

THE SECRETARY OF STATE AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEERISM ABROAD

SOSA: A Living Legacy

EXTRAORDINARY IMPACT
ACROSS CULTURES AND COUNTRIES

For more than 35 years, Foreign Service family members and employees have created lasting change in communities around the world through education, humanitarian service, environmental stewardship, and civic leadership.

2022 - 2025 Impact Report



Associates of the American
Foreign Service Worldwide

In Partnership With:

Una Chapman Cof
FOUNDATION

ADST
Association for Diplomatic
Studies and Training



GCLO
GLOBAL COMMUNITY LIAISON OFFICE
Advocacy Program Services



Volunteerism by members of our Foreign Service community is not just a kindness. It is an essential and underappreciated dimension of American foreign policy.

When a diplomat's spouse organizes a village, when a Foreign Service family champions orphaned children or rebuilds a community — they give the people of that country something no official statement can provide: first-hand knowledge of Americans practicing generously.

Susan Baker · SOSA Co-Founder



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View the
[Interactive Full Report Online](https://sosaimpact.org)
sosaimpact.org →

Volunteers serving across 6 Regional Bureaus and 35 countries.

Letter from the Founders



June 2026

Dear Friends of SOSA,

When we first began this program, the inspiration was deeply personal. Traveling with Jim throughout his years of diplomatic service, I witnessed firsthand the extraordinary things that American diplomats and their families were quietly doing in communities around the world — and how little of it was recognized.

One conversation has stayed with me. A colleague said: "Susan, the spouses do so many wonderful things overseas — and they aren't recognized. We have to do something about that." That is how SOSA was born.

What we believed then, we believe more firmly now: volunteerism by our Foreign Service community is not merely a kindness — it is an essential dimension of American foreign policy. When these families show up with their time and their heart, they give people around the world something no official statement can provide: firsthand knowledge of Americans practicing generously. They put a human face on the United States of America.

The women and men honored here — across four years, six Regional Bureaus, and dozens of countries — exemplify the finest ideals of the American character. Their impact will ripple far beyond what they may ever fully know.

To the 2022–2025 awardees: thank you. You have given far more than your time; you have given yourselves — and in doing so, made us all profoundly proud.

With deepest gratitude and admiration,

Susan Baker
Co-Founder, Secretary of State's Award for Outstanding Volunteerism Abroad

James A. Baker
III 68th United States Secretary of State and Co-Founder

The Secretary of State Award for Outstanding Volunteerism Abroad



The Secretary of State Award for Outstanding Volunteerism Abroad (SOSA) honors Foreign Service employees and family members whose volunteer work creates lasting, community-centered impact at posts worldwide. Established in 1990 at the Bakers' encouragement and administered by AAFSW, SOSA has honored nearly 100 awardees across 130+ missions — work that endures and reflects diplomacy's highest ideals.

OUR LEGACY

Nearly Four Decades of Recognizing the Service of the Foreign Service Community

Across thirty-five years, the SOSA program has gathered the quiet extraordinary acts of Foreign Service families and made them visible. The stories in this volume — bicycles for refugees, classrooms for the deaf, recycling cooperatives, animal-welfare clinics — remind us that diplomacy is not only made at the negotiating table, but also at the kitchen table, in the schoolyard, and on the road between posts. We are grateful to every awardee, every honorable mention, and every family who has chosen to serve beyond what was asked of them.

- 1990**
SOSA established
- 2012**
Earliest available records referenced
- 2022–2025**
Legacy Report period
- 2026**
SOSA & Living Legacy published by AAFSW



To our supporters, congressional partners, Department of State colleagues, and the global SOSA community, Over the years, SOSA has nurtured a culture of imagination and initiative within the Foreign Service community—encouraging embassy personnel, including family members, spouses, partners, and Members of Households (MOHs) at post, to explore the human, unscripted dimensions of American diplomacy.

Through their volunteer work, SOSA awardees extend the impact of their roles far beyond traditional expectations, showing how creativity, compassion, and civic engagement deepen the reach of U.S. presence overseas. For more than three decades, SOSA has supported over a hundred interdisciplinary projects across the U.S. Department of State's six regional bureaus—AF, EAP, EUR, NEA, SCA, and WHA—merging diplomacy and volunteerism. These initiatives strengthen community ties, foster social change in underserved populations, build bridges between American diplomacy and public awareness, and deepen dialogue with host countries.

The SOSA Legacy Report shows how the Awards have become a powerful instrument for discovery, opening doors to new perspectives across our global community. AAFSW is grateful to Former Secretary James A. Baker III and Mrs. Susan Baker for their vision, to the U.S. State Department for its support, to the Una Chapman Cox Foundation for funding the SOSA Legacy Report, and to all who have taken part in SOSA—the applicants, volunteers, and awardees whose remarkable efforts continue to inspire our community.

Celine Ford

Celine Ford

President, The Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide (AAFSW)

ABOUT SOSA

Each year, diplomatic missions across all six Regional Bureaus submit nominations recognizing exceptional volunteers in their communities. A selection panel of representatives from AAFSW, the Global Community Liaison Office (GCLLO), and each regional bureau evaluates nominees against criteria including scope and reach, sustainability, ingenuity, and leadership. Winners receive a certificate signed by the Secretary of State and a cash award and are honored at an annual ceremony.

The award recognizes three Areas of Service: *outstanding contributions to the host country community*, exceptional support to the mission community, and remarkable service during emergency situations. Above all, SOSA honors work that endures — initiatives that take root, continue beyond a single tour, and reflect the highest ideals of diplomacy and humanitarian leadership.



[Access Past Ceremonies
Interactive Report Online
sosaimpact.org →](#)

“*[These awardees'] efforts better the lives of their neighbors and strengthen the ties that bind our people. They show fundamentally American values: respect for other cultures, a belief that everyone deserves to live with dignity, the spirit of service to the people of our nation and the world*

Former Secretary of State Antony Blinken
• 2024 SOSA Ceremony • [state.gov](#)



Our Partners

SOSA: A Living Legacy was made possible through the generosity and collaboration of organizations that share AAFSW's commitment to recognizing the extraordinary contributions of the Foreign Service community. These partners have helped sustain and elevate the SOSA program across four years of remarkable service.



UCCF - FOUNDING PARTNER

Una Chapman Cox Foundation

The Una Chapman Cox Foundation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to strengthening the effectiveness, professionalism, and long-term capacity of the U.S. Foreign Service.

Established in 1981 through the legacy of Una Chapman Cox, the Foundation invests in the people of the U.S. Foreign Service — funding sabbaticals, mid-career fellowships, professional development, and public-diplomacy initiatives. UCCF has been a longtime supporter of the SOSA program, helping AAFSW recognize the volunteer contributions of Foreign Service employees and family members who serve their host communities with distinction.



ADST

Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training (ADST) maintains the world's largest collection of U.S. diplomatic oral histories and produces podcasts, videos, books, publications, and the "Moments in U.S. Diplomatic History" online series.



GCLLO

Global Community Liaison Office

The Global Community Liaison Office (GCLLO) supports U.S. Foreign Service employees and families by providing resources, programs, and advocacy to improve quality of life, mobility, and community support during overseas service.

Volunteer Efforts That Create Lasting Change Across Multiple Areas of Human Need

Behind every diplomatic posting is an individual or family that chooses to give more — building communities, opening doors, protecting the planet, and deepening the ties that make diplomacy real. For the Foreign Service families honored here, service doesn't end at the embassy gate. That's where it truly begins.

SOSA recognizes Foreign Service family members whose volunteer service strengthens communities in many different ways. The stories below feature SOSA award recipients from 2022–2025, organized by Areas of Service to show the breadth of their contributions across education, sustainability, crisis response, environmental stewardship, community support, and embassy–host country collaboration.



Sustainable Community Development

Mentorship, refugee support, and grassroots programs that build lasting community capacity. When Foreign Service families invest in the places they serve, the impact outlasts their posting by years — sometimes generations.



Expands Access and Opportunity

Education, the arts, and skill-building that open doors for the next generation. From literacy programmes and classroom teaching to creative expression and vocational training, Foreign Service volunteers expand what is possible for young people in the communities they serve. From ASL classrooms in Tajikistan to Technovation Girls in Turkmenistan, our community believes every child deserves a chance to thrive.



Promotes Environmental Responsibility

Animal welfare, sustainable agriculture, and waste-to-housing innovation across continents. SOSA awardees prove that even a single tour of duty can leave a community — and its environment — measurably better.



Strengthens Embassy–Host Country Collaboration

Service that deepens diplomatic ties and supports communities through crisis and renewal. When a Foreign Service family shows up — not in an official capacity, but simply as a neighbor — they put a human face on America.

Sustainable Community Development

Mentorship, refugee support, and grassroots programs that build lasting community capacity. When Foreign Service families invest in the places they serve, the impact outlasts their posting by years — sometimes generations.

FEATURED · 2025 AWARD WINNER

2025 SOSA AWARD WINNER

Jennifer Sturgeon

Netherlands

EUR



\$102,000 raised. Connections built across every dividing line.

In cobblestone streets across The Hague, Jennifer Sturgeon kneels alongside Dutch neighbors to polish the Stolpersteine — small brass Holocaust memorial stones set into sidewalks to mark where Jewish families once lived. It is one of many ways she has woven herself into communities not hers by birth but made hers by commitment. In Slovakia she raised \$102,000 for refugees and women in need; in the Netherlands she has built bridges ranging from sea rescue to trafficking survivors to Holocaust remembrance.



George Cornick

2023 · Uganda

AF

Where there was need, George Cornick showed up.

In Kampala, George Cornick didn't find one cause to serve — he found every cause that needed him. He mentored youth and helped form a step dancing group at the Refuge of Hope refugee center, mobilized embassy volunteers to renovate facilities for children with cancer, and organized relief drives for Afghan refugees and Ugandans during an Ebola outbreak. His gift was seeing the person in front of him, whatever the crisis.



Jerry Case

2023 · Ireland

EUR

2,000 bicycles. A whole country mobilized.

For a Ukrainian refugee navigating a new country, a bicycle can mean the difference between isolation and independence — getting to school, to work, to a semblance of ordinary life. EFM Jerry Case understood this, and in Dublin he turned a shared love of cycling into something remarkable: the Good Bike Project, which has refurbished more than 2,000 bicycles and distributed them to displaced Ukrainians across nearly every county in Ireland.



Daniela Garcia

2023 · El Salvador

WHA

Building safety — and futures — for the most vulnerable girls.

When Daniela Garcia arrived in San Salvador in 2021, she found children at Mi Casa orphanage who needed more than the orphanage could hold. She rallied the embassy and local community to fund a building expansion, and then went further — creating a new safe home specifically for pregnant teen orphans, many of them abuse survivors, and building the counseling and support programs to help them become mothers.



Mandy Brown

2023 · Qatar

NEA

Teaching skills. Restoring agency. One refugee at a time.

When Afghan refugees arrived in Doha by the tens of thousands, Mandy Brown didn't wait for an organization to tell her what to do — she organized one. As a founding force of the "Doha Do-Gooders," she spent her own money purchasing supplies to teach Afghan women and children marketable skills and creative arts, giving them tools for livelihood and expression in an uncertain new chapter.



Connie Pearson

2024 · Israel

NEA

In the hardest season, she fed, helped, and never stopped.

Connie Pearson came to Jerusalem to build bridges between communities. After October 7, 2023, she became a lifeline for people on every side of the crisis — cooking meals for embassy staff and IDF soldiers and displaced Gazan families, helping evacuate U.S. citizens, and ensuring that children, families, and an orphanage had what they needed to survive what came next.



Meredith Wiedemer

2022 · Moldova

EUR

\$200,000 raised. 38,000 refugees served. A center built to last.

As 460,000+ Ukrainian refugees crossed into Moldova, EFM Meredith Wiedemer helped lead a Donation Center that supplied 38,000 refugees with essentials — then opened the Sunflower Center for long-term children's programming, mothers' psychosocial support, and employment for Ukrainian women, raising over \$200,000 along the way.



Debra Stock

2022 · Doha, Qatar

NEA

58,000 Afghan refugees welcomed. A school built from scratch.

Arriving at her first post just as 58,000 Afghan refugees flowed into Doha, EFM Debra Stock organized the "Doha Do-Gooders" — receiving lines, clothing, hygiene, fundraisers, even 300 soccer balls — and created and furnished a school for the refugee children where she also taught.

Expanding Access & Opportunity

Education, the arts, and skill-building that open doors for the next generation. From literacy programmes and classroom teaching to creative expression and vocational training, Foreign Service volunteers expand what is possible for young people in the communities they serve. From ASL classrooms in Tajikistan to Technovation Girls in Turkmenistan, our community believes every child deserves a chance to thrive.



William "Ed" O'Bryan & Alesia Krupenikava

2023 · Turkmenistan

SCA

350 girls. Three global semifinalists. One country's first programmers.

In a country where women's professional opportunities are tightly constrained, William "Ed" O'Bryan and Alesia Krupenikava asked a simple question: what if girls here learned to build technology? Together they launched Technovation Girls across Turkmenistan — and since 2021, more than 350 Turkmen girls have designed working mobile and AI applications, with three teams advancing to the semifinals of a global competition against more than 1,000 teams worldwide.



Kristin Factor

2024 · India

SCA

25 girls. Walls covered in possibility.

The walls of the Sharanam Shelter for Girls in Mumbai tell a story now. They didn't before Kristin Factor arrived. Working from her own initiative and her own funds, this EFM built an art education program from scratch for 25 orphaned girls — and transformed the shelter's walls into a canvas for their creativity, potential, and resilience.



Garrett Fraino

2024 · Brazil

WHA

Better systems. Better teachers. Better futures for Rio's youth.

When Garrett Fraino arrived at Mais Caminhos — a free activities and English program for youth in Rio's favelas — he didn't just show up to tutor students. He looked at the whole organization and started fixing what wasn't working: rewriting the teaching guide, redesigning teacher training, building an attendance system, and launching a new hospitality and tourism program to give older students a credential they could take into the workforce.



Shirley Helm

2025 · Tajikistan

SCA

4,000 hours. The first Deaf Tajiks in the FLEX exchange. A legacy that signs.

Shirley Helm arrived in Dushanbe as a Foreign Service Management Specialist. She left as the person who changed what was possible for Tajikistan's deaf community. Over more than 4,000 volunteer hours, she built an ASL education program from nothing — and two of her students became the first Deaf Tajiks ever accepted into the U.S. FLEX exchange program. She personally escorted them to America.



J. Carlos Valles

2022 · Port-au-Prince, Haiti

WHA

1,000+ hours teaching carpentry. Dignity, livelihoods, and a lasting trade.

At the St. Luke's Foundation Carpenter Training Center in Port-au-Prince, EFM J. Carlos Valles has volunteered over 1,000 hours teaching at-risk young men to work with machinery and tools — producing furniture and affordable coffins that allow Haiti's urban poor to bury their loved ones with dignity.



Promoting Environmental Responsibility

Animal welfare, sustainable agriculture, and waste-to-housing innovation across continents. SOSA awardees prove that even a single tour of duty can leave a community — and its environment — measurably better.



Robert & Kimberly Gudenkauf

2023 · Mongolia

EAP

\$40,000 raised. 80 volunteers. Mongolia's first push for animal rights.

Ulaanbaatar is the coldest capital city on earth, and for animals in its shelters, winter is a death sentence — unless someone intervenes. Kimberly and Robert Gudenkauf intervened in every way they could, raising more than \$40,000 to rebuild shelter infrastructure, building a volunteer network of 80 people, and ultimately advocating for legislation that would create Mongolia's first animal rights law.



Andrew Richley

2024 · Montenegro

EUR

300 trees. 250 crates a month. A food forest built to last.

Andrew Richley is an arborist and forester by training. When he arrived in Montenegro, he found a city with the land for something extraordinary — and the hunger to justify it. He established the Urbana Bašta Podgorica Food Forest, one of the largest urban gardens in Europe, planting more than 300 trees and building a harvest operation that now donates more than 250 crates of food to local food banks every month.



David Bargaño

2025 · Brazil

WHA

The first embassy to show up. A community renamed a room in their honor.

Fifteen minutes from downtown Brasilia sits a recycling center that most of the diplomatic community had never heard of. FSO David Bargaño spent a year changing that — building a partnership with the largest cooperative of recyclable trash pickers in Latin America, mobilizing the Embassy and American School into a yearlong campaign, and delivering tools that made real differences in 2,500 families' lives. At the end of International Volunteer Day, the cooperative renamed their multipurpose room Martin Luther King, Jr. Hall.



Samantha Bunch

2025 · Kenya

AF

Two tons of plastic into housing. One volunteer, everywhere at once.

Samantha Bunch looked at the plastic waste accumulating in Nairobi and saw building materials. Her Eco-Brick Initiative diverted over two tons of plastic waste into low-cost housing materials — a model addressing environmental and housing challenges at once. But Bunch's service extended to empowering teenage mothers, supporting an orphanage, and showing up to help when hundreds of Khartoum evacuees arrived suddenly in Nairobi.



Justin Wimpey

2022 · Madagascar

AF

97% of Madagascar cooks with charcoal. He engineered a better pot.

Recognizing that 97% of Madagascar's population cooks with charcoal, EFM Justin Wimpey designed an affordable, locally produced pressure cooker — the "Cocotte Minute Gasy" — and helped stand up a women-led business to manufacture and distribute it, reducing deforestation and freeing women from hours of daily exposure to toxic cooking fumes.

Strengthens Embassy–Host Country Collaboration

Service that deepens diplomatic ties and supports communities through crisis and renewal. When a Foreign Service family shows up — not in an official capacity, but simply as a neighbor — they put a human face on America.



Wiley Skaret
2025 · Colombia

WHA

\$100,000 raised. Nine scholarships. Music as a vehicle for justice.

Wiley Skaret is a concert pianist. He is also the founder of James 1 — a U.S. 501(c)(3) that provides university scholarships to the children of Colombian National Police officers killed in the line of duty. He built the coalition through concert halls and police headquarters alike, turning a personal conviction into a global effort that has raised more than \$100,000 and put nine children of fallen officers through university.



Julie Fischer
2025 · Democratic Republic of Congo

AF

Crisis leader. Art therapist. Governance reformer. One extraordinary EFM.

When the Ordered Departure from U.S. Embassy Kinshasa was announced in January 2025, Julie Fischer stepped into an informal leadership role for more than 200 evacuees — keeping people calm, coordinating with AAFSW’s Evacuee Support Network, and ensuring supplies and support were ready on arrival. In Kinshasa, her service was just as wide: art therapy for at-risk women, governance reforms at the American School, English tutoring, and conservation work for African bird species.



Denis Rajic, Michele Rajic Tang, Vicki Daniel & Ellin R. Lobb
2022 · Shanghai, China

EAP

When Shanghai locked down, they built the supply chain that fed the Consulate.

When Shanghai’s harsh 2022 COVID-19 lockdown left residents without access to food, this four-person volunteer team built — from scratch — a wholesale delivery network that fed U.S. direct-hire staff, families, and local employees of Consulate General Shanghai, and is now a model for other Missions.

“When a diplomat’s spouse organises a village, when a Foreign Service family champions orphaned children or rebuilds a community — they give the people of that country something no official statement can provide.”

Susan Baker, Co-Founder, SOSA · Spouse of Secretary of State James A. Baker III



Behind every number, every volunteer, is a community that was changed.

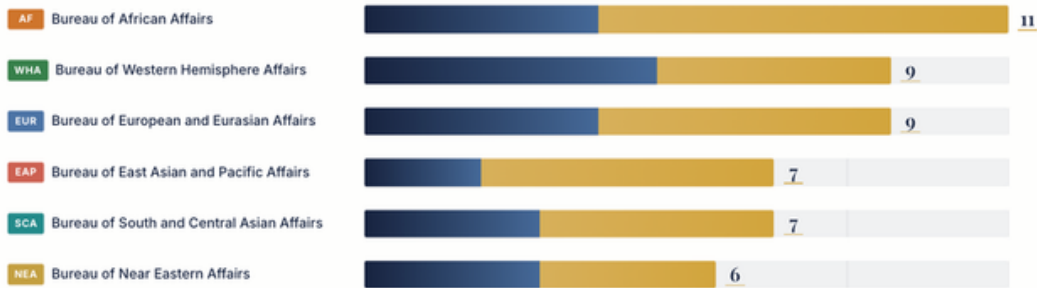
Service Across Borders

From Africa to the Pacific, AAFSW volunteers turned local needs into lasting change — recognized across every regional bureau the State Department serves.

AWARD RECIPIENTS & HONOREES

49 Award Recipients & Honorees - 2022-2025

AWARD RECIPIENTS HONOREES



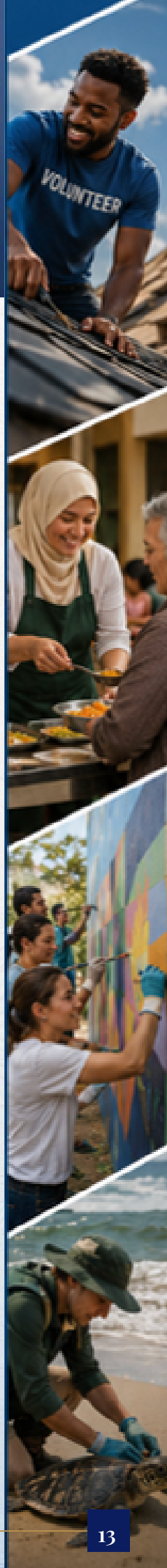
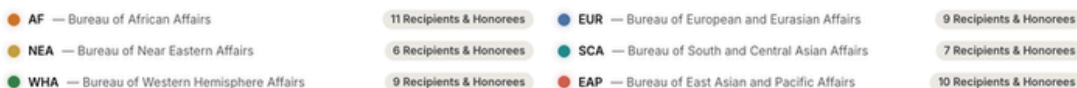
One honoree, recognized in both 2023 and 2025, is reflected across two award years and appears once in each — a fitting testament to the lasting impact of sustained volunteer service.

35+ YEARS OF SERVICE | 35 COUNTRIES | 6 REGIONAL BUREAUS | 96 TOTAL AWARDS | Est. 1990

Where SOSA Volunteers Made Their Mark

Behind every pin on this map is a volunteer who saw a need and answered it — from embassy compounds to remote field posts, 2022-2025.

35 COUNTRIES · 6 REGIONAL BUREAUS · 2022-2025



BY THE NUMBERS

Financial Contributions & Community Impact

\$442,000+

DOLLARS MOBILIZED

Over \$442,000 has been raised for communities in need, directly impacting thousands of lives through humanitarian efforts across various regions between 2022 and 2025.

Dollars Mobilized:

\$200,000+ — Ukrainian & Moldovan refugees in need, **Moldova**

\$102,000 — Refugees, children & women in need, **Slovakia/Netherlands**

\$100,000+ — University scholarships for children of fallen officers, **Colombia**

\$40,000+ — Animal rescue & welfare, **Mongolia**

People Reached:

58,000 — Afghan refugees welcomed at Al Udeid Air Base, **Qatar**

38,000 — Refugees served through Sunflower Center, **Moldova**

4,000+ — Volunteer hours teaching ASL, **Tajikistan**

2,500+ — Low-income families via catadores cooperative, **Brazil**

350+ — Girls empowered via Technovation Girls, **Turkmenistan**

200+ — Evacuees supported, Ordered Departure, **DRC**

“*[These SOSA Awardees'] efforts are a testament to America's volunteer spirit and demonstrate the creativity, commitment, and generous nature of our Foreign Service community.*”

Ambassador Marcia S. Bernicat Director General of the Foreign Service, U.S.
Department of State at the 2024 SOSA Ceremony

Service You Can Count

COUNTED ACTS OF SERVICE - 2022 - 2025

2,000+ bicycles refurbished for Ukrainian refugees, **Ireland**

2 tons plastic waste transformed into housing materials, **Kenya**

300+ trees planted in urban food forest, **Montenegro**

250+ crates of food donated to families every month, **Montenegro**

80+ volunteers organised for animal rescue & welfare, **Mongolia**

50 insulated dog houses built for winter survival, **Mongolia**

9 university scholarships via James 1 Foundation, **Colombia**

4 scholarship graduates to date, **Colombia**



This volunteerism is quintessentially American — very American — which I'm very proud of ... It's the best way to convey who we are."

Susan Pompeo, Honorary President, Association of American Foreign Service Women (AAFSW) Spouse of Secretary of State Mike Pompeo

As quoted at the 2019 SOSA Ceremony · Federal News Network



In their words ...

The Secretary of State Award for Outstanding Volunteerism Abroad recognizes members of the Foreign Service community who go far beyond their official roles — giving their time, skills, and compassion to the communities where they serve. These are their voices.

BUREAU OF AFRICAN AFFAIRS

"Witnessing the project grow beyond my initial idea into something that the people of Madagascar have embraced is a priceless gift."

Justin Wimpey · Madagascar · Bureau of African Affairs

EAST ASIA & PACIFIC

"By volunteering, we exemplify the best of the American tradition — whether in small town USA or at some distant outpost abroad."

Denis Rajic · Shanghai, China · Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs

"Serving as a volunteer is a means of giving back to a community that takes care of you. I am humbled with every volunteer opportunity. It has led me to a deeper understanding of how we all need help in some ways, both physically and mentally."

Vicki Daniel · Shanghai, China · Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs

"This is showing 260+ local staff — not counting their family members — the BEST of America. This is people-to-people diplomacy, more than anything."

Ellin R. Lobb · Shanghai, China · Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs

EUROPE & EURASIA

"It was the powerful moment of watching refugee children enjoy their childhood again ... Ukrainian mothers thank us every day.... is incredibly rewarding."

Meredith Wiedemer · Chişinău, Moldova · Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs

"[E]ven small acts of service can create lasting ripples of hope, belonging, and connection ... built through service endure far beyond a single assignment or posting."

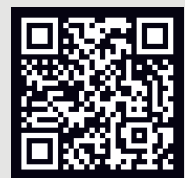
Jennifer Sturgeon (2025 Winner) · Netherlands · Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs

NEAR EAST

"It is communicating with the language of love. when I see a smile on the faces of young children ... of relief from parents I feel that the small role I played in their lives matters. They have also shown me that the impossible is possible."

Debra Stock · Doha, Qatar · Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs

Past SOSA Award Ceremony Highlights



To view the full award ceremonies, visit the [AAFSW YouTube Channel](#) →

Honorable Mentions



2025

- [NEA] - Kaleigh Fountain —  Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
- [EAP] - Amy Kennedy —  Beijing, China
- [EAP] - Thomas Lee —  Rangoon, Burma
- [EAP] - Carlo Cressotti —  Suva, Fiji
- [WHA] - Francisco Ordaz —  Port of Spain, Trinidad & Tobago
- [AF] - Margie Tidwell —  Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
- [EUR] - Patty Liddle —  Istanbul, Turkey
- [SCA] - Katryn DeMeritt Stewart —  Ashgabat, Turkmenistan

2024

- [AF] - Valerie Wendell —  Kinshasa, DRC
- [AF] - Joel McDonell —  Gaborone, Botswana
- [EAP] Thanh Kim —  Seoul, Republic of Korea
- [EUR] - Sarah Berdugo —  Paris, France
- [NEA] - Jessica Baetjer —  Amman, Jordan
- [SCA] - Stefanie Hendricks —  Astana, Kazakhstan
- [SCA] - Lianne Tuomey —  Kathmandu, Nepal
- [WHA] - Susannah Holmes —  San Salvador, El Salvador

Nominations for the annual SOSA award are open to all Foreign Service families posted abroad.



NOMINATE A DESERVING VOLUNTEER
aafsw.org/nominations

Honorable Mentions



2023

[AF] - Heather Nader — 🇰🇪 Nairobi, Kenya

[AF] - Diane Young — 🇰🇪 Nairobi, Kenya

[AF] - Danielle Muench — 🇰🇪 Nairobi, Kenya

[EUR] - Sarah Begbie — 🇷🇺 Yerevan, Armenia

[EUR] - Mikell Reed Carroll — 🇷🇸 Belgrade, Serbia

[SCA] - Jason Coombs — 🇱🇰 Colombo, Sri Lanka

[WHA] - Malia Skaret — 🇵🇷 Asunción, Paraguay

2022

[AF] - Sonia Carolina Torres López — 🇬🇪 Conakry, Guinea

[EAP] - Ling L.C. Conley — 🇨🇳 Beijing, China

[EUR] - Ondrej Hindl — 🇬🇪 Tbilisi, Georgia

[NEA] - John Wesley Kane — 🇮🇱 East Jerusalem, Israel/Palestinian Territories

[WHA] - Wiley Skaret — 🇨🇴 Bogotá, Colombia

“*These awardees today have looked at the landscape of where they are, they’ve identified a need and they’ve taken action ... they’ve added to the fabric of where they are in a very rich and substantive way.*

Evan Ryan · White House Cabinet Secretary · 2024 Ceremony

Continue the Legacy

For more than three decades, the Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide (AAFSW) has supported Foreign Service employees, family members, and retirees through advocacy, scholarships, professional development, and community-building programs around the world. The Secretary of State Award for Outstanding Volunteerism Abroad (SOSA) is one of the many ways AAFSW celebrates the extraordinary impact of the Foreign Service community.

Join AAFSW

Become part of a worldwide network dedicated to supporting the people and families who serve America abroad. Membership benefits include:

- EFM employment advocacy
- Family scholarship opportunities
- Professional development and networking
- Worldwide interest groups and member communities
- Priority access to select events and programs
- Support resources, including Spouses in Transition and evacuation assistance

Scan the QR code to learn more and join.



Support the Mission
aafsw.org/join →

Support the Mission

Your contribution helps sustain AAFSW's programs, including merit scholarships, SOSA recognition, community support initiatives, and resources for Foreign Service families worldwide.

AAFSW is an accredited 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

Scan the QR code to make a donation.



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From left to right: SOSA Co-chair Jose Dorce, AAFSW Program Chair Sheila Switzer, CCE-EFM winner Joanna Parys, SOSA Honorable Mentions Valerie Wendell and Jessica Baetjer, White House Cabinet Secretary Evan Ryan, Director General of the Foreign Service Marcia Bernicat, SOSA winners Garrett Fraino, Kristin Factor, and Connie Pearson, SOSA Honorable Mention Susannah Holmes, AAFSW President Celine Ford, Tragen Award Winner Megan Kuhn, SOSA Co-chair Moises Mendoza.



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