



# CVIP Spring 2016 Newsletter

**COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS FOR INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS**

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## International Student Lending Center

The Lending Center will be staying open after all. With everyone's help, we are looking forward to a successful, thriving business once again.

This year's supplies have been greatly depleted. We need to restock. If you are planning to take houseware items to a thrift store, please remember that you can



claim your donation to the Lending Center on your income tax return (if you itemize).

When students return items, we loan them out again, and we do not sell the items. Consequently, more than one family can benefit from your donation.

Here are some of the items we especially need: Kitchen items: pots and pans, bakeware, plates, bowls, plastic containers, silverware. Bathroom: towels, bath mats, etc. Bedroom: sheets, blankets, comfort-

ers, bed pillows. Living room: floor/table

lamps, throws, throw pillows. \*Note that we do not take furniture or electrical items, except for lamps.

Newly arrived students are brought to the Center by people from their department. It is great to have such a positive reputation of being a welcoming early stop on campus. We at CVIP are delighted to be able to keep the Lending Center open. Students who are finishing their degrees come to the Lending Center to return items. They know it was helpful to them when they first arrived and want to pass it on.

The Lending Center is located at 77 Middlevale Rd., East Lansing, also known as 1434 F Spartan Village. To learn how to make donations, please contact the CVIP office at 353-1735 or [cvip.isp.msu.edu](http://cvip.isp.msu.edu). It is always a good idea to contact the Center ahead for an appointment to drop off donations. The new co-chairs are **Anna Kortemeyer**, 337-2117 and **Stacey Bieler**, 332-0464.

### CVIP Newsletter Editors:

Stacey Bieler  
Patrice Klein  
Pat Barrett  
Katy Bahrami

We welcome your submissions of articles and other features by email. Please send them to [cvip@msu.edu](mailto:cvip@msu.edu).

*You are cordially invited to the*  
**CVIP Annual Meeting  
and Potluck Salad Luncheon**

**Wednesday, May 11**  
at the University Lutheran Church  
1020 S Harrison Rd, East Lansing, MI

**Reception 11:30am;  
Luncheon 12:00; Program to Follow**

Bring a salad to share. Bread, beverage and table service will be provided.

## President's Corner



*Stacey Bieler, CVIP President*

As I was thinking about writing my last column as President, I turned to my personal history with CVIP – not a strange idea since I'm a historian!

When we moved to East Lansing in 1989 for my husband to start teaching at MSU, we went to the New Faculty Welcome Lunch. Afterwards we wandered through displays with people introducing us to various aspects of life at MSU. I was thrilled to talk with someone at the CVIP table. I was hoping to find an outreach to international students because I had enjoyed this activity in California.

Since I was going to start graduate school, I looked for a position that fit my available time. I joined **Margaret Gunn** to work on the CVIP Newsletter. I appreciated her warm friendliness.

After grad school I started writing a book on the history of Chinese students in United States, so I stayed with the Newsletter. In Spring of 1995 I was to become the President of CVIP, but our adopted daughter showed up so I received a celebratory baby shower from the board and friendly requests to “come back when you are ready.”

When our daughter went to kindergarten, I came back to CVIP. But I was balancing finishing a book and raising a lively child. I worked on the Newsletter and joined the Global Festival team as publicity chair under **Lois Park**'s wonderful leadership.

After the book was published in 2003, I was President for one year (2004-05) and I directed the Global Festival in Fall 2005. The next year, my husband had a sabbatical in Germany.

In 2007, I returned to the Newsletter that was in the capable hands of **Pat Barrett**. We have worked as a team since then. I am thankful for the skills that **Pat Klein** and **Katy Bahrami** have recently brought to the team.

I also began as a driver and host for Home Visits. It is a wonderful excuse to clean your house twice a year and welcome students who may never make it into another American home.

In 2014 I became President again. I am thankful to the CVIP board for all of their hard work these past two years. My new adventure will begin soon – being co-chair of the Lending Center.

I've appreciated the focus, friendships and flexibility of CVIP through the years.

Do you have some time to get more involved in this great group at YOUR stage of life?

I invite you to come to CVIP's Annual Meeting and Luncheon and celebrate another year of friendship and service.

## International Spouse Connection

The International Spouse Connection (ISC) meets weekly to provide activities and support for partners accompanying international students and visiting scholars during their time at Michigan State University. This semester, we enjoyed presentations by our members about their countries, including Ukraine, Nepal and Colombia. We took field trips to the MSU Recycling Center and the MSU Museum and made crafts for Valentine's Day and Easter.

We have provided two new types of service to the East Lansing community.

Our group has been concerned about the recent negative publicity regarding Islam, and the ignorance that many people have about the Muslim religion. In January, we held a special meeting at University Lutheran Church inviting members of CVIP and the community to attend. **Taksin Sardar**, a former President of the Islamic Council of Greater Lansing and member of the advisory council for the Michigan Muslim Community Council, gave a lecture on the basic beliefs and practices of Islam, highlighting the similarities between Islam, Judaism and Christianity. Then two ISC members, **Desi Fitri Diana** and **Annisa Meutia Ratri**, focused on the role of women in Islam, and how that role varies in different parts of the world.



In March, 14 ISC members worked together to construct four fleece blankets for children at Haven House, a short-term shelter for homeless families in East Lansing. As we made the

blankets, we discussed the American custom of volunteer work to support organizations such as Haven House. We hope to do similar projects in the future to provide support for people in need in our local community. For more information about the ISC, contact **Cheryl Highstreet** at 775-4837 or [highstreets2@yahoo.com](mailto:highstreets2@yahoo.com).

## HOME VISITS

Forty-five students and scholars from VETP and the A+ English Language School were greeted by friendly hosts on the morning of April 19 as they visited local homes.

The drivers pick up their assigned students and take them to participating homes. Drivers included **Tom Bartly**, **Stacey Bieler**, **Fred Graham**, **Mary Hennessy**, **Beth Lawrence**, **Lois Park**, **Bob Tobey** and **Barb Tanaka**.

Thank you to the gracious hosts for this Spring visit: **Stacey Bieler**, **Mary Estes**, **Alice Hamachek**, **Alice Hill**, **Ann House**, **Susan** and **Richard Levitt**, and **Joan and Dick Witter**.



Students enjoy a short tour of a home and eating a light snack. After introducing themselves, the hosts usually share some information about their home as well as their background and interests. If it is nice weather, some take a walking tour of the neighborhood.

Home Visits are held twice a year. If you would like to participate as a driver or a host this coming Fall, please contact **Jim Steadman**, 248-568-7717 or [jas12745@aol.com](mailto:jas12745@aol.com).

## I SPEAK

I SPEAK has a long-standing friendship with members of the International Interest Group (IIG) of the MSU Community Club. This group of about 25 women meets once each month to celebrate their common passion for learning about cultures around the world. Since 2008, when the late Lillian Kumata was still with the group, I SPEAK has provided nearly 50 presentations to this group.



The group has also enjoyed some special demonstrations. This past December, **Dr. Antionette Tessmer** shared the culture of her home country, Belgium. After learning about the advance preparation of the batter for Belgian waffles, the members assisted Antoinette in making and eating them. To everyone's surprise, they learned that in Belgium, the waffles are thin, irregular in shape, and served like cookies, without syrup or toppings. The typical Belgian kitchen has a waffle jar instead of a cookie jar, and the children look forward to their after-school waffle snack. Antoinette, a faculty member in MSU's finance department, lives with her husband (also an MSU professor) in Okemos. She takes MSU students to Belgium each summer as part of the Study Abroad Program.

Most recently, **Dr. Isaac Kalumbu**, director at MSU for the MasterCard Foundation Scholarship Program, spoke to the IIG about how this program makes it possible for

disadvantaged students from African countries to study at MSU, then return to their homelands as potential future leaders.

Thank you to **Mary Ann Dunn** of IIG and her leadership team for nurturing this long-term friendship with I SPEAK.

Would you like to participate with I SPEAK?

\* Consider inviting an international speaker to make a presentation to your interest group.

\* Volunteer as a driver and meet an international student or scholar in the process. We need community volunteers to provide transportation for international speakers from campus to the locations of their assignments in the greater Lansing area (no further than 25 miles from MSU).

Please contact **Carol Towl** at 882-4391 or [ispeak.cvipmsu@gmail.com](mailto:ispeak.cvipmsu@gmail.com) if you'd like to share in the enrichment MSU's international students and scholars bring to our community!

## Volunteer Opportunities

Looking for a new volunteer opportunity? Consider these options with CVIP:

**International Friendship Program:** Volunteer to share friendship with an international student (meet once a month, at your convenience).

**International Student Lending Center:** Help staff the Lending Center once or twice a month.

**Volunteer English Tutoring Program:** Become a conversation partner and help an international student improve his/her ability to use spoken English.

**I SPEAK:** Drivers are needed to take international student speakers to presentations off campus and return them to campus.

For more information and to submit a volunteer application, go to [cvip.isp.msu.edu](http://cvip.isp.msu.edu), or call the CVIP office (weekday mornings, 353-1735).

## Global Festival World Gift Shop

The World Gift Shop was held in the Lake Huron room of the MSU Union on November 22. The Gift Shop raised about \$4,500 to benefit the Lillian Kumata Scholarship Fund, which offers scholarships to spouses of MSU international students.

The Gift Shop, an annual event for CVIP, represents considerable work and planning by a large number of people, including **Wendy and Bernard Pope**, **Dottie Schmidt**, **Joy Walter** of OISS and **Cathy Fitzpatrick** of the MSU Union. Particular thanks are due to the many CVIP volunteers who participated in pricing, packing and selling the donated items. **Gengen Chan** and **Mona Brandou** have helped in these activities for many years and this time were joined by **Ou Ni**, **Tino Awokuse** and **Teruko Miyazaki**.

As usual, **Carlos Fuentes** and his volunteers were invaluable in carefully and efficiently transporting items to and from the MSU Union.

Articles for sale included a fascinating mix of items from all parts of the world: art works, fabrics, clothing, ornaments and jewelry. Many things were purchased as gifts and as home decorations. Some items were also useful, such as a lovely brass samovar to make cups of tea!

If you would like to donate international items to the World Gift Shop to be sold at the Global Festival on November 13, 2016, please contact **Dottie Schmidt** at 351-2812. Cash donations are also welcome. For more information, please contact **Wendy Pope** at 381-9039.



## Pam Sievers Receives Homer Higbee Award

**Pam Sievers** received the Homer Higbee International Education Award at the recent International Studies and Programs awards ceremony. This award is given each year to an outstanding CVIP volunteer.

Pam joined CVIP in 2010 as a volunteer with the International Friendship Program, including chairing this committee for two years. She served as Vice-President and then President of CVIP from 2012-2014. This past year, she has been the chair of the Leadership Committee.

During her two years as President, Pam helped CVIP become more organized and professional. She helped us to set goals and assign accountability in our efforts to meet them. One of her signal accomplishments was working with Past President David Horner to achieve 501(c)3 status with the IRS. Pam also helped to update the CVIP constitution and bylaws.

## International Friendship Program

Nearly 7,600 international students from more than 130 countries are currently attending Michigan State University. For most of them, this is the first time they have lived in the United States.

The International Friendship Program (IFP) provides these students with the opportunity to get to know members of the local community and learn about American culture and traditions. Hopefully, participating students will leave MSU and the United States with a better understanding of our country and its citizens, and often with new friendships that will last long into the future.

Community friends also benefit from these relationships. Volunteering with the International Friendship Program allows us to learn about the culture of the students' home countries, including their foods, customs, and lifestyles.

Volunteers serving as community friends often share examples of our American lifestyle by inviting the students to experience our holiday activities, such as enjoying a Thanksgiving dinner, decorating a Christmas tree or Easter eggs, or observing the Fourth of July fireworks. We may enjoy conversation at a coffee shop or share dinner in our homes, or attend concerts or sporting events. For a student from a large city elsewhere in the world, just observing a star-filled night sky or the Aurora Borealis for the first time can be a rewarding experience. The better we know and understand each other as fellow members of our global community, the better the future will be for all of us.

Does this opportunity of getting to know the world's future business, cultural and educational leaders sound interesting to you? If so, go to [www.cvip.isp.msu.edu/friendship](http://www.cvip.isp.msu.edu/friendship) for more information about the program and an on-line application. We are currently accepting applications for participation beginning with the fall semester.

If you have previously participated in the program and are ready to be matched with another student, there is no need to re-apply. Just send us an email at [cvip@msu.edu](mailto:cvip@msu.edu) or leave a telephone message at the CVIP office (353-1735). Please include any changes in your contact information, interests, and family status.



*Dean Steve Hanson & Barbara Sawyer-Koch*

## Glen L. Taggart Award Given to Barbara Sawyer-Koch

**Barb Sawyer-Koch** was recognized for her long years of kindness to international students at MSU when she received the Glen L. Taggart Award for Community Contributions recently. She has offered complimentary housing to over 15 graduate students since 1983, while forming many lifelong friendships across the world.

One of her nominators wrote, "Barbara has changed my family's lives in so many important ways, and influenced many international students' lives for the better."

In addition, Barb has generously created an endowment for international students to help with emergency and family needs.

## Volunteer English Tutoring

The Volunteer English Tutoring Program (VETP) helps international students, scholars and their adult family members practice their conversational English.

Through weekly classroom discussions or one-on-one Conversation Partners, VETP Tutors assist others with their pronunciation and answer questions about American culture. During this school year, over 1,100 people have attended VETP conversation classes. There are currently more than 60 Conversation Partners, who meet for an hour a week over coffee or lunch.

One visiting scholar told what VETP meant to her: “Your help is so important to us as when we just arrived here in last Sept. we have no friend, have difficulties with communication, we are also worried and anxious about our living here, but your instant and effective help helps us overcome the culture-shock and adopted the living and studying here in our first, the hardest period. Your work is so important, it shows how helpful MSU is and how American friendly is, please keep on with your work, it is so valuable for people like us from oversea.”

VETP Tutors say they receive as much from their meetings as their international conversation partners do. Julie, a VETP Tutor from Okemos, has traveled to Italy with her family and fallen in love with the country and culture. VETP doesn't get many applications from international students from Europe, but Irene, a visiting scholar from Italy, was matched with Julie. When Julie decided to open a small business specializing in Italian baked goods, Irene was the perfect person to help. Together they went over a cookbook of Italian cakes, and Irene pointed out the ones that her mom frequently makes.

Nicole, a recent MSU graduate, was traveling to China for an internship working at the Bifengxia Giant Panda Reserve in Ya'an, Sichuan Province. Her conversation partner from China wrote: “I helped Nicole with her Chinese, and she helped

me with American culture and living ways here. She is so friendly and helpful, she is a hardworking girl. We help each other and still keep in touch on We-chat.”

VETP Conversation Partners are always needed. You will be helping someone learn English, and you never know how they might help you! If you are interested, please fill out an application on the VETP website ([vetp.isp.msu.edu](http://vetp.isp.msu.edu)) or email [vetp@msu.edu](mailto:vetp@msu.edu).

## Erika Larson Wins Globe Award



**Erika Larson**, Chair of CVIP's Lending Center for the last 13 years, is a worthy recipient of one of the Office of International Students and Scholars' Globie Awards this spring.

Erika has made many valuable connections within the community and on campus. She goes to garage sales and church sales to collect items, and she has arranged to receive items from the students in College of Communication Arts and Sciences at the end of each school year.

Many international students have benefited from Erika's and her team's work to prepare household items for the Lending Center. More than 11,600 items were lent out from 2014-15.

## Lillian Kumata Scholarship Program

This Spring Semester two MSU married students were awarded scholarships that cover tuition costs up to \$2,500. The awardees are **Liang Wang** from China, who is working toward a Master's Degree in Biostatistics and Epidemiology, and **Shaimaa Elzeini** from Egypt, who is studying Game Design in the College of Communication Arts and Sciences and also working on a Master's Degree in the College of Education.

The Lillian Kumata Scholarship committee owes much gratitude to the CVIP volunteers who worked diligently at the CVIP World Gift Shop during the Global Festival. These key people helped raise funds for the scholarship program. Thank you to **Bernard and Wendy Pope** for their leadership and to their committee members for making this a special and successful event.



*Amick, Kristin and Lois Sollenberger*

In 1991, **Lois Sollenberger** joined Lillian Kumata as Gift Shop Co-chair. Lois is looking forward to helping again this year. She collects donations from MSU friends whom she and her husband Harold have educated about the importance of the World Gift Shop. Even their artistic daughter and granddaughter think of the

Global Festival as a holiday weekend in East Lansing and do not want to miss it. Several years ago Lois learned how to use eBay to sell expensive items that did not sell at the Gift Shop. She arranged the sale of a fur coat and fabulous amber necklace. CVIP is lucky to have such supportive volunteers as the Sollenbergers who delight in the World Gift Shop.

Donations for the World Gift Shop are gladly accepted and are tax-deductible! For more details, contact **Peggy Arbanas** at 669-1239 or [arbanasp@msu.edu](mailto:arbanasp@msu.edu), or **Dottie Schmidt** at 351-2812 or [dottieschmidt1854@gmail.com](mailto:dottieschmidt1854@gmail.com).

## A+ English Language School

The A+ English Language School had a busy winter semester. More than 130 students were registered in various classes, with over 35 countries represented and 22 different languages spoken. Students have been learning topics ranging from math, problem solving, and employability to cultural awareness and citizenship, all aimed at improving their English language proficiency.

Our curriculum includes making visits in the community as well as listening to guest speakers. Students visited the State Capitol Building and learned about the beautiful building, the Michigan legislature, and the history of our state. We have had speakers from Michigan Works! and the Refugee Center and are looking forward to State Representative Sam Singh's visit this spring.

A+ English Language School held its annual International Festival in March. Community members and fourth graders from Bennett Woods Elementary in Okemos learned about 20 different countries through presentations about places, climate, cuisine and games.