



HOSTING CORNER

WASHINGTON, DC – The nation’s capital gave a warm welcome on April 12 to a 34-person Open World contingent from Turkmenistan that included members of the Mejlis (Parliament), staff of *hyakims* (governors), education and civic leaders, and business owners and entrepreneurship promoters. Individual delegations had meetings at the offices of Sens. **Jeff Bingaman** (NM), **Scott Brown** (MA), and **Tom Udall** (NM), and Reps. **John Fleming** (LA), **Martin Heinrich** (NM), **Steven LaTourette** (OH), and **Terri Sewell** (AL). Other sessions were held with representatives of the State Department; staff of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the House Foreign Affairs Committee, and the Helsinki Commission; and orientation speak-

ers. An evening reception at the Embassy of Turkmenistan capped off the day. The delegations then headed for hosting in communities with a special interest in and connection to Turkmenistan: Akron, OH; Albuquerque, NM; Columbus, OH; Huntsville, AL; Louisville, KY; Shreveport, LA; and Worcester, MA.



Turkmen delegate Rejep Sultanov (right) and another volunteer pitch in during an April 21 Earth Day cleanup project in Worcester, MA.



Turkmen women business leaders meet in New Mexico Sen. Tom Udall’s DC office with aides Anna Vavruska (holding a hand-stitched Turkmen place mat) and Stephanie Kuo (center). The group discussed the business climate in Albuquerque (the delegates’ host community) and Ashgabat, Turkmenistan’s capital.

CENTER NEWS

WASHINGTON, DC – In March, Open World launched an exciting new initiative to use closed Facebook groups to help ALL those involved in an Open World exchange to communicate before, during, and after the visit. Each closed group is for a specific travel date. Our Facebook closed-group initiative is designed to:

- Facilitate interaction between local host coordinators, host families, and their assigned delegates and facilitators in the weeks before and during the Open World visit.
- Enable host coordinators and families, their delegates and facilitators, presenters, grantees, and Open World Leadership Center staff to keep in touch after the local program has concluded.
- Encourage project-oriented partnerships between U.S. host communities and delegates’ communities by providing a commonly used and easily accessed point of contact.

How it works:

Open World’s logistical contractor, American Councils, creates a closed group on Facebook for a given travel date. The facilitators for that travel date then invite, via Facebook, their delegations’ local host coordinators and host families to become members of (“join”) the closed group, and the networking begins. (Host coordinators and host-family members who aren’t yet on Facebook are invited to sign up for it.)

Facebook is becoming the standard social network in Open World countries, and our participants are particularly motivated to use social media to keep in contact with their professional counterparts and new friends in the United States. This first phase of the initiative has been limited to Russian travel groups, but we plan to begin expanding it to other Open World countries soon.

Questions? Contact Open World Public Affairs Officer Maura Shelden at mshelden@openworld.gov.

Correction: The previous issue of the Open World News incorrectly stated that the Armenian bloggers hosted in Tega Cay, SC, earlier this year met with print and online staff of The Herald newspaper. We regret the error.