

American Spaces: Connecting
the World with the United
States

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American Spaces

BUREAU OF EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

Quarterly Newsletter

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.

Welcome Director Todd Miyahira



Todd Miyahira became the director of the Office of American Spaces in July. He joined the Foreign Service in 2005, and most recently served as the Country Cultural Affairs officer at the U.S. Embassy in Brasilia, Brazil. His previous assignments abroad have been in Portugal, Bolivia, the Netherlands, and Honduras. He has also served in various positions in Washington, including as a Special Assistant to the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs and as a Duty Officer in the White House Situation Room. Todd has a BS from Georgetown's School of Foreign Service and a MA from National Defense University's College of International Security Affairs. He is a native of New Jersey and is married with three children. Welcome Todd!

More new faces in the Office of American Spaces include division chief for field support - REPS Cathy Marsicek - and division chief for policy - Doug Johnston. Welcome Cathy and Doug!

We've Moved!

The Office of American Spaces has moved to a new neighborhood in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA). Previously the office was in the Academic neighborhood. Now it is in the **Policy neighborhood**, alongside other offices such as Alumni Affairs, the Cultural Heritage Center, and Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning & Innovation. The move does not affect our our mission, staffing structure, or physical location, but our office symbol has changed from ECA/A/M to **ECA/P/M**.

Team Lomé Celebrates eLibraryUSA Success

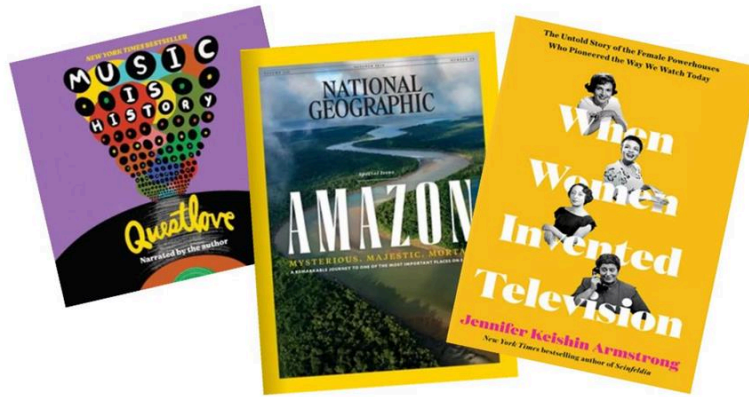


As part of the Fourth of July celebration, the Public Diplomacy Section and the American Spaces team in Lomé, Togo, hosted the North Dakota National Guard Band, which included a cultural exchange program at the American Corner at Université de Lomé. During this program, local musicians in Israel D’Almeida’s band, one the Corner’s contacts, as well as the American Corner Fan Club choir, connected with members of the visiting band. The program included an informal musical performance and a discussion in English.

During the program, our American Spaces Coordinator in Lomé, Aboubacar (Nathaniel) Sowou Djifa, introduced the local band performers and program participants to [eLibraryUSA](#). He then highlighted Overdrive (a new eLibraryUSA feature available through the [Libby app](#)) and its benefits to musicians, including the **ArtistWorks** feature, which includes free, online music lessons available to all.

Through **ArtistWorks**, aspiring and experienced musicians alike have access to improved skills via step-by-step music instruction from some of the world’s most sought-after musicians and music teachers.

Like the team in Lomé, we encourage American Spaces to explore [Overdrive](#) and all the new features available: [books](#), [audiobooks](#), [magazines](#), and even [music lessons](#)! Remember, almost all of the OverDrive resources can be used simultaneously, so they are ideal for book clubs, discussion groups, and workshops.



2025 Calendar of Observances

Check out the 2025 [calendar](#) now available on the American Spaces website. The calendar has been updated to align with the Department of State's strategic objectives, so you may notice some observances have been added and some have been removed. Links have been updated to feature American Spaces toolkits and U.S. government resources.

The calendar is a resource that Spaces may use when planning programs. Spaces should collaborate with post to identify the most appropriate program themes and observances that support their country's [Integrated Country Strategy](#).

Join Us in Marking 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence



From November 25 to December 10, we observe [16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence](#) to

raise awareness and promote action to end violence against women and girls. This year's theme, "**UNiTE to End Violence Against Women and Girls**," calls for renewed commitment to tackle this issue.

In support of this campaign, the Office of American Spaces will "orange" its [website](#)—turning it a vivid shade of orange to symbolize a brighter, violence-free future. This visual change will highlight the global struggle against gender-based violence (GBV).

We encourage you to explore the [website](#), including the [related programming toolkit](#). Consider using your social media platforms to amplify key statistics, survivor stories, and impactful visuals throughout the 16-day period to foster greater understanding.

New and Updated Resources

eLibraryUSA Flyer

eLibrary USA

With the world connected through the internet, false information can spread across the globe in less than a minute. A positive way to respond to this serious dilemma is to provide communities with access to real information, written by experts, fact-checked and designed to inform and educate. The collection of quality resources in **eLibraryUSA** is well-known throughout North America and Europe and meets the standards of publishers, academics, journalists, and media companies. **eLibraryUSA** is completely free of charge to use at American Spaces.

eLibraryUSA is sponsored by the Office of American Spaces, U.S. Department of State, in partnership with the U.S. Embassy.

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Press Reader
PressReader
PressReader is a true "digital newsstand." This extremely popular database contains 400 of the most read newspapers and magazines from around the world. A bonus is PressReader's easy, traditional format, which allows users to read the digital copy as if they were reading the print version.

BookFlix
Scholastic
BookFlix is a beginners reading website for English language learners that combines animated fictional stories with related nonfiction books. This resource helps young readers see and understand English and to learn about science, geography, history, and other subjects along the way.

The **eLibraryUSA flyer** has been updated to reflect that Flipster is no longer part of the collection. Access to more than 5,000 magazines is now available through [OverDrive](#).

Would you like to add your Space's logo to the flyer before sharing it with your audiences? You can make a copy of [this Canva file](#) and edit it to suit your needs.

Featured Videos on Disinformation and Elections

We are excited to share resources from [Africa Regional Services](#) that can greatly enhance your programming and outreach efforts. Below are links to highlighted videos that cover disinformation and the U.S. elections:

1. Disinformation in Times of Elections

English Version: This video explores various disinformation techniques used during elections, including the spread of false information and the use of AI to create deepfakes, cheapfakes, and video voice-overs. It's a must-watch for understanding the threats to electoral integrity.

- [Watch the English Version](#)

French Version: This video provides the same critical insights as the English version but is presented in French to cater to a wider francophone audience.

- [Watch the French Version](#)

2. How to Cover an Election

This video series features renowned journalist Eduardo Cue, offering essential guidance on covering elections. It is particularly valuable for journalists, media professionals, and anyone interested in the intricacies of election reporting.

- [Watch the How to Cover an Election Series](#)



International Education Week November 18-22, 2024

[International Education Week](#) takes place November 18-22, 2024, and is a wonderful opportunity to promote study in the United States.

In addition to offering programs to promote EducationUSA, American Spaces can promote International Education Week with these [promotional materials](#). Don't forget to tag social media posts with #IEW, #ExchangeOurWorld, and #AmericanSpaces.



U.S. Speaker Program

The **Office of the U.S. Speaker Program** connects posts with speakers who are available for in-person and virtual programs.

Jesse James Green Jr., a newly recruited speaker, is the **national security correspondent** at WTOP News radio covering the Washington, D.C. region. He provides reports and analysis on international security, intelligence, foreign policy, and terrorism. Green has embedded with the U.S. military in war zones and travelled to over 50 countries. He can speak on **investigative journalism and conflict reporting** and is **fluent in Spanish**.

To request a speaker for your American Space, please coordinate with the Public Diplomacy Section at post.

BridgeUSA Alumni are USG Alumni

Did you know that **BridgeUSA** alumni are alumni of U.S. government programs? Just like participants who completed Fulbright, IVLP, or the English Access Microscholarship Program, **J-1 visa program participants** such as au pairs, camp counselors, and research scholars are USG alumni. BridgeUSA alumni can be engaged as audiences and/or program implementers at American Spaces.

BridgeUSA, an office in the Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, recently updated their informational materials. [This one-pager](#) includes the J-1 visa types, plus BridgeUSA alumni engagement success stories from several posts.



What We're Reading

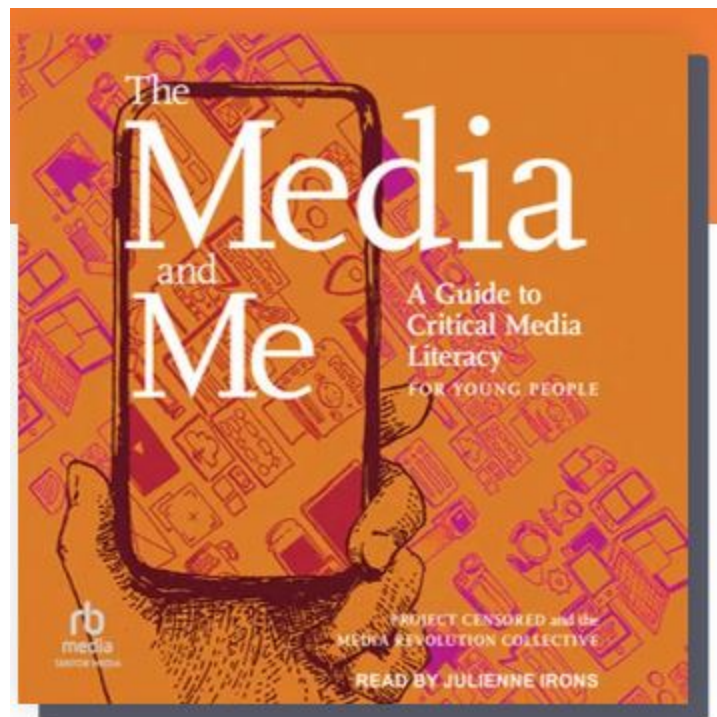
REPS Laura Kaspari-Hohmann has been reading [The Media and Me: A Guide to Critical Media Literacy for Young People](#). Co-author [Allison T. Butler](#), a professor at UMass Amherst, recently spoke to American Spaces coordinators when they visited Boston as part of the Digital Literacy and Training Program exchange.

As described in [OverDrive](#), this book "provides listeners with the tools and perspectives to be empowered and autonomous

media users ... this book will help students evolve from passive consumers of media to engaged critics and creators."

Laura adds: "It's helping me to think through how we approach our media literacy training."

The audiobook is always available in the [American Spaces OverDrive collection](#).



Borrow



We love to hear from you!

Thanks to all of you who have shared your programming ideas and highlights with your colleagues through the [American Spaces Facebook group](#). If you have questions about this newsletter or want to submit a success story, please email [Rita Botts](#).



American
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