



For Immediate Release

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PRESS RELEASE

International Center of the Capital Region's New Executive Director Boasts Exciting Vision for Organization's Future

Announces Program Progress, New Hires; Call for Summer Interns

(Troy, N.Y.) – The [International Center of the Capital Region](#) (ICCR) announced their new Executive Director, Jennifer Zhao, at the end of 2021. In a few short months, Zhao has laid the groundwork for an exciting and inspiring future for the international focused non-profit organization in the Capital Region.

After the [announcement](#) of ICCR's new permanent space on the Hudson Valley Community College Campus last November, Zhao immediately began work to expand services and education program offerings through the organization—which hasn't been easy given the pandemic climate.

The organization's biggest need right now is host families. ICCR's Open World Exchange program is guided by The Open World Leadership Center which is one of the most effective U.S. exchange programs for countries of the post-Soviet region which enables emerging leaders to experience the United States culture and to learn about the legislative functions necessary to sustain democracy. However, without the American families to host, this program cannot flourish. It is inherent that host families participate to help provide the best experience for the exchange guests.

We will be hosting a **virtual Open House** where past hosts will share their experiences. People interested in hosting are welcome to attend to help get their questions answered on **Wednesday, March 2, 2022, at 6:30 p.m** and **Saturday March 12th 2022 at 1:00pm**. For more information regarding the Open World Program and hosting visitors, visit <https://iccralbany.org/open-world/>. Those interested in attending the open house, may sign up [here](#).

“At the heart of our organization is the promotion of cultural understanding among Americans and international visitors alike, to welcome new people to the Capital Region and learn from them. The Open World Exchange Program is the epitome of this information exchange that is crucial to our mission,” said Zhao.

ICCR has plans to host representatives from Russia in April and Moldova in May.

In addition, the ICCR is working on creating an ethnic restaurant guide. Zhao believes that one of the easiest and most effective ways to connect different cultures is through food, because, “everybody eats!” This notion will pave the way for an **ethnic food guide of the Capital Region** highlighting important immigrant success stories, and not just the restaurants that came out of them.

Zhao is thrilled to announce a **new Director of Community Engagement** who will be integral to these new endeavors. Holly McKenna has served as president of the Friends and Foundation of the Albany Public Library and the Library Board of Trustees. She is a media lecturer and director of the internship program for the English department at the University at Albany.

ICCR is also looking to build up its intern staff for the summer. Applications and information can be found [here](#).

ICCR is a non-profit organization founded in 1956 that promotes cultural understanding among others by welcoming international leaders and dynamic newcomers to the Capital Region. After being headquartered in various locations around the region since its founding, Hudson Valley Community College has offered to host the organization permanently on campus in the Fitzgibbons Health Technologies Center, which is a space shared with the college’s Office of Global Initiatives.

With a very diverse background of service, ICCR’s mission shifted in 2005 to focus on outreach, educational, and advocacy activities. The Center serves its local and global communities hosting international visitors to the region (as the region’s officially designated member of Global Ties US, formerly known as the National Council for International Visitors), convening educational exchanges and symposia, fostering dialogue on the contributions, opportunities and challenges presented the global economy, and advocating for greater appreciation and understanding of the international community in the greater Capital Region.

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About International Center of the Capital Region. The International Center of the Capital Region (ICCR), a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization, has been welcoming and assisting international newcomers throughout New York’s Capital Region since 1956. We enable citizen ambassadors for professional and cultural exchanges through the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP), the U.S. Department of State’s premier professional exchange program, while promoting the diverse people, rich history, and unique assets of the Capital Region.