



SPECIAL ISSUE – DELEGATIONS FROM THE REPUBLIC OF BURYATIA

*This issue highlights a November 2011 exchange for five Open World delegations from the Russian republic of Buryatia, on Lake Baikal’s eastern shore. Many of the delegates were Buryats, an indigenous Siberian people. Major funding for the exchange came from the **ERA Foundation**, whose founder, Sen. **Vitaly Malkin**, represents Buryatia in the Russian Parliament’s upper house. The **Suzanne and Walter Scott Foundation** (cofounded by Open World’s board chair) provided additional support for the delegation hosted in Omaha, NE.*

In Chicago, Buryatian officials who work with youth attended the “University of Scouting,” a full day of workshops for area Boy Scout volunteers. A team-building course was especially popular with the delegates. Another highlight was meeting with Illinois Secretary of State **Jesse White**, who founded the Jesse White Tumbling Team in 1959 to provide a positive outlet for inner-city youth. Visits to local schools, youth leadership organizations, and a suburban youth services agency were also on the program, conducted by the Council for International Programs Chicago. Rep. **Jan Schakowsky** met with the delegates on Capitol Hill before they headed to Chicago.

Buryatian journalists hosted in Kalamazoo, MI, by Colleagues International observed how their U.S. counterparts gather and report news, through sessions at the *Kalamazoo Gazette*, local CBS affiliate WWMT, and other media outlets. At the Public Media Network, the group saw how this organization offers free use of its production and broadcast facilities to promote noncommercial community media programming. Q&A with an aide to Rep. **Fred Upton** was another highlight. The delegates made news back home during their visit, as one of them, TV journalist **Aleksandr Malkhanov**, blogged about his experiences on his station’s website.



Michigan Press Association head Mike MacLaren greets a delegate.



Delegates see a John Deere combine.

University agricultural experts hosted by the Friendship Force of Greater Omaha visited one of the country’s largest soil-testing facilities (Midwest Laboratories), met with the vice president of international operations and a marketing rep for Valmont Industries’ irrigation division, and got out in the field to see no-till farming at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln’s Agricultural Research and Development Center. Nebraska Director of Agriculture **Greg Ibach** gave the Buryatians an overview of the state’s role in agriculture, while an aide to Sen. **Ben Nelson** discussed federal agricultural programs with them.

Buryatian higher education delegates, most from East-Siberia State University of Technology, learned about “green” teaching techniques at American University’s Center for Teaching, Research and Learning, and explored the role of satellite campuses at Johns Hopkins University’s satellite campus in Columbia, MD. Staff of Sen. **Ben Cardin** (MD) reviewed Congress’s role in education policy with the delegates. Another highlight was discussing community service as a complement to academic work at Howard Community College. Cultural Vistas hosted the exchange.

After a welcome from Ohio state Rep. **Cheryl Grossman** and an aide to Rep. **Steve Stivers**, Buryatian child welfare advocates began their professional activities by touring a Columbus-area residential facility for troubled youth. Next came visits to a juvenile correctional facility, emergency shelters for children, social services agencies, and the Institute for Human Services, which trains child welfare staff across America. The institute’s director was the ideal person to wrap up the exchange, as she had recently attended a Russian-American child welfare forum in Buryatia and was well-informed about how U.S. child welfare practices could be adapted to Buryatian needs. The Columbus International Program hosted the visit.



Buryatians don traditional attire for a visit to a high school in Casstown, OH.