

# THE Vision's Voice INTERNATIONALISM

presented by The Cliffs Communities  
by Becky Mann

It's not your mother's Greenville anymore – at least, it's not the Greenville she may have known growing up. It's a much more diverse place to live, a place that's been enriched with an influx of people from many different parts of this country and many other nations around the world.



Vision 2025. For more information, contact Russell Stall with Greenville Forward at [rstall@greenvilleforward.com](mailto:rstall@greenvilleforward.com)

In Greenville, The International Center of the Upstate was founded in 1998 to promote cross-cultural understanding by helping international residents get connected to the community and helping local residents learn about other cultures by meeting people from different countries. Since the organization began, the environment in which it works has changed drastically. "I don't think, in 1998, anyone foresaw how much immigration was going to increase to the area," says Patricia Harrison, the center's Executive Director. "I think when they started they expected to be helping people from France and Germany, but we've had more than 70 countries represented since we began." In addition, the center has had a number of American members with international experience and interests, some of them long-time Upstate residents.

Harrison, who chairs the Vision 2025 Internationalism Committee, says one important goal for the group is to communicate to the community just how internationally diverse we have become.

"People are used to Michelin and BMW," she says, "but it goes so much farther than that, and so the group is working to raise the profile of the international community and to communicate international activities to the general public better."

One of the Vision goals that she says is most important is to have a dedicated international center in Greenville that would be a one-stop shop for incoming international residents as well as people who are interested in international business.

"That international center would go beyond the current non-profit center that we are – the International Center of the Upstate," she says. "We would be one part of

what that would be, but it would be more of an international trade and cultural center.”

Other Vision goals include having Greenville recognized both nationally and internationally by 2025 for its strong international trade and investment level, its international cultural diversity, and its reputation for welcoming internationals. Another goal is to develop exceptional school programs at the college and secondary levels, to prepare students to live in a global world. Finally, city and county efforts would be implemented to project an image for Greenville as an important international community welcoming international trade and investment and possessing a vibrant cultural life celebrating its internationally diverse population.

Harrison says the primary barrier to reaching Vision goals is persuading people that international issues do involve them as local residents.

“People often hear the word “international” and they think well, I’m American. I’m a long-time Greenville resident. I’m not international,” she says. In fact, she adds, we are all part of the global economy and the global community, so local native residents are just as much international residents as the person who’s just arrived recently from another country.

Harrison is encouraged by the level of interest she’s seeing in internationalism. “When people hear how many different countries have been represented, and when they have the opportunity to meet people, they are really curious,” she says. “Greenville is becoming even more diverse – not only with other Americans moving to the area from other places but also with people from other countries. And that’s really exciting.”

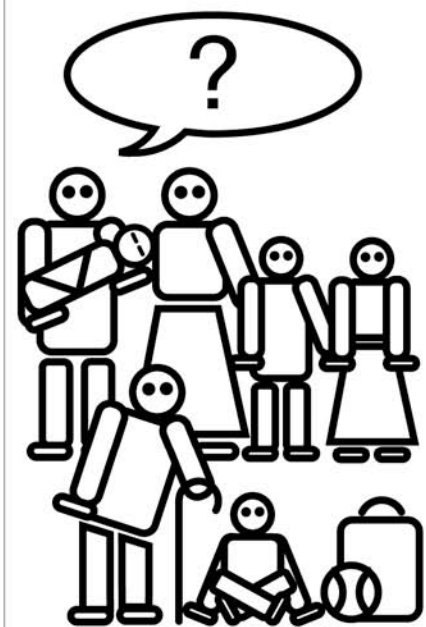
Cris Josson, International Business Director with Carroll Properties Corporation, serves on the internationalism committee and is encouraged by the changes she’s seen in Greenville from the first time – as a native of Italy 10 years ago – to the time she came back to live here two years ago.

“I had a hard time when I came over the first time. The mentality was looking at you like a foreigner,” she says. “When you look at the development of Greenville in 10 years, I can tell you that there is a tremendous difference. And it’s not just because I hear different languages. It’s because I can see there is a true commitment to develop the city into a more international place.”

Vision 2025 goals, including those for internationalism, are moving forward with the help of Greenville Forward, an organization intended to make sure that the Vision becomes a reality. If you have an interest in being part of the Vision 2025 Internationalism Committee, your participation is welcomed. Go to [www.greenville-forward.com](http://www.greenville-forward.com) or call Russell Stall, executive director of Greenville Forward, at (864) 233-8443.



As Vision 2005 paved the way in the 1980s for the incredible quality of life Greenville enjoys today, Vision 2025 spearheads projects that will further elevate our city, culturally and commercially. The Vision’s Voice is one of the many ways that The Cliffs is committed to promoting growth in Greenville.



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