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World Services of La Crosse earns national honor

(LA CROSSE, Wis.) — The Open World Leadership Center based in Washington DC has named World Services of La Crosse, Inc., as its 2015 Grantee of Merit.

The Open World Leadership Center is a congressional agency working to increase U.S.-Eurasian understanding and partnerships. Emerging leaders travel to the United States and gain firsthand exposure to the American system of participatory democracy and free enterprise. World Services has been a national hosting organization partner with Open World since its inception in 1999.

In announcing the award, Open World wrote that over the years World Services “has brought us expertise in public health issues, sustainable community development, and helping delegates set post-program goals. They have consistently shown strength in advocating for sister cities in the U.S. who either welcome support for their sister city projects or would like to reset relations with their dormant international city partners.”

Last year, World Services partnered with U.S. cities in 17 states to host 35 Open World delegations. Open World citizen diplomat volunteers provide warm, professional hospitality and excellent programming while developing long-term friendships with lasting ties. Since 2000, World Services has administered Open World exchanges hosting over 1700 delegates with cities in Wisconsin and across the country. Another 19 delegations are scheduled for 2015.

Open World operates dynamic programs in Ukraine, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Serbia, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan. The U.S. Congress established Open World in 1999 to enhance understanding and capabilities for cooperation between the United States and Russia. In 2003, Congress made all post-Soviet states eligible for the program. Open World promotes partnerships and continued communications between delegates and their American hosts and professional counterparts.

World Services of La Crosse, Inc., is a La Crosse-based nonprofit organization that develops and implements international partnerships designed to advance health, civil society, public administration and the environment and to promote peace and mutual understanding in countries throughout the world.

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