

Fact sheet

1. Goal

swiss roots will take place in 2006 with the goal of bringing together people in Switzerland and the US.

In particular, **swiss roots** wants to

- motivate Americans and Americans of Swiss heritage to discover their roots and to get to know Switzerland and their Swiss relatives.
- motivate Americans with an affinity for Switzerland to learn more about the country and to make contact with Swiss citizens.
- motivate Swiss to seek out contact with their American relatives.
- motivate Swiss to communicate with Americans who share the same interests.

swiss roots also wants to

- offer a platform for an exchange between Switzerland and the US in areas such as politics, economics, culture, education, research and tourism.
- foster relations between the US and Switzerland.
- reinforce the image of Switzerland as an innovative, diverse and quality-conscious country.
- build up a close network of Swiss-American relationships.

2. Target groups

US

- Over one million Americans of Swiss heritage
- Swiss citizens who live in the US
- Americans with a connection to Switzerland
- Americans who live in the 5,000 American cities and towns with Swiss names
- Public figures in the US
- American companies with subsidiaries in Switzerland
- Students in primary and secondary schools and college students

Switzerland

- Swiss who have relatives in the US
- Swiss who travel to the US for business or personal reasons
- Swiss with an interest in American culture, music, sports, lifestyle, etc.
- Swiss companies with subsidiaries in the US

3. Implementation

swiss roots consists of four pillars:

- The **swiss roots website**. This is the communication platform and offers, first of all, information about Switzerland and **swiss roots**, while simultaneously allowing initial inquiries in the search for Swiss roots. In addition, transatlantic friendships can be formed over the internet and information can be exchanged with the help of various interactive tools. The **swiss roots** website will go online in March 2006. Individual sections will also be available in German and in French.
- The **swiss roots network in the U.S.**. This includes all official Swiss representations, as well as Swiss associations such as Swiss clubs, the Swiss American Historical Society, the Swiss Center for North America and many others. The USA network is the key to the organization of the **swiss roots** program that will be implemented throughout the country in 2006 with various events.

- The **swiss roots network in Switzerland**. This will include the Swiss cities and communities, the regional tourism offices, various partner organizations, such as the ASO (Organization of Swiss Abroad), the "Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Familienforschung", the "Schweizerische Gemeindeverband", and many others. The Swiss network is the key to the search for Swiss roots and will facilitate dialogue between people in the two countries.
- Events in the US. Various **swiss roots** events will take place in regions with the largest concentrations of Americans with Swiss heritage. Three large events, to be held in 2006, form the framework of the Events Program:
 - A roadshow with a Swiss postal bus from Los Angeles to New York from April to September 2006
 - The "Small Number – Big Impact" show on Swiss emigration to the US at the Ellis Island Immigration Museum in New York from July 29 to October 31, 2006
 - A cultural program presented by Pro Helvetia with highlights in music, film, architecture and visual arts in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco and other cities

4. Partners und Sponsors

swiss roots is organized by the official Swiss representations in the US under the lead of the Consulate General in New York. The project is supported by Presence Switzerland, Pro Helvetia and Switzerland Tourism, as well as by a number of other organizations (e.g., the Swiss-American Chamber of Commerce, the Organization of the Swiss Abroad, the "Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Familienforschung", the "Schweizerische Gemeindeverband", Swiss Ping Pong, etc.).

Presence Switzerland, Pro Helvetia and Switzerland Tourism have contributed around USD 1 million to **swiss roots'** budget:

Presence Switzerland: USD 545,000

Pro Helvetia: USD 320,000 for the **swiss roots** culture program

Switzerland Tourism: USD 210,000 plus various in-kind contributions and human resources

Negotiations are being conducted with program sponsors from private industry, with Swiss International Air Lines already having agreed to provide support. Various other companies will support individual events with smaller amounts.

5. Honorary Board

swiss roots has an Honorary Board that includes public figures who have committed themselves to the strengthening of the transatlantic relationship between the US and Switzerland. These public figures will appear at **swiss roots** events and/or lend their names to the project.

The Honorary Board is composed of the following public figures :

American side:

- David Aebischer, goalie, Colorado Avalanche
- Tammy Baldwin, member, House of Representatives (D-WI)
- François Bitz, arts patron, Pittsburgh
- Marc Forster, director, Los Angeles
- Linda Geiser, actress, New York
- Robert A. Lutz, vice president, General Motors
- Claude Nicollier, astronaut with NASA, Houston
- Ben Roethlisberger, quarterback, Pittsburgh Steelers
- Daniel Schnyder, composer, New York
- Tom Bates, Mayor of Berkeley, California
- J. Richard Fredericks, former U.S. Ambassador to Switzerland, California
- Marthe Keller, Actress, New York

- John Lie, Dean International & Area Studies, University of California, Berkeley
- Dr. Ruth Westheimer, Therapist, New York
- Adrian Benepe, Park & Recreation Commissioner, City of New York
- Rudolf Millisits, Executive Vice President of Hottinger Capital Corporation, New York
- Xavier Koller, Film Director, Los Angeles
- Madeleine M. Kunin, former U.S. Ambassador to Switzerland, Vermont
- Arthur Cohn, Film Producer, Los Angeles

Swiss side:

- Micheline Calmy-Rey, Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA)
- Peter Briner, State Councilor, President of the Swiss-American Parliamentary Association, Schaffhausen
- Brigitta M. Gadiant, National Councilor, Vice President of the Swiss-American Parliamentary Association, Chur
- Barbara Haering, National Councilor, Vice President of the Swiss-American Parliamentary Association, Zurich
- Thérèse Meyer-Kaelin, National Councilor, 2005 [Council] President, Estavayer-le-Lac
- Johannes Randegger, National Councilor, Vice President of the Swiss-American Parliamentary Association, Basel
- Urs Ph. Roth, CEO, Swiss Bankers Association, Basel
- Ambassador Pamela Pitzer Willeford, U.S. Ambassador to Switzerland, Bern
- Jörg Abderhalden, Swiss Alpine Wrestling Champion, Nesslau
- Sue Mathys, Singer / Actress, Zurich

6. Organization

The **swiss roots** project team is part of the Swiss Consulate General in New York, which is taking the lead in implementing the project. A governing committee of supporters and partners is laying down strategic guidelines. The Switzerland **swiss roots** network is being handled by a program coordinator in Bern.

Contacts:

- Daniel Hunn, head of the project team, Swiss Consulate General in New York,
E-mail: SWISSROOTS@nyc.rep.admin.ch, Tel: 212 599 5700, ext. 1022
- Project coordinator in Switzerland: Christian Baechler,
e-mail: christian.baechler@eda.admin.ch, phone: ++ 41 31 325 5928

