

# AMERICAN SWISS FOUNDATION HOSTS SUMMER COCKTAIL AND PROGRAM ON THE FUTURE OF BIOSECURITY AT GINKGO BIOWORKS

BOSTON, MA, U.S.A., July 22, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The American Swiss Foundation (ASF) hosted “The Future of Biosecurity” at Ginkgo Bioworks’ new headquarters featuring key Swiss and American business and diplomatic leaders in Boston on Wednesday, July 17.

The keynote featured a fireside chat between ASF Board Member, Matthew McKnight (YL 2014), General Manager, Biosecurity, Ginkgo Bioworks and ASF Board Member, Dr. Srishti Gupta Narasimhan, Member of the ASF Nominating and Executive Committees.

Steven G. Hoch (YL 1990), ASF Chair Emeritus, welcomed guests to the event: “The U.S. and Switzerland share a longstanding and dynamic partnership rooted in mutual respect, shared values, and a commitment to global prosperity and safety.

Together we continue to build a future based on trust and common goals, strengthening the bonds that unite us.

One of the most prominent shared goals is each country’s drive to innovate in all spaces, but specifically in biotech. Boston and Basel share rich histories in the life sciences and are pillars of



ASF Summer Cocktail, Ginkgo Bioworks



ASF Board Members Matt McKnight and Dr. Srishti Gupta Narasimhan

scientific innovation.”

Massachusetts Secretary of Labor and Workforce Development Lauren Jones participated in the American Swiss Foundation’s Young Leaders Program in 2017. As part of opening remarks, Secretary Jones noted Massachusetts’ continued investment in registered apprenticeship as a workforce solution, a key element of the Swiss education and workforce system. “Under Governor Healey’s leadership, Massachusetts continues to expand Registered Apprenticeship to unlock opportunities for untapped talent and meet employer needs across a range of industries from the life sciences and health care to education to advanced manufacturing, and more. We have an opportunity to learn from the Swiss apprenticeship model to build skilled talent in Massachusetts.”



ASF Chair Emeritus Steven G. Hoch, The Honorable Lauren Jones, and ASF Stratton Committee Co-Chair Mike Lake

Guests were then treated to virtual appearances from U.S. Representatives Jim McGovern (2nd District of MA and Co-Chair of the Friends of Switzerland Caucus in Congress) and Jake Auchincloss (4th District of MA). Representative Jim McGovern thanked the ASF for their work dedicated to cultivating the deep friendship between the U.S. and Switzerland that “reaches back centuries and shares the democratic values of individual liberty, rule of law, and free enterprise”. As Co-Chair of the Friends of Switzerland Caucus in Congress he shared that the Caucus “works to encourage and strengthen Swiss-American relations by creating more opportunities for political dialogue between both countries.”

Representative Jake Auchincloss (4th District of MA) delivered a video message to the guests on the importance of biosecurity. He first thanked keynote speakers and ASF Board Members Matt McKnight (General Manager, Biosecurity for Ginkgo Bioworks) and Dr. Srishti Gupta Narasimhan for “bringing the U.S.-Swiss communities together” and gave special thank you to Secretary Lauren Jones for “her leadership on bringing Swiss style apprenticeship to Massachusetts”. Representative Auchincloss noted the importance of investing in biosecurity: “Investment into a vibrant life sciences ecosystem and sound policy making to support the U.S. bioeconomy will be critical to delivering innovation to health, food, energy, materials, and more. Massachusetts biomedical success is at the forefront of this drive, and it’s driven by our world-leading talent and innovation. We solve the world’s hardest problems in biology.”

During the keynote fireside chat, Matthew McKnight (YL 2014) and Dr. Srishti Gupta Narasimhan discussed the future of biosecurity. McKnight noted, "As biotechnology grows and enables innovation and sustainability across industries, we must acknowledge that engineering biology comes with the risk of both malicious and inadvertent misuse. It's our responsibility to build biosecurity in tandem with the bioeconomy. True biosecurity demands proactivity in ways that we have not built to date. And that means finding ways to detect and characterize biothreats early, long before they ever present in clinical settings."

This event coincided with the ASF's launch of the Alumni Committee. Co-Chairs of the Alumni Committee, Alexander Pieper (YL 2023) and Brig. Gen. (PA, Ret.) Andy Hutchinson (2001) noted: "Activating and nurturing the ASF alumni network through events like this will foster connections, collaboration, and professional development opportunities among alumni across the United States and Switzerland."

Mike Lake (YL 2013), ASF Stratton Prize Committee Co-Chair and Boston Chapter Co-Lead, closed out the program noting the importance of the Foundation's focus on the Boston area and asked attendees to "carry forward the spirit of collaboration and friendship that is the hallmark of the ASF's work," encouraging all to "continue to build bridges between the U.S. and Switzerland by joining the ASF and Boston Chapter, so we can all benefit from the innovative practices each country values."

The event was attended by distinguished members of both the Swiss and American communities, including business leaders, elected officials, and members of the diplomatic corps. The ASF thanks Ginkgo Bioworks for their partnership on this event.

### About the American Swiss Foundation

Founded in 1945 in response to World War II, the Foundation's mission is to connect and engage Swiss and American leaders. Towards the end of the 20th century, two former U.S. Ambassadors to Switzerland, Shelby Cullom Davis and Faith Whittlesey, ushered in a new era for the small organization. They ultimately transformed the Foundation from an organization that was primarily social to one that focused on nurturing and investing in the next generation of leaders in both countries.

In 1975, Ambassador Davis assumed an active leadership role with the Foundation. He served as chairman and president until 1989, and as honorary chairman until his passing in 1994. In 1989, Ambassador Whittlesey became chairman and president of the Foundation and launched the organization's flagship program, the Young Leaders Conference.

Today, alumni of the conference number more than 1,450 leaders who shape the futures of the two countries, including members of U.S. Congress and Swiss parliamentarians, entrepreneurs and business executives, media professionals, and public policy experts. The American Swiss Foundation's mission is to connect and engage Swiss and American leaders through inspirational

programs to strengthen the shared values of liberty, the rule of law, and free enterprise.

Vanessa Beary, Executive Director

American Swiss Foundation

+1 212-754-0130

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