

Making a Difference

WASHINGTON, DC – This month marks the retirement from Congress of one of Open World’s great friends: Open World Trustee **Robert E. “Bud” Cramer**. Rep. Cramer’s involvement with Open World began in 1999, our very first year, when he not only hosted a Russian delegation in his hometown of Huntsville, AL, but also helped recruit other Members of Congress to serve as official hosts. Since his appointment to Open World’s board by the leadership of the House of Representatives in 2001, Rep. Cramer has always given wise counsel to his fellow trustees. He also effectively advocated for Open World funding as a member of the **House Appropriations Committee**, and met with a number of our visiting delegations. Rep. Cramer’s most recent service to us came toward the end of 2008, when he participated with Russian Open World delegates in a public forum in Washington, DC, on assisting victims of human trafficking. The delegates were honored by his involvement and impressed by his commitment. All of us at Open World share those same sentiments. Joining us in thanking Rep. Cramer for his work on the program’s behalf is Open World host **Dr. John R. Pottenger**, whose tribute to his longtime congressional representative appears below.

HUNTSVILLE, AL – Over the past two-and-a-half decades, I have watched **Rep. Bud Cramer’s** distinguished public-service career unfold. First as Madison County (AL) district attorney, then as the congressman for Alabama’s Fifth Congressional District, Rep. Cramer has worked hard and effectively to improve the well-being of the people of north Alabama. His initiatives have also had a nationwide impact. To cite just two examples, the nonprofit **National Children’s Advocacy Center** founded by

Rep. Cramer in 1985 fights child abuse across the country through service, training, and education programs, and NASA’s **Marshall Space Flight Center** in Huntsville has enhanced America’s scientific prowess, thanks in significant measure to Rep. Cramer’s support. On the international front, Rep. Cramer has energetically promoted post–Cold War cultural awareness during his extensive service on the board of trustees that governs the Open World Leadership Center. As the director of an Open World local host organization, I have seen firsthand how this public diplomacy program has benefited our local communities as well as our participants, and how it has promoted a positive image of Alabama in former Soviet countries.

The people of this district—and indeed the entire state—will long remember Rep. Cramer’s compassion, decency, and momentous accomplishments.

—Dr. John R. Pottenger, Director

Office of International Programs and Services
University of Alabama in Huntsville



Trustee Robert E. “Bud” Cramer (center) at Open World’s 2008 board meeting. Also shown are Board Chair Dr. James H. Billington (left) and Executive Director John O’Keefe.



Dr. James H. Billington

WASHINGTON, DC – Open World is proud to announce that its cofounder and board chairman, **Dr. James H. Billington**, received the **Presidential Citizens Medal** on Dec. 10 in recognition of “his stewardship of the Library of Congress and his dedication to strengthening the cultural life of our Nation.” Dr. Billington was one of

Hosting Corner

WASHINGTON, DC – On Jan. 10, a Georgetown gallery exhibiting pro-peace art hosted an awards ceremony held by the **National Peace Foundation (NPF)**, an Open World grantee. Three of NPF’s five honorees have Open World ties. Writer **Holly Witte** of Cornelius, OR, received one of NPF’s new citizen diplomat awards for her work hosting exchanges for NPF, including many sponsored by Open World. In her acceptance remarks, Witte thanked Open World for making so much of her international outreach possible. **Olga Bessolova** of the **Russian Federation of Women Graduates** won another of the awards for her contributions to NPF’s many development and social-justice initiatives in Russia. Bessolova’s federation is an Open World nominating organization, and Bessolova herself collaborates with alumni across Russia on community projects. Author/artist **Carol Hiltner** of Seattle, WA, was honored for two famous peace quilts she helped create in the 1980s to promote U.S.–Soviet friendship, and for her work with U.S. and Russian native peoples. Hiltner cohosted a 2007 Open World visit that enabled ethnic Altai delegates to share strategies for cultural and environmental sustainability with Native American leaders, and she helps Altai alumni raise funds to maintain ownership of their ancestral lands. Open World congratulates all three women on this well-deserved recognition.



From left, NPF awardees Holly Witte, Olga Bessolova, and Carol Hiltner at the Jan. 10 event.

24 individuals to be honored with the award during a private ceremony held by **President George W. Bush** in the Oval Office. The Presidential Citizens Medal is one of the nation’s highest civilian honors.