

Making a Difference

WASHINGTON, DC – On March 11, Secretary of State **Hillary Rodham Clinton** and First Lady **Michelle Obama** presented Open World alumna **Veronika Marchenko**, head of the Russian NGO **Mother's Right**, with one of the State Department's eight 2009 International Women of Courage Awards. This is the only State Department award that pays tribute to outstanding women leaders worldwide. Mother's Right, which Marchenko established in 1990, has grown into one of the most outspoken and effective NGOs fighting peacetime deaths and human-rights violations in the Russian armed forces. Marchenko took part in a 2002 Open World rule of

law exchange hosted by the International Visitors Council of San Diego. She describes the experience as a rare opportunity to learn about the U.S. judicial and political system. On March 12, accompanied by Open World Program representatives, Marchenko visited the office of Sen. **Dianne Feinstein** (CA), where she spoke with Legislative Assistant **Rich Harper** about how the international donor community could support local NGOs in Russia, despite a 2006 Russian law that makes NGOs subject

to much greater government scrutiny if they accept foreign funding.



Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton congratulates Open World alumna Veronika Marchenko (center) on winning an International Women of Courage Award, as First Lady Michelle Obama looks on.

From the Field

BAKU, AZERBAIJAN – U.S. Ambassador to Azerbaijan **Anne E. Derse** hosted 44 Azerbaijani Open World alumni at her residence in Baku on March 2 to celebrate the second anniversary of their country's participation in the program. Nominating-organization representatives, American Councils staff, and four facilitators also joined the festivities. Ambassador Derse's welcoming remarks emphasized Open World's importance in building strong U.S.-Azerbaijani relations. The event, which featured music by the **U.S. Army Europe Band's** woodwind quintet,

received TV and online coverage. The delegates at this commemoration had been hosted stateside in 2007–2008 by Florida's Eleventh Judicial Circuit Court, the Houston Baku Sister Cities Association, the International Center of Syracuse (NY), the New Orleans Citizen Diplomacy Council, the Santa Fe (NM) Council on International Relations, the University of Oklahoma International Programs Center, the World Affairs Council of Kentucky and Southern Indiana, and the League of Women Voters chapters of Baltimore County (MD), Southwest Missouri, Edina (MN), and South Hampton Roads (VA).



U.S. Ambassador to Azerbaijan Anne E. Derse (front, right) joins several alumni and other attendees at the March 2 reception she hosted in Baku to celebrate the second anniversary of Open World's Azerbaijan program.

Hosting Corner



Turkmen delegates meet at the Institute of American Indian Arts on March 3 with Hayes Lewis (center, in blue jeans), director of the Institute's Center for Lifelong Education, and Tom Maguire (far left) of the Santa Fe Arts Commission.

SANTA FE, NM – Three delegates from Turkmenistan hosted by the **Santa Fe Council on International Relations** Feb. 25–March 9 are working to draw world attention to their long-isolated country's ancient crafts of carpet-making, silk weaving, and embroidery, and to its new generation of painters. Santa Fe, with its vibrant Native American, folk, and contemporary arts scenes, was the ideal host community for delegates **Charymurat Sariyev**, director of the Turkmenistan Art Exhibitions Office, **Bayram Hojammayev**, head of the Artists Union of Turkmenistan, and textile

designer and manufacturer **Djamiyla Djepbarova**. The Turkmen met the organizers of the Indian Market, the Spanish Market, and the International Folk Art Market, the world's largest folk art market. They also learned about programs that teach business skills to artists and help ensure the authenticity of tribal wares. Although the theme of this exchange was economic development, at least one of the delegates sees a more profound mission for arts promotion, saying that beauty would "save the world." National Grantee: Academy for Educational Development