### OUR MISSION
TO DEVELOP SUSTAINABLE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS AND CONNECT PEOPLE THROUGH PERSONALIZED DIPLOMACY.

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Dear Global Ties KC Friends,

After almost 70 years of facilitating exchanges between KC and the world, the impact of Global Ties KC continues to grow. Both in the year-to-year programs (in 2023, we welcomed 493 current and future global leaders to the heartland) and in the long-term changes that happen when people from divergent backgrounds connect on a person-to-person level.

Global Ties KC is committed to cultivating robust global connections, fostering understanding, and nurturing ties between peoples around the world, with the understanding that peace is built one handshake at a time. We are in the business of humanizing foreign affairs. We create lived experiences and personal connections, bringing people from diverse cultures, backgrounds, and perspectives together to learn, share and collaborate for the greater good. Through our programs, individuals are given the chance to converse with diverse people, connect as human beings, and build relationships that have the potential to foster future peace. Our work means more now than ever before.

Global crises like food insecurity, supply chain disruption, global health, conflict, and a rapidly changing climate will continue to impact our day-to-day lives in the years and decades to come. What happens overseas affects our daily lives at home. By convening global changemakers working in each of these areas, we are at the front lines of these issues.

We express our deepest gratitude for your unwavering support in our mission to bridge cultures and build lasting connections. Together, we have not only enriched the lives of individuals but also contributed to a more interconnected and compassionate world. As we look to the future, we remain committed to facing global challenges head-on, armed with the belief that genuine human connections can be the catalyst for positive change.

Thank you for your continued support!

Courtney Brooks
President & CEO, Global Ties KC

“Together, we have not only enriched the lives of individuals but also contributed to a more interconnected and compassionate world.”

Global Ties KC is a nonprofit organization that has been working in the Midwest for almost 70 years, connecting everyday citizens to global leaders and rising stars who are making an impact across the globe on topics ranging from transparency in government, and human rights to climate change.

We are the U.S. Department of State’s go-to partner in Kansas and Western Missouri to implement professional exchange experiences, including the International Visitor Leadership Program, youth development exchanges and professional fellowship programs.

2023 BY THE NUMBERS

493 PARTICIPANTS

35 PROGRAMS

19 COMMUNITY EVENTS

47 STUDENTS IMPACTED BY THE YOUTH DIPLOMATS INSTITUTE

640 NIGHTS IN HOMESTAYS

64 HOMESTAYS

8,885 VOLUNTEER HOURS FROM LOCAL COMMUNITY

$1.79M ECONOMIC IMPACT

2023 Local Economic Impact in Kansas City

Direct Program $837k
Donation of Time, Meeting Space, Beds and Meals $431k
Hotel, Transportation, and City Impact $523k

Together, we have not only enriched the lives of individuals but also contributed to a more interconnected and compassionate world.
BOARD OF DIRECTORS & STAFF

GLOBAL TIES KC – 2023 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kendall Seal, Board Chair
The Center for the Rights of Abused Children

Shabina Kavimandan, Vice-Chair
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Stephanie Greenwood, Secretary
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Ariel Griffin
Children International

Kelsey McLellan
Chamber HR Solutions

Terri S. Turner
TST Business Strategies, LLC

GLOBAL TIES KC – 2023 STAFF

Courtney Brooks
President & CEO

Sarah Lowderman
Program Director

Justin Keehler
Program Associate

Niyati Sethi
Program Associate

Matt Roy
STEM Program Manager

Martina Pascuzzo
Marketing Coordinator

Ela Sedlock
Youth Diplomats Education Fellow

Alex Freeman
Communications Specialist

Ana Pendergast
Program Coordinator

Lukas Pitman
Intern & CDAMF Grant Recipient

Mae Dingley
Intern

Tatum Smith
Intern

Leila Hao
Intern

Thomas Tempest
Intern
The International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) is the U.S. Department of State’s premier professional exchange program. Through short-term visits to the United States, current and emerging leaders in a variety of fields experience this country firsthand and cultivate lasting relationships with their American counterparts. The IVLP is designed to build mutual understanding between the U.S. and other countries through carefully designed visits that reflect the participants’ professional interests and support U.S. foreign policy goals.

Handpicked by American embassies around the world, international visitors come to the United States to meet and confer with their professional counterparts and to gain and appreciate the ethnic, cultural, political, and socio-economic diversity of the U.S. They come to find innovative solutions to global issues and make connections both professionally and personally that will last a lifetime.

More than 500 IVLP alumni have gone on to serve as Chiefs of State or Heads of Government.

Global Ties KC is THE International Visitor Leadership Program implementing organization in Kansas and the Western half of Missouri. We have been coordinating this program for almost 70 years, bringing future leaders to our communities.
For 15 years, the International Women of Courage program has honored women who demonstrate exceptional courage, strength, and leadership, often at great personal risk and sacrifice. Dr. Zakira Hekmat is a displaced person from Ghazni Province, Afghanistan where she secretly completed high school under the Taliban’s first period of control. She continued her education and became a doctor in Türkiye. From a one-room office, she founded the Afghan Refugee Solidarity Association in Türkiye in 2014, where she has since worked tirelessly to advocate for the rights of all refugees and women. Dr. Hekmat’s time in Kansas City with Global Ties KC included conversations with local refugee organizations like Jewish Vocational Services, Della Lamb, Welcoming KC, Topeka United, United WE, KC for Refugees, and also speaking at a luncheon hosted by Rotary Club of Kansas City, Kansas.

During the same weekend as the Super Bowl, Global Ties KC had the opportunity to host a unique program which hosted ministry of art and culture officials from Senegal. Senegalese visitors got to meet with local artists, foundations, and art advocacy organizations like Mid-America Art Alliance, Arts KC, Sike Style, Kansas City Artists Council, and Charlotte Street Foundation. And with the Chiefs win in KC that weekend, visitors also got the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to celebrate with the city at the Super Bowl Parade!

In November 2023, seven executives of youth-focused NGO arrived in Kansas City to exchange information and ideas with local leaders in the nonprofit sector. Many of their NGO’s focus on providing technology or English skills for youth, seeing both as marketable skills to avoid the cycle of poverty and violence. While in Kansas City the group met with Guadalupe Centers, the Greater Kansas City Community Foundation, the Boys and Girls Club, Summit Technology Academy, Science City, and Missouri 4-H.

Global Ties KC hosts Senegalese officials exploring KC’s art scene.

Senegalese visitors engage with KC’s Charlotte Street Foundation.

Boys and Girls Club collaboration: Global leaders strategize youth empowerment.

Youth NGO leaders connect with Science City for empowerment insights.

Visitors enjoy dinner in a local home.

Visitors enjoying Science City after dialogue on innovation in education.

Greater KC Community Foundation hosts global executives shaping youth-focused NGOs.

Dr. Zakira Hekmat, Afghan advocate, honored for her courage at the KCK Rotary Luncheon.

Dr. Zakira Hekmat, Afghan advocate, honored for her courage at the KCK Rotary Luncheon.
RURAL DEVELOPMENT

KAZAKHSTAN

With one of the lowest population densities in the world, Kazakhstan has a very high percentage of rural communities. From August 22-26 a group of eight Kazakh leaders visited Kansas City to explore a wide variety of issues related to rural development. While in Kansas City they visited Vibrant Health, the Mid-America Regional Council, Tuttle Farms, the Kansas Office of Rural Prosperity, the Tonganoxie City Manager’s Office, and Tonganoxie High School. The leaders included government officials, agriculture officials, National Park directors, and corporate leaders.

The U.S. Department of State invited ten members of the Internal Revenue Service to be a part of an International Visitor Leadership Program, virtually, in 2021. The program was so necessary that the same participants were invited in-person to KC in October 2023, where Global Ties KC welcomed the group to explore how Pakistan can enhance their taxation system through federal intervention and potential private partnerships.
Community Connections is a U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) program intended to support post-Soviet countries as they transition to more democratic and free market-oriented societies. Since 2019, Community Connections has shifted to virtual meetings, and continues to impact hundreds of professionals and youth by enhancing their professional capacity. As one of the few organizations selected nationally each year to implement these integral developmental programs, Global Ties KC is a steadfast, valued partner to USAID.

2023 TOPICS:
- Advocacy and Intervention: Supporting Domestic Violence Survivors with Disabilities
- Global Trends in Mid-Career Coaching
- 21st Century Skills for Belarusian Youth

IMPACT & OUTCOMES
Being flexible in one’s career is critical in Belarusian society due to the uncertainty they live with. In a time where travel is restricted, the Community Connection Virtual Program provides the necessary connection for the professionals living in Belarus who are craving opportunities for personal and professional development, which they currently may not have access to in their communities.

Since 1999, the Open World program has been instrumental in forging lasting positive relationships between emerging and established leaders in the former Soviet Union and their American counterparts. Program participants have a range of diverse backgrounds, and come to the U.S. with the purpose of gaining a better understanding of American democracy and the rule of law in the U.S. This is people-to-people exchange at its best.

Corporate Social Responsibility
Moldova - February 3-11, 2023
The small country of Moldova, situated between Ukraine and Romania, has been a notable arena for ideological contentions between the West and Russia long before the flames of war flared in Ukraine in 2022. However, the pressure on Moldova has only increased, and on February 10, 2023, during the Kansas City Open World Program, the pro-EU government collapsed amidst mounting crises. The collapse showed exactly why the connections between the United States and Moldova are paramount.

From February 3-11, Global Ties KC had the opportunity to host a group of six Moldovan business leaders to exchange ideas on creating a thriving, socially responsible private sector. While in Kansas City, these leaders met with private companies to discuss their Corporate Social Responsibility programs, with nonprofits to discuss how they can support the private sector, and with political leaders to discuss the role of government in corporate social responsibility. The Moldovan leaders left Kansas City full of hope, connections, and ideas to implement in their businesses and society back home.
In 2023, Global Ties KC facilitated the Young Leaders of the Americas Initiative (YLAI) for 12 fellows from 10 different countries across Latin America. These fellows were placed with host organizations to learn from and collaborate with the Kansas City commercial ecosystem, strengthening Kansas City's ties to global business leaders. The fellows lived in Kansas City for a month, immersing themselves in Kansas City life, and exploring Kansas City staples such as barbecue, the Nelson-Atkins, and Kansas City jazz.

As a follow-up to the YLAI program in Kansas City, three host organizations will have the opportunity to travel to their fellows' home countries in 2024 to continue and build upon their connections. This year, hosts will be traveling to Costa Rica, Panama, and El Salvador.

Global Ties KC has facilitated the Young Leaders of the Americas Initiative in Kansas City since its launch in 2015. The U.S. Department of State’s YLAI Fellowship Program empowers emerging entrepreneurs from the Western Hemisphere to enable the full economic potential of its citizens. YLAI promotes U.S. business models, increases trade, encourages job creation, and builds lasting and sustainable networks of young entrepreneurs and business and social leaders across Latin America, the Caribbean, Canada, and the United States.

Jamie is a Scottish human rights activist and licensed therapist. His work with young people in foster care has led to policy-changing campaigns and a program of direct engagement with the First Minister of Scotland. Jamie was even awarded a British Empire Medal from Her Majesty the Queen. In September 2023, he returned to the U.S. to continue exploring how he might use his dual capacity as a therapist and community builder to foster more safe gathering spaces around his work.

Global Ties KC coordinated a professional program for Jamie focused on conversations around youth education, mental health access, and peacebuilding. In his meetings with organizations like KC G.I.F.T and Reconciliation Services, he took a deep dive into topics like redlining and equitable access to resources.

Lukas Pitman, an alumnus of the Department of State exchange program “Youth Ambassadors” and Global Ties KC Youth Diplomat received a competitive grant from the U.S. Department of State’s Citizen Diplomacy Action Fund (CDAF) to create the Heartland Alumni Network, a space for U.S. Department of State exchange alumni in the Heartland (Kansas and Missouri) to connect and network with each other. This initiative is the first of its kind in the Midwest. CDAF was launched in 2019 to empower U.S. alumni of U.S. government-sponsored exchange programs to support their communities through public service projects and address key foreign policy goals.

The Heartland Alumni Network seeks to create a dynamic and innovative space for Exchange Alumni in Kansas and Missouri to connect with fellow alumni, collaborate on important community issues, and engage in storytelling. If you are an U.S. Department of State exchange alumni and are interested in connecting, please join the network!
Each year, this dynamic youth leadership program engages 150 high school students and adult mentors from more than 38 countries in Africa. Global Ties KC was selected to host two Pan-Africa Youth Leadership Program (PAYLP) cohorts in 2023. PAYLP is designed to provide secondary school youth (ages 15-18) and adult educators the opportunity to explore priority policy themes such as civic education, climate resiliency, conflict resolution, economic development, entrepreneurship, respect for diversity, women’s empowerment, and youth leadership development.

**PAYLP ALL-STARS**
**FEBRUARY 2023**

The first cohort was a special “All-Stars” program for successful PAYLP alumni including 15 young adults from eight different countries: Togo, Gambia, Chad, Niger, Mali, Senegal, the DRC, and Congo Brazzaville. Participants stayed in a downtown hotel and spent time creating impactful community action projects. They then presented their projects in a pitch competition, held at the Missouri Innovation Campus, which allowed local students to understand the key issues currently affecting Africa, and to hear about the critical work being done to affect change.

**PAYLP FRANCOPHONE**
**JULY 2023**

The second PAYLP cohort was a youth program for 14 students and three adult mentors from Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, and Chad. The participants met with local nonprofits and even had the opportunity to participate in a city scavenger hunt with their French peers who were in town on a French Youth Ambassadors Program. Students also planned and presented their community action projects addressing youth access to technology, food insecurity, and recycling. Lastly, the students were able to experience authentic American culture and hospitality by staying with local hosts.

CLICK HERE TO READ THE FULL STORY
Global Ties KC has worked with the Lee’s Summit School District connecting them to the Youth Ambassadors program for more than a decade. This year Global Ties KC brought another 13 international students and two adult mentors, where each participant lived with host families in the greater Lee’s Summit area. In strategic partnership with the Lee’s Summit School District, this program reaffirmed the strong relationship between Global Ties KC and our school partners, and, in a similar vein, the host families made authentic relationships with their visitors.

Both the incoming students and their mentors benefited from the experiences and events that allowed them to interact with their American peers in exciting and productive ways. Having high-school-aged host siblings and visiting the local school were both invaluable experiences for all involved. These experiences galvanized the program participants and local students to engage and interact with their international counterparts and to create a true cross-cultural exchange.

**Two volunteer activities**
With Harvesters Food Bank and Synergy Services.

**Visits to the Brown vs. Board of Education National Historic Site Hillcrest Transitional Housing, LivZero, volunteer organizations, and United Topeka**
All provided context and insight into multiculturalism in Kansas City and the United States. These meetings and sessions varied; activities included tours, meetings, individual walk-throughs, hands-on training, and other unique experiences.

**Many meaningful interactions with local youth and residents**
Youth Ambassadors visited a local high school for two full days of classes. During that time, they gave cultural presentations on their home countries to a large group of American students.

**Mentor-specific opportunities**
This included one-on-one meetings with teachers during the school visits.

Building upon the success of the prior three cohorts from 2022, Global Ties KC welcomed a new cohort of college students. From October 26 to November 2, 2023, Global Ties KC welcomed 10 Ukrainian college students, between 19 and 20 years old, on the American Leadership Exchange Program (ALEX) sponsored by the U.S. Department of State and American Councils on International Education. These young adults undertook a 3-week leadership building program, including time in Warsaw, Washington D.C., and Kansas City.

**I believe in person-to-person diplomacy and its importance. I believe in people representing the values of their country as they move around the world.**

– Sofya Shchypakina

During the day, students participated in intensive programming in pursuit of professional development, leadership skill building, and cultural enrichment. Participants engaged with the community in multiple ways, including a coffee social hour, meeting with the Mayor of Prairie Village, and meeting with local Congressional staffers.

**Thank you for supporting Ukraine, sharing our stories, and spreading information about our community.**

– Anastasiya (Nastya) Rayina

**It has been two years since the war. A lot of people get tired of the news cycle but it is still very valuable to us to see communities supporting us and welcoming us with open arms.**

– Kateryna Shablyko
Global Ties KC was exclusively selected to fully coordinate the Youth Ambassadors Program for Community Service, designated by the U.S. Embassy in Paris. Working collaboratively with the partners in Paris, France, Global Ties KC coordinated all aspects of the program to create a hands-on experience.

The tour and volunteering with Operation Breakthrough provided a hands-on opportunity for participants to serve a local organization doing imperative work for the underserved population. Students were able to learn about what the organization does and meet with staff, then see the impact the organization is making through getting together a graduation ceremony for a third-grade class, many of whom would not be receiving a stable education and wrap-around care without the organization.

Students participated in a photo scavenger hunt with high school students from Africa and Kansas City, who were in Kansas City on a U.S. Department of State funded Pan-African Youth Leadership Program. This cross-cultural hands-on activity encouraged bonding, community learning, and teambuilding in an interactive activity. They were able to explore the community and engage with their international peers in a multicultural setting.

Youth Ambassadors engaged in a second activity with the Pan African Youth Leadership Program to participate in the White House Decision Center, which is a simulation conducted by the Harry S. Truman Presidential Library. Each student is provided a Presidential Advisory position and must then come together to make a decision on a real global crisis that occurred during Truman’s Presidency. Students enjoyed the hands-on learning and engagement of the activity, while using their collaboration, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills.
The Global Robotics Exchange* is a STEM-focused virtual exchange program that is funded by The Stevens Initiative: a U.S. Department of State grant aimed at investing in young people in the U.S. and Middle East and North African region through virtual exchange programs.

In October of 2023, Global Ties KC administered the program to the first of four semi-annual cohorts. The program consisted of four concurrent live webinar-style sessions where FIRST robotics teams from the U.S., Morocco, and Libya participated in discussions relating to their professional development, technical topics about robotics, and intercultural exchange.

The Global Robotics Exchange* is implemented by Global Ties KC and is supported by the J. Christopher Stevens Virtual Exchange Initiative (JCSVEI). JCSVEI is a U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs program administered by the Aspen Institute.

In total, more than 200 students from the U.S., Morocco, and Libya participated in the program for at least one session, with 164 reaching alumni status by participating in at least three out of four of the sessions. This program was truly a collaborative effort, with The DeBruce Foundation, Lybotics, KC STEM Alliance, and Robots & More each contributing speakers for the program.

Students participated in asynchronous activities during the program, including introducing themselves in a WhatsApp group to get to know their international peers.

Thank you everyone for your great effort. It was a really good experience. I feel more confident.

– Fatima Ez Zahrae Arouaw (Participant, Morocco)

I found this experience very positive, I am very happy to be part of the Global Robotics Exchange. And it was very interesting to see other students that are experiencing the same challenges that we are experiencing.

– Douaa Fadoua (Participant, Morocco)

GLOBAL TIES KC PROGRAM PARTNERS

164 ALUMNI

3 COUNTRIES

Click here to read the full story
WHAT IS IT

The Youth Diplomats Institute is a 9-month real-world learning opportunity for Kansas and Missouri high school students to develop skills in public affairs and diplomacy. Through monthly workshops, participants interact with their peers, network, develop professional skills, and directly engage in cultural learning.

THE FIFTH COHORT

In September 2022, Global Ties KC welcomed 37 new participants to the Youth Diplomat Institute from 20 different high schools across Missouri and Kansas – from Bland, MO to Lawrence, KS. Global Ties KC has successfully completed four years of the homegrown Youth Diplomats Institute, graduating students from five different cohorts, and welcoming in both a virtual and an in-person cohort for the 2022-2023 year. The Youth Diplomat Institute has quickly become a pillar of the organization.

ALUMNI EVERYWHERE

The Youth Diplomats Institute has successfully graduated more than 75 students. These participants are some of the best and brightest that our community has to offer. In August 2022, Global Ties KC instituted the Youth Diplomat Advisory Council, bringing together 13 Youth Diplomat alumni who are invested in making the program even better. Global Ties KC is excited to listen to the advisory council to find what ways the institute can improve.
WASHINGTON DC LEADERSHIP EXCURSION

JULY 16-20, 2023 | 5 STUDENTS

Five Kansas and Missouri high school students had the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to travel to Washington D.C. fully sponsored for 5 days to join the Youth Ambassadors Program for Community Service, fully implemented by Global Ties KC.

Students enjoyed exploring the nation’s capital city with necessary time in touring major museums and monuments, but also spent time volunteering with local civic organizations and meeting with Washington D.C. non-governmental organizational leaders to discuss social services and issue facing the beltway.

- Volunteering activity with Bread for the City, providing access to groceries for those who need it in Washington D.C.
- Panel featuring four local leaders to discuss the spirit of volunteerism in the United States and insight into how non-governmental organizations function in the U.S. through the use of donated time and resources.
- Leadership Styles Workshop to aid students in understanding their strengths in a group setting to help them work better with others.
- A guided tour of Washington DC with Capitol Communications Group, emphasizing American institutions and federalism.
- A tour and visit to the African American Culture and History Museum.

Participants had the opportunity to see major sights, including the Capitol Building, Martin Luther King Jr Memorial, Albert Einstein Memorial, World War I Memorial, and White House.

From top to bottom, left to right: students outside the U.S. Capitol; students setting goals for the week; students posing outside the White House.

CHICAGO LEADERSHIP EXCURSION

JUNE 8-11, 2023 | 9 STUDENTS

In partnership with WorldChicago, Global Ties KC coordinated a Youth Diplomat Exchange, where 9 local high school students traveled to Chicago, Illinois to meet with their Chicagonian counterparts. This fully sponsored opportunity provided key leadership development opportunities and cultural exploration.

- A Youth Diplomat city sharing session, allowing each group of Youth Diplomats to share about their culture and community.
- An interactive communication styles workshop with local community leader and activist.
- Visit to the Chicago Blues Festival and Art Museum.
- A walking mural tour featuring local Hispanic artists, depicting community culture and history through visual arts, then enjoying local cuisine.

My favorite excursion on the Chicago trip was either the Chicago Arts Institute or interacting with the students at WorldChicago. I got to experience the museum with Martina who knew a lot about all of the art, and made friends at WorldChicago that I’m still in touch with today!

— Thomas Tempest

Follow our social media to see more.
Seventy-eight years ago, a small-town farmer from rural Missouri became President of the United States, at one of the most critical moments in world history. Just eight years later, during the same season as the Harry S. Truman Presidential Library was under construction, the groundwork was being laid for a tiny citizen diplomacy-focused nonprofit in Kansas City, which has grown to the organization that Global Ties KC is today.

Over the past seven decades, we have welcomed thousands and thousands of international visitors into Kansas and Missouri, connecting experts in a variety of fields to their local counterparts, and building global relationships, one handshake at a time. Through shared meals, farm tours, strolls through art galleries, museum visits, and thousands of professional meetings each year, the more than four hundred international visitors we bring to KC annually have the opportunity to meet ‘average’ people in the heart of America. So yes, we’re being very literal when we say “diplomacy begins here.” Here at this Summit. Here in the Heartland. Here at home.

— Courtney Brooks
President & CEO, Global Ties KC

Every citizen can play a role in creating enduring relationships abroad by engaging communities beyond our borders.

— Daniel Ricchetti, the Deputy Special Representative for City and State Diplomacy

Special thanks to our speakers for the Diplomacy Begins Here Summit:
Mark Adams, Education Director, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library
Courtney Brooks, President & CEO, Global Ties KC
Jim Erickson, Director of Strategic Initiatives, Economic Development Corporation of Kansas City, MO
Drew Felling, Vice President, International Trade, Commerce Bank
Zane Francescato, Central Outreach Manager, U.S. Global Leadership Coalition
Karen Hiller, Councilwoman, Topeka, KS
Kevin Holland, Vice President, Lockton
Melissa Miller, Director, World Trade Center-Kansas City
Chris Miner, Managing Director for Professional & Cultural Exchanges, Bureau of Educational & Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State
Trisha Purdon, Director, Office of Rural Prosperity, Kansas Department of Commerce

Held semi-annually in Global Ties U.S. cities across the country, the Diplomacy Begins Here Summit brings together leaders in business, government, and nonprofit organizations to forge new connections with local communities around exchange programming.

The day concluded with closing remarks from Daniel Ricchetti, the Deputy Special Representative for City and State Diplomacy. In his role, Daniel works with municipal leaders such as mayors, governors, and other local officials to strengthen local government engagement on the international stage.

READ A FULL RECAP OF THE SUMMIT
The final day of the Diplomacy Begins Here Summit was devoted to professional development for those in the Global Ties network. Dr. DeAngela Burns-Wallace, the CEO of the Kauffman Foundation, set the tone for the day and provided an inspirational opening keynote on the intersection of international work and the Kauffman Foundation. Her message to the network was to follow Kauffman’s lead, and to “be uncommon”, a sentiment that set the tone for the day and will serve to inspire the Global Ties network for years to come.

The day continued with heartfelt conversations around alumni engagement, local advocacy, and wrapped up with discussions about organizational strategy. The Learning Lab left participants with new ideas for implementing programs, but also with a feeling of hope and inspiration for the future of the work of vital citizen diplomacy.

In addition to shining a light on the legacy of the Heartland’s role in international exchange, the Diplomacy Begins Here Summit was bookended by a welcome activities, and a learning lab, for guests from out of town. Global Ties KC is part of a network of more than 80 nonprofit organizations from across the United States, who all work on the International Visitor Leadership Program. We were invited to host one of two 2023 Summits, to convene IVLP implementing organizations from coast to coast, to talk through best practices in international exchange.

On September 20, the Summit began with a strong welcome with a Resource Tour and the Heartland Welcome Dinner. The Welcome day highlighted key major business sectors in Kansas City, but then moved attendees to a historically underinvested part of Kansas City, the jazz district and location of our Welcome Dinner.

The final day, September 22, the Learning Lab brought together the Global Ties U.S. network for debriefing and professional development, aiming to strengthen the network. The Learning Lab was held at the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation Conference Center, once again intentionally highlighting strong network allies and complimenting the daily objective of relationship building.

Sessions included:
- Kansas City Resource Tour with Kansas City Area Development Council and 2000 Vine
- American Jazz Museum Guided Tour
- Heartland Barbecue Welcome Dinner
- Fireside Chat with Ewing Marion, Kauffman Foundation CEO
- Where’s Your There and Learning to Define It for Strategic and Personal Impact
- Stories Demonstrating Impact: Happenings in Alumni Engagement
- IVLP Programming Ecosystem: The View from My Office
- Creative Programming Through Facilitated Discussions: Opportunities in IVLP
- Securing the Future: Strategies and Key Elements of Advocacy

READ A FULL RECAP OF THE LEARNING LAB
EVENTS

CULTURAL CONNECTION HOUR, MOROCCAN WOMEN IN STEAM
STATE OF THE ORGANIZATION
CULTURAL CONNECTION HOUR, MOLDOVAN CORPORATE LEADERS
CULTURAL CONNECTION HOUR, EDWARD R. MURROW JOURNALISM- U.S. FOREIGN POLICY FROM THE NEAR EAST AND NORTH AFRICA
PAN-AFRICAN YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROGRAM ALL-STAR ALUMNI

CULTURAL CONNECTION HOUR, FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT PROFESSIONALS
INTERNATIONAL WOMEN OF COURAGE LUNCHEON
CULTURAL CONNECTION HOUR, LATIN AMERICAN JOURNALISTS
CULTURAL CONNECTION HOUR, VIETNAMESE LEGAL ENGLISH TEACHING PROFESSIONALS
CULTURAL CONNECTION HOUR, ITALIAN HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS

ANNUAL CELEBRATION
HEARTLAND WELCOME DINNER
DIPLOMACY BEGINS HERE SUMMIT
CASUAL COFFEE CONVOS WITH UKRAINIINAN COLLEGE STUDENTS
CULTURAL CONNECTION HOUR, NGO LEADERS

COMMUNITY IMPACT

MICHAEL FARMER VISIT TO TBILISI, GEORGIA

Kansas City sent a local to the Community Connections Program Reunion in Tbilisi, Georgia through a Global Ties KC program. Community Connections is a U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) program which has tangibly impacted thousands of Belarusians through tailored intensive professional development exchange programs. In the pursuit of continued impact, the Community Connections Program conducts a reunion to harness energy and work to create intense change in the country of Belarus.

“Working with the group of Belarusian while in Tbilisi, Georgia was incredibly inspiring.”
– Michael Farmer

Michael Farmer, Entrepreneurship Instructor, empowers Belarusian students in Georgia with AI insights at Community Connections Program Reunion.

Board of directors and community members enjoy themselves at the Heartland Pop Up annual celebration.

19 TOTAL EVENTS
549 TOTAL ATTENDEES
Tom and Julie Prudden
Shari Wilson and Chris Steineger
James and Marti Wilson
Yvonne and Bill Hales
Ann and Jim Greene
Bernard Brown
Rachel Ibok
Shabina and Suren Kavimandan
Paul-Francois Polidori and Andrew Koch
Ken and Cheryl Davis
Sharon Johnson and Bob Dona
Lara and Cory Tenbarge
Marti Moore and Jak Kinsey
Jennifer Dye
Kelly and Gonzalo Arias
Paul Temme and Loring Leifer
Joan and Mai Ho
Roger Heinrich and Lisa Deangelo
Kaleigh and Justin Bearce
Martin and Leslee Rivarola
Kai and Susanne Ringenson
Kit and Linda Wagar
Holly and Paul Schenk
Ally and Eric Roberson
Nicholas and Sarah Boehnlein
Ketra and Rodney Kirk
Sheri Morris
Tia Pasnick
Chad and Mishelle Pauley
Jess and Drew Solomon
Judy and Sabina Shifrin
Megan and Matt Maassel
Jane Lampo and Howard Welsch
Erin and Michael Calloway
Rick and DeeAnn Behrens
Courtney and Bret Ivy
Kim Chamberlin
Linda and Dan Cosgrove
Mikhala Lantz-Simmons and Mohammad Rasoulipour
Alison and Shawn Long
Terence and Arlette McIff
Tianna McIff and Mason Patten
Chad and Kira Montuori
Vanessa Vaughn-West and Jim West
Debbie Vesel
Jim and Marti Wilson
Liz and Michael Zeller
David and Suzannah Smith
Jason Camis
Courtney and Ben Brooks
Mylinda and Gil Scott
Karen Dickinson

2000 Vine
A Turning Point KC
Academie Lafayette
Agricultural Business Council
American Civil Liberties Union of Kansas
American Jazz Museum
American Public Square
Arnold Development Group
Arts KC
Associates in Dispute Resolution
Avenues of Life
Barkey
Bayer
BioNexus KC
Black & Veatch
BNIM
Boulevard Brewing
Boys and Girls Club of Greater Kansas City
Boys Grow
Bridging the Gap
Broadmoor Bistro
Cafe Cà Phê
Center for Conflict Resolution
Channel 4 WDAF-TV
Charlotte Street Foundation
Chicken N Pickle
Children’s Mercy: Division of Infectious Diseases
City of Lee’s Summit
City of Lenexa
Civil Rights and Equal Opportunity Department, City of KC
Climate-Energy Project
Commerce Bank
Conscious Capitalism
Crescent Peace Society
Della Lamb
Domestic Violence Victim Assistance Program
Douglas County Courthouse
Emmanual Ngomul
Ethnic Enrichment Commission
Federal Bureau of Investigation
First Tech Challenge
Girl Scouts of NE Kansas and NW Missouri
Greater Kansas City Community Foundation
Greater Kansas City Foreign Trade Zone
Guadalupe Centers
Harry S. Truman Presidential Library
Harvesters
Health Forward Foundation
Heartland Conservation Alliance
Hillcrest Transitional Housing
Hispanic Economic Development Corporation
Hope House
Jackson County CASA
Jackson County Prosecutor’s Office
Jacob’s Well
James Toon
Jewish Vocational Services
Judge Mary Sheffield
Kansas Center for Sustainable Agriculture and Alternative Crops
Kansas City Area Development Council
Kansas City Artists Coalition
Kansas City Auditor’s Office
Kansas City International Airport
Kansas City Police Department
Kansas City Star
Kansas City, Kansas DA’s Office
Kansas Coalition for Open Government
Kansas Department of Children and Families
Kansas Department of Commerce
Kansas Department of Commerce, Office of Rural Prosperity
Kansas Department of Commerce, International Division
Kansas Reflector
Kansas State Department of Animal Science and Industry
Kansas State Food Safety and Security Program
Kauffman FastTrac
KC Black Owned
KC Care Health Clinic
KC Center for Inclusion
KC Community Gardens
KC Farm School
KC Film Commission

THANK YOU TO OUR 2023 PARTNERS
THANK YOU TO OUR 2023 HOSTS

103 MEALS SHARED
640 NIGHTS IN HOMESTAYS
In 2023, we lost a number of important members of the Global Ties KC family. Trudy Nepstad welcomed hundreds of international guests into her home, introduced them to a diverse array of her friends from across KC, and put together dinner parties that showcased the very best of the United States. Mayor Dick Berkley was awarded the John C. Dodds III Citizen Diplomacy Award for his longstanding dedication to international relations and citizen diplomacy. Long after his term as mayor of Kansas City, he was still a regular at Global Ties KC receptions. Ross Marine served many years on the Global Ties KC’s board, including time as president, and was an exemplary leader and contributor.

For all those we lost, on behalf of the Global Ties KC team and network, our hearts go out to their families and the individuals they touched from all around the world.