

## STORIES FROM THE NETWORK

## French Presidential Elections Exemplify IVLP Success

By Monya Hudsick, NCIV Staff

There are many ways to measure the effectiveness of the International Visitor Leadership Program. One of the most common ways is by the change in attitudes and perceptions of the participants either during their program or once they return home. Another measure of efficacy is when the International Visitors (IVs) directly apply their knowledge learned during the program to bring about change in their home communities. In addition, a program is often considered successful when International Visitors use their experience on the program to strengthen their interactions with their ties in the United States. The credit for the hard work of putting together these influential programs in Washington, DC goes to program officers at the U.S. Department of State and the programming teams at the National Program Agencies. Excellent work is done by the Councils for International Visitors receiving the participants and showing them America up close. However, there is one very important group of people who merit the spotlight as well; the Foreign Service officers and U.S. Embassies and consulates abroad who are managing the IVLP selection process.

As proven by recent events, the U.S. Embassy in France, like many other embassies around the world, has succeeded in selecting influential leaders to participate in the IVLP. Not only is the newly elected French President, Nicolas Sarkozy, an IVLP alumnus, but so are four members of his cabinet. The new Prime Minister, Francois Fillon, came to the United States in 1984 as an IV for a program on defense and education issues. The new Minister of State for Ecology and Sustainable Development, Alain Juppé, participated on an IV program in 1978 for city management and urbanism. In 1992, Christine Boutin, the new Minister of Housing and City, came on the IV Program for bioethics, health care and agriculture. The new Minister of Immigration, Integration, National Identity and Development, Brice Hortefeux, came to the United States as a Voluntary Visitor when he accompanied Mr. Sarkozy, Mayor of Neuilly/Seine, on his IV Program.

Their program on political marketing and campaign finance practices brought then Mayor Sarkozy and Mr. Hortefeux

to Washington, DC, New York, San Francisco and Oakland. Mayor Sarkozy met with Senator Gary Hart and New York Mayor Ed Koch and participated on a night patrol with the Oakland Police. It was the latter activity that Mayor Sarkozy cited in an interview published in *Le Figaro Magazine* that provided lessons that would be useful for the city of Neuilly. Now President Sarkozy and his cabinet members are emblematic of the IVLP's accomplishments in today's world.

Another exemplary French IVLP Alumnus is Pascal Dupeyrat. He was the featured speaker at the 2007 NCIV National Meeting during the IVLP Alumni Luncheon on Saturday. Please see the video of his speech on the NCIV website: <http://www.nciv.org/2007NationalMeeting.asp>. Mr. Dupeyrat came to the United States as an IV in July 2000. His program on the new economy and the internet revolution took him to Washington, DC; Freeport, Illinois, San Francisco, California; Boston, Massachusetts; and New York, New York. As a result of his IV experience and the events of September 11, Mr. Dupeyrat sought to reach out to the American people with friendship and support. He founded the association *Cercle Jefferson* and serves as Secretary General. The *Cercle Jefferson* is comprised of 425 French IVLP alumni (of the 800 known alumni), including Christine Boutin and Alain Juppé. The *Cercle Jefferson* organizes conferences and cultural activities, meets with future leaders who are about to embark on an IV program, welcomes them when they return, and provides home hospitality—ready to welcome any American visitors.

During his most recent trip to Washington, DC, Mr. Dupeyrat met with the NCIV staff over lunch to brainstorm how the NCIV network can create stronger relationships with the IVLP alumni. NCIV hosted a dinner in his honor at the home of Sherry Mueller. On this occasion he shared with various friends of NCIV his impressions of the IV program and the positive effects that it had on his life. NCIV plans to continue its collaborations with Mr. Dupeyrat. Stories such as Pascal Dupeyrat and the French IVLP alumni demonstrate that the hard work of the NCIV network yields important results. ★