



For Immediate Release
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August 7, 2023

MEDIA ADVISORY

International Center of the Capital Region Names Director of Community Engagement

*Nonprofit Welcomes Six New Board Members
Asking for Nominations for Upcoming Achievement Awards in November*

(Troy, N.Y.) – The [International Center of the Capital Region](#) (ICCR) now has a **new Director of Community Engagement**. DTrae Carter, (pronounced “Dray”), started in the role vacated by Holly McKenna when she was [named the New Executive Director](#) of the organization, last month. Carter will be responsible for tasks related to the organization's newsletter and website, social media accounts, fundraising, and programming for various delegation visits.

Carter spent the last 15 years designing and directing work for some of New York State's most significant and essential programs such as Taste NY, Pride of New York, Farmers Market Nutrition Program, and NY State of Health. He has utilized this experience to focus on elevating the visibility of and implementing effective visual-based marketing strategies for small to medium sized businesses. Apart from his professional pursuits, Carter is an avid traveler and an advocate for cultural exchange. He has journeyed to numerous countries, immersing himself in different cultures, and fostering cross-cultural understanding. Through his travels, he has gained a global perspective that informs his work and personal philosophy.

ICCR boasts **six new board members** as well who have begun work with the nonprofit over the course of the last few weeks.

Caroline Bobick works as a lobbyist for the New York State School Boards Association. She holds a Bachelor of Arts from Binghamton University and a Master of International Affairs from Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs. Bobick has lived in Turkey, Spain, Honduras, and Nicaragua. She speaks Turkish and Spanish, and has studied Portuguese and Hebrew for a number of years as well. Caroline is passionate about women and immigrant rights. She lives in Malta with her husband and two young children.

A career educator **Dr. Phil Fusco** has served as Grade 7-12 Social Studies teacher, K-12 principal and program consultant. Most recently Dr. Fusco's work has focused on collaborating with school districts in the development of character-based learning cultures that support students achieving their maximum potential. As an extension of that initiative Dr. Fusco facilitates the N.Y.S. School of Character mentor program in conjunction with Exc21.org and Character.org in Washington, D.C. Through the creation of Exc21.org Dr. Fusco has enhanced his work with schools to build pathways to achieving excellence through character development. By incorporating core character beliefs as the foundation for their program into strategic planning school districts pave their path to a culture of excellence.

Christine Guerin grew up in the Capital District and has enjoyed home hosting several guests for dinner through the International Center's program. She has traveled to many countries around the world and has extensive experience building business relationships internationally. She currently works for The Orvis Company as Senior Product Developer in the menswear division. Christine holds a Business Degree from LeMoyne College in Syracuse, NY. Recently, she returned to school and in December 2022 completed her master's degree in International Relations at Norwich University in Vermont.

Mary-Ellen Pichè is a healthcare executive and consultant who provides services to healthcare and non-profit organizations to include strategic planning, organizational assessment/development, patient experience improvement, leadership development and coaching, high reliability, patient safety and quality management/accreditation. In her ACHE faculty role, she delivers seminars on the patient experience and staff/physician/patient engagement. Previously Ms. Piche was a consultant with Planetree Inc. in Derby, Conn., and CEO of the Stratton VA Medical Center in Albany, N.Y. Mary-Ellen serves on the Board of Directors of Rockefeller College's Center for Women in Government and Civil Society, where she gives frequent presentations to the Fellows and New Leaders programs. She also serves as Vice President of the Board of Directors of WMHT, the regional PBS network.

Michael Quaranta is a Vice President, Senior Business Banking Officer with Berkshire Bank in Albany, NY. Michael has enjoyed an extensive banking career within the retail and commercial banking segments of the Capital Region for both large and mid-sized institutions. Michael specializes in Commercial and Industrial lending, Foreign Trade, Cash Management, encompassing all industries for small to large size business, including start ups. Prior to banking, Michael was employed by John Hancock Financial Services specializing in life insurance and estate planning. A dedicated volunteer, Michael has held several committee and Board of Director positions with Living Resources Corporation, Living Resources Foundation, Habitat for Humanity, and Family and Child Services of Schenectady. Michael is currently serving as Treasurer for both Living Resources Corporation and Family & Child Services of Schenectady.

Alvaro A.J. Salinero's parents emigrated to the United States from Spain in the summer of 1959. He was born soon thereafter and spent his early childhood in the area known as Washington Heights -a place with a rich mixture of Irish-American, German-Jewish,

African-American, Puerto Rican and Dominican cultures. He attended Stoney Brook University. Salinero moved to the Capital Region in the Fall of 1982 to attend Albany Law School and graduated in 1985. He worked for the Schenectady Corporation Counsel (the city's attorney), then moved to the New York State Department of Social Services, and from there, to the New York State Department of Health. He retired from the Health Department in the summer of 2022. Salinero believes wholeheartedly in the Center's mission to break down barriers through direct one-on-one contact and has enjoyed meeting visitors to the United States through this worthwhile program.

Headshot images of Carter and the new board members may be found [here](#).

ICCR will be hosting its **second annual Achievement Awards Ceremony Thursday, November 2, 2023** to honor foreign-born community members and others in the community who have made significant contributions to the area while advancing cross-cultural dialogue through volunteerism and advocacy. They are currently **looking for nominations** to honor people in the community. **Nominations are open until August 31st**. Sponsorship inquiries may be directed to info@iccralbany.org.

The Achievement Awards honors people in five (5) categories:

- **Business & Entrepreneurship** –Honors a foreign-born community member who has created economic opportunities through business and entrepreneurship.
- **Community Service and Philanthropy** – Honors a foreign-born community member who has enhanced community programs by giving back through volunteerism and philanthropy.
- **Civic Engagement & Citizenship** – Honors a foreign-born community member who has demonstrated leadership in civic engagement, government, and citizenship.
- **Distinguished Career** – Honors a foreign-born community member who has achieved exceptional career accomplishments in for-profit or non-profit sectors in his/her professional field.
- **Volunteer of the Year Award** – Honors a community member who has shown outstanding commitment to the mission of the International Center of the Capital Region through volunteerism, including but not limited to providing hospitality for international visitors, event planning, grant writing, and web design.

The organization is adding two categories that will honor other organizations as well:

- **Global Citizenship** – Honors an organization that has demonstrated awareness of the wider world and understanding their place in it, and who creates positive change that transcends geography or political borders.
- **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility, and Belonging** – Honors an organization that has made a significant impact in DEIAB efforts within the organization, in the Capital Region, and beyond.

Nomination information and forms may be found on the website, <https://iccralbany.org/achievement-awards/>.

ICCR is a nonprofit organization founded in 1956 that exists to promote cultural understanding among others by welcoming international leaders and dynamic newcomers to the Capital Region. ICCR connects the Capital Region to the world through citizen diplomacy by hosting programs with foreign visitors and events that help establish relationships across borders and cultures. For more information on the International Center of the Capital Region, visit <https://iccralbany.org/>.

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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.