



USAID Alumni Association

November/December 2025 Newsletter

Note from the UAA Board

A tremendous amount of work went into making this year's AGM the success it was. On behalf of the new UAA Board, we extend our heartfelt thanks to the AGM Committee headed by Steve Wingert and Joy Riggs-Perla. Likewise, we are grateful to our generous host, the Center for Global Development, for their invaluable contributions. We are also deeply grateful to our panelists—and especially to our keynote speaker, Jim Kunder, whose insightful remarks helped set the tone for a thoughtful and engaging event.

We would also like to recognize our departing Board Members—Ken Yamashita, Roberta Mahoney, Denise Rollins, and Oren Whyche-Shaw — for their outstanding leadership during an extraordinary year. The AGM raised important questions about the future of the UAA, including how we can strengthen membership, expand outreach, and build partnerships with both existing and new organizations. We heard you.

This has been a year of exceptional challenges and change, and we recognize the need for decisive action. But we cannot do it alone—we need your continued participation and support. Please stay tuned for upcoming opportunities to get involved in the weeks ahead. Once again, thank you to everyone who helped make this AGM such a success, and to the hundreds of members who joined us both in person and virtually.



New UAA Board: Jeanne Briggs, Tony Pryor, Tony Chan, Chris Milligan, Christine Sheckler, Steve Haykin (Missing from photo: Alicia Dinerstein)

Calendar of Upcoming UAA Events

New! Saturday, December 13, 2025, 3:00 to 5:00 p.m., UAA 2025 Friendsgiving at the Thompson Center, 6090 Kingstowne Village Parkway, Alexandria, VA 22315 (<https://maps.app.goo.gl/ciXm9MdJXUHksxGs8>). See article below for details. Registration is now closed.

What's New on the UAA Website

In Memoriam:

Jerry Sowalsky, David Delos Bathrick, Carol Henderson Tyson, Stephen Hirscher Spangler, James Louis Blum, John Rudolph Eriksson, Brooke C. Holmes, Duff G. Gillespie

NOTE: Article entries during the last month have been too numerous to list all of them here, so only a few of the most recent ones that deserve special mention follow. For those interested in seeing more, please use these links:

- 1) [Bulletin Board](#)
- 2) [Articles](#)

Bulletin Board

- November 10, 2025, Brian Atwood – along with Andrew Natsios – were awarded the American Academy of Diplomacy Henrietta Fore Award for Contributions to International Development. Here are the remarks he made in accepting the award “on behalf of USAID professionals”.
- **Inscribed Awards — Please check the list and help us locate awardees.** During the summer, USAID officers alerted the UAA board that many USAID materials — including books, swag, and inscribed awards — were on the verge of destruction as USAID was being evicted from the Ronald Reagan Building (RRB). UAA volunteers rescued and stored materials among which are a series of inscribed plaques, awards, and certificates, including Length of Service, FSN of the Year, Civ-Mil Cooperation, and Distinguished Career Service. An alphabetical list of awardees is attached. UAA would like to get as many awards to their awardees as possible. Please look over the sheets to see if you recognize your own name or that of friends or colleagues. Please send contact info to foundawards@gmail.com and UAA will try to unite as many awards and awardees as possible.
- ***Tuesday, December 9, at 9:00 a.m. Washington time (afternoon in Africa), online and in person in Washington DC. Topic: “The Future of Africa – U.S. Health Diplomacy: Perspectives from the Continent, Part 4”***
 - To attend in person in Washington DC at the University of Southern California (USC) Washington campus, 1771 N Street NW, please RSVP to Judy Kang at junghwak@usc.edu
 - To join by zoom, please RSVP at <https://annenbergl.usc.edu/events/ccip/future-africa-us-health-diplomacy-perspectives-continent-part-4-how-might-shift-us>
- MFAN and ONE Urge Congress to Protect DFC’s Development Mission. MFAN Press Release, 5 Nov 2025
- The William R. Rivkin Award for a dissent channel memo was presented at an AFSA award ceremony on October 1, 2025 to ten USAID employees who advocated for the work of USAID on October 1, 2025.

Articles

(Click on the “Articles” link above for more articles posted on our website. Click on the boldface item headings there and below for a hyperlink to the full article or video.)

- **A portal for the US aid cuts at your fingertips.** By Anna Gawel, *Devex Newswire*, 5 Nov 2025

- "We screwed up, we were wrong, badly wrong." Mark Green, former USAID Administrator, by Helen Murphy, *Devex Newswire*, 29 Oct 2025
- The destruction of Gaza and USAID represents a dual challenge for the US. Opinion by Jim Kunder, former USAID Deputy Administrator, *Devex Newswire*, 27 Oct 2025
- Marco Rubio, the grand USAID hypocrite. Opinion by Michelle Dworkin, former USAID FSO, *The Hill*, 21 Oct 2025
- Trump Revives Foreign Aid, Helping Needy Billionaires. Opinion by Nicholas Kristof, *The New York Times*, 22 Oct 2025
- Still Standing – MCC and DFC. By Anna Gawel, *Devex Newswire*, 22 Oct 2025
- America's Retreat From Aid Is Devastating Somalia's Health System. By Stephanie Nolen, *The New York Times*, 17 Oct 2025
- World Bank launches massive push to put farming front and center. By Helen Murphy, *Devex Newswire*, 15 Oct 2025
- Foreign Aid Is Mostly Gone. It's Being Replaced with Something Better. By Rajiv J. Shah, *The New York Times*, 13 Oct 2025

Jobs & Volunteer Opportunities

Georgetown University's Institute for the Study of Diplomacy

Bring the real world to your classroom! The Institute for the Study of Diplomacy has over 250 case studies in international diplomacy written by scholars and practitioners. Join the faculty lounge for premiere access to this extensive library and explore topics from peace deals to arms control to basketball diplomacy. ISD is also recruiting paid authors! Share your expertise with the next generation of scholars by applying to author a case study.

Posted 5 Nov 2025

SID-US Job Board

Given the current situation in the international development field, we are sharing openings within and beyond the sector for those whose roles have been directly affected by the freeze on foreign assistance, as well as anyone looking to transition careers in the industry. [Click here for details.](#)

**Job Opportunity in Austin, Texas
Capital Program Consultant – Austin Water**

Provide oversight and reporting and make improvement recommendations for the City's Capital Improvements Program (CIP) within the Capital Planning Office. Pay Range: \$97,450.00 – \$125,200.00 Annual. [Click here for more information.](#)

**Unique Opportunity for UAA Members:
Become a FactCite Country Reviewer**

Play a role with K-12 Students Becoming Better Informed Citizens with Your Country Specific Knowledge. [Click here for more information.](#)

UAA Annual General Meeting



Jim Kunder, Keynote Speaker

Thanks to everyone who participated in the 2025 UAA Annual General Meeting (AGM), either in-person or virtually. Your active participation enriched the meeting and brought in many new ideas.

Many thanks to Jim Kunder whose thoughtful keynote address was an inspiring way to launch the meeting with its challenge to envision what comes after USAID in the arena of development collaboration. The panel continued with a stimulating discussion of the future of international development collaboration. The panel was moderated by Masood Ahmed of CGD with panelists Ndidi Nwuneli from the One Campaign, Charles Kenny of CGD and Andrew Herscowitz from the Rockefeller Foundation.

UAA Board Co-Chair Roberta Mahoney briefed the members on UAA's work during the past year, focusing on the period after the destruction of USAID. The briefing included a description by Board member Tony Pryor of ongoing activities related to knowledge preservation. USAID's legacy includes research, data, photos, human interest stories, and collective expertise accumulated over the last six decades of the Agency's work.



Roberta Mahoney

Recognizing the urgent need to locate, preserve, and share these resources, the UAA teamed up with the Aid Transition Alliance (AtA) to collect materials to create a free, searchable database.



Ndidi Okonkwo Nwunneli, Masood Ahmed, Charles Kenny, Andrew Herscowitz



Tony Chan

Tony Chan, UAA Board Co-chair led the discussion during the session on the future of UAA. This discussion was especially important given that UAA will have to adapt to very different circumstances without USAID. Discussions about expanding membership eligibility and key areas of work will benefit greatly from membership inputs, especially from the new members, as we look to the future directions of the organization. We will hear more about the plans for those discussions from the UAA Board in the coming weeks.

As new committees and working groups are established, please sign up! UAA depends largely on volunteers for most of our work. It is important that former USAID-associated staff from all over the country are represented on these working groups.

If you have not filled out the AGM evaluation form, please do so as soon as possible by clicking [here](#). We always benefit from hearing directly from UAA members on how to improve the AGM for the following year. If you were not able to attend at all, please click [here](#) for a full recording of the meeting and [here](#) for the written report. [Click here](#) to see more photos from the event.



*Richard Greene, Joy Riggs-Perla,
Marguerite Farrell, Carol Dabbs, Carol
Carpenter Yaman, John Crowley*



Mia Beers and Monika Gorzelanska



Post-AGM Luncheon Group



Tara Simpson and Kathy Reiners



*Kira Mickie Mitre, Linda Whitlock-Brown,
Sharlene Bagga-Taves, Ted Glenn*



Post-AGM Luncheon Group

UAA Staff Financial Support Fund Update

We greatly appreciate everyone who has donated to the USAID Staff Financial Support Fund to assist former staff (and families) whose jobs were unceremoniously terminated through the dissolution of USAID. The fund has raised over \$340,000 and 150 grants have been approved with another 20 in process. Remaining are about 60 eligible applications which we would like to approve over the next several weeks.

Our fundraising now is focused on being able to approve those remaining 60 applications (and any new ones received), and we will continue to fundraise as long as possible. We have established a waiting list and will process the applications as we have funds available. It is likely that we will close the application process within a month or so. If you want to donate, please go to: [Donate to USAID Staff Financial Support Fund](#). If you want to apply for a grant, please go to: [USAID Staff Financial Support Fund Application Guidelines Survey](#). We will post an updated notice on the UAA website soon and suggest that you check there for any new developments. Thank you again for your generous support.

Session on Career Transition

The USAID Alumni Association (UAA) hosted a virtual session titled "Successful Career Transition: Experiences that Worked" on Thursday,

October 18, 2025. Nearly 50 UAA members attended the discussion.

The session featured a panel of four former USAID employees who were part of this year's reduction in force and have since successfully transitioned into new positions. They shared their personal experiences, strategies, and lessons learned in navigating the job market and building new careers.

The panelists encouraged participants to look beyond traditional career paths and explore opportunities in organizations outside their usual professional sphere. They emphasized leveraging transferable skills—particularly in management and leadership—and remaining flexible in considering roles that may not have been on their original preference list.

A central takeaway at this session was the importance of staying positive, open-minded and confident, regardless of age or prior seniority.

One of the most engaging parts of the discussion focused on the role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in today's job search. All panelists reported using AI tools to review and tailor their résumés to job descriptions—including Claude AI and other online platforms—to improve their application's alignment with employer screening systems. Many companies today have closed HR departments and substituted AI Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) to recruit, interview, hire, and manage the recruitment workflow, all without a human interface. This process, though often frustrating for applicants, is important for applicants to understand.

Change of Location - UAA Friendsgiving Potluck Event

If you have already registered, please take note of the new location. You do NOT need to RSVP again! Date and time remain the same. Reservations are now closed due to the wonderful early response.



UAA alumni are invited to bring their family or a guest to our first ever Friendsgiving. We are growing and want to keep our family close in these uncertain times. So, we look forward to a potluck event to catch up, network, share adventures and plans and fortify ourselves for the winter.

Bring your favorite family fall/winter holiday dish. We will provide turkey and ham. As you plan, please consider our vegan and vegetarian friends as well. Our space is limited to 90 so first come first in the door! Do bring your ideas for things that you'd like to see us do together in the future. This is a free event for UAA members. We also encourage you to bring or invite those eligible to become members.

Date: Saturday, December 13, 2025

Time: 3:00 to 5:00 p.m.

Location: Thompson Center, 6090 Kingstowne Village Parkway, Alexandria, VA 22315 (<https://maps.app.goo.gl/ciXm9MdJXUHksxGs8>)
Parking is available and the building is easily accessible.
Handicapped access is at the rear. Closest Metro is Franconia Springfield or Van Dorn.

Dress: Casual

Pay UAA Dues Beginning on December 1st

UAA dues for calendar year 2026 may be paid beginning on December 1, 2025. Contributions to UAA received prior to December 1 will be attributed to 2025 membership.

An explanation of paying dues to UAA is on our website at: <https://usaidalumni.org/dues-payment>. For questions, please email us at office@usaidalumni.org.

--Carol Dabbs, Treasurer

Bibliography of USAID Authors

The UAA will continue to collect and publicize information about books written by USAID FSOs, FSNs, and family members adding to our on-line collection of 353.

Five new ones include Daniel Miller's *Fifty Years Among Nomads and Cowboys: Roamin' the Range and Mountains*, his 16th entry in our collection. It compiles the 150 best photos and text from his travels in Nepal, Bhutan, Tibet, Mongolia and the American West. A former PCV and USAID Range Management and Agriculture Officer Dan remains a prolific traveler and public speaker. He can be reached at WildYakman@gmail.com.

Recently RIF'd after 15 years as an FSO, Stephen Berlinguette has written the intriguing *Operation Lam Quen: Motorcycling Vietnam One Landing at a Time*. It's a journey through Vietnam's hidden war history - told one back-road, battlefield and roadside beer at a time. A recent retiree, Danielle Reiff has edited a much-needed book *Overcoming Information Chaos: A Guide to Cultivating Peaceful Communities in the Digital Age*. Danielle is a peacebuilder, writer and FSO for 20 years specializing in supporting democratic transitions and peacebuilding processes. She founded the nonpartisan Peacebuilders Initiative.

Two books of fiction have also come to our attention. *What We Were Making* by Peter Cloutier explores the challenges to a British diplomat assigned to Jakarta and an American expat teacher who learn of a plot to undermine foreign aid provided after a natural disaster - "a masterful blend of two contrasting worlds, political and natural". Peter is a retired FSO of 21 years of service. 103-year-old Irving Tragen has published the 2nd book of a trilogy dealing with El Salvador in the mid-20th century: *Esperanza: Daring to Dream Beyond Borders*. During his long career at USAID, State, OAS and executive director of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission, Irv, who was much admired by my old LAC DAA boss, Marshall (Buster) Brown, worked in all 33 Latin American and Caribbean countries.

Please send notices of newly published or discovered books to jpielemeie@aol.com.

Profile: Anne Aarnes and David Sprague

Anne Aarnes and David Sprague met in a meeting in 1978 in USAID/Washington, where they both had GS jobs. It must have been a good meeting because they married two years later.

Anne had joined USAID in 1969, focusing on population/family planning programs. David, joining the agency in 1972, worked in the Education



Office of USAID's central technical bureau. Neither of them had planned to spend their careers in USAID, but each of them, within their first few years of joining the agency, found USAID's work intensely compelling.

In 1988, Anne and David both converted to USAID's Foreign Service and went overseas with their two young children, Michael and Leslie, spending the next 21 years in six postings: Pakistan, Ukraine, Bangladesh, Egypt, Jordan, and back to Pakistan. David retired from USAID in 2000, but he continued to accompany Anne and worked as an education contractor for the World Bank and USAID in Egypt,

Jordan, and their final tour in Pakistan. Anne was Mission Director in Jordan and Pakistan.

All their postings were challenging and fascinating, and the first two laid the foundation for their time overseas. In Pakistan, the tour began in 1988 with a tragic plane crash that killed the U.S. Ambassador and the Pakistani President. The Mission and the Pakistan government mounted successful programs in primary education and family planning—important areas for Pakistan's development. However, by the end of their tour, USAID was phasing out of Pakistan as required by the Pressler Amendment. In Ukraine in 1994-1997, David and Anne were among the first on the ground to help establish a major USAID Mission from scratch in this impoverished country, isolated from the west for 70 years. Eventually, the Mission flourished: developed programs and gained staff, work space, and even heat and hot water in personal residences. These first two postings reinforced basic ground rules: stay calm, be flexible, persevere, and expect the unexpected.

Returning to USAID/Washington in 2009, Anne served as a faculty member at the National War College and as Senior DAA in three USAID regional bureaus. Meanwhile, David worked for the Academy for Educational Development and the URC (University Research Co.) on USAID-funded education projects. He also taught graduate courses on international education at Georgetown University and Johns Hopkins School for Advanced International Studies. Anne retired in 2015 with the grade of Career Minister and settled down with David for good in Washington, DC.

In retirement, Anne and David have volunteered in their neighborhood association to help senior citizens "age in place." They have remained engaged in international development by joining and serving on the

boards of NGOs concerned with Middle East refugee assistance, archaeological and other studies related to Jordan, and American diplomacy and foreign affairs issues. They have both been involved in the work of the USAID Alumni Association over the past 10-15 years. Their involvement will likely increase given UAA's efforts to help those who have lost their jobs in 2025 and to preserve USAID's deep knowledge of development.

The travel bug has not disappeared as Anne and David continue to travel to places they did not have time to visit during their USAID careers: Europe, East Asia, and the United States.

Every year they spend the summer in Vermont. A major activity is co-hosting the "Development Wallahs Picnic," which is an annual gathering, mostly USAID retirees, who have settled in Vermont and nearby states. One of their greatest joys is seeing USAID friends and colleagues, so they were particularly happy this summer to have some of USAID's newest former employees join the group.

Make Your 2025 UAA Membership Contribution
USAID Alumni Association

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