



## MEDIA RESOURCES

# Greenheart Press Kit

Connecting people and planet since 1985

### Media contact

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# Greenheart Press Kit

## About Greenheart

Greenheart International connects people and planet to create global leaders through volunteer service, environmental care, personal development and cultural exchange. Founded in 1985 and headquartered in Chicago, Greenheart envisions a world where people come together with mutual respect and understanding, creating a more peaceful and sustainable future for all.

### Our branches

**Greenheart Exchange** is designated by the U.S. Department of State to sponsor BridgeUSA programs, bringing international participants to the U.S. to study, work, teach and train — and welcoming them into American homes, schools and workplaces.

**Greenheart Travel** sends students and adults abroad to teach, work, study and volunteer in 20+ countries through cultural immersion programs that change lives.



185,000+

Participants since 1985

14,714

Hosts

100+

Countries

10,300+

Exchanges in 2025



“I am currently hosting my 15th exchange son! I have loved each of them as my own son and I remain in touch with all of them. I have children all over the world!”

— Hunt, Greenheart Exchange host dad

“I learned more in 3 weeks in Spain than I did in 2 years of learning Spanish in my American school.”

— James, Greenheart Travel Language Camp in Spain



# About Greenheart

Use any version as-is. Please refer to us as “Greenheart International” on first mention and “Greenheart” after that.

## Boilerplate, 25 words

Greenheart International is a Chicago-based non-profit that has connected people and planet through cultural exchange since 1985, through its branches Greenheart Exchange and Greenheart Travel.

## Boilerplate, 75 words

Greenheart International is a Chicago-based non-profit that connects people and planet to create global leaders through volunteer service, environmental care, personal development and cultural exchange. Since 1985, Greenheart has facilitated more than 185,000 exchanges with partners in more than 100 countries. Greenheart Exchange brings international students, workers, interns, trainees and teachers to the U.S., and Greenheart Travel sends Americans abroad to study, teach, work and volunteer. Learn more at [greenheart.org](http://greenheart.org).

## Boilerplate, 150 words

Greenheart International is a Chicago-based non-profit organization that connects people and planet to create global leaders through volunteer service, environmental care, personal development and cultural exchange. Founded in 1985 as the Center for Cultural Interchange, Greenheart began by placing seven students from Spain with families in suburban Chicago. Today it facilitates more than 10,000 exchanges a year through two branches. Greenheart Exchange is designated by the U.S. Department of State to sponsor BridgeUSA programs that bring international high school students, seasonal staff, interns, trainees and teachers to communities across the U.S. Greenheart Travel sends students and adults abroad to study, teach, work and volunteer, with high school programs in 17 countries and teach abroad programs in 10. Greenheart also offers scholarships and grants that give back to host and home communities. More than 185,000 people have taken part in a Greenheart exchange. Learn more at [greenheart.org](http://greenheart.org).

## Branches

### GREENHEART EXCHANGE

Greenheart Exchange, a branch of Greenheart International, is designated by the U.S. Department of State to sponsor BridgeUSA programs. It welcomes international high school students, Work and Travel participants, interns, trainees and teachers to the U.S., and supports the host families, schools and businesses who welcome them. It is fully listed by the Council on Standards for International Educational Travel (CSIET). [greenheartexchange.org](http://greenheartexchange.org)

### GREENHEART TRAVEL

Greenheart Travel, a branch of Greenheart International, helps Americans travel for a change through high school abroad, teen summer language camps, and teach, work and volunteer abroad programs. With support throughout each program, it turns travel into personal growth and cultural understanding. [GreenheartTravel.org](http://GreenheartTravel.org)

# Key Facts and History

## Since 1985

185,000+

participants since 1985

14,714

hosts since 1985

100+

countries

## In 2025

10,300+

cultural exchanges

95

partner countries

1,616

U.S. schools

949

host organizations

786

host families

34,300

U.S. students taught daily by international teachers

\$40,000

in first-time travel scholarships

6

Global Impact Grants

97%

of inbound participants report improved attitudes toward the U.S.

97%

of hosts report improved attitudes toward other cultures

100%

of host organizations say exchange benefited their work culture

## Timeline

1985

Founded in Chicago by Emanuel Kuntzelman and Laura K. Rose as the Center for Cultural Interchange (CCI). Its first participants were seven students from Spain placed with families in suburban Chicago for an academic year.

About  
2012

Renamed Greenheart International to better reflect its mission and values.

2017

The inbound branch, formerly CCI Greenheart, becomes Greenheart Exchange.

2020

Daniel Ebert, who began as an intern in Greenheart's Spanish office, is named President. He also led the creation of the Teach USA program.

2025

Greenheart celebrates its 40th anniversary in Spain and honors founders Emanuel Kuntzelman and Laura K. Rose on their retirement.

2026

Matt Smith, who joined the Board in 2023 and served as Board Chair, becomes Chief Executive Officer on March 1, following Daniel Ebert's departure after about 27 years with Greenheart.

Sources: greenheartexchange.org and the Greenheart International 2025 Impact Report. Figures current as of October 2026.

# Leadership

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High-resolution headshots are available on request.



**Matt Smith**

**Chief Executive Officer**

Matt developed a passion for cultural exchange by living, studying and working abroad at a young age. He brings 30 years of BridgeUSA experience, including executive roles at EF Education and CIEE, where as Executive Vice President he led programs bringing about 30,000 J-1 visitors to the U.S. each year. He joined Greenheart's Board in 2023, served as Board Chair and became CEO in March 2026. He graduated with honors from Connecticut College.



**Maria Kiosses**

**Vice President, Compliance and Youth Programs**

Maria has worked at Greenheart since 2011. She oversees compliance and youth programs, including the FLEX grant program, and focuses on big-picture strategy and making the most of every resource.



**Jason Nusser**

**Vice President, International Business Development and Operations**

Jason joined Greenheart in 2010 and leads its international business development and operations. He chairs the WYSE Travel Confederation's Study Abroad Sector Panel and served two years as a U.S. Peace Corps Youth Development Volunteer in Ukraine.



**Jess Kissell**

**Vice President, Professional Exchange Programs**

Jess leads Greenheart's BridgeUSA J-1 professional exchange programs, combining strategic non-profit management with a focus on programs and people. She brings extensive cultural exchange experience and has volunteered in Southeast Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa.

## Founders



**Emanuel Kuntzelman**

**Founder and Senior Advisor**

Emanuel founded Greenheart in 1985. An entrepreneur, writer, philosopher, philanthropist and activist for social transformation, he now serves as Senior Advisor.



**Laura K. Rose**

**Co-Founder**

Laura co-founded Greenheart and is its former CEO. A youth empowerment specialist, she also co-founded Purpose Earth and Fundación por el Futuro.

# Our Programs

Greenheart runs exchange programs in both directions: bringing the world to U.S. communities, and sending Americans abroad.

## High School Program

GREENHEART EXCHANGE

[HostWithGreenheart.org](https://HostWithGreenheart.org)

International high school students spend a semester or academic year at a U.S. high school, living with volunteer host families. Local coordinators support every student and family throughout the year.

## Work and Travel

GREENHEART EXCHANGE

[HireWithGreenheart.org](https://HireWithGreenheart.org)

International university students fill seasonal jobs at U.S. resorts, parks, restaurants and attractions, then travel and explore American culture. Greenheart supports both participants and the host employers who hire them.

## Intern & Trainee

GREENHEART EXCHANGE

[HostGreenheartProfessionals.org](https://HostGreenheartProfessionals.org)

International students and young professionals gain hands-on training at U.S. businesses in fields such as hospitality and culinary arts, bringing a global perspective to their host companies.

## TeachUSA

GREENHEART EXCHANGE

[HostGreenheartTeachers.org](https://HostGreenheartTeachers.org)

Experienced international teachers join U.S. schools on J-1 visas, filling classroom needs while sharing their cultures with students and colleagues. In 2025, Greenheart teachers reached about 34,300 U.S. students every day.

## Greenheart Travel

GREENHEART TRAVEL

[GreenheartTravel.org](https://GreenheartTravel.org)

U.S. teens and adults go abroad through high school programs in 17 countries, nine teen summer language camps, teach abroad programs in 10 countries and work abroad programs in three.

## Scholarships and grants

GREENHEART  
INTERNATIONAL

[greenheart.org](https://greenheart.org)

Greenheart awarded \$40,000 in first-time travel scholarships and six Global Impact Grants in 2025, and administers grants for the U.S. Department of State-funded FLEX youth exchange program. The Ambassador Scholarship Fund supports community-minded Work and Travel participants.

# Greenheart Odyssey

The Greenheart Odyssey is a fully funded leadership pathway for participants and alumni of Greenheart's exchange and travel programs. Paid for by Greenheart's donors, it takes young people from their first leadership conference to running projects in their own communities.



## Four stages



### Jr. Global Leaders Conference

A conference in Chicago for high school students from Greenheart Exchange and Greenheart Travel, held during their final days on program.



### Global Leaders Conference

A week in Washington, D.C., for emerging leaders from more than 20 countries, with workshops on social justice, environmental sustainability and intercultural communication, plus volunteer service.



### Alumni Council

Alumni leaders who keep the network connected through newsletters, meetings, events and social media.



### Global Impact Grants

Grants of up to \$2,000 for participants and alumni launching projects in their communities, awarded twice a year.

## AWARD-WINNING

### Winner, Extraordinary Experience

2026 Global Youth Travel Awards · WYSTC, Bilbao, Spain

On September 17, 2026, the WYSE Travel Confederation recognized Greenheart's Global Leaders Conference at the World Youth and Student Travel Conference (WYSTC). After the conference, 87% of attendees said they felt comfortable promoting cultural exchange and 84% felt empowered to engage with their communities. The Odyssey also won Best Education Abroad Provider at the 2018 Global Youth Travel Awards.

Sources: [wysetc.org](https://wysetc.org) and [greenheart.org](https://greenheart.org).

# Story Ideas

We can connect reporters with participants, host families, host businesses, schools and Greenheart leaders for any of these stories.

- 1

**Families wanted: host an exchange student**

How local families make room for a teen from another country, and what they gain. Best in spring and summer, before students arrive in August.

**Visuals:** Host families with their students; welcome moments at the airport
- 2

**International teachers in local classrooms**

Experienced teachers from abroad filling classroom needs in U.S. schools and sharing their cultures with thousands of students. Back-to-school season.

**Visuals:** Teachers in class; principal interviews
- 3

**Summer staff from around the world**

How seasonal businesses in resort and tourism towns stay open with Work and Travel participants. Early summer, when participants arrive.

**Visuals:** Participants at work; community welcome events
- 4

**Local teens studying abroad**

Teens who spend a summer, semester or year abroad and come home changed. Winter planning season and summer departures.

**Visuals:** Departure-day photos; student travel photos
- 5

**Scholarships that open the world**

First-time travel scholarships, Global Impact Grants and FLEX grants that make exchange possible.

**Visuals:** Scholarship recipients and grant projects
- 6

**Four decades of connection**

From seven students from Spain in suburban Chicago in 1985 to more than 185,000 participants today.

**Visuals:** Archive photos; long-time host families
- 7

**New leadership for a 40-year-old non-profit**

CEO Matt Smith on the future of cultural exchange after taking the helm in 2026.

**Visuals:** CEO interview and headshot
- 8

**Why exchange matters now**

What exchange participants and their hosts say about understanding across cultures, with survey results from 2025.

**Visuals:** Participant and host interviews

## Seasonal calendar

|          |                                                                       |
|----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Jan–Mar  | Host family recruitment; teen summer language camp sign-ups           |
| Apr–May  | Work and Travel employers prepare; host family recruitment continues  |
| Jun–Jul  | Seasonal staff and summer camp participants arrive                    |
| Aug–Sep  | High school students and international teachers start the school year |
| November | International Education Week                                          |

# Recent Coverage

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|                |                                     |                                                                                                                                            |
|----------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| July 28, 2026  | <b>Debate Sinaloa</b>               | Los Mochis takes its talent to the teaching world, representing Mexico at an international leadership forum in the United States (Spanish) |
| July 10, 2026  | <b>ClickOnDetroit</b>               | World-renowned Polish youth ensemble brings medieval music to Michigan                                                                     |
| June 24, 2026  | <b>Saco Bay News</b>                | Old Orchard Beach welcomes J-1 students                                                                                                    |
| May 27, 2026   | <b>The Global Filipino Magazine</b> | He grew up the son of a fisherman. Now he's a math teacher in America with a PhD.                                                          |
| April 25, 2026 | <b>The Global Filipino Magazine</b> | Filipino teacher named best in entire Illinois school district                                                                             |
| April 23, 2026 | <b>WWNY TV</b>                      | Student brings Arabic language and culture to Indian River High School                                                                     |
| March 2, 2026  | <b>KOAM News Now</b>                | Foreign exchange programs continue despite ICE concerns                                                                                    |

## Press releases

|                  |                                                                                            |
|------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| March 6, 2026    | Greenheart International Announces Leadership Transition                                   |
| February 3, 2026 | Greenheart and Lanyard strike a deal to help organizations find housing for seasonal staff |

Links to every story and release: [greenheart.org/press](https://greenheart.org/press)

# Media Assets

Download the press kit, logos, brand wheel, photo library (with captions) and headshots at [greenheart.org/press](https://greenheart.org/press).



## Using our logo and photos

- Use the logo files as provided. Don't recolor, stretch, crop or add effects to the logo.
- Use the color logo on light backgrounds and the white logo on dark backgrounds or photos.
- Credit photos "Courtesy of Greenheart International" and keep the captions provided.
- Don't crop people out of photos in a way that changes the story, and don't use participant photos for unrelated stories.

### MEDIA CONTACT

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