



Global Switchboard Project Opening May 2014 to Offer Office and Meeting Space for Individuals and Organizations with International Focus, Encouraging Global Engagement and Awareness

PITTSBURGH, Pa., March 18, 2014 - A shared building space called The Global Switchboard will open in May 2014 in Pittsburgh's Lawrenceville neighborhood as a way to bring together the region's internationally-focused individuals and organizations by providing office and event facilities to encourage collaboration and potential partnerships.

"This is a community-oriented shared space that we envision will serve as Pittsburgh's home for global engagement, a way to bring new resources to the city, and a space to cultivate new and innovative global ideas," said Brandon Blache-Cohen, executive director of Amizade Global Service-Learning, which has signed the lease on the property and is powering the project.

The Global Switchboard will occupy a 4,200-square-foot building located at 3406 Ligonier St. on 34th St. near Doughboy Square, Blache-Cohen said. The facility will serve as headquarters for Amizade and Global Solutions Pittsburgh, another international non-profit anchoring the project. Project manager for The Global Switchboard will be Nathan Darity of Amizade.

"There are dozens of organizations in the Pittsburgh area working on global and local connections every day," Darity said. "It is the goal of The Global Switchboard to bring these groups together so that we can work more collaboratively to enhance the work that we are all doing and to ensure that the local community benefits as well."

Other organizations will be invited to occupy parts of the space and become paying members. Like other co-working spaces in the Pittsburgh area, the member organizations will have round-the-clock access to one or more desks for staff members, meeting space, a classroom, high-speed internet, high-definition video conferencing services, and a kitchen.

The Global Switchboard will be different than most other co-working spaces because it will comprise globally-focused organizations and individuals that are committed to one or more of the following:

- Socially responsible international development
- Global education in Pittsburgh and abroad
- Community empowerment

Other organizations in the process of becoming members of The Global Switchboard are

GlobalPittsburgh, the Pittsburgh Hispanic Development Corp., Classrooms Without Borders, Cameroon Football Development Program, and ChildLight US.

In addition, organizations that have expressed interest in possible membership or other involvement in The Global Switchboard include Rukmini Foundation, Ujamaa Collective, and Building New Hope.

The Global Switchboard aims to improve each member's impact on the world by offering much more than a shared workspace. For this reason, members are expected to participate in the 3-tiered program component of The Global Switchboard, which include member workshops, spotlight events focusing on global engagement projects and leaders in the Pittsburgh area, and professional development.

The Global Switchboard has received support from Pittsburgh District 7 Councilwoman Deb Gross, as well as community development organizations Lawrenceville United and Lawrenceville Corp.

"I am incredibly excited to welcome The Global Switchboard to Lawrenceville and Pittsburgh City Council District 7," Gross said. "The Global Switchboard is a perfect example of the new and exciting ways in which our city is attracting innovative ideas and a 21st century global perspective. We are lucky to have them in District 7, and I can't wait to see what they do in our neighborhoods and city."

Lauren Byrne, Executive Director of Lawrenceville United, said "We are excited to welcome The Global Switchboard to Lawrenceville. Lawrenceville is becoming home to many innovative individuals, organizations, and companies. As a community, Lawrenceville embraces and celebrates innovation, collaboration, and community. This physical space exemplifies those values that continue to shape our plans and our vision for the community. We look forward to working with members of The Global Switchboard and to becoming more engaged in universal issues while also engaging more Lawrenceville residents and organizations in these issues."

Maya Henry, Director of Special Initiatives at the Lawrenceville Corp., said "As the local community development corporation (CDC) in Lawrenceville, the Lawrenceville Corp. is excited to help The Global Switchboard shape neighborhood connections, particularly within the local business community. The Global Switchboard reflects the creative and authentic businesses and resources that have grown out of Lawrenceville's rebirth."

Membership Details

All memberships begin on or after May 1st, 2014, The Global Switchboard launch date.

Early-signing Discounted Rate - Sublease signed before April 1st

- \$150/month for first 6 months*
- 12-month membership with optional opt out after 6 months

- \$200/month after first 6 months**

Standard Member - Sublease signed any time after April 1st

- \$200/month
- 12-month membership required
- *A limited number of membership rate discounts are available and can be discussed after application is received.

Applications will be received and reviewed on a rolling basis. Once an application is submitted, it will be reviewed by the Membership Committee. If recommended by the Committee, applicants will be invited to an interview to discuss final details of the lease agreement.

Biographical information for Nathan Darity, Project Manager for The Global Switchboard

Darity was raised in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania and moved to Pittsburgh in 2001 to complete his undergraduate education at the University of Pittsburgh. In 2008, he finished a dual masters program in public health and international development at the University of Pittsburgh. A year later he relocated to Santarém, Brazil to work as the local Amizade Site Director. In 2012, Darity moved back to Pittsburgh and became an Amizade Project Director, responsible for new program ideas, oversight of foreign faculty-led programming, and development of health-related multinational collaborations and exchanges. He maintains a reduced role in Santarém as the current Brazil Site Coordinator.

The Global Switchboard has launched a crowdfunding campaign at www.wedid.it with the goal of raising \$10,000 in additional funds for building out the new space. Supporters of the concept are invited to invest at <http://wedid.it/campaigns/1203-building-the-global-switchboard>.

For additional information, contact Nathan Darity at 412-586-4986 or nathan@amizade.org, or go to www.theglobalswitchboard.org.

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