

## The Globalization of Jacksonville: People, Perspectives and *Perogies*

For the months of January, February and March 2009, this forum examined what the *Forward* generation thinks is needed now for Jacksonville to take the world stage. Local citizens from around the globe will share their stories, experiences and lives.

### KEY FINDINGS

- There is a lack of awareness as to the rich fabric of multicultural residents who live, work and play in Duval County, even though currently there are children from over 130 different countries of origin in our public school system.
- New citizens do not have a predetermined negative impression of Jacksonville and can be the community's strong cheerleaders and ambassadors but they need to be invited to participate.
- Although knit neighborhoods, such as Chinatown or Little Italy, don't exist in our community there are pockets of cultures growing in different neighborhoods as citizens build their own support systems and develop cultural-based amenities.
- There is no guide for newcomers for *How to Live and Succeed in Jacksonville* and the information that is available is English-language only.
- There is no central meeting place or cultural center to share and showcase our local international citizens and their culture, art or contributions.

### **Action plan:**

The committee used the Issue Forum meeting summaries and supplemental material as a basis for answering the question "What can we do?" and determine the following plan:

- Take advantage of opportunities, such as DVI's monthly *ArtWalk*, and showcase our community's multicultural citizens beyond the annual *World of Nations Celebrations*. Outreach to business, cultural support groups, speakers, and performers to participate in local events all year long.
- Individually explore and encourage others to learn about different countries and their offerings without ever leaving the city.
- Identify locations, events, businesses and develop a guide highlighting the city's global locations and opportunities.

### **Community Speakers**

Master Chief Aguila (Philippines)	Marisa Gonzalez, Englewood High School	Christine Rothberg, Lutheran Social Services
Karim Belhaj (France)		
Sonny Bhika (Zambia)	Khalid Ibrahim (Afghanistan)	Michelle Simkulet (Canada)
Michelle Conty, (Spain/Philippines)	Tess Mork (China)	Tatyana Ta, (Vietnam)
Stephen H. Davis, Immigration Attorney	Chris O'Connor (Ireland)	Vanya Vukota (Bosnia)
AJ Dunn (Jamaica)	Racheal Obal (Sudan)	Dr. Wassan Yassin (Iraq)
John Fitzgerald, Catholic Charities	Ray Odalkowski, Jacksonville University	
	John Reyes, Visit Jacksonville	

### **Committee Members:**

Lee Poemann (chair), Damien Dempsey (co-chair), Eve Apel, Clanzenetta Brown, Lee Brown, William David, Leah Donelan, Sondie Frus, Cynthia Gibbs, Tyler Grunewald, Marcus Haile, Aubree Hershorin, Piko Horne, Circe LeNoble, Jacquelyn Lowe, Neil McGuinness, Elexia Moss, Marvin Reese, Herman Robinson, Christine Rothberg, Caitlin Sellers, Rebecca Tripi, and Wassan Yassin *Staff: Michelle Simkulet*

*Thanks to Visit Jacksonville for supporting this Forum!*