Mending Hearts and Homes
Mexico City Relief Fund provides assistance to shaken city

Going the Distance
Consulate General Perth embraces outreach with 84-mile trek

COLOMBIA
New opportunities and exciting potential in a rapidly-changing country
Features

**Office Spotlight: IRM Nairobi**
Team builds culture of outreach and innovation
*By Chickelle Woody*

**Going the Distance**
Consulate General Perth embraces outreach with 84-mile trek
*By Erin Sanders*

**Breaking Stereotypes**
Embassy Doha’s Young Writers Program engages Qatari youth
*By Julia Kirby and Kristina Rosales Kostrukova*

**Post of the Month: Colombia**
New opportunities and exciting potential
*By Beth Creason and David S. Howlett*

**Mending Hearts and Homes**
Mexico City Relief Fund provides assistance to shaken city
*By Katrina Barnas*

Columns

In the News
Diversity Notes
Lying In State
In Brief
Retirements
In Memoriam

On the cover
A 360° panorama composed of more than 50 individual photographs illustrates the immense scale of Bogotá, South America’s fifth-largest city.
*Photo by Isaac D. Pacheco*
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oig.state.gov/hotline
Happy National Mediation Month!

When it comes to resolving conflict, my young sons—ages 6 and 9—instantly resort to the game of “rock, paper, scissors.” No matter the issue, or how the disagreement starts, it works for them. It works because they care only about winning the game, and there is always a winner of “rock, paper, scissors.” While this is an effective method for my young sons, it is not an effective way to resolve conflict, especially if you want to get at the underlying reason or cause of a disagreement.

What is a better way to resolve workplace conflict? Alternative dispute resolution involves a number of other methods to resolve a dispute, short of litigation. In the Office of Civil Rights (S/OCR), mediation is our method of choice for alternative dispute resolution in the EEO process. Done well, with the assistance of a trained mediator, mediation can repair working relationships by empowering parties to craft solutions that best suit their joint interests. Mediation fosters mutual respect through improved communication. The mediator employs enhanced communication techniques so parties may better understand one another’s concerns and address them in a collaborative manner.

Mediation is designed to help parties stop being defensive or accusatory and allow them to hear each other clearly. Active listening is required of both parties. The trained mediator encourages parties to apply emotional intelligence and to practice empathy. It calls for the parties to refrain from making over-generalized assumptions and seek to understand the other party’s interests. When both sides play a part in drafting the terms of the agreement, the resolution is more sustainable.

There is no one winner or loser in mediation—only resolution. In the EEO process, we encourage employees to consider mediation because we know from experience that it works. Results are peace and productivity in the workplace, at the earliest stage possible. So, the next time you find yourself in the middle of a workplace conflict, try mediation!
Interns participate in ethical leadership workshop at Holocaust

At the invitation of Student Internship Programs in the Bureau of Human Resources’ Office of Recruitment, Examination and Employment, 120 Department of State student interns recently visited the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and engaged with the new Americans and the Holocaust exhibit. The exhibition provides historical context helpful for a better understanding of the questions surrounding America’s response to the Holocaust, and examines the role of the American government, news media and numerous other factors that shaped Americans’ reactions to Nazism and World War II. Interns participated in an Ethical Leadership workshop led by the curator of the exhibition and museum historian Dr. Rebecca Erbelding and Coordinator of Leadership Programs at the Museum Rebecca Dupas.

Erbelding led the workshop with a discussion of her research and the design process behind the creation of the exhibition. She cross-examined factors that contribute to the inaction of large groups when people fail to respond to crises, with times when individuals decide to take action. The session concluded with a conversation led by Dupas, who explored the human decision-making process. Students discussed the importance of making informed decisions and the value of individual agency to strengthen positive leadership skills.

A quote from writer and Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel states, “This museum is not an answer. It is a question mark.” Participation in this workshop enabled interns to leave the museum with a deeper understanding of positive leadership, as well as the motivation to continue asking questions and further the conversation surrounding ethics and humanity.

By Evelyn Heck

Evelyn Heck served as an editorial intern for State Magazine.
As the Foreign Service summer 2019 bidding cycle kicks off in September, the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs (NEA) encourages bidders to embrace the challenge and join the NEA team. To generate interest in serving in the bureau, NEA hosted an alumni reception on June 12 in the Delegates Lounge at HST in Washington, D.C. The event provided information on the positions available at NEA posts abroad and in Washington. The event was a great opportunity for our current staff, bureau alumni and prospective bidders. To demonstrate the diverse nature of our region, the bureau invited employees who speak Arabic, Hebrew, Kurdish, French and Farsi, as well as those who have previously served at NEA posts. During the event, colleagues who have made their professional home in NEA shared how rewarding their careers within the bureau have been. Although the NEA region can be complex and challenging, the importance of the issues and the exceptional talent and teamwork within the bureau contribute to the benefits of working in the region.

This year, the bureau has more than 200 open positions in more than 20 posts within the region as well as in Washington, D.C. NEA is committed to building an inclusive workforce, and we value the differing perspectives that officers from diverse backgrounds and experiences bring to our posts and offices. The bureau encourages both its alumni and other Department employees to consider bidding NEA.

Interested bidders should visit the BID NEA website to learn more about NEA posts, see the latest openings in the bureau and obtain the list of vacancies on offer in the summer 2019 cycle. Please reach out to the Assignments Team at NEA-SCA-Assignments@state.gov for more information about the website and about bidding in NEA.
Marine Security Guards remembered at Quantico

Marines assigned to the Marine Corps Embassy Security Group (MCESG), along with family members and friends, gathered at the MCESG’s school in Quantico, Va., June 22, to honor, remember and pay tribute to four Marines who were killed by terrorists in San Salvador, El Salvador, June 19, 1985.

The Marine Corps Embassy Security Group’s mission is to screen, train, assign and ensure operational readiness, administration, logistical support and discipline of Marines, and to provide Marines for duty as Marine Security Guards at designated U.S. diplomatic missions in support of the Department of State in the protection of personnel, classified material and U.S. property.

Staff Sergeants Thomas T. Handwork of Beavercreek, Ohio, and Bobby J. Dickson of Tuscaloosa, Ala., together with Sergeants Gregory H. Weber of Cincinnati, Ohio, and Patrick R. Kwiatkowski of Wausau, Wisc., were members of the Marine Security Guard detachment at the U.S. Embassy in San Salvador and were off-duty at the time of the shooting.

The attack took place during the evening hours at Chili’s Café, a popular restaurant in the Zona Rosa, or “Pink Zone,” in the capital city’s small but vibrant nightclub district. A small and relatively obscure guerrilla group, known as the Revolutionary Central American Workers’ Party, or PRTC, claimed responsibility for the submachine-gun killings of the four Marines and nine civilians.

Family members present at the ceremony warmly paid tribute to the four Marines and recalled their times together. Col. Michael C. Taylor, the commanding officer of the MCESG, spoke of their selflessness, dedication to duty and exemplary service to the nation in a country being torn apart by terrorist organizations and revolutionary factions.
In 1973, President Nixon sent 135 fragments of moon rock, collected during the Apollo 17 mission, to governments around the world and to all 50 American states, coining them “goodwill moon rocks.” These small rocks were encased in acrylic and mounted on a plaque with the recipient country’s flag. Today, unfortunately, many of these goodwill moon rocks are missing from public record, including the rock donated to Cambodia—until recently.

Cambodia’s moon rock remained hidden for decades among the treasures of the National Museum of Cambodia, and even survived the Khmer Rouge. Last fall, the National Museum contacted U.S. Embassy Phnom Penh for help uncovering the history of their moon rock, in order to showcase it in the museum’s upcoming centenary anniversary celebration. The Cultural Affairs team started investigating by contacting NASA, the Nixon Presidential Library, the Library of Congress and other sources in an attempt to find clues. After six months of research, the mystery behind this unique gift was unveiled.

On July 19, 1973, U.S. Ambassador Emory Swank presented the rock to the Cambodian National Education Minister. According to a cable, the Department of State recommended that the ambassador state the important symbolism of the moon rock at the original presentation.

With support from the U.S. Embassy, the National Museum recently organized a new exhibit detailing the rock’s history for the first time. Cambodian Secretary of State for the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts Chuch Phoeurn, who attended the ceremony in 1973, attended the new exhibit. The discovery of the moon rock has helped highlight a positive message to the Cambodian public at a time when the U.S.-Cambodia relationship remains strained.

Other embassies can help locate missing moon rocks by visiting the Collect Space site.
This summer, the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations and Embassies Kabul and Islamabad will commission new staff diplomatic apartments (SDAs) and recreation facilities that will greatly improve the quality of life in these challenging locations. In Kabul, SDAs 2 and 3 will open in late September, making 432 apartments available for post staff. Two hundred thirty-two of these will be shared apartments. In Islamabad, many new SDAs will open, with 65 one-bedroom apartments, 130 two-bedroom apartments and 64 three-bedroom apartments. The new Islamabad embassy compound project also includes 78 studio apartments and 18 one-bedroom apartments for visitors. These SDAs replace nonpermanent containerized housing units.

The new SDAs are fully compliant with the Secure Embassy Construction and Counterterrorism Act of 1999 and the Overseas Security Policy Board requirements, representing the Department’s highest standards of security. These buildings meet all international building codes, especially in air quality, fire and life safety. They are built to Category 4 seismic construction standards in recognition of the region’s high seismic risk. All buildings have security windows and doors, and the exteriors meet requirements for 15-minute forced entry/ballistic resistant construction.

The new buildings in Kabul are configured and connected to create a two-level secure courtyard that leads to a two-story below-grade community center.

In Islamabad, extensive landscaping/hardscaping is intended to create a garden-like atmosphere around the new SDAs. Post will inaugurate a new consular annex, a U.S. Marine Security Guard residence and support facilities for the embassy community.
IRM Nairobi

Team builds culture of outreach and innovation

By Chickelle Woody

Mission Nairobi has 50 Information Resource Management (IRM) team members who work behind the scenes to ensure the mission’s IT infrastructure is fully operational at all times. This year, however, an outreach program is focused on strengthening IRM Nairobi’s ties to the people of Kenya by employing soft diplomacy. Through the use of a progressive computer donation program and outreach events focused on cybersecurity, IRM Nairobi is stepping outside the server rooms to make a difference in Kenya.

As the office upgraded client workstations throughout the mission to support the deployment of Windows 10, IRM team members identified redundant hardware that included unused hard drives. Seizing the initiative, the IRM team developed an innovative plan to donate surplus stocks of computers to local Kenyan schools. Using technology in the classroom gives teachers the opportunity to develop their students’ digital citizenship skills. By providing schools with this equipment, there was meaningful impact. Students were given access to tools needed to master basic applications and to harness the benefits of the internet.

As part of this community effort, Mission Nairobi enlisted assistance from the local Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts within the community to help prepare the computers for donation to the local schools. Volunteers from the IRM team provided the scouts with hands-on computer training, which taught them how to clean up the workstations, ensure the peripherals were in working order, verify the operating systems and package the units for donation. It was a win-win situation. The scouts learned new skills while helping to prepare the computers for donation to local Kenyan schools. | Cont. |▼
To identify recipient schools, IRM Nairobi actively worked with American Presence Officer for the Kenyan Coastal Region Heather Fabrikant and Cultural Affairs Officer Meghan Larson-Koné. In conjunction with the donation strategy, team members volunteered to participate in the Embassy Nairobi Speakers Bureau program, managed by the public affairs section, to maximize the benefit of traveling to schools to set up the machines. Through the outreach program, IRM Nairobi was able to integrate donation delivery and cybersecurity training to the schools.

The goal was to provide the best experience for the students, so the team brought resources, including the OptionFinder audience participation system, or “clickers.” Clickers are used as an interactive, audience-polling tool, capable of gathering data in real time, with results displayed to the audience during the presentation. This tool helps to reinforce learning: participants focus on the presentation, in order to compete with one another to answer questions about the content correctly.

Mission Nairobi’s information systems security officer accompanied George Mimba, the Locally Employed staff regional information systems manager, Political Counselor Eric Kneedler, and Fabrikant on Nairobi IRM’s first outreach program. This team traveled to Mombasa, Kenya’s second largest city, to visit a well-established and vibrant local community center, Shining Hope for Communities Bangladesh. There, they learned about the center’s important work and its programs aimed at improving the lives of Mombasa’s diverse community.

Today, the digital world is a critical aspect of education everywhere. Reports, homework assignments and research projects are primarily conducted...
online, emphasizing the necessity for computer access. Communities in Kenya lack resources to engage and participate in this digital sphere, and the donation of excess computers greatly helps the education sector and nonprofit organizations in need of digital equipment. The donated computers will be used for self-improvement programs.

The team toured the facility and organized on-site, back-to-back cybersecurity trainings for faculty and students. More than 33 students—including some pursuing degrees in information technology—from different educational institutions and backgrounds, attended the morning session. The lively exchange led to a robust question and answer session, which was well received by the audience.

More than 20 high school students attended the second session. The presenters provided best practices of social media use. Although equipment donation is an important piece in helping to develop digital skills, cybersecurity awareness and knowledge of safe social media use is of equal importance. As part of the briefing, the audience and presenters engaged in a robust discussion about cyberbullying and netiquette.

The IRM outreach program helped to promote community involvement, provided much-needed computers to Kenyan schools and gave the IRM team the chance to promote cybersecurity education to Kenyan students. “It is great to see our IRM team contributing to Kenyan schools with the donation of computers and cybersecurity training,” said U.S. Ambassador to Kenya Robert Godec. “I appreciate their commitment and encourage my entire staff to participate in outreach programs to advance educational experiences and strengthen our bonds with the Kenyan community.”

The Nairobi IRM team is hopeful that other embassies can replicate this effort as a best practice and help build the culture of outreach and innovation within IRM.

**Chickelle Woody is the information systems security officer at Embassy Nairobi.**
Consulate General (ConGen) Perth stepped out to southwestern Australia as part of U.S. Mission Australia’s Regional Outreach Campaign to share the message of the strong U.S.-Australia alliance. While the bilateral relationship between major U.S. and Australian cities gets most of the attention, the bulk of U.S. economic investment in the country is in regional Australia. Members of the consulate team met with a number of Australian contacts, both old and new, to promote links in tourism, agriculture and creative services. The twist of this trip was the location, with members of ConGen Perth trekking the 135-kilometer (84-mile) Cape to Cape Track from Cape Naturaliste to Cape Leeuwin. Consul General Rachel Cooke was joined on the trek by Foreign Service officer Joe James, who manages both the political/economic section and public affairs section (PAS). Cooke and James were supported behind the scenes by the consulate chauffeur Marg Mason and trip coordinator Erin Sanders. The hike alone is difficult, but the team included 15 outreach activities along the way, creating a more rigorous—and rewarding—week.

ConGen Perth kicked off the trek with Jane Scott, author of the Cape to Cape Track Guidebook and advocate of the trail, who highlighted the beautiful flora and fauna in between the rolling storms. Park rangers also braved treacherous trail conditions with ConGen Perth to discuss community involvement in park management, through an indigenous rangers program. | Cont. |
The community plays a vital role in trail upkeep, so, as part of the hike, the consulate partnered with a local high school and environmental conservation organization for a “beach cleanup day,” as part of the Keep Australia Beautiful Campaign. With 25 students, ConGen Perth targeted the rocky terrain and dramatic geology pools, and braced against the turbulent winds of the Canal Rocks beach to clean up 48 pounds of rubbish, including nearly 2,000 shards of glass. The data collected from the cleanup will be included in a global marine debris report by U.S. nonprofit The Ocean Conservancy.

Continuing the theme of youth engagement, ConGen Perth hosted a beach activity, “Stand up with Pride,” with local LGBTI organization OUT Southwest. Funded as part of a PAS cultural grant, “Stand Up With Pride” created an opportunity for LGBTI youth to express their concerns and experiences with the recent Australian same-sex marriage survey while paddle boarding and kayaking along the picturesque Margaret River. | Cont. |
Prior to this activity, Cooke sat down with OUT Southwest to discuss the organization’s plans for the next year, share opportunities for partnerships with the consulate and talk about the U.S. approach to same-sex marriage. After participants paddled the river, a local newspaper reporter interviewed Cooke to discuss both the trek and the same-sex marriage debate in the U.S. and Australia.

At the halfway point, the Shire of Augusta-Margaret River Council hosted Cooke at a civic reception. Cooke delivered remarks on the opportunities for expanding American investment in the region to an audience of business leaders, volunteers, civic leaders and members of neighboring councils. A state politician who advocates strongly for the South West region in Perth also spoke to the positive impact ConGen Perth’s trip was having in the region. Further down the trail, Cooke met with representatives from the city of Busselton in a neighboring district, to discuss the Busselton Airport development and sister-city opportunities.

Setting a cracking pace, Cooke trekked the last leg of the trail with the federal representative of the region. On the edge of the picturesque cliffs, they discussed their experiences in Afghanistan and the crucial role of the U.S.-Australia relationship there. Cooke also met with state politicians who advocated for future engagement with the consulate. With one politician, she discussed opportunities for U.S. investment to boost the Western Australia agriculture sector, and with another state politician, the discussion focused on tourism in the region and ways to promote food and creative services.

The organizers of the Emergence Creative Festival hiked more than 7 miles with Cooke while discussing collaboration opportunities. | Cont. | ✻
The yearly festival attracts professional and emerging artists—working in the fields of music, film, photography, advertising, digital and the visual arts—who share ideas and network. Cooke attended the 2018 Emergence Creative Festival, which included American Justin Gignac, founder of the creative platform Working not Working, as a speaker. At the festival, Cooke met with Convicts NYC, an organization that promotes Australians living in the U.S., in collaboration with the Australian Consulate General New York. ConGen Perth is currently exploring a similar model to highlight Americans living in Western Australia. Convicts NYC had high praise for the E3 visa and its positive impact on the “AusMerican” community in “Little Australia” in New York.

Across the agriculture sector of the region, ConGen Perth focused on the historical link between the U.S. and Australia. The Margaret River region is famed by Leeuwin Estate, a local founding winery, made possible by U.S. winemaker Robert Mondavi. The consulate hosted a breakfast for local producers in the beautiful town of Cowaramup, where manufacturers of wine, bread, baked goods and dairy expressed their concerns for the sector and the challenges they face entering the U.S. market. With support from the South West Development Commission, the consulate provided attendees with information about how to break into the U.S. market. ConGen Perth also visited The Margaret River Education Campus and the Creative Corner for a tour of their facilities. While on campus, the consulate explored the viticulture, visual arts and creative services spaces and met with representatives from the Margaret River Wine Association who discussed their experience with exporting to America.

Touching on tourism, Wadandi Cultural Custodians from Koomal Dreaming hosted ConGen Perth at Ngilgi Cave for a cultural experience, including a native food tasting, cave tour and traditional fire lighting demonstration. During the experience, ConGen Perth shared examples of Native American cultural leaders who promote economic development in their communities.

In the region, there are American citizens who highlight the strength of the U.S.-Australia alliance with their work. The founder of Settlers Tavern in Margaret River and the director of Margaret River Business Centre, both dual American-Australian citizens, are excellent examples. Together, they hosted ConGen Perth for an informal reception with local American citizens where the consular team discussed a variety of relevant topics, including filing tax returns overseas and registrations of births abroad. The attendees appreciated the opportunity to meet the team and discuss issues that usually requires a trip to Perth.  

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Cooke celebrates the end of the track with the federal politician of the region, in front of the Cape Naturaliste lighthouse.  

Photo courtesy of ConGen Perth
The trip attracted media coverage throughout the region, including a front-page article in the Augusta Margaret River Times titled “Politics with a Paddle.” A local radio show, “ABC Breakfast with Stan Shaw,” also featured Cooke one morning. ConGen Perth’s Facebook page tracked the journey, with excellent engagement rates as a result.

Despite running into wildlife like tiger snakes, kangaroos, a goanna and a shingleback skink, and being drenched by torrential downpours, Cooke completed the entire 84-mile Cape to Cape trail.

Amid the breathtaking beauty of South West Australia, ConGen Perth strengthened ties with the region by stepping outside of the office and onto the trail.

Erin Sanders is the protocol assistant at Consulate General Perth.
Embassy Doha’s public affairs section (PAS) recently completed the fourth year of the Young Writers Program (YWP), an English language program implemented in partnership with Qatar’s Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE). The mission-initiated outreach program encourages youth to read, write and think critically, while improving their English language skills. Students from 135 government schools—representing an unprecedented 80 percent of all such schools—participated in this year’s program.

YWP is PAS Doha’s largest youth outreach program, with the goals of promoting English language learning and countering negative narratives about the U.S. It is an important education diplomacy program and a key “soft power” tool in PAS Doha’s effort to prevent the messages of ISIS and violent extremism from taking root among local youth.

This year, for the first time, PAS Doha worked with a survey research specialist to conduct a questionnaire-based impact evaluation of the program. Overall, the survey reveals very positive evaluations of the YWP among participants. The results also revealed a direct positive impact of the YWP on key public diplomacy aims, including promoting interest in English language, U.S. study abroad and the American people in general.

PAS Doha partnered with MEHE in 2014 to establish the YWP with the aim of supporting English language learning in local government schools and developing students’ critical thinking skills. A second aim of the program is to disseminate accurate portrayals of the U.S. government and counter negative narratives that promulgate extremist attitudes among local youth—a key goal of Embassy Doha’s integrated country strategy. | Cont. |
Over the course of four years, YWP has grown into a nationwide youth outreach program that reaches 80 percent of all Qatari public schools and thousands of students. The program’s success has continued to open doors with the MEHE, enabling unparalleled access for Embassy Doha to Qatari public schools. In particular, access to rural areas of the country—where the population is more conservative and youth have less exposure to Western culture and influences—has helped Embassy Doha propagate positive portrayals of the U.S. and Americans.

YWP consists of four programming strands that take place throughout the academic year: teacher professional development, student creative writing workshops, the Young Writers Competition and the Young Writers Journal. Each year, PAS Doha chooses four schools in rural areas to participate in the student creative writing workshops. Students from these areas typically are from conservative families, and are unlikely to travel to the U.S. for leisure or for education. Through the workshops, PAS staff has the opportunity to engage students directly with both English language teaching and messages about the nature of American society and values, like freedom of expression and tolerance.

PAS staff carefully choose the writing themes for the program each year to ensure they are both relevant to the Qatari audience and creative enough to provoke critical and imaginative thought among the participants. The 2015–2016 program theme focused on education and the threat of ignorance on global citizenship. To make this theme relevant to the Qatari audience, PAS Doha incorporated quotes from Sheikha Moza Bint Nasser, the mother of the Amir and founder of Qatar Foundation, that touched on these themes and linked them to overall countering violent extremism (CVE) efforts and issues relevant to the audience. The 2017–2018 theme, “Transforming Obstacles into Opportunities,” challenged students to write an essay, story or poem on the topic, with specific prompts tailored for each grade level. | Cont. |
A notable outcome of the program is the number of students willing to address difficult, and often taboo, topics through this creative writing platform. For the 2015–2016 and 2016–2017 program cycles, the overwhelming majority of participants addressed CVE-related issues head-on through creative pieces they wrote about the war in Syria and the threat to education posed by terrorism. For this latest program cycle in 2017–2018, students’ writing was largely preoccupied with the diplomatic crisis currently affecting the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). Students addressed the issue through poetry, fictional stories and personal essays about their day-to-day experiences under the economic embargo.

Every year, the top five writing pieces from each participating grade are recognized at Embassy Doha’s annual YWP awards ceremony, where the chief of mission presents awards to the winning students. The winning submissions are featured in the Young Writers Journal, a professional-quality journal published yearly by the embassy and distributed to educational institutions across the country.

New to this year’s YWP was an impact evaluation survey—a new best practice for PAS Doha. To determine whether the program was having the desired impact on participants’ attitudes toward the United States, PAS Doha applied academic rigor to its evaluation process.

PAS worked with a local survey research expert to develop a survey instrument. The survey not only captured participant feedback on the YWP, but also measured broader attitudes that might be associated with participation in the YWP, including interest in English language, interest in study abroad, cultural openness and attitudes toward America and American culture. The survey was conducted concurrently with a carefully selected control group of nonparticipant schools, enabling assessment of the attitudinal impacts of the YWP.
A YWP writing workshop instructor assists YWP students during a session.
Overall, the survey revealed very positive evaluations of the YWP among participants. A full 98 percent of YWP participants agreed that “overall, this was an excellent program” and 100 percent agreed that “the instructor was an excellent teacher.” Similarly, 84 percent agreed that their English language abilities had improved, while 88 percent said they felt more confident in their English writing after the program. Finally, 84 percent of respondents agreed that the YWP had “deepened their interest in American culture.”

The survey also evidenced a positive impact of the YWP on a variety of attitudes. These include student interest in foreign language, interest in U.S. study abroad and general attitudes toward Americans. For instance, 12 percent of nonparticipants describe Americans as “very bad,” compared with only 4 percent of students who participated in the YWP. Conversely, just 39 percent of nonparticipants rate Americans as “very good” people, compared with 49 percent of participants. Participation in the YWP is also associated with an increased interest in study abroad in the United States. This effect is especially strong among male Qatari participants: 90 percent of male Qatari who participated in the YWP say they are “very interested” in traveling to the United States to study language, compared with just 42 percent of nonparticipating Qatari males.

The results of the PAS’ impact evaluation survey of the YWP confirm that the use of targeted, contextually relevant education diplomacy programs like the YWP have a measurable, positive impact on local perceptions of the U.S. and the American people, and are effective tools in achieving a number of Department of State public diplomacy goals among local youth populations. These goals include English language development, interest in and support for EducationUSA (study abroad in the U.S.) and, importantly, combating negative attitudes toward the U.S. that promulgate extremism.

More information about YWP is available on the program’s website. Follow U.S. Embassy Doha on Twitter and at @USAinQatar on Instagram.

Kristina Rosales Kostrukova is the cultural affairs officer at Embassy Doha. Julia Kirby is the education and English language advisor at Embassy Doha.
Qatari students engage with a YWP writing workshop instructor.
COLOMBIA

New opportunities and exciting potential in a rapidly-changing country

Story by Beth Creason and David S. Howlett
It takes only a short funicular ride to get from Bogotá’s beautiful downtown Candelaria district to the top of Monserrate, a mountain that towers over the third highest capital city in South America. Standing at a scenic overlook, one can witness the ever-changing weather roll over the sprawling metropolis of 8 million people. Despite its location only 4 degrees north of the equator, Bogotá’s perch in the high Andes means it is bathed in consistently cool temperatures, and “Bogotanos” dress expecting to go through several seasons every day. For a country undergoing rapid changes, the meteorological phenomenon is an apt metaphor, particularly regarding the manner of its swift transformation into a world-class destination.

The December 2016 peace accord between the Colombian government and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) guerilla organization ended the region’s longest running insurgency. Although the security situation has improved dramatically compared with decades ago, significant challenges remain in bringing the benefits of peace to all Colombians, and public opinion is divided on how best to move the country forward. The recent presidential and congressional elections were the most peaceful in decades, with higher than usual voter turnout. The Colombian economy is growing, and areas previously held by the FARC are opening up for investment. These encouraging trends are welcome even as the country faces challenges in bringing security, government services and legitimate economic opportunities to all its people, especially in formerly conflict-affected rural areas. The next few years will be crucial as the United States supports the country’s efforts to secure the just and lasting peace its people deserve—making Colombia a fascinating and rewarding place to work and live. | Cont. |
A security officer and his "guard dog" patrol the entrance of a hotel in Cartagena.

Photo by Isaac D. Pacheco
Embassy Bogotá is one of the largest U.S. Missions in the world.

The United States' long-term shared interests with Colombia is evidenced by the size of its official footprint in the country. Mission Colombia is one of the world's largest, with more than 3,000 American direct hires, Locally Employed staff and temporary duty personnel, who are accompanied by more than 600 family members. Mission Colombia includes 15 U.S. government agencies residing in the embassy in Bogotá, an embassy branch office in Cartagena and a Peace Corps office in Barranquilla. Despite its massive size, the mission boasts a tight-knit interagency community.

Nowhere is this cooperation more evident than the work multiple U.S. government agencies are doing with the Colombian government to reduce coca cultivation and cocaine production. According to estimates, coca cultivation has nearly tripled and cocaine production has more than quintupled since 2012. At the bilateral High Level Dialogue in March, Colombia and the U.S. committed to reduce coca and cocaine production by 50 percent over the next five years, with robust U.S. interagency support for coordinated interdiction, eradication, rural security and economic development. The U.S. works closely with Colombia to disrupt narcotrafficking, while simultaneously supporting Colombian efforts to develop legitimate economic opportunities for those in rural, conflict-affected regions through support to legal crop alternatives and improved access to financing and markets. | Cont. |
Pilgrims flock to Bolivar Square while visiting the Metropolitan Cathedral Basilica of the Immaculate Conception Bolivar during Good Friday celebrations, March 30.

Photo by Isaac D. Pacheco
Pilgrims flock to Bolívar Square while visiting the Metropolitan Cathedral Basilica of the Immaculate Conception Bolívar during Good Friday celebrations, March 30.

Photo by Isaac D. Pacheco
These efforts require the work of many in the embassy, from the International Narcotics and Law Enforcement section and the Drug Enforcement Agency to the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to the Departments of Justice, Homeland Security, Defense, Agriculture and Treasury. The embassy’s whole-of-government Plan Antioquia program brings together NGOs, the private sector, the government of the Antioquia region and national government agencies and has contributed to Antioquia’s 20 percent reduction in coca cultivation in the past year.

The U.S. relationship with Colombia is about so much more than counternarcotics, however. Colombia is one of the U.S. government’s closest and most valued military partners in South America. Since 2000, the U.S. military has worked to train and professionalize more than 34,000 Colombian security force personnel. Colombia is now a strategic leader in the region, exporting its skills by training police and armed forces in other Latin American countries and participating in international peacekeeping operations. Colombia is increasingly taking on a global military role, as evidenced by the partnership agreement it signed with NATO in May.

Key to supporting lasting peace in Colombia is improving educational access, developing rural economic opportunities and improving management of the country’s diverse natural resources. USAID, Public Affairs and other Embassy Bogotá agencies are providing programs that bring tangible benefits to marginalized Afro-Colombian and indigenous communities in remote areas, as well as other vulnerable populations, including more than 1 million Venezuelans. Other U.S. government agencies have a strong presence in Colombia. The Department of Labor implements labor rights projects in the coffee and mining sectors, and engages in other capacity-building efforts. Collectively, these initiatives are helping Colombia rebuild its political, economic and social foundation and strengthen the implementation of the peace accord so all Colombians can benefit from a more inclusive future.
Revelers take to Cartagena's streets during Carnival.

Photo by Andrey Gontarev
Colombia’s international popularity is growing. Travel from other countries to Colombia increased by 31 percent in 2017, including many visitors from the U.S. The Department of State warns travelers to Colombia of security concerns and urges caution, recommending against travel to some regions due to crime and possible terrorism. U.S. government employees are still required to clear travel outside of Bogotá with the regional security officer. Yet, as word spreads about the variety of unique experiences available in the northwest corner of South America, people continue to travel to the area, to hike to the Lost City, go whale watching, unwind by the country’s fabulous beaches or swirl to the rhythms of fast-paced salsa dancing in Cali. The late Anthony Bourdain introduced Colombian cuisine to the American public on several trips to the country, and provided a simple, yet astute, introduction to the uniquely Colombian game of Tejo: “it involves alcohol and explosives.”

As U.S. tourism to Colombia has increased, the consular section’s work has kept pace in providing services to U.S. citizens. The number of Colombian visitors to the U.S. also remains steady, and Embassy Bogotá’s consular section is one of the largest in the world, frequently interviewing more than 7,000 nonimmigrant visa applicants a week to facilitate legitimate travel and business between the two countries. The U.S. continues to be an attractive academic destination, and at any given moment more than 8,000 Colombians are attending U.S. educational institutions. The section’s midsized immigrant visa unit recently came to the aid of consular affairs to manage the constitutionally mandated number of Cuban immigrants when the U.S. Embassy in Havana closed.

The growing travel between the two nations is paralleled by a similarly robust exchange of goods. The U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement, in force since 2012, ensures continued solid trade and economic ties between the two countries. Fifty years ago, USAID’s work helped launch Colombia as a flower exporter. Since the first shipment of...
Colombian flowers to the United States in 1965, the industry has grown, with more than 58 percent of cut roses and 62 percent of all cut U.S. flower imports coming from Colombia. Colombia is currently the 22nd largest U.S. export destination worldwide, and U.S. products can be found for sale throughout the country. Agricultural exports are a particular success, having more than doubled under the bilateral free trade agreement. Exports of high-value products, like aircraft and pharmaceuticals, have also increased significantly. U.S. companies are successful in the digital economy as well, providing goods and services that underpin Colombia’s tremendous potential for growth in the tech sector. Colombia’s May invitation to accede to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development is also helping to strengthen its reputation as a market-based economy open to global trade.

Being involved in such a wide range of important bilateral, regional and global issues that receive high-level attention demonstrates why Embassy Bogotá regularly attracts bidders looking for challenging and engaging work, as does the high quality of life enjoyed by embassy employees. Bogotá boasts unparalleled local staff who provide the embassy with invaluable institutional knowledge, expertise, loyalty and an impeccable work ethic. Embassy employees benefit from access to first-rate medical services at a fraction of the cost in the United States. Embassy children have many options for schools and day care, including fantastic support for those with special needs. The embassy community is large yet welcoming, with high morale and positive energy. | Cont. |↓

A street vendor bags up yucca root for a customer in Cartagena’s Getsemani neighborhood.  
*Photo by Isaac D. Pacheco*
Vibrant flags decorate an alleyway in Cartagena's Getsemani neighborhood. 
Photo by Isaac D. Pacheco
Outside the embassy walls, the city of Bogotá has modern skyscrapers, centuries-old churches and monasteries, excellent museums and a burgeoning dining scene. Within an hour’s drive from Bogotá, one can enjoy tropical weekend getaways, and an hour’s flight will take you to most locations in Colombia, including vibrant cities such as Cartagena and Santa Marta, with their historic city centers and relaxing beach communities. Nature lovers appreciate that Colombia has the most species of birds than any other country and is one of the most biodiverse countries in the world. From the Amazon jungles to Caribbean and Pacific shores, from snow-capped mountain peaks to the lush Coffee Triangle, the country’s well-developed national park system showcases its stunning diversity.

One thing is clear: a tour in this exquisite country is never boring. While Colombia has weathered many social and political shifts, it has maintained a steady course as the United States’ most willing and capable partner in Latin America. The significant bilateral issues make for fulfilling work, while the travel opportunities, natural beauty and vibrancy of the Colombian people and culture ensure that embassy employees and their families fall in love with this amazing country. It’s an exciting time to serve in Mission Bogotá.

Beth Creason is vice consul at Embassy Bogotá.
David S. Howlett is the USAID environment officer at Embassy Bogotá.

Recently decriminalized in Colombia’s capital city, colorful street art is a prominent form of public expression for artists, and has become a popular tourist attraction in recent years.

Photos by Isaac D. Pacheco
Capital: Bogotá

Government Type: presidential republic

Area: 1,138,910 sq km

Population: 47,698,524 (July 2017 est.)

Religions: Roman Catholic 79%, Protestant 14% (includes Pentecostal 6%, mainline Protestant 2%, other 6%), other 2%, unspecified 5% (2014 est.)

Ethnic groups: mestizo and white 84.2%, Afro-Colombian (includes mulatto, Raizal, and Palenquero) 10.4%, Amerindian 3.4%, Romani <.01, unspecified 2.1% (2005 est.)

Languages: Spanish (official)

Exports (commodities): petroleum, coal, emeralds, coffee, nickel, cut flowers, bananas, apparel

Export partners: US 28.5%, Panama 8.6%, China 5.1% (2017)

Imports (commodities): industrial equipment, transportation equipment, consumer goods, chemicals, paper products, fuels, electricity

Import partners: US 26.3%, China 19.3%, Mexico 7.5%, Brazil 5%, Germany 4.1% (2017)

Currency: Colombian pesos

Internet country code: .co
On Sept. 19, 2017, Mexico City shook with a 7.1 magnitude earthquake whose epicenter was only 100 miles from the megacity. In the capital alone, hundreds died, thousands were injured and buildings collapsed. Mission personnel rushed back from lunch relieved to see the embassy still standing. Unfortunately, many structures in Mexico City did not fare as well, including homes of some Locally Employed (LE) staff. The Foreign Service National (FSN) Emergency Relief Fund proved to be a great assistance to these colleagues when they needed it most.

Gabriela Penaloza, who has served as an LE staff member at the embassy for 16 years, returned to her home to survey the damage. “All corridors were blocked,” said Penaloza as she described her building. “Our water tube had significant cracks, and our bedrooms had big cracks where we could see the sky.” She and her family retrieved their belongings incrementally, as some moving companies refused to go to their sixth floor apartment, and others significantly increased prices after the earthquake. In a highly inflated rental market, Penaloza and other staff were forced to find new places to stay immediately. The entire building where LE staff member Yuriko Gancedo lived tilted to one side. “To know that the embassy was thinking about us in the middle of the chaos and the stressful situation we were living, it was very comforting to know that others were willing to help,” said Gancedo. | Cont. |
LE staff member Miguel Vazquez’s apartment is in a great location, only three blocks from the U.S. Embassy, but to this day, it remains uninhabitable. “The earthquake left me without a home of my own,” Vazquez remarked. “It had taken years to build and still left me with a mortgage of 11 more years to pay off.” With the help of the FSN Relief Fund, Vazquez has been able to afford rent on another apartment while still working through the nightmare of repairing his apartment. “Receiving the FSN Relief Fund has been not only very useful to keep the wheels going,” Vazquez stated, “but I also felt one of the greatest heart-warming emotions I have ever experienced that Ambassador Jacobson and the great local team in Mexico cared about those of us who suffered this loss.”

Many people are only vaguely aware of the FSN Relief Fund; Embassy Mexico City now knows from experience that it is a wonderful resource. The official FSN Emergency Relief Fund was established in 1994 to respond to crises following natural disasters, civil unrest and targeted attacks or line-of-duty incidents. Since 2004, more than $2 million in donations has been collected and distributed to local employees and their families in each of the regional bureaus. Former Ambassador Roberta Jacobson saw the importance of the Relief Fund firsthand after the Mexico City earthquake. “In all of my years of government service, I had not personally seen the fund directly impact colleagues,” said Jacobson, “and I was moved to see it in action and the good it can do.”

A report three months after the Mexico City earthquake showed 16,630 damaged buildings. Since then, office buildings, schools and homes have been inspected and many deemed structurally unsound. Resources such as skilled labor are scarce, making an already bad situation even more challenging for the numerous LE staff members who have found themselves in this position.

In the aftermath of the earthquake, there were many people who needed help, and Embassy Mexico City rose to the challenge. Staff jumped into action, helping frightened and injured American citizens and working, through interagency collaboration, to support and coordinate an international disaster response team with 67 Los Angeles...
firefighters and their five-dog team. Some of these same staff working during this hectic and crucial time had holes in the walls of their own apartments. “I am honored to have served with this team, which gave so much of their time and energy,” said Jacobson. “They were so professional that many of us, including myself, had no idea that their own homes were unstable.”

The management section served as a focal point for the FSN Relief Fund, speaking with affected staff and documenting the damage to their homes, both rented and owned. Post Management Officers Barry Smith and John Heinbeck liaised with Chanel Wallace and Crystal Jobe in the Office of Emergencies in the Diplomatic and Consular Service (M/EDCS) to help Embassy Mexico City seamlessly navigate the process. Within two weeks of documenting the damages, 13 LE staff were able to receive funds that provided immediate relief. A few months later, three staff who had experienced even greater losses received additional funding to help them rebuild. Jacobson met with the affected staff to gain firsthand knowledge and understanding of their situations.

LE staff member Mariana Barranco was more fortunate than others. While the structural damage to her home was severe, she has been able to get the regulatory permissions to rebuild.
First responders and residents work together to help rescue those caught in collapsed buildings after the earthquake.  

*Photo by Sara Escobar*
“My family and I are profoundly grateful for the assistance that was provided to us,” she said. “During a difficult time in our lives, we struggle with not only a financial burden, but also the physical and mental burden. This experience has made us a stronger family. Words are not enough to describe how appreciative we are.”

Penaloza, the LE staff member who had to relocate, echoed Barranco’s appreciation. “To all those who have contributed for this fund, I want to thank you,” said Penaloza. “I never thought I was going to be in this circumstance and it is very moving to see there are other people donating resources to help co-workers in emergency situations. We never know who will be the next one in need, so please keep donating for this honorable cause.”

Natural disasters affect us all. The LE staff who received the FSN Relief Fund were drivers, clerks and program officers. Some had been with the embassy a year or two, and others more than a decade. Combined, they had more than 100 years of service and came from the Department of Justice, Foreign Agricultural Service, USAID, Foreign Commercial Service, Internal Revenue Service and various sections of the Department of State.

Katrina Barnas was the management staff aide at Embassy Mexico City.
LYING IN STATE: GET YOUR SWAGGER BACK!

WHERE ARE MY SWAGGERING POINTS???

LUCINDA, YOUR TRAVEL VOUCHER!
I CAN'T RIGHT NOW - SWAGGERING!

THIS MEMO HAS TO HAVE A CLEARANCE FROM THE BUREAU OF SWAGGER AFFAIRS.

I THINK THAT'S ACTUALLY MORE SWASHBUCKLING...

THE AMERICANS WERE ALWAYS FORMIDABLE DIPLOMATS, BUT NOW WITH SUCH SUPERIOR SWAGGER!

TRULY SWAGGERIFIC...
Questions concerning employee deaths should be directed to the Office of Casualty Assistance at (202) 736-4302. Inquiries concerning deaths of retired employees should be directed to the Office of Retirement at (202) 261-8960. For specific questions on submitting an obituary, please contact Heidi Howland at howlandh@state.gov.
In Memoriam

Wally F. Bowles

Wally F. Bowles, 94, died Nov. 4, 2017, at his home in McLean, Va. Born in San Marcos, Texas, he served as a U.S. Navy aviator during World War II. Bowles served 20 years in the Foreign Service, with posts in Morocco, Tunisia, Nicaragua, Egypt, Syria, Israel and Grenada. He is predeceased by his wife, Teresa B. Bowles, and survived by his children and grandchildren.
Dr. Valerie Adamcyk Colby died April 27, in Fairfax, Va. Colby joined the Foreign Service in 2003, and her posts included Honduras, Australia, Moldova, Macedonia, New York and Washington, D.C. As a Foreign Service officer in public affairs, Colby served as a consular officer, cultural affairs officer and public affairs officer. She loved to cook and teach.
In Memoriam

Sharon Elizabeth Denitto

Sharon Elizabeth Denitto, 71, died June 22, in Norwich, U.K. Denitto worked as both a Foreign Service officer and Civil Service employee for 15 years. Her posts included India, Cameroon, Taiwan, Senegal and the U.K. As a civil servant, Denitto worked in the Bureau of Diplomatic Security and the Employee Service Center. She dedicated many of her years volunteering to support veterans at the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C., and continued her involvement during retirement by traveling with the Vietnam Veterans Moving Wall Memorial to numerous cities in the U.S., providing valuable historic veteran information at each location.
In Memoriam

Willard Ames De Pree

Willard Ames De Pree, 89, died July 2, in Bethesda, Md. De Pree served two years with the Army before serving as a Foreign Service officer at the Department of State for 38 years. His overseas tours included Egypt, Cyprus, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Mozambique and Bangladesh, the last two as ambassador. His Washington, D.C., assignments included the policy planning staff, the Office of Inspector General and the Office of Management Operations. He retired in 1993. After retiring, De Pree was active in both the American Foreign Service Association (AFSA) and Diplomatic and Consular Officers, Retired (DACOR).
In Memoriam

Louis N. Lemieux, Jr.

Louis N. Lemieux Jr., 75, died July 12, in Portland, Maine. After serving in the U.S. Air Force during the Vietnam War, Lemieux joined the Foreign Service in 1966. He served 33 years and retired in 1999. His tours included Taiz, Sana’a, Rawalpindi, Poznań, Ponta Delgada, Monrovia, Leningrad, Kuala Lumpur, Manila, Muscat, Beirut and Tokyo. Lemieux also served in several assignments in Washington, D.C. After retiring, he worked at the Department of State as a reemployed annuitant (WAE) for 11 years, until 2011. Lemieux was an avid outdoorsman with a passion for sailing. He is survived by his wife, Therese, his son and three siblings. He is predeceased by his daughter and two brothers.
Victor Maffei, 80, died Aug. 14, 2017. Maffei was born in Italy and moved to New York in 1950. In 1959, he joined the U.S. Army in the Signal Corps. Soon after, he joined the Foreign Service and worked as a communications officer. Some of his posts included Zaire, Benghazi, Stuttgart, Budapest, Maseru, Brussels, Dakar, Abidjan, Rome, Jeddah, Canberra and Rabat. He retired in 1991 to Gloucester, Mass. Maffei is predeceased by his wife Harriet (Lovett) Maffei, also of the Foreign Service. He is survived by his daughter and two grandchildren.
In Memoriam

Charles Robert Sheehan

Charles Robert Sheehan, 82, died June 8, in Alexandria, Va. Sheehan’s positions at the Department of State included associate dean for Overseas Programs and Administration and regional language supervisor for Southeast Asia at U.S. Embassy Bangkok. After retiring from the Department, Sheehan taught Chinese at Cornell University, among other jobs. He is predeceased by his first wife Anne H. Sheehan, and survived by their two children, Maegyne P. Held and Kevin R. Sheehan. Sheehan is also survived by his wife of 26 years, Jie Chen Sheehan.
Barbara Jean Sullivan, 74, died July 22, in Charleston, S.C. Sullivan was a retired Foreign Service officer and the wife of retired Foreign Service officer Daniel Sullivan. She also served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Malaysia in 1971, and in Saudi Arabia on a joint project with the U.S. Department of Labor and Saudi government from 1983 to 1985. She joined the Department of State in 1988, where she served as an information management officer at various embassies, including postings in Monrovia, Liberia; Jakarta, Indonesia; Bucharest, Romania; Rome, Italy; London, U.K.; and the U.S. mission to the United Nations in New York. Sullivan retired from the Foreign Service in 2009. After retirement, she was active in her church and in several local nonprofit organizations. She is survived by her five children, including June Shaffer, a Foreign Service officer.
Howell S. Teeple

Howell S. Teeple, 96, died March 24, in Dana Point, Calif. Teeple was a retired Counselor of Embassy in the U.S. Foreign Service. Teeple served in the U.S. Army in the 193rd Field Artillery Battalion attached to the 1st Infantry Division. Teeple joined the Foreign Service in 1947 and served posts in New Delhi, India; Adana, Turkey; Tripoli, Libya; Monrovia, Liberia; and Cebu, Philippines. He served as chief of foreign national personnel for the United States Information Agency before retiring in 1980. During his retirement, he worked as a caseworker on FOIA requests for the Department of State. Teeple is predeceased by his wife of 57 years, Jane, and survived by his two sons.
In Memoriam

James Perry Thurber, Jr.

James Perry Thurber Jr., 90, died June 16. Thurber was a Foreign Service officer for 23 years. He served in various positions in United States Information Agency (USIA) offices in Tanzania, Malawi and Nigeria. Among his other positions, Thurber was counselor of embassy in Islamabad, Pakistan, chief of the Policy Guidance Office at USIA in Washington, D.C., and minister counselor for public affairs at the U.S. Embassy in Ottawa, Canada. In 1980, Thurber was presented with the Department of State’s Award for Valor for his actions during the takeover and destruction of the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad. In retirement, he served in many capacities, including president of the Los Altos History Museum, chair of the Los Altos Library Commission and president of the Foothill-De Anza Colleges Foundation. Thurber is survived by his four children, 12 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.
Dennis L. Watson

Dennis L. Watson, 65, died March 13, in Nehalem, Ore. Watson was a Foreign Service communications officer at the Department of State for 25 years. During his career, Watson traveled to 49 countries. He retired in 2002 and returned to Oregon. Watson is survived by his wife, Deborah, his two children, four grandchildren and one great-grandson.
In Memoriam

Howard Charles “Kerry” Wiener III

In brief

To earn their badges, Diplomatic Security Service (DSS) special agents complete the Basic Special Agent Course, one of the most rigorous training courses in federal law enforcement. In addition to a full slate of physical fitness and law enforcement training, the candidates must excel in dignitary protection, motorcade operations and numerous other competencies necessary to protect American diplomats and diplomacy around the globe. To learn more, visit the DSS website. View more photos from the course on the DSS Flickr site.

State Department photo
During a daylong series of public and private events, Ambassador Robert F. Godec and his wife, Lori Magnusson, led the 20th commemoration of the Aug. 7, 1998 bombing of Embassy Nairobi. At the official ceremony held at the August 7th Memorial Park located on the grounds of the former embassy building, the audience lit candles of remembrance. Following the ceremony, Ambassador Godec and his wife welcomed survivors and family members to their home for a private communion event. Embassy personnel also remembered the victims and honored the survivors, many of whom still work with the embassy, at a commemoration event in the memorial garden on the chancery grounds.
In brief

Working closely with U.S. Embassy Kuala Lumpur, the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs’ Sports Diplomacy Division sent professional skateboarders Jimmy Cao and Cheryl Jumao-as to Malaysia for a youth outreach Sports Envoy Program. Leveraging the sport’s introduction at the upcoming 2020 Olympic Games, the Department’s use of skateboarding engaged nearly 500 at-risk Malay youth with messages on teamwork, constructive decision-making and girls’ empowerment. Cao and Jumao-as showcased their skills and promoted positive messages in both peninsular Malaysia and the island of Borneo.

Photo courtesy U.S. Embassy Kuala Lumpur
The 2018 youth award winners were honored at a ceremony at the Department of State, July 13. Hosted by the Foreign Service Youth Foundation, the Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide and the American Foreign Service Association, recipients received awards for outstanding work in categories including art, essay writing, community service and video post-production. Susan Pompeo (right) and AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson (left) participated in the ceremony. Photo by Joaquin Sosa
Consul General Daria Darnell inaugurated *Nuestra Frontera* (“Our Border”), a new permanent art installation in the nonimmigrant visa waiting area at the U.S. Consulate General in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, July 12. A team of binational local artists created the one-of-a-kind installation, engraved across 36 cast acrylic panels. Using regional binational iconography, the piece showcases the centuries-old cultural bonds between Ciudad Juarez and its U.S. sister city, El Paso, Texas. The images include famous sites in the two border cities and the surrounding Chihuahuan Desert. (From left) Consul General Daria Darnell, artist Edgar Picazo, Deputy Principal Officer Eric Cohan and entry-level officers Saptarshi Basu, Sean Boshard and Jeff Tomasevich celebrate the inauguration of the art installation.  

*Photo courtesy of U.S. Consulate General Ciudad Juarez*
In brief

To earn their badges, Diplomatic Security Service (DSS) special agents complete the Basic Special Agent Course, one of the most rigorous training courses in federal law enforcement. In addition to a full slate of physical fitness and law enforcement training, the candidates must excel in dignitary protection, motorcade operations and numerous other competencies necessary to protect American diplomats and diplomacy around the globe. To learn more, visit the DSS website. View more photos from the course on the DSS Flickr site.

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### Retirements

**Civil Service**
- Balan, Cyrus E.
- Black, William J.
- Boone, Lynn C.
- Boyer, Kay M.
- Crane, Jeanne Kay
- Dixon, James
- Ettleman, Greg Forest
- Grafeld, Margaret P.
- Hall, Mildred E.
- Hartle, Robin L.
- Hawkins, Frances T.
- Holland, Mary Stone
- Jeffries, James
- Kirby, John M.
- Milton, Kathleen M.
- Oh, Dai Hwan
- Owens, Debbie C.
- Roddick, Paul T.
- Rosado, Frank L.
- Shea, Thomas Walter
- Sprague, Brenda Saunders
- Sturdavant, Bernice Jean
- Watts, Allie D.
- Weaver, Doris Ann
- Wilder, Herman L.

**Foreign Service**
- Bolton, Otis F.
- Braun, Peggy L.
- Brown, William Raymond
- Burrows, Patricia A.
- Cabrera, Ricardo
- Conners, John F.
- Fotheringham, Michael J.
- Gavin, Shaun Jamell
- Gerber, Kenn R.
- Heyden, Kathleen A.
- Huey, Thomas A.
- Kenealy, Henry D.
- Krol, Andre
- Ma, Michael J.
- Mellott, Becky L.
- Moretti, John S.
- Namde, Joyce Winchel
- Navarro, Mary M.
- Okojie, Ayemere E.
- Pate, Joseph Michael
- Plowman, Jonathan Andrew
- Reimer, Calvin
- Rockwitt, Randall W.
- Shannon, Thomas A.
- Sneff, Wendy Robin
- Soltow, Edward W.
- Sparks, Stephen W.
- Tilley, Royale
- Walston, Melissa L.
- Williams, Stephanie Turco
A woman (bottom right) peers out from her apartment window in the La Candelaria district of Bogotá.

*Photo by Isaac D. Pacheco*