

However, nothing demonstrates American values and generosity, its people's concern for others and willingness to extend a helping hand better than the American people themselves. Tens of thousands of our fellow citizens travel outside our country every year, each leaving a personal and lasting image. Still more Americans remain home and build friendships through technology with their counterparts abroad, or raise funds to meet the needs of those less fortunate who are facing disasters of weather, war, and famine.

These Americans, from five to ninety-five, are businesspersons, teachers and students and researchers, artists, activists and athletes. They go, they give and they learn, coming back to their home communities more informed, more involved, and more responsible citizens of our shared world. They are involved with the Peace Corps, Rotary International, Sister Cities, Partners of the Americas, Doctors without Borders, Youth for Understanding, the Fulbright Program and countless other organizations committed to the importance of Americans being actively engaged in building personal relationships with people throughout the world.

However, until now, there has been no concerted effort, public or private, to enhance the quality and quantity of this spontaneous flow of personal energy and goodwill. There is no measurement of the extent of its impact, no methodical sharing of what works and what does not, no focus on magnifying this extraordinary resource to the level of national attention that it deserves. Today, it is critical that American values be better understood throughout the world. It is not only the right but the responsibility of every American to be a citizen diplomat, of the highest quality, for our communities and our country.

The newly formed U.S. Center for Citizen Diplomacy will devote itself to filling this need by recruiting, educating, strengthening and recognizing the citizen diplomats who strive to meet the duty of each generation. Such relationships and partnerships have been among American's greatest assets.

The U.S. Center for Citizen Diplomacy invites you to support this very meaningful work and make Iowa once again proud to be a leader in a vital nationwide effort to redress this situation. With your valuable assistance, through persuasion and example, in league with existing citizen diplomacy efforts nation-wide, the Center will work to forge a common future with mutual security, cultural diversity, and realistic expectations.

Harriet Fulbright
Board Member
U.S. Center for Citizen Diplomacy
And
President, The J. William & Harriet Fulbright Center

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