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Dear Friends,

Although you won't know it by the weather, the summer is behind us. We look back on the surprising new friendships we made over the past few months and the community initiatives that made the season special and us especially optimistic about Bulgaria's future.

Speaking of surprises, two graduates of our journalism fellowship program write about finding community in unusual places.

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A Bulgarian-American collaboration



For Sarah Harralson, the Purpose of Music is Healing

Sarah Harralson knows about being a good community member. Yet, she never expected to be at a community building festival in Bulgaria, much less so to be headlining at one.

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A Bulgarian's Successful Bid for Country Music Fame

Barney Esville is not your typical country musician. He comes from Bulgaria, and by day he takes care of the community affairs of the northern Bulgarian city of Veliko Tarnovo.

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Beyond words



This photo from this summer's lineup of community festivals is a powerful reminder of how important bridge-building is. Bridges connect riverbanks, people, and entire communities — in addition to being fun places to play (with safety features included)!

The Collective Foundation's Rivers of the City format helps to bring communities together by restoring derelict or little-used places and transforming them into welcoming spaces for the community to meet. In partnership with local organizations, businesses, and individuals, Rivers of the City festivals took place in Stara Zagora, Veliko Tarnovo, Gabrovo, and Sofia this year.

This photo is from the Rivers of Sofia 2023 festival. For more community highlights from the summer, [visit The Collective's Facebook page](#).

On the power of community



A Trip to Greece Offers a Surprising Lesson on Community

In the small Greek village of Variko, Mihail Ivanov found long-lost family members and a connection to the community of humankind.

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Kindness & Support Are What Holds Communities Together

Three girls from three small Bulgarian towns: Velina Milanova reflects on finding friendship & community among fellow Bulgarians abroad.

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Sending warm regards,

Your friends at the America for Bulgaria Foundation

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