



# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

International Center of the  
Capital Region

Citizen  
Ambassadors  
Connecting the  
Capital Region to  
the World



[www.iccralbany.org](http://www.iccralbany.org) 518-708-7608



**OPEN  
SINCE  
1956**

## **ICCR 2023**

130 Visitors

47 Nations

6 Continents

100+ Area citizens engaged

Algeria

Angola

Armenia

Australia

Bahamas

Belarus

Colombia

Costa Rica

Egypt

Ethiopia

Eritrea

Estonia

France

Germany

Ghana

India

Iraq Kurdistan

Jordan

Kazakhstan

Kyrgyzstan

Lebanon

Lithuania

Marshall Islands

Mexico

Moldova

Morocco

Mozambique

Nepal

Netherlands

Nicaragua

Nigeria

North Macedonia

Pakistan

Poland

Rwanda

Saudi Arabia

Slovak Republic

Slovenia

South Korea

Suriname

Tanzania

Trinidad & Tobago

Tunisia

Turkey

Uganda

Ukraine

United Kingdom

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Dear Friends of ICCR:

The world is open again! In our first full year of operation since the pandemic, ICCR reengaged with citizens from 47 nations and six continents, introducing them to business, government & community leaders and volunteers from across New York's Capital Region to promote greater cultural understanding and international cooperation.

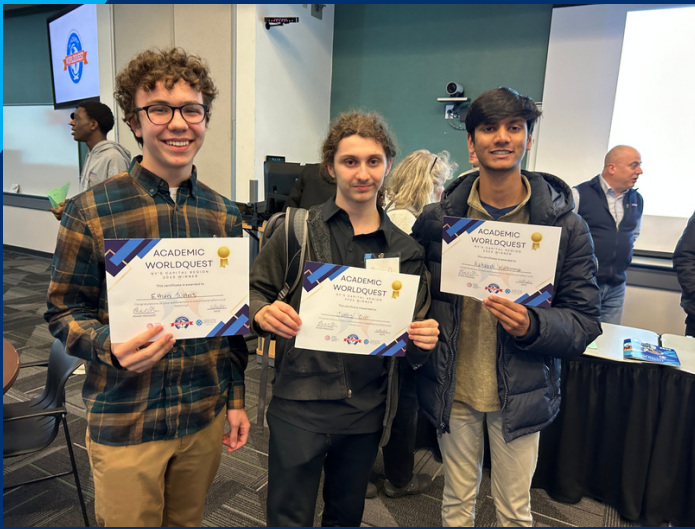
We hosted 130 international visitors who met with local experts to explore issues ranging from business development, border security & emergency preparedness, confronting disinformation, law & justice and disability rights, renewable energy and women's health—while also contributing tens of thousands of dollars to our local economy through spending at local restaurants, lodging and more.

We relaunched programming for students and teachers to expand their own diplomacy skills through school-based programs like Academic World Quest, and redoubled our efforts to introduce residents of the region to the rich cultural diversity and achievements of foreign-born neighbors and friends by hosting the 2nd Annual ICCR Achievement Awards and "Taste the World" culinary promotions.

Events around the globe remind us of the vital role citizen diplomats play in promoting greater understanding of diverse cultures & international cooperation. The world is open again and as we sprint towards ICCR's 70th anniversary in 2026, the board members & staff eagerly await the next opportunity to introduce the Capital Region to the world. Thank you for being a vital part of our mission and success!

Holly Planells McKenna  
Executive Director

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# ENGAGING CITIZEN DIPLOMATS

Academic WorldQuest is a fast-paced team competition that challenges students on their knowledge of world events. ICCR reintroduced the Capital Region to the nationally known, World Affairs Council-sponsored (WACA) event, held at Hudson Valley Community College and including teams from four area high schools. Utilizing grant funding from the former Albany Tula Alliance and secured by State Senator Neil Breslin, ICCR volunteers are helping to expand the program and explore adding programs like Model UN to help grow a new generation of citizen diplomats.

ICCR continued our community outreach activities by cohosting a workforce development and labor conference with the International Labor Organization, thanks to a WACA grant, and the area's first Citizen Diplomacy Workshop, thanks to the US Department of State, to help volunteers hone their engagement skills.

We appreciate our members, donors and volunteers who support our work.

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# Recognizing Diversity & Achievement

## The ICCR Achievement Awards

New York's Capital Region boasts an incredibly rich diversity of cultural communities—represented by an impressive 60 distinct cultural centers and local organizations with international connections. ICCR has worked to expand its role encouraging engagement with these citizens and the wider Capital Region community, and recognizing the vital role they play in promoting opportunity and improving our quality of life. In 2023, ICCR partnered with area businesses to launch a successful international dining passport program, featuring discounts at more than a dozen ethnically themed restaurants and hosting our Achievement Awards event recognizing significant contributions of foreign-born residents in our area that support our mission). Together with co-hosts Assembly Members Pat Fahy and John McDonald and our corporate and individual benefactors, ICCR honored six individuals and two organizations (Festival of Nations and the Chinese Community Center) that promote and enrich our area. Congratulations to all the honorees, and thank you to everyone who helped make this second annual event such a great success.



**Congratulations to our 2023 Honorees!**

**ACHIEVEMENT  
AWARDS**

We will start planning our 2024 Achievement Awards and it's not too early to think about nominations!

# Opening the Capital Region to the World

ICCR was thrilled to once again serve as the region's premier partner in hosting international visitors to the Capital Region. In 2013, 130 visitors representing 47 countries met with more than 100 community representatives, learning and sharing their own experiences and unique challenges, and through spending at area restaurants, retailers and hotels, contributing tens of thousands of dollars to the Capital Region's economy too.

During one such visit, leaders from 20 nations in Africa, Asia, Western Europe, former Soviet republics, the Middle East and Americas spent five days meeting with representatives of Capital Region not-for-profit, community agencies and government to learn to strengthen the roles of NGOs in their home countries to better serve critical social, economic and other needs.

(Photo Credit: DTrae Carter. NGO leaders from 20 nations met at HVCC with Capital Region experts to find ways to improve efficiency and operation of programs that serve their communities.)

Our international visitor programs (Open World and the US State Department's International Visitor Leadership Program) are at the core of ICCR's mission to promote understanding and cooperation through citizen diplomacy. We are grateful to all the volunteers, home hosts, community leaders and more—the "Citizen Diplomats" who helped ensure our success in 2023.

It takes a region to make a difference in the work we do and we welcome ideas to help us grow and engage our community in international affairs.



## WHAT'S NEXT?

Looking ahead, ICCR's leadership is committed to expanding the Capital Region's engagement with the international community to foster better opportunity and understanding to people across our world and right here at home.

Thank you to our partners:  
Members and financial supporters of ICCR  
American Councils for International Education  
Congressional Office of International Leadership (Open World)  
Cultural Vistas  
Hudson Valley Community College and President Roger A. Ramsammy, Ph.D.  
Global Ties US  
Meridian International  
Mississippi Consortium for International Development  
US Department of State's International Visitor Leadership Program  
World Affairs Councils of America



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You can learn more about ICCR's programs and volunteer opportunities,  
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ICCR

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THE CAPITAL REGION  
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