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Message from the CEO



Ted Wysocki, CEO

I have completed my first year as CEO of the Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA) having many fruitful conversations

along the way. I am proud of all that we have accomplished this year, but even more so I am excited about where we are heading. At the beginning of April, the ICA Board, staff and volunteers met to launch a strategic planning process to propel us forward into the future.

Together, we are aiming to answer the question:

“What do we need to do to create a unified movement for the work of ICA-USA that allows us to reimagine who we are, maximize our potential, increase our impact, and better serve our constituencies?”

I am confident that we are laying the groundwork to be successful in implementing these plans.

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ICA Envisions New Directions at Board Meeting and Archives Sojourn

ICA board, staff, and volunteers are welcoming spring of 2016 with new commitments for the future of ICA. From March 28-April 2, ICA leaders were directing their energy towards strategic planning.

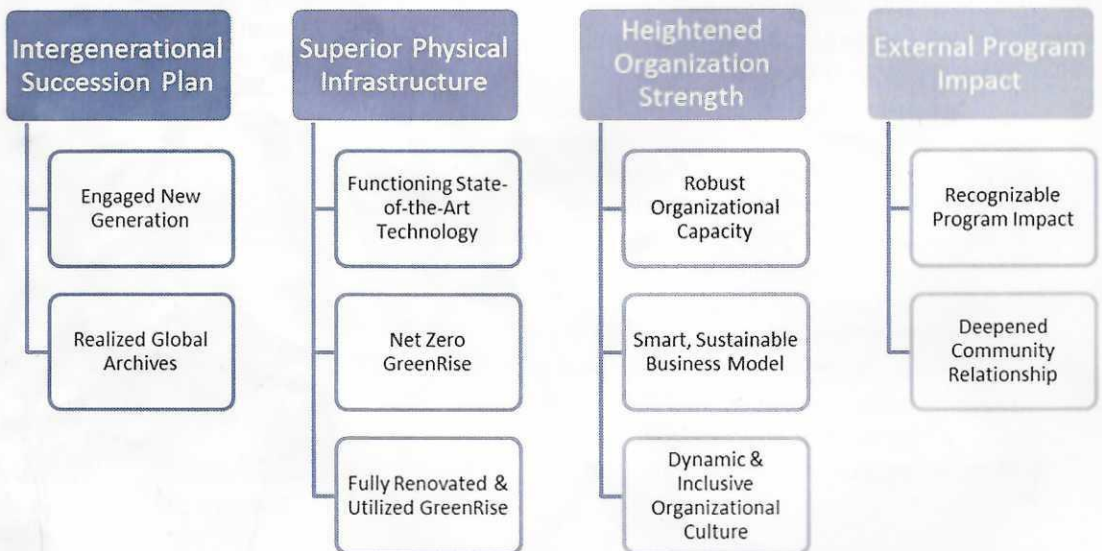
The spring archives sojourners started their week off with an action plan for the next 18 months of work. Their goal is to focus the work of the archives to be most relevant to present-day community practitioners both at the ICA and in the social change community in general. Their plan aims to address the necessary human assets and financial resources to sustain the archives for longterm use.

The archives team joined with ICA board and staff to close out the week with a ToP

strategic planning process. Board and staff had spent months planning for the process through conducting ICA stakeholder interviews, finely crafting the focus question, and coordinating the flow of the weekend. The weekend’s work resulted in a strategic plan that was generated by a truly coordinated and collaborative effort from the board, staff, and volunteers who came together as one ICA.

The group will move forward in four distinct strategic direction teams to advance our vision which is shown below. Each team is comprised of staff, board, and volunteers to ensure a coordinated effort moving forward. The teams will meet individually over the next few months to affirm the plan at the fall board meeting.

ICA’s 3-5 Year Vision



MESSAGE FROM CEO CONTINUED...

We are formulating with the ToP Network new strategies for branding and marketing the Technology of Participation (ToP)® methods. In conjunction with a new ToP Network Climate Action Team and our Global Archives Team, we are planning to commemorate ICA's Bicentennial '76 Town Meetings by convening October Town Meetings with local partners in at least nine US cities to "*Change the Conversation on Climate Change.*"

We are soliciting funding for the Historic Renovation Plan of ICA's Chicago-landmarked GreenRise as a prelude to financing \$12 million in capital improvements. We will be renovating the infrastructure with innovative and energy-efficient plumbing, HVAC and new boilers. Common spaces will be refurbished, increasing the viability and utilization of the building for years to come as the Midwest's largest non-profit center and home for 25 social service agencies which serve over 1,000 persons per week.

"Empowering cultural dimensions of the social process" remains integral to our initiatives locally in Chicago's Uptown community as well as supporting the work globally of our international colleagues. "Strengthening the capacities of organizations, communities, and individuals to build and implement innovative plans in a collaborative manner" prevails as our prime objective in Chicago and nationally.

The closing mantra this year for our weekly staff meetings is "Go Make a Difference." The next two lines of that hymn's verse are: "We can make a difference. Go make a difference in the world." With your continued support and engagement, we can do just that for "a just and equitable society in harmony with Planet Earth."



To become better acquainted with Ted,
please read his blog at:
<https://u2cando49.wordpress.com/>

BOARD MEMBER PROFILE: Kadi Sisay

How/when did you first encounter the ICA?

My initial encounter with ICA occurred in the Winter of 1972. My significant encounter, however, was in the Winter of 1993, 20 years later, when I participated in the ICA Leadership Options Program.



Acceptance in the program required that individuals submit a personal inquiry question which served to keep us focused on the work to be accomplished. The Program was designed to help us discover more about ourselves – individually and collectively.

Along with 19 other participants of diverse backgrounds (we called ourselves "The 19 Global Brains"), I experienced a month-long journey - challenging myself daily to find answers to my inquiry question. ICA methods were used as the framework to create a deep and intense experience which contributed greatly to personal and professional development.

What is your current role at the ICA?

Serving as the Chair of the ICA Board, I view myself as a convener, coordinator and encourager. There's a lot going on at ICA. It's a big job to stay on top of everything. Board and staff are critical players in the success of the organization. In this age of technology and 'abundant' information there needs to be an 'intentionality' towards keeping the lines of communication open, sharing accurate information and consistently encouraging everyone to engage their gifts, skills and talents to the fullest – focused on the mission.

What are your favorite things about the ICA?

I like the mission, the history of what ICA has accomplished around the world. I also like the diversity of thought and creativity among the current players - women and men with passion for the mission, Board, staff and partners. ICA is starting on another leg of its journey and creative people believing in the mission (in any organization) is critical to meaningful dialogue and futuristic thinking, hopefully leading to establishing another generation of innovation and accomplishments. There is an African proverb 'We stand on the shoulders of our ancestors.' ICA has some big shoulders!

What is an interesting fact about you?

Sorry, I can't think of only one! I like solitude, a book and a cup of tea. But I also like jazz and classical music. I like to drum and dance, and I enjoy being with family and friends. I care deeply about having intergenerational conversations. I learn a lot!



Kadi and ICA Board members at the 2016 spring strategic planning

Partnerships to Engage Uptown

ICA has been busy in the past couple months building partnerships to engage Uptown residents at the GreenRise and in the community. To support the 5th annual One Earth Film Fest, ICA hosted two films & discussions on Saturday, March 5th. ICA's films were strategically selected to connect festival attendees to current ICA initiatives.

In the morning, ICA screened *Catching the Sun*, a documentary that explores the opportunities and threats associated with the growing solar industry. Resource people from Cook County Community Solar and Illinois Solar Energy Association discussed ways for audience members to follow up on the film's message. Damien Blanchard, ICA Facilities Manager, also shared information about the solar installation at the GreenRise and led a tour of ICA's solar array.

To complete the day, ICA screened *This Changes Everything*, a documentary guided by Naomi Klein's book with the same title. It highlights powerful community responses to the climate crisis. Resource partners from Chicago 350, United Nations Association, Chicago Sustainability Leaders Network (CSLN), and Eco Up, an Uptown group of residents aiming to coordinate sustainable community engagement, all shared opportunities from attendees to take action.

OEFF continued the conversation about community sustainability on Earth Day when they partnered with the City of Chicago to screen the film *Growing Cities* at the Adler Planetarium and Uptown's Clarendon Park



This Changes Everything Panelists

Community Center. ICA led the post-film dialogue in Uptown and presented at the pre-film Green Resource Fair with CSLN and Eco Up representatives. The event was full of interesting conversations with Uptown members looking to be more engaged around sustainability, some of whom previously attended ICA GreenRise hub events. The night concluded with stargazing hosted by the Chicago Astronomical Society, which was so popular that there will be more throughout the summer!

ICA's engagement in Uptown is also extending this year to the Winthrop Historical Garden, a community garden for Uptown organizations and residents.

ICA has been gardening at their plot since 2009, and this year ICA is coordinating all 16 plots at the garden. The Winthrop Gardeners kicked-off the season on Saturday, April 23rd with a community work

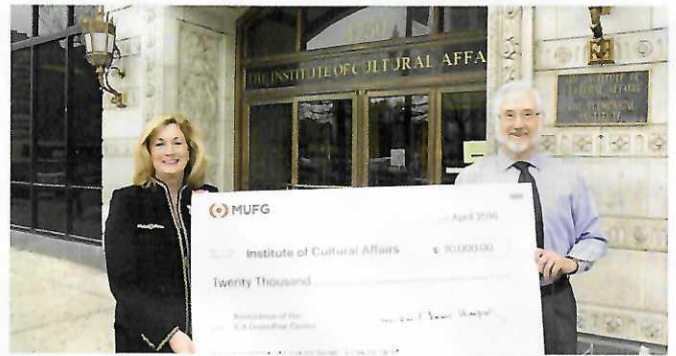


day. 13 of the 16 plots were represented, and gardeners enjoyed meeting and sharing stories about Uptown with each other. The group is looking forward to more work days throughout the season to continue to cultivate a community within the garden.

Strengthening our GreenRise

Spring at the ICA GreenRise has been bountiful for strengthening both the physical infrastructure of the building and the culture within.

On April 29th, we were proud to accept a \$20,000 grant from Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group, Inc. (MUFG) to support pre-development expenses for the building. This grant is one of many financial layers needed to support building maintenance, covering both general upkeep and innovative updates to move the building towards our goal to be a net zero building. MUFG sponsored the ICA because of the historic nature of the building as well as the social impact of GreenRise tenants on low- to moderate- income communities.



Ted Wysocki accepts grant from MUFG

Within the building, the intentional communities are growing and thriving. After over a year of work, the ICA GreenRise Intentional Community celebrated the completion of the ICA GreenRise Customary. The customary is a written agreement of the norms and expectations for current and future members of the community. Combining logistics and spirit, the customary is a foundational piece for what it means to be a part of the community. Community members celebrated with champagne at the customary signing; every new member will similarly sign the customary at their first community event.

The ICA GreenRise Intentional Community also officially welcomed Stone Soup to the building at their February community dinner. Over 30 members from both communities were in attendance at the meal. The group shared a meal, celebrated momentous occasions, and then engaged in lively discussion about their favorite experiences in Chicago. One seasoned ICA GreenRise member remarked that the Stone Soup members brought a presence unlike any community before in the building, and the possibilities for continuing to build a relationship with them are very exciting. This year will continue to welcome new victories for community life in the GreenRise.

Leadership Elevating in Chicago Sustainability

The Chicago Sustainability Leaders Network (CSLN) launched the 2016 year with great enthusiasm and creative thinking in how best to move the network forward.

In keeping with ICA's original intention for the CSLN to be a self-sustaining network, new shared leadership team members, Melanie Eckner (north), Simone Alexander (southwest), and Quilen Blackwell (south) were added to the CSLN organizing team. The team is looking forward to continuing to build the CSLN as a strong voice representing communities across Chicago.

The CSLN Shared Leadership team's first priority is to establish a membership structure that serves the needs of the network and allows us to grow. In order to garner input on membership structures, the team developed a membership survey and coordinated an interactive panel at the April CSLN meeting.

The panelists reflected on their abundant local experience in network facilitation and featured Jen Daniels-Lake from Chicago



Literacy Alliance, LeRoy Chalmers from Greater Roseland West Pullman Food Network, and ICA's Ted Wysocki who highlighted his former experience with Chicago Association of Neighborhood Development Organizations and the National Community Reinvestment Coalition.

Local Action

As the One Earth Film Festival (OEFF) grows each year, so does the participation of CSLN members and Allies. Including the ICA, four CSLN members partnered with the festival to host films and discussions centered around environmental activism. A number of individuals who participated in the 2015 Faith and Sustainability Forum and subsequent faith-based ToP training also volunteered their facilitation at sites across the city.

CSLN Meeting in February

Looking ahead, ICA and the CSLN will act as the Midwestern site for the Integrated Network for Social Sustainability (INSS) conference in June. Members see the INSS conference as a vehicle to engage directly with residents who aren't typically involved in sustainability.

National Recognition

The CSLN policy group focuses on engaging with aldermen and policymakers to create more equitable and accessible structures. This work was recently recognized by The Center for American Progress who cited the CSLN's work in the recent publication, *Resilient Midwestern Cities: Improving Equity in a Changing Climate!* The report takes a close look at how 5 cities are building resilience to climate change in low-income communities and uses those case studies to make broader policy recommendations.

LISC & ICA Training: Chicago Plans 2016

After a successful fall 2015 Chicago Plans cohort, ICA and Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) are continuing their partnership— a LISC-led effort to empower community leaders with the facilitation skills they need to design and execute successful participation-based planning efforts in community areas across the city.

Beginning on April 12th and running until May 31th, this four day workshop series is based on teaching participants elements of ICA's ToP and community development methodologies. The goal for the series is to give local Chicago planning agencies the tools they need to better engage their communities in the planning process.

Photo by Gordon Walek/LISC

The Spring 2016 cohort is comprised of 10 teams of three team members each. The teams are made up of at least one member from a lead organization and two community leaders/ other organizations from the same community area. Participants range from aldermanic staff to executive directors of non-profits to local community leaders.

The application requirements for Chicago Plans allow participants to develop the kinds of cross-organizational relationships necessary for collaborative community planning. In addition to the new tools and methods they learn to apply to their work, teams are able to meet similar organizations from all across Chicago, and the series design allows for plenty of time for cross-community interaction and exchange.



After a recent social-styles inventory exercise, participants noted that it is so helpful to have a way to reflect on their own styles within a group and learn how to flex to others. Many of the teams have prior experience with community meetings around planning leading to angry community members or unhelpful scenarios. ICA and LISC intend for this series to give Chicago Plans participants the tools to create well-designed and thoughtful meetings that allow all participants to feel heard and also give cohort participants the skills they need to be able to mitigate conflict when it occurs.

Top Network: Moving Beyond the Gathering

The past few months have seen great investment in a ToP Network that is innovative and evolving, with much focus on mending the relationship between the ToP Network and the ICA. At the Annual Gathering, the historical scan and image shift exercises in particular enabled healing and momentum to explore future potential for the ToP Network and ICA.

One component of this effort to build network strength has been a series of virtual dialogues in order to develop new branding and marketing of the ToP Network to resonate throughout industries and sectors. This process is nearing completion, and we're looking forward to implementing a new, more effective strategy.

Another emerging initiative within the ToP network is the ToP Climate Action Team (ToP CAT). Sparked by the Climate Change session at the Annual Gathering, ToP

practitioners from across the country are meeting regularly to work on structures for communicating climate action urgency using ToP methods.

ToP trainers and facilitators can use their work as a platform to increase climate conversations by:

1. Incorporating Climate Change Focused Conversations into trainings.

The group has developed three scripted conversations to reflect on short climate change videos for any facilitator to use.

2. Facilitating Climate Conversations with clients and other groups you are involved with at this time.

Help organize a movie night with a partner organization and facilitate the conversation after the video to explore perceptions and inspire action around climate action.

3. Getting involved with helping to plan and prepare for Town Meetings in October. These Town Meetings will use the ToP methods to dialogue with communities and encourage climate change actions. There is enthusiasm to facilitate Town Meetings this fall in part to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Bicentennial Town Meetings that were held across the U.S. in 1976. Email Ted at twysock@ica-usa.org for more details.

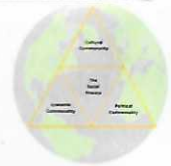
As the ToP Network and ICA continue to collaborate on initiatives there are opportunities for engagement. Colleagues of both networks are invited to join in on this incredible journey and offer what you can (your time, ToP skills, and other talents) to the work.

Looking to Create Sustainable Communities? Apply for ICA's 2016 Community Development Summer Cohort

The program is designed for students, community development practitioners, environmental activists, and others who are interested in learning practical tools to supplement theory-based learning within the field of community development or applied community sustainability. The academic modules are highly participatory and utilize a multi-media approach. The three-week program is from 9:00-5:00 daily for a total of 120 hours.

Extended Application deadline: May 23rd @ www.ica-usa.org/page/SCDI

July 11 — July 29, 2016



Peer Sharing in Zimbabwe Strengthens Zim50

In March ICA-USA colleagues and ICA-Zimbabwe hosted a regional collaboration session as part of The Zimbabwe 50 Communities project (Zim50). Zim50 is a five-year project that intends to do 50 yearlong HIV/AIDS campaigns in 50 communities in and around Harare.

ICA Directors from ICA Tanzania, ICA Kenya and ICA Zambia traveled to Zimbabwe for a few days to learn about the Zim50 project and discuss the potential of replicating the project in other countries. ICA-USA has been a supporter of the Zim50 project, and US colleagues Louise Singleton and Jane Spalding helped organize and host the conference in Zimbabwe.

This collaboration session will assist ICA-Zimbabwe in the creation of a toolkit for running one year campaigns that engages leaders and villages in the work itself, using their own energy and determination with minimal outside assistance and resources. In addition to the toolkit, ICA-Zimbabwe will develop a training tool on using the kit that is responsive so residents can modify their implementation strategies in the way that is appropriate for their community.

While exploring the toolkit as a replicable model, the group was able to draft a small proposal to seek funding for the replication of Zim50 in other places. This partnership and meeting is a great follow up to the May 2015 East Africa Conference.



ICA Directors Charles Luoga, Meshak Mutevu, Voice Vingo with ICA Zimbabwe Director Gerald Gomani

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ICA Community Calendar

May 17-18th: Chicago ToP Strategic Planning Course

A structured planning process which incorporates the group facilitation methods into productive action and concrete accomplishments.

May 19th: Chicago ToP Environmental Scanning Course

An assessment tool to prepare a group to do further work, such as strategic planning or making significant decisions.

May 24th: ICA-USA Board Call

June 8-10th: Integrated Network for Social Sustainability Conference

ICA GreenRise will be hosting the Midwest site for the INSS conference, which is a multisite conference across the nation that engages academics and practitioners around holistic sustainability. This year's theme is "Communities and Connections."

June 23rd: ICA-International General Assembly Call

July 16th: First Annual Uptown Garden Walk

As a follow up to the garden-themed hub day in February, ICA and Eco Up are coordinating an Uptown garden walk to showcase the variety of gardens in Uptown and further support collaboration between Uptown gardeners.

July 26th: ICA-USA Board Call

October: Climate Action Town Meetings

There is enthusiasm to facilitate Town Meetings this fall in part to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Bicentennial Town Meetings that were held across the U.S. in 1976. Connect with Ted at twysock@ica-usa.org for more details.

