

# Case Studies

*Time-tested programs that work.*

The following case studies offer a wide variety of activities conducted by REALTOR® associations ranging in size from 1,000 to 165,000 members. Some of these activities, such as multicultural mixers, diversity councils or summits, and mentoring, are versatile tools that can be useful for many associations in a variety of circumstances. Other activities highlighted in these case studies are designed for more specific purposes. Still other activities are not noted in these case studies at all—yet. That’s where you come in.

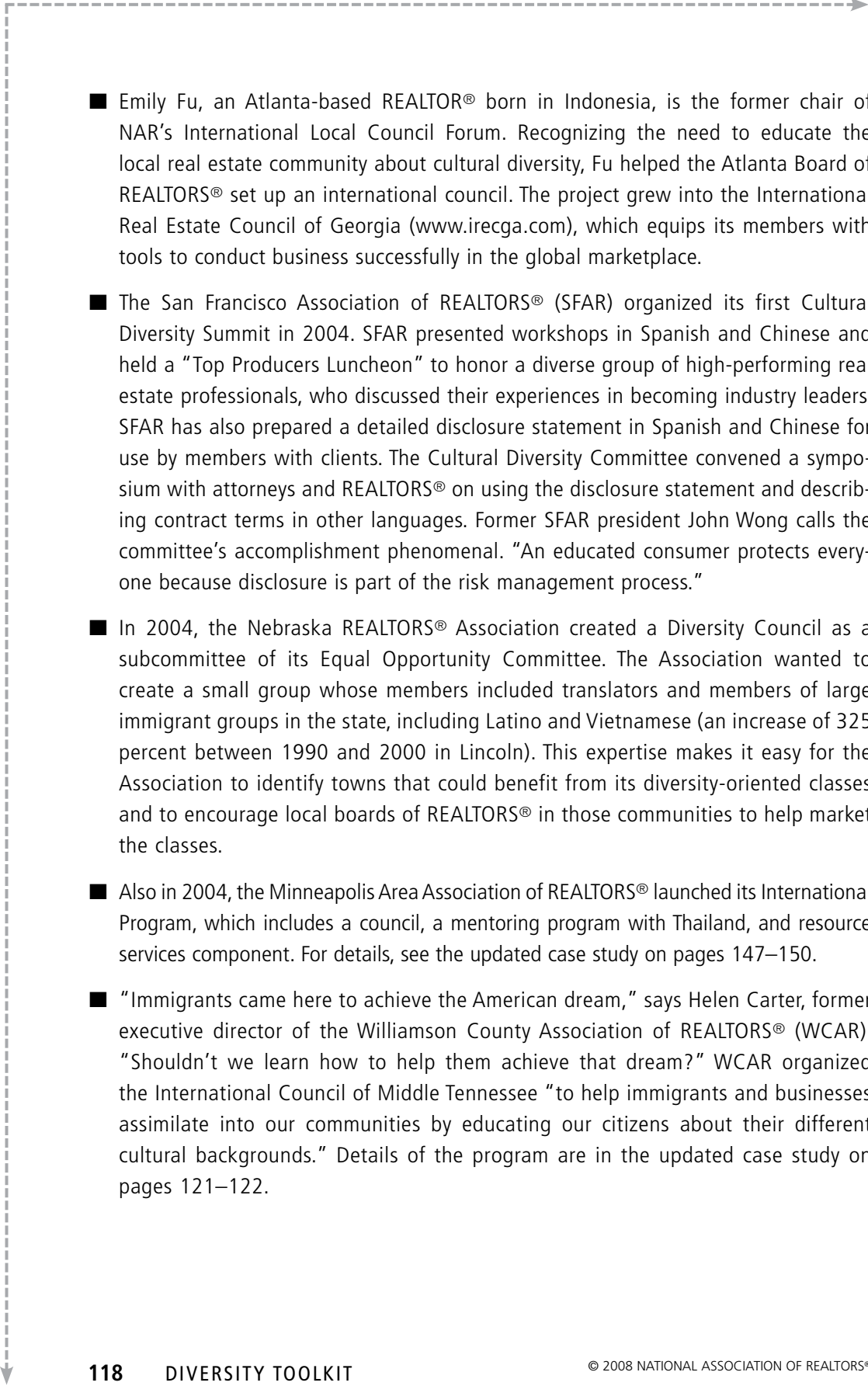
**Multicultural Mixers: Affordable for All.** One of the most affordable activities for advancing diversity and for associations of any size is a multicultural mixer.

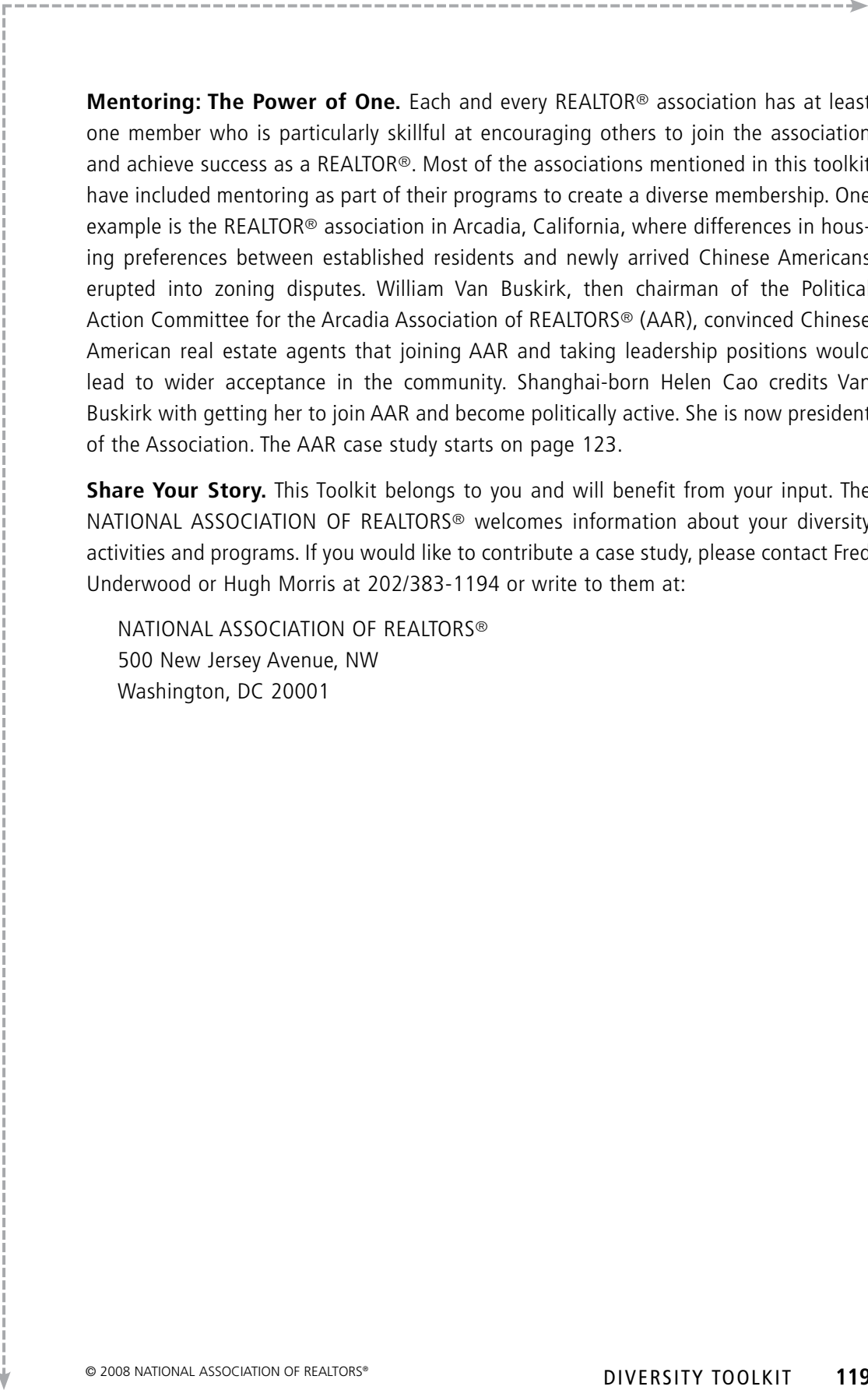
“Mixers are a good way to break the ice and start working together,” says Brian Paul, director of member and community relations at the Southland Regional Association of REALTORS® (SRAR). In SRAR’s experience, mixers also help to maintain good relationships. The Association’s Equal Opportunity and Diversity Committee sponsored its 13th mixer in September 2004.

Each SRAR mixer draws 600-800 REALTORS® and members of Southland’s diverse community at a cost to the Association of about \$500. SRAR schedules a mixer every September; since 9-11, the mixer has had a theme of community unity, and civic leaders have joined SRAR and its guests in recognizing firefighters. The mixer takes place in the Association’s parking lot. SRAR provides tables at no charge to affiliate members, who decorate the tables and provide food. Banks, title companies, and other local establishments make contributions. A band from a minority culture plays, often at no charge. SRAR holds a contest in which attendees rate the quality of the food and presentation at each table. SRAR then awards a variety of prizes.

A multicultural mixer is only one aspect of SRAR’s diversity program, which is described in the Association’s case study on pages 151–153. For more details, contact Brian Paul at 818/786-2110 or [brianp@srar.com](mailto:brianp@srar.com).

**Diversity Councils and Summits: Wide-Ranging Benefits.** Middle Tennessee is home to the largest gathering of Kurdish nationals outside western Asia. Franklin County, Ohio, has many residents from Somalia. REALTOR® associations across the country are discovering that potential homeowners come from unexpected places and are organizing international diversity councils and summits. For example:

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- Emily Fu, an Atlanta-based REALTOR® born in Indonesia, is the former chair of NAR's International Local Council Forum. Recognizing the need to educate the local real estate community about cultural diversity, Fu helped the Atlanta Board of REALTORS® set up an international council. The project grew into the International Real Estate Council of Georgia ([www.irecga.com](http://www.irecga.com)), which equips its members with tools to conduct business successfully in the global marketplace.
  - The San Francisco Association of REALTORS® (SFAR) organized its first Cultural Diversity Summit in 2004. SFAR presented workshops in Spanish and Chinese and held a "Top Producers Luncheon" to honor a diverse group of high-performing real estate professionals, who discussed their experiences in becoming industry leaders. SFAR has also prepared a detailed disclosure statement in Spanish and Chinese for use by members with clients. The Cultural Diversity Committee convened a symposium with attorneys and REALTORS® on using the disclosure statement and describing contract terms in other languages. Former SFAR president John Wong calls the committee's accomplishment phenomenal. "An educated consumer protects everyone because disclosure is part of the risk management process."
  - In 2004, the Nebraska REALTORS® Association created a Diversity Council as a subcommittee of its Equal Opportunity Committee. The Association wanted to create a small group whose members included translators and members of large immigrant groups in the state, including Latino and Vietnamese (an increase of 325 percent between 1990 and 2000 in Lincoln). This expertise makes it easy for the Association to identify towns that could benefit from its diversity-oriented classes and to encourage local boards of REALTORS® in those communities to help market the classes.
  - Also in 2004, the Minneapolis Area Association of REALTORS® launched its International Program, which includes a council, a mentoring program with Thailand, and resource services component. For details, see the updated case study on pages 147–150.
  - "Immigrants came here to achieve the American dream," says Helen Carter, former executive director of the Williamson County Association of REALTORS® (WCAR). "Shouldn't we learn how to help them achieve that dream?" WCAR organized the International Council of Middle Tennessee "to help immigrants and businesses assimilate into our communities by educating our citizens about their different cultural backgrounds." Details of the program are in the updated case study on pages 121–122.



**Mentoring: The Power of One.** Each and every REALTOR® association has at least one member who is particularly skillful at encouraging others to join the association and achieve success as a REALTOR®. Most of the associations mentioned in this toolkit have included mentoring as part of their programs to create a diverse membership. One example is the REALTOR® association in Arcadia, California, where differences in housing preferences between established residents and newly arrived Chinese Americans erupted into zoning disputes. William Van Buskirk, then chairman of the Political Action Committee for the Arcadia Association of REALTORS® (AAR), convinced Chinese American real estate agents that joining AAR and taking leadership positions would lead to wider acceptance in the community. Shanghai-born Helen Cao credits Van Buskirk with getting her to join AAR and become politically active. She is now president of the Association. The AAR case study starts on page 123.

**Share Your Story.** This Toolkit belongs to you and will benefit from your input. The NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® welcomes information about your diversity activities and programs. If you would like to contribute a case study, please contact Fred Underwood or Hugh Morris at 202/383-1194 or write to them at:

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