



# CVIP Spring 2013 Newsletter

**COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS FOR INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS**

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## **VOLUNTEER ENGLISH TUTORING PROGRAM**

The Volunteer English Tutoring Program is about more than just tutoring! Our “tutors” are conversation partners and discussion leaders, as well as guides to the culture of the United States. Our tutors come in all ages!



*Mary Hennessey, Director VETP*

For example, Bea Mangino retired from the MSU Music School in 1992. Since then she has helped countless numbers of MSU international students and scholars speak and write better English. Bea’s former students continue to stay in touch and still appreciate her help.

Five MSU undergraduates participated in VETP as part of service-learning this year. The students, all freshmen, are from various parts of Michigan. The students hoped that by working as tutors with VETP, their communication skills would improve and they would gain knowledge from the international students.

One freshman tutor reported that many of the international students mentioned that they are overwhelmed by the new environment. The tutor “put them at ease by talking about having the same feelings as a freshman at MSU.”

Another freshman wrote, “Volunteering with VETP has been a wonderful experience. Helping others has taught me a lot

also, and I believe that we have all mutually benefited.”

Volunteer tutors act as conversation and discussion leaders in small groups (“classes”) in the VETP Classroom (Room 307 in the Inter-national Center on MSU’s campus) or one-on-one at any public place that is mutually convenient for them. In general, tutors meet with their class for 60-90 minutes once a week.

Tutors do not need to work through a textbook or assign homework. The VETP Director can give ideas for topics to discuss at each class, or the class may have suggestions for what they’d like to discuss. In the process, the tutor will be modeling correct, naturally spoken English, and giving the student a chance to experience an authentic language exchange.

Tutors may also answer questions about idiomatic expressions, slang and references to popular culture or events (i.e. *tailgating*) that students are unfamiliar with. While doing this, tutors have found that they also learn a lot about other countries and cultures.

Would you like to help someone navigate American language and culture? If so, contact **Mary Hennessey** at [vetsp@msu.edu](mailto:vetsp@msu.edu).

### **CVIP Newsletter Editors:**

**Stacey Bieler  
Pat Barrett  
Dana Kanhai**

**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 Salad Luncheon**  
**Wednesday, May 8**  
 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



*Pam Sievers, CVIP President (on right in back row) with several international friends, who enjoyed a soup and salad dinner during MSU's spring break*

"I am really getting to like this [volunteer] job." I recently read this in a report written by one of our volunteers and I know exactly how he feels. A couple of weeks ago, I had to speak to a community group, and it was cold and rainy and I wanted to stay home and work on another project. But I love talking about CVIP and trying to help people see where and how they fit in the organization. I, too, really like this volunteer job.

There has probably been no one in the 52-year history of CVIP who really liked her volunteer job with CVIP more than Lillian Kumata. Lillian died on April 2, 2013, two weeks shy of her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. She was actively engaged in CVIP until the very end, recruiting a program chair and participating in a student interview for a class project just four days earlier. As a founding member of CVIP, she never missed an opportunity to promote CVIP's work, recruit volunteers or raise money for the scholarship fund. She was passionate about serving and supporting the international students, scholars and their families. We will miss her dearly.

Please join me in celebrating the accomplishments of CVIP volunteers and friends at our upcoming **annual meeting and salad luncheon on Wednesday, May 8th**. The reception will begin at 11:30 and the luncheon and program at noon, at University Lutheran Church, 1020 South Harrison Road. Hope to see you there!

## CVIP SCHOLARSHIPS CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

For decades, CVIP has been providing scholarships for spouses of international students at MSU. All the funds come from sales of donated items at the World Gift Shop (held at the annual Global Festival) or from private donations. The generosity of our community has made the difference for hundreds of students who return to their home countries to share useful knowledge. For Spring 2013, one student received a full \$2,500 tuition scholarship, and three students received tuition for one credit each.

**Jisun Oh** is finishing a Ph.D. in violin. Her supervising professor describes her as an excellent student and a top violinist, who chose a difficult topic for her dissertation that will make a significant contribution to the music community.

**Rituparna Mitra** and **Onur Agirseven** are a married couple who each received one credit of tuition. Both have completed their coursework and need only to finish their dissertations.

**Thasanee Satimanon** received one credit of tuition for the second time, as serious health issues have prevented her from completing her dissertation as quickly as planned.

Rituparna, Onur and Thasaneear are examples of how CVIP assists students in crisis. Imagine that you are a doctoral student yourself, studying for years in a foreign country, and that as you approach the finish line you experience debilitating and bewildering health issues. Your health insurance is dependent upon continuing as a student, and yet your assistantships and other resources are timed to end upon your original estimated completion date. You must either choose to return home without a degree or continue as a student while trying to pick up an extra job on campus. One credit of tuition may not seem like a large sum, but it represents an awful lot of hours working in food service on campus!

For more information, please contact **Peggy Arbanas** (669-1239) or **Dottie Schmidt** (351-2812), co-chairs of the Scholarship Committee.

## EVERY TUESDAY ADVENTURES

Every Tuesday (ET) brings together international student wives with women from the local community, providing a place to make friends, learn about other cultures, and especially, to help newcomers acclimate themselves to their new home and culture here in the Lansing area. We meet on Tuesday afternoon to participate in a fun activity together - a craft, an exercise class, or a cooking session. It is also a fun and fascinating way for women from the Lansing area to enjoy new friends from other cultures.



*ET Visits the Fenner Nature Center*

One week we took a field trip to the Fenner Nature Center, guided by an ET participant who is also a volunteer at Fenner. We tasted maple sap and discovered that none of the other countries represented make maple syrup. A dead tree led to a new vocabulary word, “stump,” which led to the discussion of tongue twisters and the teaching of “The skunk sat on a stump...” A spouse from Russia then taught us a Russian tongue twister.

Another time when someone sneezed and someone else said, “God bless you,” I asked the Korean women next to me if they have a similar saying in Korea when someone sneezes. The ladies looked rather startled and said that no one says anything when someone sneezes in Korea.

While eating Valentine candy conversation hearts, a young Japanese woman asked the meaning of a heart that read, “HEAD/HEELS.” “Head over heels in love” didn’t make it clearer, so I said that perhaps if you are in love, you might feel so dizzy that you would fall down and tumble down a hill,

rolling in such a way that your head is above your heels and then vice versa. Then she saw “SUGAR LIPS” and thought it was so hilarious she stuck it on a Valentine card to a friend. The women with children each took home a handful of hearts, with “B MINE,” “GO GIRL,” and “SWEET PEA.”

Every Tuesday is open to any woman who wants to welcome newcomers to our community and broaden her own horizons as well. A sense of humor is optional, but highly useful. Hope to see you at Every Tuesday next fall!

Every Tuesday meets from 1:00 to 3:00 pm at the University Lutheran Church, 1020 S. Harrison Road, East Lansing. \*\*\*Note that ET does NOT meet on the second Tuesday of each month. For more information and to receive a notice of our activities, please contact: **Christine VanNada** (cavannada@hotmail.com) or **Sarah Phillips** (sarah.phillips@ballstate.bsu.edu).

## HOME VISITS PROGRAM

On Wednesday, April 24, 2013, fifty-one international English language students had the opportunity to tour an American home and practice conversation while enjoying light refreshments provided by one of the home hosts. The hour and a half home tour and conversation is often the highlight of the semester for many of the English language students.

We appreciated having five new home hosts and three new drivers participating this time. Thanks to new home participants **Alice Hill, Charlotte Poston, Jim Stedman, Kathie Woefel, and Pat Zandstra** along with continued support from **Pauline Adams, Stacey Bieler, Mona Brandou, Helen Hagans & John Casberque, Dr. Alice Hamachek, Pat Hepp, Susan Leavitt, and Lois & Harold Sollenberger**. This Spring we had more homes than needed. However, in the Fall we usually do not enough homes, so we have to send more than the ideal number of three to five students to a home.

If you would like to open your home or become a driver, contact **Iris Horner** (349-1865 or [hornerio@yahoo.com](mailto:hornerio@yahoo.com)) with the subject line saying 'Home Visits'.

## GUATEMALAN GRAD STUDENT GETS MORE THAN SHE'D PLANNED

Five years ago **Ana Rocio Escobar-Chew** from Guatemala first visited the CVIP International Student Lending Center. When she returned as a graduate student three years ago she approached **Erica Larson**, the Lending Center coordinator, with a proposal to use the L.C. as the focus of a mini project. Recently she dropped off her completed 15-page report. Here are some excerpts from "The Lending Center: A Participant/Observer Perspective of Socio-cultural Interactions."

Rocio wrote, *"Coming from Guatemala and according to the cultural norms of my middle class family it was not traditionally accepted to acquire used items of any kind. It was not always the case in the past, but while growing up my family was fortunate to have access to buying new items, especially clothes. It was acceptable to take used items from a close family member or a friend. However, you do not accept used items because you do not know where they came from or how people used those items."*

Rocio continues: *"When I first went to the L.C. I felt hesitant about what to take. I definitely needed some household items since I just came with the basic set of clothes and shoes that two 50-pound suitcases allowed me. Starting from zero, buying everything you need for your daily use is very expensive, particularly with an international student budget."*

*"Later, as I adjusted to my new environment I started to learn how common [it] was for people in the U.S. to acquire, buy and utilize used items from complete strangers. . . Another way my mindset changed through the L.C. experience was regarding ecological consequences. Reusing items instead of buying new ones avoids adding to the chain of negative consequences to the environment."*

Rocio agreed to be present a minimum of four hours for the following four weeks. The whole concept of volunteering, working for nothing was totally foreign. Rocio quoted the Lending Center volunteers, *"We get more out of it than they do."* and *"We all (volunteers) believe it is more a blessing to give than to receive. It is a sense of joy...pleasure to give..."*, *"Even the ones (clients) that do not speak a*

*lot...(you receive) smiles, thank yous and we enjoy doing it...(to) provide for their needs. In fact, the majority of volunteers here have lived abroad in different parts of the world."*

Rocio observed/volunteered for the agreed four weeks, then increased her number of hours! She wrote, *"I consider that [the increase in hours] was also motivated by the feelings I experienced as a volunteer. As a newcomer in MSU, I received kind help and support from people. Volunteering at the L.C. enabled me to feel I could give back some of the kindness and support I had received. I perceive giving back is a way to express gratefulness for the blessings and opportunities I have received throughout my life. This feeling allowed me to understand the feelings of volunteers and the satisfaction they experienced working at the center."*

To continue our work, the Lending Center needs your donations. Please tell your friends and neighbors! The items are loaned out free of charge. We are always in need of lamps, lamp parts, bedding, pots and pans, kettles, etc. CVIP is a 501c3 organization and has tax credit forms at the Center. If you would like to become a volunteer, we always need more hands. The Lending Center is located at 1434F Spartan Village or, by GPS: 77 Middlevale Rd. Apt. 1434 F, East Lansing, MI 48823. Contact **Erika Larson** ([enwank@yahoo.com](mailto:enwank@yahoo.com) or 517-351-4548) for an appointment or questions.

## ELIZABETH RIMPAU PASSES

We will miss **Elizabeth Rimpau**, with her cheerful attitude and ready smile. She was born in Lansing, attended Sexton High School and MSU, and earned an MS degree in biochemistry from U. of Southern California. She had a career as a lab technician at MSU until her retirement in 1993.

After she retired, Elizabeth was very active in CVIP, co-chair of Speakers Bureau, 1998-2000; co-chair of Transportation Committee, 2001-06; a driver for Home Visits, 2003-06. For many years a Global Festival World Gift Shop volunteer and strong supporter of the CVIP Scholarship Committee. She regularly attended the semi-annual CVIP Alumni meetings, where she enjoyed meeting and reminiscing with other retired CVIP members.

## INTERNATIONAL SPOUSE CONNECTION

International Spouse Connection (ISC) continues to provide spouses of international student scholars with the opportunity to lend each other support and friendship. The spouse leaders are **Wei Liu** from China and **Dana Kanhai** from Trinidad and Tobago.

Wei, a new leader in ISC, suggested focusing on providing English conversation practice at our weekly meetings. We shared family photographs and stories, talked about interesting places to visit in our countries, and about our academic and career goals. ISC is a safe and fun environment to practice our English.

One of our members, **Akiko Takahashi**, talked with us about the Japanese bean-throwing festival which is a Spring festival typically held in early February. She shared with us the folklore about the Oni figure that represents bad luck. At this festival, people throw beans to ward off the bad luck and welcome in the new year. Akiko also brought Japanese snacks for the group to enjoy.

**Elena Negoda** made a presentation about Russia, her home country, including Russia's education system and amazing geography. We also enjoyed delicious traditional New Year's dishes: buckwheat with minced beef and the Russian version of potato salad.

**Wei Liu** also made a presentation about the Chinese Spring Festival and shared traditional food and beautiful artifacts, such as the laser cut decoration "FU" that means *blessing* or *happiness*.

Another popular presentation this year was actually a joint session by ISC and Friendship House MSU. **Laurie Felton**, a friend of Friendship House MSU, is an American mom who homeschools her children. She made a presentation about homeschooling children in the U.S. International moms who also homeschool their children talked about its benefits to their families.

**Barbara Toman** and **Jan Bernsten** as advisors have provided their unwavering support. **Mitsuko Marx** joined us several times this semester as well.

As the semester comes to a close, ISC is looking forward to the customary end-of-semester potluck. ISC meets every Friday, 1-2:30pm. For more

information, contact **Cheryl Highstreet**, ISC Advisor (517-775-4837) or email us at [isc@msu.edu](mailto:isc@msu.edu).

## CONGRATULATIONS!



At the 2013 International Awards on April 3, **Carol Towl** received the Homer Higbee Award for a CVIP volunteer. After teaching English in Misawa, Japan, Carol taught math and science in Ohio, East Lansing, Haslett, Laingsburg and Perry. Carol first began as a Global Festival Volunteer in 1990. She became co-chair of CVIP Speakers Bureau (now called I-Speak). Carol has arranged speakers for 17 schools and 23 community organizations this year alone.



**Barbara Sawyer-Koch** received the Globie Award for a Community Member on April 16, 2013, given by the Office of International Students and Scholars. Barbara has enjoyed being part of the International Friendship Program for many years. This year Barb served as vice-president of CVIP and co-chaired the I-SPEAK program.



## LILLIAN KUMATA

Lillian Kumata left us on April 2, 2013, two weeks before her 90th birthday. When the news of her death spread throughout the local community, we were stunned and shocked; many of us cried, as if we had lost our best friend. And many of us felt that we had.

We described Lillian in many ways: *volunteer supreme; totally awesome; a 'professional' volunteer; a role model and an inspiration; prodigious leader; always generous with her time and talents.*

Most of Lillian's volunteer efforts were in the international field of activity. Her upbringing, first in the United States and later in Japan, made her a natural interpreter of both cultures and languages. However, she worked with any group in need of service, no matter the nationality. Indeed, the first organizations to benefit from her volunteerism were the Girl Scouts and a local East Lansing church. Then in 1961 she helped organize a coat lending service for international students from Africa who were ill-prepared for Michigan winters.

In 1964, Lillian became one of the founding members of a new organization, CVIP, and she served as its third president from 1965-1968, and again in 1993-1994.

"I'd rather wear out than rust out." Perhaps Lillian never actually used this expression but her life was an embodiment of this idea. During the last fifty years, Lillian had a great influence on the development of CVIP programs and committees, holding almost every leadership position in the organization. For 15 years, she and her co-chair Lois Sollenberger led the Scholarship Program and ran the World Gift Shop at the Global Festival.

Lillian was the recipient of many honors and awards from local, national and international groups. On the local level, she received East Lansing's Crystal Award in 1992, the Homer Higbee Award in 1993, the Michigan Governor's Community Service Award in 1998, a Special Recognition Award from MSU's International Studies and Programs in 1998, the Faculty Folk Club's Outstanding Woman of the Year Award in 2005 and the OISS Globie Award in 2008.

Her national honors include the Cultural Diversity Award from the American Red Cross in 1995, and in 2000, the Millennium International Volunteer Award from the U.S. Department of State and *USA Today*.

Her most prestigious international award was the Order of the Sacred Treasure, Gold and Silver Rays, presented to her by the Emperor of Japan in 1999 for improving relations between Japan and other countries and for aiding international students.

One of Lillian's legendary skills was recruiting. If you asked the members of the CVIP Board how they got started in CVIP, the majority would answer that Lillian Kumata recruited them. It is common knowledge in CVIP circles that "you can't say 'no' to Lillian." If she asked you to assume some position in the organization, it meant that she felt that you could do the job and that she had your back.

Yes, Lillian was a friend and a prodigious volunteer, the likes of which we may never see again. And she also played a wicked game of bridge.

## INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP PROGRAM

When **Larry and Susan Karnes** were first matched with a student through the International Friendship Program in 2005, I doubt they thought they'd be planning a second trip to Korea so soon. Or that they'd become "grandparents" to a five year old little boy who was born while his mother was a student at MSU, or that they'd maintain contact with every one of their matches, well after the students left MSU. But that's exactly what's happened.

Their first student reminded them last November that it was his 8<sup>th</sup> consecutive Thanksgiving carving the Karnes' family turkey. They still maintain regular communication with a former match who is currently living in Florida, and they are currently "friends" to a couple from China and a young family from Korea who are here through MSU's Visiting International Professional Program. In all, they've been matched with three individual international students, one couple and one family, from Taiwan, China and Korea.

Larry learned of the program through a co-worker. He and Susan thought it would be a fun thing to try. They've made the most of all of their matches. Susan's work as a private piano and clarinet teacher has been a nice link to many of their students who have strong musical interests.

While a student at MSU, **Jeong Yeon** experienced the joy of giving birth to her son while her husband was studying in Massachusetts, and the grief of losing her father. The Karnes were there to support her along the way. The Karnes will go to Korea this June to spend two weeks with Jeong and her family. It will be a joyful "family reunion."

We are thrilled that Larry has agreed to be the new chair of the International Friendship Program. IFP is not a home stay program but matches MSU international students with local American "friends" to build friendships while sharing their cultures. For more information, contact **Larry Karnes** ([lbkarnes@att.net](mailto:lbkarnes@att.net)) or leave a message at the CVIP office (353-1735).

## STUDENTS' COMMENTS ABOUT CVIP

**Josue Melendez-R.** is a graduate student in the School of Social Work and an intern in the Office for International Students and Scholars at Michigan State University. He recently surveyed international students and their families who have participated in a CVIP program. Here are some of their responses to: "What did you find useful about the program(s) in which you participated?"

**International Friendship Program:** "It was great meeting with an American family and their influence helped me adjust to America. They are great friends and we spent much time together, traveled and met in special occasions or hanged out to spend quality time together."

**Lending Center:** "The Lending Center is such a blessing and is such a great idea! Thanks so much for it!"

**I-Speak:** "I loved speaking to groups through the I-Speak. It was very rewarding and I loved sharing my culture and experiences."

**International Spouse Connection and Every Tuesday:** "ISC provided me with a place to make friends and to feel at home talking about my own culture. I like ET because it is fun and has different activities."

**Scholarship:** "My wife and I are very grateful to CVIP for the tuition waiver scholarship, which helped us tremendously."

**Global Festival:** "Having participated in the Global Festival many times, I appreciate the opportunity it gives international students to exhibit their cultures."

**Volunteer English Tutoring Program:** "VETP was amazing. The tutor, Dottie, made me familiar with U.S. culture and history and even with other religions and culture. I feel without that program, I would feel lost in this country."

Thank you, Josue, for providing this feedback from our international students and families.

## I-SPEAK: THE INTERNATIONAL SPEAKERS PROGRAM

CVIP is all about promoting mutual cross-cultural education, understanding, and appreciation! I-SPEAK connects volunteer international students and scholars with local K-12 students, senior citizen groups, service club members, and other community groups. Here are some highlights of 2012-13:



*May Mansy, biomedical engineering student from Egypt, speaks at the Eaton County Youth Facility*

Since 2007 the **International Interest Group of the MSU Community Club** has looked to I-SPEAK to locate presenters for some of their monthly meetings. To date, we have connected them with speakers from about 25 different countries. The increase in attendance has made it necessary to move their meeting place from private homes to the new MSU Credit Union meeting room!

**Hyun-Seung Kwak**, a Ph.D. student from South Korea, accepted an invitation to Bickford Assisted Living Facility. One resident, a retired university professor originally from South Korea, glowed with pleasure as she spoke with Hyun-Seung, and burst into song when she heard a Korean folk song performed.

**Eaton County Youth Facility's** alternative school hosts six to eight international speakers each year. These students are an interested and appreciative audience and our speakers are always touched to receive the thank-you notes the students send to them following their pleasant time of culture-sharing.

**Felix Yeboah** from Ghana shared his culture with members of the **Zonta Club of Lansing**. He provided contacts that helped renew the club's interest in a micro-enterprise project in Ghana that had become dormant for lack of a connecting person in that country.

The tradition of providing speakers for **Holt High School World Language Week** in April continues with nine volunteers sharing their culture with these students in foreign language classes.

Our culture exchange continues as our international volunteers interact with all ages of folks in the local community from young Girl Scouts in Holt to Senior Citizens at the Allen Neighborhood Center! Consider inviting an international speaker to make a presentation to your group. Please contact **Carol Towl** (882-4391) or **Mary Hennessy** ([vetp@msu.edu](mailto:vetp@msu.edu)) to set up a presentation.

## GLOBAL FESTIVAL 2012

On Sunday, November 11, 2012, the Global Festival launched an afternoon of fun and friendship. The welcome crew, comprised of volunteers from ages 80 on down passed out passports and talked up the exhibits, performances, food and the World Gift Shop. Representing 26 countries, the student-run exhibits attracted a lot of attention, as did the student performances. Children enjoyed learning about other cultures, and MSU students liked seeing their friends perform.

The World Gift Shop, also staffed by community volunteers, brought in around \$7,000 for the CVIP Scholarship Committee.

Joining CVIP as sponsors: **Office of International Students and Scholars, Office of Cultural and Academic Transitions, International Studies and Programs, Spartan Signature Catering, Michigan State University Activities Board, MSU Union and Michigan State University Federal Credit Union.** Let them know you appreciate their participation.

Since the Union is scheduled for more renovations this year that will reconfigure some spaces entirely, the committee is searching for a new home for Global Festival 2013, to be held on **Sunday, November 17.**