

OUR MISSION

International Women Associates (IWA) is a Chicago-area forum that connects women with diverse international backgrounds.

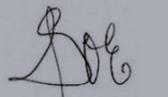
Members put global understanding into practice through programs offering education, support, and service. IWA enriches the lives of members through participation in shared experiences that encourage cross-cultural exchange and friendship. IWA's vision is to create a more just and peaceful world through mutual respect and understanding. IWA works with organizations and individuals whose goals are harmonious with its mission and advocates for universal human rights, especially for women and girls.

OUR FOUNDER



IWA was founded in 1978 by Doe Thornburg, OBE (Order of the British Empire) who has devoted her life and career to organizing innovative exchanges of ideas among people of many nations.

Working for global understanding means transforming consciousness by respecting and appreciating what each person has to offer. To partner in such a commitment is the work of IWA members. Together we are changing the status quo. We are assisting in the creation of a more just and peaceful civilization.


Doe Thornburg

WHAT WE DO

Each of IWA's 20 Culture, Language and Activity Groups offers a monthly educational and enriching program promoting cross-cultural dialogue and friendship. Meetings are held both mornings and evenings, at the home of an IWA member, the IWA office, or at another location. On occasion, groups may plan joint meetings. Most meetings are free of charge and all are open to every IWA member.

Presenters are experts from academic, business, governmental, or non-governmental organizations. IWA members are sometimes presenters, sharing their expertise in many fields. The presentations spark remarkable discussions, as members from diverse cultures share their insights and develop friendships through mutual understanding.

IWA sponsors a number of other member programs throughout the year which provide an opportunity for sharing, learning, interaction, and the building of friendships.

"I have learned so much about the world just by visiting all the groups we offer."
- ANA

Fund-raising activities include our annual Award Event, a festive Gala, gourmet feasts featuring international cuisine, and special programs that are open to the public.



WE ARE INVOLVED IN OUR COMMUNITY

SWIFT SCHOOL TUTORING AND MENTORING

IWA has established a unique relationship with the George B. Swift Specialty School, a K-8th grade school within the Chicago Public School system. Swift serves as a port-of-entry school for low income, immigrant, and refugee students from 55 countries who speak 65 languages and dialects. These children face many barriers to successful assimilation into their new country and the Chicago community. IWA's association with Swift School allows our organization to live its goal of "putting global understanding into practice" as it assists the newest members of our community to become successful and productive citizens.

"IWA's support will have a lasting impact on the future of my students."
- THE SWIFT SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

CULTURE IN A SUITCASE



IWA maintains a strong commitment to the community through its unique Culture in a Suitcase presentations in Chicago Public Schools, and volunteer tutoring and mentoring programs at the Swift School on the city's north side.

"We enjoyed the Culture in a Suitcase program so much! The students loved learning about the different cultures and had fun doing it."
- A CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR



IWA philanthropic funds support the following programs at Swift School:

BOOK DISTRIBUTION

IWA supports Swift School with a book distribution event two times a year, partnering with the Reading is Fundamental organization. Children select a book from grade-specific Scholastic books that are purchased with funds from IWA's Insider Chicago program donations.



ESSAY CONTEST

As part of the Swift School curriculum, IWA sponsors an annual essay contest for students in grades 4-8 that provides a prize for each grade's winning essay.

EDUCATIONAL ENHANCEMENT

IWA is funding a pilot program of coaching and ISAT test preparation classes for 7th grade students at Swift School. This program is designed to include practice tests, strategy discussions, and a thorough review of the academic topics included in the test. IWA also supports an "Ideal Student Workshop" program for 8th grade students at Swift School to help them learn how to learn. This program is a half-day study skills workshop focused on the executive functioning skills required to assure high school readiness.

"Each tutor expressed her satisfaction of working with the children, for she learned that once the heart is touched by the grateful appreciation of a child, there is an intangible pride and sense of accomplishment that brings immeasurable reward."
-BARBARA, IWA TUTOR

DOE THORNBURG SCHOLARSHIP

In keeping with IWA's vision to create a more just and peaceful world, IWA has initiated the Doe Thornburg Scholarship program. Honoring IWA's founder, the scholarship will be awarded annually to an undergraduate who is studying abroad.

WE LOOK TO THE FUTURE

IWA is committed to expanding its fundraising efforts to grow the resources available for its philanthropic programs. IWA solicits members to become involved with and support these exciting initiatives.

WE HONOR EXCEPTIONAL WOMEN

THE WOMAN EXTRAORDINAIRE AWARD

Our annual Woman Extraordinaire Award recognizes either a Chicago-area woman who has made an outstanding contribution in the international arena, or a woman who is working internationally to advance human rights.

Recent honorees include:



Mary Robinson First woman President of Ireland; former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; Realizing Rights founder.



Prudence Bushnell Diplomat and educator; U.S. Ambassador to Kenya when the embassy was bombed by Al-Qaeda; State Department official, who worked to prevent the genocide in Rwanda; long focused on improving the status of women, especially in developing countries.



Kathryn Bolkovac Human rights activist; former police investigator who worked with Human Rights Watch in Bosnia to expose the abuse committed against young girls forced into prostitution by U.S. military contractors, other police, and various international organizations.



Funmi Olopade, M.D. Professor of Medicine and Human Genetics at the University of Chicago; breast cancer specialist; 2005 MacArthur Foundation Fellow.



Connie K. Duckworth Trailblazing business leader and founder of ARZU STUDIO HOPE, an organization empowering women, families, and communities in Afghanistan through its unique social business model.



Molly Melching Founder and Executive Director of Senegal-based Tostan, a non-governmental organization dedicated to community education and empowerment in several African countries.



Marjorie Craig Benton Lifelong activist working on behalf of women and children and for community development; she also worked extensively on arms control and disarmament.



Anna Eleanor Roosevelt As Vice President for Global Corporate Citizenship at Chicago-based Boeing Company, she led a network of U.S. and international community investors to address the needs of selected communities around the world.

WHO WE ARE

IWA warmly welcomes new members, including international newcomers and expats, and Chicago residents who have extensive international experience. New members join a diverse group that respects all cultures, enjoys all personalities, considers all viewpoints, and fosters a network of deep friendships transcending cultural and national differences. IWA is a unique gathering and learning place that connects women dedicated to the pursuit of global understanding and universal human rights.

“I came to Chicago knowing no one and the friends I made through IWA are like sisters to me now.”

- JULING



“Volunteering offers the opportunity to connect with one another.”

- MARGARET



Our 450 members come from more than 60 countries. Their backgrounds include many different professions and diplomatic affiliations as well as experience and interest in international education, economics, and culture.

HOW TO JOIN

International Women Associates (IWA) is a Chicago-area forum that connects women with diverse international backgrounds. IWA represents a diversity of cultures, ages, professions, and ethnicities, from young professionals to active grandmothers.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP

IWA offers membership to a woman who is foreign born; a woman whose spouse is foreign born, who has lived, studied or worked abroad, whose parent or parents are foreign born, or whose family has been engaged in international business, international education, or the diplomatic service.

New members are nominated by current members. If an applicant does not know a current IWA member, she may apply online to initiate the membership process. Candidates for membership are approved by the Board of Directors upon the recommendation of the Director for Membership.

For questions concerning membership, please contact the IWA Office at 312-263-1421 or membership@iwachicago.org.

“It is up to us to make a better world.”

- DOE THORNBURG, FOUNDER



307 N. Michigan Avenue | Suite 1800
Chicago, IL 60601

phone: 312. 263.1421 | fax: 312.263.1461
iwa@iwachicago.org | www.iwachicago.org



Putting Global Understanding
Into Practice

WWW.IWACHICAGO.ORG

