



U.S. SUMMIT & INITIATIVE FOR GLOBAL CITIZEN DIPLOMACY

For Immediate Release

Contact:

Joyce McClure, Executive Director
Bridges to Understanding
601 N 34th St
Seattle, WA 981093
joyce@bridges2understanding.org
206.925.5301

Diane Rasmussen, Director of Communications
U.S. Center for Citizen Diplomacy
525 SW 5th St, Suite A
Des Moines, IA 50309
drasmussen@uscenterforcitizendiplomacy.org
515.282.8192 Ext. 240

Bridges to Understanding Named Top K-12 Education Program by U.S. Center for Citizen Diplomacy

Seattle, WA. September 20, 2010. [Bridges to Understanding](#), in collaboration with Carnegie Mellon University's [CREATE](#) Lab, is pleased to announce their citizen diplomacy program, *The Bridges Collaborative: Supporting 21st Century Education Worldwide*, has been selected as a Top Program by the K-12 Task Force of the U.S. Center for Citizen Diplomacy (USCCD.) As such, the program will be highlighted as a key component of the upcoming U.S. Summit for Global Citizen Diplomacy, to be held November 16-19, 2010 in Washington, DC.

"We are honored to be selected for this recognition on the eve of our tenth anniversary of connecting youth around the world to explore how they can be active, responsible global citizens," said Joyce McClure, Executive Director of Seattle-based Bridges to Understanding. "The vision of our founder, Mercer Island resident and renowned humanitarian photographer Phil Borges, of a harmonious, interconnected world in which youth are actively engaged as global citizens, has inspired Bridges to become what it is today."

In preparation for the Summit, Task Forces in nine sectors – business, community-based organizations, development assistance, global health, higher education, international cultural engagement, international voluntary service, K-12 education, and youth service - were created to highlight ways in which organizations within each sector can expand existing initiatives and offer new and innovative programs to encourage more engagement of Americans in global citizen diplomacy. The Task Forces are co-chaired by experts in their respective fields and represent broad networks of U.S. non-profit, non-partisan organizations. Summit Task Force groups compiled and vetted hundreds of program submittals as part of the selection process, and will make presentations on the role of their sector in increasing U.S. citizen engagement in international affairs at the Summit in November.

As part of the criteria, the creative use of new technologies and the identification of international partnerships were highly encouraged. Each selected proposal focuses on one or a combination of major global challenges that Americans as citizen diplomats working collaboratively with fellow American and international partners can address. They are:

- Preserving the Environment
- Reducing Poverty & Disease
- Increasing Respect for Human Rights
- Creating a Globally Competent Society
- Encouraging Cultural Engagement
- Achieving Food Security
- Securing U.S. & Global Financial Security

U.S. CENTER FOR CITIZEN DIPLOMACY

The K-12 Education Task Force will address innovative and creative methods for developing globally competent students in American schools, by focusing on ways in which global education can be presented to millions of children beginning in preschool through secondary education. Selected organizations will showcase what has been accomplished in several states and demonstrate how quality global competency can be achieved through new collaborations.

The Bridges Collaborative program brings together this Seattle-based nonprofit organization with the CREATE Lab, a division of Carnegie Mellon University's Robotics Institute, in a program that uses cutting-edge digital and robotic technology to connect teachers and students in middle and high classrooms in Seattle, Peru, Guatemala, India, South Africa and other countries around the world. "Using a cooperative learning-with-action process of debate, discussion and reflection," explains McClure, "youth explore real needs that impact their community, dialogue online with other students in our network of partner schools around the world, then create and present short videos ('digital stories') that offer solutions to local problems with global impact, inspiring others in their communities to help change the world for the better. Our curriculum-based program provides students with 21st Century skills in global awareness, technology, communication, creativity, flexibility, problem-solving and team-building as they learn directly from their global peers about their lives and communities and explore important global issues together."

This fall, Bridges programs are being used locally by Aki Kurose, Salmon Bay and Nathan Hale Middle Schools and Chief Sealth High School.

The U.S. Summit for Global Citizen Diplomacy is a national meeting presented by the USCCD in partnership with the U.S. Department of State, Office of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs. The Summit is designed to broaden the momentum generated from the work of the USCCD as a national resource base and network for Americans to be engaged as citizen diplomats, and two major leadership forums focused on the revival of citizen diplomacy as a critical component of U.S. public diplomacy and foreign policy strategy.

The Summit will be the first such meeting since President Eisenhower's People-to-People conference on the same subject 54 years ago, and will serve as the launch for a "Decade of Citizen Diplomacy" with a goal to double the number of American citizen diplomats by 2020.

A complete listing of the selected Top Program organizations, and detailed information about the U.S. Summit for Global Citizen Diplomacy may be found at: www.usc4cd.org/summit.

Bridges to Understanding and the U.S. Center for Citizen Diplomacy stand together in their commitment to the expansion and promotion of citizen diplomacy initiatives and urges their fellow Americans to join the effort.

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Bridges to Understanding is a non-profit organization founded in 2001 to empower and unite youth worldwide, enhance cross-cultural understanding and build global citizenship using digital technology and the art of storytelling. Additional information about Bridges may be found at: www.bridges2understanding.org

The U.S. Center for Citizen Diplomacy (USCCD) is a non-profit, non-partisan organization established in 2006 to promote and expand opportunity for all Americans to be citizen diplomats, and affirm the indispensable value of citizen involvement in foreign relations. Additional information about the USCCD and the U.S. Summit for Global Citizen Diplomacy may be found at: www.usc4cd.org