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American Spaces

BUREAU OF EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

Second Quarter 2024

With just over 600 locations, ECA's Office of American Spaces engages people worldwide through content, resources, and programming. American Spaces support U.S. foreign policy goals and strategically promote public diplomacy.

As always, thank you for sending in your comments and suggestions to americanspaces@state.gov.

A Farewell Message from Director Fred Boll

Dear American Spaces Coordinators, Colleagues, and Friends,

While every Foreign Service Officer knows his or her time in any position is limited, it is no easy thing for me to bid you farewell after three years of working together with all of you around the world. I am reminded every day that your creativity, positive energy, vision, and commitment are the key factors in American Spaces' success. All of us in Washington are truly grateful for everything you do – and I know we don't say that enough. I have loved every opportunity to meet you in person and virtually, whether in training courses or working

together on projects or tackling challenges, and am thankful for your advice, professionalism, and perspectives, which have informed so much of our decision-making and the path we have charted.

We can all be proud of what we have accomplished, even as we are reminded that our mission has never been more important. The story of American Spaces is one of constant development and pivoting to ensure our programs and messages are relevant and respond both to what engages audiences and to Mission priorities. We have the privilege of representing the United States in all its diversity, and a concurrent responsibility to convey that diversity, and the ideals and friendship of the American people as widely and genuinely as we can.

Showing visitors and program participants around the world that we are their partners, and care about their well-being, and their communities' and countries' well-being and success, means being good listeners and responding to local needs and interests. I trust that you will continue to help us listen to, understand, and engage your communities in myriad positive ways. We need that. Makerspaces, e-Sports, English language clubs, EducationUSA, alumni engagement, cultural events, and most of all access to open, timely and reliable information are tools for us to reach out, engage, and share our values and resources, but they are all starting points. The connections we are forging together begin there, but we hope they will inform lifetimes of engagement, friendship, and partnership. We count on you to help us realize that vision.

I also want to emphasize our strong commitment to you, our coordinators, and to your professional fulfilment and success. Whether you work for a partner institution, the U.S. mission, or a Binational Center, we hope that your work on American Spaces will be professionally rewarding and enriching. Our elaboration of the American Spaces Professional Development Plan aims to provide a guide to meet the training and professional development needs of American Spaces staff over the course of your careers. It is an effort to ensure that no matter where you are, your time in American Spaces will be an important part of your overall career. While we hope you will stay with us for many years, we also know that part of any normal career progression is accumulating various experiences, and we want yours with us to be the best possible. We owe you that. If you have questions about the American Spaces

Professional Development Plan, make sure to contact your post to get over the details.

Serving as Director of the Office of American Spaces, working with all of you, dear Coordinators, leading our corps of dedicated Regional Public Engagement Specialists (REPS), and the dynamic team of professionals in Washington and Vienna has been a privilege and positive challenge that I will always value. I am grateful to our Deputy Director, Kit Bartels, for her partnership and vision through these three years. Thank you for your support for me personally, for your posts and colleagues, and for your own communities and our shared vision of fostering collaboration and mutual understanding. I wish you much continued personal and professional success ahead.

Sincerely,

Alfred Boll
Director, Office of American Spaces
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs



October 2022 - Indonesia



October 2022 - Indonesia



April 2024 - Kosovo



September 2022 - India



October 2022 - Indonesia



April 2024 - Latvia



April 2024 - Lithuania



May 2023 - Colombia



September 2022 - Nepal



September 2022 - Nepal



April 2024 - Kosovo



October 2022 - Indonesia



October 2022 - Indonesia



April 2024 - Latvia



May 2023 - Colombia



May 2023 - Colombia



September 2022- Nepal



April 2024 - Kosovo



April 2024 - Serbia



April 2024 - Serbia

Breaking Barriers: The Kyrgyz Struggle for Accessibility

As the crowd dispersed towards the reception, a touching moment unfolded—a mother approached me with her severely disabled son. The difficulties encountered in Kyrgyzstan flashed through my mind as...[\[read more\]](#)

Sally Ride - Breaking Gender Barriers



Born and raised in Los Angeles, she developed a passion for science and sports at a young age. Before she embarked on a career in space, she studied English and Physics at Stanford University at the bachelor's degree level and also received a Master's and Ph.D. in Physics, solidifying her educational credentials that would eventually lead her to make history...[\[read more\]](#)

Bridging the Gap of Cultural Unfamiliarity



A first-hand experience shared by Gregory E. Buford during his visit to an American Corner: The American Corner expressed a need for someone to connect with a group of students. Despite my willingness, there was uncertainty about what to expect and how effective my interaction would be in this unfamiliar setting...[\[read more\]](#)

New Events and Resources:

Ready to Launch!



We are pleased to announce that American Spaces worldwide now have access to [OverDrive](#) and have access to over 9500 titles through [eLibraryUSA](#)! Almost all of these materials can be used simultaneously—at any American Space around the world. With audio books, electronic books, and access to a news evaluation platform called **Ground News** and music lessons through **Artist Works**, it will be a game changer across all the pillars as you plan upcoming programming! Beginning in October 2024, the Office of American Spaces plans to change its main popular magazine content provider in eLibraryUSA from Flipster to OverDrive as well.

And there is more: Individual users with an eLibraryUSA account will be able to access these materials on their own devices once they have participated in training.

Here are a few quick videos about the American Spaces Collection in OverDrive:

<https://go.screenpal.com/channels/cZfOPV31M#watch>

American Center Cairo created the following flyer about the resources available and provided a [Canva link](#) so that you can adapt it for your American Space, too. We thank you AC Cairo colleagues!



There will be additional training and marketing tie ins related to using OverDrive and eLibraryUSA rolled out over the next few months. Feel free send an email to elibraryusa@americanspaces.info with any questions and/or reach out to your REPS.

We are so excited to share this wonderful news and these fantastic resources with all of you!

Is Joy Contagious?

Librarian [Mychal Threets](#) might convince you! Known for his positive messages, his popularity has gone viral—with one million followers across various social media platforms.

Recently featured in publications such as *Time*, *USA Today*, *Rolling Stone*, and *The Root*, you can simply google his name and learn about his passion for [book advocacy](#). Who are the Mychals in your American Spaces?

U.S. Speaker Program

The **Office of the U.S. Speaker Program** shares a biweekly list of newly recruited experts who are available for programming with American Spaces. The speakers are available for in-person and virtual engagements, offering valuable insights on various topics of strategic importance to the United States. To request a speaker for your American Space, please coordinate with the Public Diplomacy team at post. For more information on the U.S. Speaker Program, please go to [Office of the U.S. Speaker Program - Home](#).

Calendar of Events

The full [calendar](#) is available on the American Spaces website.

Thanks to all of you who have shared your programming ideas and highlights with your colleagues through our American Spaces FB page. You can continue to share your news and information by emailing us at AmericanSpaces@state.gov. If you have any questions or content to add, please email [Karlene Noel Jennings](#). To add someone to this newsletter, email us at AmericanSpaces@state.gov.



American Spaces

Want to learn about more events in your area or causes you care about? Tell us about yourself and your interests here:

[Update My Preferences](#)

Office of American Spaces

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs

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