



July 2014

Newsletter of Initiatives of Change USA

Issue No. 28

Greetings!

As you read this issue the 2014 Caux Scholars program is just beginning at Caux with an outstanding class from 17 countries. The conferences have been in session since the beginning of the month and we are carrying a first report written by John W. Franklin, director of partnerships and international programs at the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture, who attended the *Just Governance for Human Security* conference.



We are in the final recruiting phase for the *Community Trustbuilding Fellowship* which begins in Richmond in October. If this is for you, now is the time to apply! In the words of one previous participant: "This program has been transformative. The most valuable lesson is that change - personal, societal, global - is possible. Each of us, no matter what our background, skill set or talents can have a hand in it." Don't miss this opportunity!

You will read more about the bold vision of a National Center for Community Trustbuilding beginning to take shape in Richmond, VA, this fall with help from a generous lead grant from the W.K. Kellogg foundation.

As thousands of children cross our southern border take a moment to read a commentary from Oscar Contreras, born in Guatemala but here in the US since 1995.

## Just governance for human security

### Being a better listener

**John W. Franklin**, director of partnerships and international programs at the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, DC, attended the conference on *Just Governance for Human Security* at Caux and writes about his experience.

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### Please consider a gift to Initiatives of Change!

Sixty percent of our support comes from people just like you! No gift is too large or too small.

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Like last year, when I arrived in Caux, the mountain was in a cloud. It had rained for days and everything was lush. The skies cleared and revealed the mountains over my stay. In quiet reflection, I decided to be a better listener. At an evening performance of testimony and song, I realized that culture will help me discard my anger and ire toward perpetrators and seek the path of forgiving them.



I was so pleased to find members of my discussion and service group of last year. Many of our colleagues from Mali, Chad and Niger had been brought back by the Swiss Office of Foreign Affairs. I was updated by them and new members of their delegations on the situations in their countries. Colleagues in Niger want assistance on a proposed museum in Agadez. I attended two special meetings on their region, the Sahel.

Although I had been invited to facilitate a francophone group, I ended up co-facilitating a diverse anglophone group of people from Ukraine, Zimbabwe, Australia, West Papua New Guinea, Germany, the United Kingdom, Poland, Romania, Algeria, Sweden and the United States. As we worked together I learned to make most of the components of a Swiss cheese pie!

Sylvester Turner, from Richmond, and I presented case studies on the Healing of America: Richmond and Tulsa.

Two active crises shaped much of the conference.

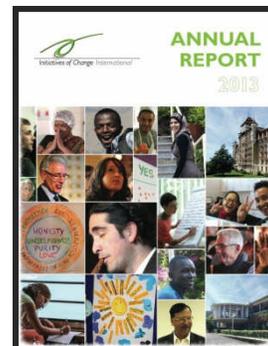
Earlier in the summer my wife Karen and I had attended a wedding in Tel Aviv on June 7 and left Israel on June 9. The Israeli teens were kidnapped and killed on June 12, an event that helped spark the current violence. Both Israelis and Palestinians were present at Caux and sessions addressing the situation were held at the conference. I met a young Palestinian working at the conference who has never been able to visit his family near Gaza since his passport is Saudi.

Tensions ran high between the Ukrainians and the Russians. During one plenary as a Ukrainian woman was describing the photos of recent demonstrations and conflict, I could hear the interpreter from Russian to English crying as she interpreted. Both groups met all night behind closed doors on my last night in Caux, while I attended the musical "Muriel" about the life and music of Muriel Smith, a world renowned American mezzo soprano and artist who dedicated her talent to healing the wounds in her country.

Eighty percent of the Ukrainians and Russians signed a resolution and presented it at the plenary session the following morning as I headed home via Geneva. Caux permits adversaries to talk in that neutral space. Then, just as I was leaving, the Malaysian passenger plane was shot down to the anguish of all.

## 2013 Annual Report

### Initiatives of Change International



[Read online](#)

Print copies can be ordered from our office

### Creators of Peace Circle in Crimea



The young IofC leaders with [Foundations for Freedom](#) initiated the first Creators of Peace Circle in Crimea.

As Ukrainians, Russians and Crimean Tatars, the participants came from different background with conflicting views and opinions. They agreed to listen to each other with open hearts, seeking to understand the other side, even if it was not easy or comfortable.

Sometimes the discussions were very hot, but they kept that agreement and managed to build a level of trust that allowed them to start speaking about things they could not talk about at the start.

[Read more online](#)

## Center for Community Trustbuilding

### A vision becomes reality

By Susan Corcoran

Initiatives of Change, through its Richmond-based Hope in the Cities program, will launch a **National Center for Community Trustbuilding** this fall. The project is supported by a lead grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. Its purpose is to "sustain strong inclusive communities anchored in systems for healing the legacy of racial history."

"Richmond has made remarkable progress over the past two decades in uncovering and acknowledging its history," says Rob Corcoran, IofC's national director. "More recently we have begun to connect that history of slavery and segregation with its impact on today's structures and public policy, highlighted by the work of the mayor's Anti-Poverty Commission."

Through collaboration with local and national organizations, the center aims to develop a creative learning environment where processes for trustbuilding, reconciliation, and community change are regularly learned and effectively practiced. "This vision for Richmond as a center for community trustbuilding has been growing for several years," says Corcoran. "The sustained work by many individuals and institutions makes this a timely moment to take this exciting next step."

Two first major building blocks for the center are the *Community Trustbuilding Fellowship*, which launches this October and the convening of an international forum on *Healing History, Overcoming Racism, Seeking Equity, Building Community* in April 2015.



### Community Trustbuilding Fellowship

Applications are coming in for the *Community Trustbuilding Fellowship* that begins in Richmond, VA, in October. You may not live in Richmond but it could be worth making the journey to discover how this city is being transformed from a symbol of racial division to a community that is willing to confront its history and the legacy that remains. Interest in sending community representatives is growing in cities such as Memphis, TN, Dayton, OH, and Washington, DC.

## A new film from South Africa

### Beyond Forgiving



This award winning film depicts the true story of two South Africans trying to move beyond their pain towards forgiveness and healing.

[Order a copy from our office](#)

## Caux Conferences 2014



### Caux: the door is open

This short video by Karen Elliott Greisdorf introduces you to the Caux conference center.

### June 30-July 4

Caux dialogue on land and security

### July 5-10

Trust and integrity in the global economy

### July 12-17

Just governance for human security

### July 20-24

Seeds of inspiration

### July 26-August 1

Children as actors for transforming society



The *Community Trustbuilding Fellowship* increases the capacity of community leaders to overcome divisions of race, culture, economics and politics by creating a network of skilled facilitators, capable team builders and credible role models. The program is for a diverse class of 25 and is structured around five residential weekend modules. Scholarship funds are available, including for travel if needed.

[More information on dates and topics are on the website](#)  
[Online program application and scholarship form](#)

## 2015 International forum in Richmond

Initiatives of Change, in collaboration with the University of Richmond and other local and national partners, will host an international forum on **Healing History: Overcoming Racism, Seeking Equity, Building Community** in Richmond, VA, April 6-10, 2015. Participants will explore the legacies of racism and how communities can work together to build trust, heal historical wounds and create economies that work for all.

April 2015 marks 150 years since Emancipation and the end of the Civil War as well as the 50th anniversary of the Selma-to-Montgomery Civil Rights march and the passing of the Voting Rights Act. Despite great strides toward racial healing, the wounds of history and systemic racism continue to hinder efforts to build healthy, inclusive communities in America - and in societies around the world. April 2015 provides a context in which to explore the question: What can we as a global community learn together about how to heal history, understand the legacies that keep us apart and generate energy for building healthy inclusive societies?



The forum aims to continue the themes addressed at the [Healing History conference](#) held in Caux, Switzerland, last summer and to convene representatives from the field of racial healing and equity including practitioners, scholars, leaders of grassroots and national organizations, representatives from business and government, and students from the US and other countries that are experiencing the legacy of racial and ethnic discrimination.

As well as the University of Richmond and other area educational

### August 3-8

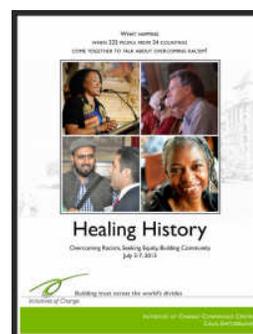
Living in a multicultural world

### August 10-13

International peace-builder's forum

More information, reports and pictures of this summer's conferences are available on the [Caux website](#)

## 2013 Healing History conference report



[Read online](#)

Print copies can be ordered from our office

## Hope & inspiration

Check out the tools for change in our books and media catalog



institutions, the forum will bring together organizational allies in Richmond such as the American Civil War Center, the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities, and Richmond Hill Retreat Center, who share a common vision and understanding of the values and process needed for effective racial healing and equity work.

Prospective collaborations with national organizations include the Poverty & Race Research Action Council (Washington DC), Everyday Democracy (Hartford CT), the Faith and Politics Institute (Washington, DC), and the William Winter Institute (University of Mississippi). Participants in the 2013 Caux Healing History conference will play an important role. The forum is supported in part by a grant by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

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## Fundraising for Caux Scholars

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### Peacebuilding is part of the journey

By Rob Corcoran

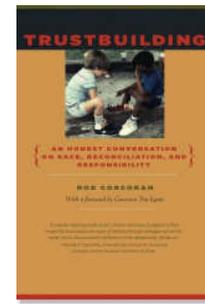
On the 70th anniversary of D-Day, a Vietnam veteran remembered his uncle who lost an eye in the battle to liberate Europe. Kenny Robison, who was gravely wounded himself in 1968, was honored as a "Sponsor of the Year" at a special fundraising event for the Caux Scholars Program in Washington, DC.



Kenny said that he and his wife Debbie were inspired to support the young peacebuilders from many parts of the world: "I have seen and experienced what violence and war can do to people. Conflict is a part of life. Yet, I have come to realize that conflict doesn't have to mean that violence is the only way to deal with conflict. It all starts somewhere, even if it's nothing much more than lifting your big toe off the floor," he said, referring to his own road to recovery. "The big toe is the center of one's balance. Remember that life is a journey and that peacebuilding is just a part of one's journey."

Another honoree, Brian Kennedy, a retired executive with Blue Cross Blue Shield, said, "Caux Scholars supplies a vital need in a tumultuous world" with its "dedicated idealistic and realistic" participants. Referring to IofC's core principle he said, "A long time ago I encountered the revolutionary idea that change begins with me."

Bringing greetings on behalf of the ambassador and "the whole team at the Swiss Embassy," Daniel Hunn, the deputy chief of



### **Trustbuilding** by Rob Corcoran

A new [study guide](#) and toolkit provides questions for reflection, conversation and action.



### **The Imam & The Pastor**

"The African model for finding peace amid the continent's warring communities" *The Times* (London)

### **An African Answer**

The second film about the work of these two African peacemakers.

[Order the 2 DVD Packaged set](#)



## Initiatives of Change, USA

is part of a diverse global network with an 80-year track record of peacebuilding, conflict transformation and forging partnerships across divides of race, class, religion and politics.

### Our vision

We inspire a vision of community where a commitment to

mission, said, "We are proud and honored to have this program in Switzerland." He highlighted the importance that his country places on peacebuilding and supporting good governance and said, "Caux is the ideal place to prepare young people for the task of peacebuilding."

Alumni from India, Jamaica, Kyrgyzstan, Iraq and the USA testified to the impact that the Caux Scholars Program has had on their lives and careers. "The practice of quiet time has transformed my life," said Patrick McNamara (CSP '96), a Visiting Professor of Political Science and International Affairs at University of Nebraska at Omaha. He is part of a team that received a U.S. Institute of Peace grant and he will design and facilitate a series of meetings - first in Kabul then in Islamabad - on Transboundary Water Conflict and Cooperation between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

An incoming 2014 Caux Scholars from Afghanistan said in a videotaped message that his father was killed when he was eight years old. "No one in the world should have to suffer the way I did as a child." He was joining the program as "part of my journey of healing and to learn more about conflict resolution for my country." Participants from Ukraine, Colombia and Rwanda also sent videotaped messages.

Guests at the occasion included leaders several NGOs including the NAACP, the International Center for Religion and Diplomacy, the DC-Interfaith network, and 9/11 Unity Walk. The event was hosted by McGuire Woods law firm and raised nearly \$20,000.

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## Welcoming a new IofC board member

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### Solving problems before they happen

**Bill Hamilton**, a native Texan with 40 years' experience in executive, legislative, and judicial branches of Texas state government, has just joined the Initiatives of Change USA board. Bill is also actively involved in local, regional, and state government and civic initiatives in the Austin/Capital Area region and served as mayor of Rollingwood. He is a consultant with Bill Hamilton and Associates. He talks with Rob Corcoran.

**Rob: What has been the most challenging and/or rewarding aspect of your career so far?**

**Bill:** Solving problems before they happen. In my first foray into neighborhood activism, I was part of a small group of Rollingwood neighbors who walked door-to-door in a referendum calling for our city council to use surplus funds to buy 10-acres of neglected athletic fields, located next to city hall in the center of town, which the founding members of the Optimist Club were threatening to



reconciliation and justice transcends competing identities and interests.

#### Our mission

We equip leaders to build trust in diverse communities through a process of personal change, inclusive dialogue, healing historical conflict and teambuilding

#### Our focus

We connect core values with personal and public action with a focus on racial reconciliation, economic inclusion and interfaith understanding.

For more information  
[www.us.iofc.org](http://www.us.iofc.org)

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### Follow-up Links

[Initiatives of Change Hope in the Cities \(HIC\) Caux Scholars Program](#)  
[IofC on Facebook](#)  
[Trustbuilding on Facebook](#)  
[HIC on Facebook](#)

sell for million dollar home lots. They needed the money and figured the city fathers wanted to have the improved property values. We prevailed in a 3 to 1 citywide vote. The renovated park, with a lot of "sweat equity" from volunteer projects in the renovated park, is now, although not without controversy, one of the most valuable amenities in that small town. I guarantee this step by just a few of us put a lot of lingering issues behind the city and shows that "people will defend what they create." It pays to be proactive and take charge of your own destiny.

***Rob: What most excites you about the work of Initiatives of Change?***

**Bill:** The opportunity to take some of my own personal, maybe even parochial, experiences, and, working with the other IofC Board members, find ways to show that my experiences are not only comparable - but that they are valuable and transferable - to similar situations in other neighborhoods, communities, and cultures around the US and, by extension, to the larger world. While my short story about a small neighborhood park is perhaps simplistic, I take the lessons I learned with me every day, especially while serving as an elected official, as well as working with other elected officials committed to public service.

***Rob: What do you think distinguishes IofC from other organizations working for peace, reconciliation and social change?***

**Bill:** I see great potential value in IofC's emphasis on modest, grass roots-type efforts, one community at a time. I am especially impressed in IofC's focus on building relationships and consensus-building. It's good to build infrastructure and other material projects, like parks, schools, hospitals, etc., to improve quality of life, but it is also good to build and improve communications and dialogue which allow people(s) to chart their own future. IofC's priority in this area is well-placed.

***Rob: Can you tell us something about your own spiritual journey?***

**Bill:** I've been involved in public service of some kind as long as I can remember, at least since I was 12 years old in 1960 and had my first job as a paper boy with a paper route on the town square of Conroe, Texas, in southeast Texas. By the time I heard John Kennedy's historic inaugural speech in 1961, whether I knew what "public service" really meant, I was already asking and doing "what I could do for my country." Many years later, after meeting many of life's challenges, a 12-step friend introduced me to Frank Buchman's history through "On the Tail of a Comet." While I knew about the moral re-armament "movement," I did not know about Buchman's connections to The Oxford Group and Alcoholics Anonymous. Today, my own efforts to emphasize grace and civility in public discourse have more meaning by understanding Buchman's worldwide efforts toward reconciliation.

***Rob: IofC USA's tag line is "building trust in the heart of community." Where does trust most need to be built in Texas? In America? And how could IofC best contribute to***

### ***the process of building trust?***

**Bill:** Texas is evolving demographically and new economies are being built. While oil and gas still plays a big role, the Texas economy is now more diverse. Access to education and opportunities for jobs, good jobs, are essential in the global economy. Since "people defend what they create," we can "build trust" in our communities, cities, and counties by finding ways to give people the opportunity (i.e., empowering them) to both define and determine their collective destiny.

**Rob: As a new board member, how would you like to see IofC develop over the next few years?**

**Bill:** Becoming a "workshop for emerging issues." When I worked for Texas State Comptroller in the late-1980s, we created a group who scanned numerous periodicals regularly, looking for issues which were likely to require more attention, especially funding, in the future. This was my first venture into "finding problems before they happen." One day, one of the staff brought us this obscure note about something going on in Africa called "aids," about which we knew nothing - so the rest is history.

Maybe IofC can be on the leading, or "emerging" edge as a laboratory for promoting civil discourse in public life.

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## Commentary

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### Someone is knocking at the door

**Oscar Contreras** was born in Guatemala and has been in the United States since 1995. Since 2007 he has been a program host at WBTK 1380AM, the Latino Family Christian Radio Station in Richmond, VA. He writes about the current humanitarian crisis on the US-Mexican border:



A neighbor, who lives two houses up the street, who we had not met before, came one day desperately banging on our door. My wife, Rachel, was home with our children at the time, Elena, 3, and David, 2. Our neighbor squeezed herself between our door and the screen door, knocking

frantically. Rachel was afraid and had no idea what was going on. It looked like our neighbor was looking for a refuge and protection, but how would my wife know? Regardless, Rachel was faced with a dilemma. Should she let this lady into our home and try to help her or should she call the police and protect herself and the kids?

Tens of thousands of children are now banging on our door and it looks like they are looking for a refuge and protection. Something

is going on and it is happening at our door step. Unaccompanied minors as young as seven, mainly from our neighboring countries Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras, are traveling hundreds of miles full of danger and uncertainty. Some children do not make it. Children's bodies have been reported found on the shores of the Rio Grande. Some children are robbed, raped and abused during their journey. This is also happening on this side of the border. Because of the trauma, memory loss has been reported among the children. The number of children surpasses 50,000, so they end up sleeping in warehouses on the floor and only with basic services. These are children who are celebrating birthdays while detained with no one to rejoice with them. The government is not giving access to non-profits or religious organizations that would at least provide moral and spiritual support to the children while the minors await an unclear process. How long can an eight year-old girl wait for some hope and security? How much longer does she need to travel?

Each child has his or her own story to tell. What we know is that many of them come from countries where gangs have taken over certain areas. Even though everyone should feel safe in their own home and have a sense of security, most of these children are running away from homes infiltrated by violence. The kids are being aggressively recruited and threatened daily by these violent gangs. At my church, we have prayed for the safe keeping of young women and men that have been kidnapped for money in Central American countries. According to a report by UNICEF in 2011, more than 30% of Guatemalans, including around two million children, benefit from a family member's financial support sent from the USA. The gangs know that the children are vulnerable and that their families in the USA are willing to sacrifice everything and send the money that the gangs are demanding. It is a circle of violence in some of these neighborhoods. The children are either forced to join the violence, or try to survive by running away to pursue some kind of stable ground they can call home. The USA seems to be that place.

Yes, we have many problems in our own home too. One of these problems is that our immigration system is broken, which we have known for a long time. This is not the first time unaccompanied children cross our border. We are just not prepared for the estimated 90 to 100 thousand expected to come by the end of 2014. We have a dilemma. We have some decisions to make. They involve money, politics, power, national security, following the established laws, creating new laws, protecting ourselves or protecting those asking for help. As free individuals we can make any decision we see more fitting to our character. A free nation is not different. When we are blessed unboundedly, many times much is expected from us. Well, the question still remains, should we let these children into our home and try to help or should we militarize our border to protect ourselves and our children?

That day, at my home, Rachel opened the door. Our neighbor rushed in shaking, frantic, crying and fumbling with her phone. She was not safe any more in her own home. She was vulnerable. Her home had been broken into just seconds before while she was in the house in the early afternoon. She couldn't pull herself together to call 9-1-1. Rachel let her in, locked the door, and called 9-1-1.

The police arrived in minutes. Both my wife and our neighbor felt more secure at that moment. She gave the police a report of what happened at her home. My kids were watching all of this and Rachel explained to them what happened, and that they should not be afraid. Our neighbor was deeply thankful and she stayed with Rachel until her family arrived to go home with her. In a moment of pressure and fear, I'm glad my wife was able to make a decision that fit with her character and that she can be proud of no matter the outcome.

*"For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me." Matthew 25:35*

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We hope you enjoyed this issue of *Breakthroughs*. Please share this newsletter with your friends and forward it to those you know have a passion for trustbuilding.

Thank you!

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