



CVIP Fall 2015 Newsletter

COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS FOR INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

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Volunteer English Tutoring Program (VETP)

The Volunteer English Tutoring Program has many wonderful volunteers who help international students practice English conversation. Often, international students who arrive here have good “textbook” English, but need more help with conversation, making small talk, and learning about American culture. Many work in labs all day, frequently with people from their home country, so they look forward to speaking English with others.



One dedicated VETP tutor is **Peggy Teoh**. Peggy is a retired special education teacher. She has worked with ESL students in the past, but feels she has “found her niche” with VETP. Peggy says of her experiences: “I get far more back than I put in.”

Peggy has been a conversation partner with a number of students. Currently she meets with **Pouyan**, who is a PhD student from Iran. Peggy calls their weekly meetings “cultural exchanges” since she

enjoys learning about Iranian culture from him. When her student said he had trouble understanding Americans on the phone, they set up a “telephone meeting,” where Peggy called him and they held their conversation that way.

Pouyan says, “I have learned a lot from Peggy. Not only have I gained a better understanding of the English language, but she’s also shown me how to be patient, understanding and dedicated. She has also shown me how to be a volunteer and help people without expecting anything in return, how to be more empathetic to other people’s problems and in one word, how to esteem humanity. I am glad that I have such a great person in my life.”

Peggy is also doing a language exchange with **Sonia**, a woman from Peru. Peggy helps Sonia with conversational English and American culture, and Sonia helps Peggy practice her Spanish. (*cont.p.2*)

CVIP Newsletter
Editors:

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Pat Barrett
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We welcome your submissions of articles and other features by email. Please send them to cvip@msu.edu.

GLOBAL FESTIVAL



See the world in a day

**Sunday
November 22nd
1-6pm
MSU Union**

- International exhibits
- Live performances
- World Gift Shop
- Children’s activities
- Performance workshops
- Fashion show

International food available!

PRESIDENT'S CORNER



Stacey Bieler, CVIP President

CVIP participated in various activities welcoming new students and scholars during Fall Orientation in August. We met students at the Lansing airport and at the Michigan Flyer buses, handing out taxi coupons to help new arrivals go to their temporary residences for free. At the Spartan Village Fair CVIP introduced programs, International Spouse Connection (ISC) invited spouses and I-Speak recruited students to tell about their countries.

The board enjoyed the Fall Retreat at Brody Complex, where we combined planning with meals. We appreciate **James Dorsett**, the new director of OISS, and his office's financial support. We are thankful for the hard work of our liaison, **Joy Walter**.

The Global Festival is at the MSU Union on Sunday, November 22, from 1-6 pm. Bring your family and friends for an afternoon of free performances and displays by MSU international students. Take home treasures from the Gift Shop. The proceeds help fund the Lillian Kumata Scholarships for international student spouses.

Changes in campus apartments affect our programs. First, the local international student population shrank when the Cherry Lane apartments were torn down and Spartan Village closed several buildings. We

said "good-bye" to Every Tuesday, a place for spouses to make friends and crafts.

Second, we are also in the process of figuring out the next steps for the Lending Center. Spartan Village is going to close in 2017. Eventually we will need to find a new place to help students. We also need a new chair for the Lending Center and a lively group of volunteers to step up to continue this service.

Thanks to all of you who are making friends with international students and scholars this fall. Hope to see you at the Global Festival!

VETP (continued from page 1)

They recently shared jokes from each other's country – including knock-knock jokes!

Peggy was a conversation partner with **Thaisa**, a scholar from Brazil who was at MSU with Scientists Without Borders. Thaisa, like many visiting scholars, spent much of her time working in her lab, and she was very happy to have someone to speak to in English. Even though Thaisa has returned to Brazil, they remain in contact.

Twenty-three tutors started this school year with a tutor meeting. After they introduced themselves, each person shared a helpful hint or idea they had when working with their students. **Joy Walter** (OISS) gave an overview of the international student picture at MSU. In September eleven conversation classes served 246 students. Forty-two conversation partners met with 49 international students.

If you would like to share conversation and American culture with a student one hour a week, you can fill out an application at vetp.isp.msu.edu or email **Mary Hennessey** at vetp@msu.edu.

Lillian Kumata Scholarship Program

Dottie Schmidt, Peggy Arbanas and **Suzanne Sorkin** are on the Lillian Kumata Scholarship Committee. The scholarships are designed to help subsidize the considerable tuition costs for spouses of international students who want to take maximum advantage of educational opportunities at MSU while they are here. We are pleased to introduce the four recipients of the Lillian Kumata Scholarship for Fall 2015:

Natalya Bezuglova, a Russian pianist, is studying piano pedagogy and performance in the College of Music in pursuit of a doctoral degree. Her husband, Oleg Bezuglov, a violinist, is here for a doctoral degree in music. They have a young daughter. Natalya teaches at the Community Music School and provides music for local church services. She hopes to teach at a conservatory.

Liang Wang of China is working toward a career as a professor of statistics. His wife, Weijia Wang, is a graduate student in plant genetics. Liang is also volunteering in a local elementary school in order to learn more about the fundamentals of teaching.

Jelili Adebisi of Nigeria has a background in engineering and agriculture, and is pursuing his doctorate in sustainable agriculture. His wife is affiliated with MSU's Fisheries program and is working toward her GIS (Geographical Information Systems) certification. They have 3 young children. Jelili's dissertation research will focus on organic farming in Nigeria.

Ehsan Kharazmi of Iran is studying mechanical engineering. His wife, Fatemeh Afzali, is also studying mechanical engineering. Ehsan's passion is wind energy. He hopes to join a project with a mechanical engineering professor.

As we all gather international items to donate to the upcoming World Gift Shop, please take pride in the impressive spouses we help with tuition support. Greet the recipients working at the Gift Shop! They will be wearing nametags identifying them as Lillian Kumata Scholars.

Interviews for Spring Scholarship candidates will be held in late November/early December. Encourage any qualified candidates to apply! For more information, contact **Dottie Schmidt** (351-2812) or **Peggy Arbanas** (669-1239).

CVIP Volunteer Appreciation Awards

At the Annual Meeting and Luncheon in May, CVIP handed out four CVIP Volunteer Appreciation Awards to outstanding volunteers.

Wendy Sylvester Rowan and **Jake Rowan** first joined the International Friendship Program in 2005. Wendy and Jake have taken multiple students as friends several times. As a former member of the IFP committee, Wendy helped match MSU international students with community friends and conduct the orientation meetings.

Marion Chapman has been the Church Women United (CWU) representative on the CVIP Board for the last four years. CWU began baking cookies for CVIP activities in 1964! Marion has been active in CVIP for ten years, beginning with her participation in the International Friendship Program. She and her late husband, Jim, also helped in the Gift Shop or as greeters at a Welcome Table at the Global Festival.

Sue McDonald has been matched with five students with the International Friendship Program. In addition, she helped IFP with publicity. She has also been a regular volunteer at the Lending Center and a driver for Home Visits and I Speak. She currently serves as Secretary of the CVIP Board.

Pam Sievers began her journey with CVIP in 2010 with the International Friendship Program. She became IFP Co-Chair in 2011 and then the Chair in 2012. Pam served as CVIP vice-president in 2011-12, and from 2012-14 she served as president. She has helped staff the CVIP Office and the Lending Center. She has also served on the Visioning Committee, the Finance Committee, and the Leadership Committee.

International Spouse Connection (ISC)

Members of the International Spouse Connection accompany their partners to the US, and many leave very full and meaningful lives in their home countries. ISC helps spouses learn about their new home and make friends from around the world. Here are three of our most active members:

Desi Fitri Diana. I am from Bogor, Indonesia. I came to East Lansing with my husband, a forestry graduate student, and my two teenage children who attend Haslett High School.

In my country, I have a small catering business. To promote my business, I use my blog. I founded the Bogor Blogger Community (Blogor) and the Indonesian Forum to Save the Rhino (Forum Badak Indonesia). I like writing and have published two books of the stories of my blogger community members. I host a radio show, mostly talking about community activities. I give courses in the catering business, including classes through social media, where people can learn without having to pay.

Our family loves nature and social activities, such as encouraging people to care about the rhino and the Sumatran Rhino--animals that are almost extinct.

Here in East Lansing, I am a spouse leader for ISC and I teach a class in International Cooking at Friendship House every week.

Araceli Mendoza Alvarez. I was born in the Toluca state of Mexico. I came here four years ago because my husband was offered a job at Jackson National Insurance Company. We and our three-year-old son will be going back to Mexico soon. After high school, I studied business administration.

Before coming to East Lansing, I worked in finance for seven years at my city's airport. My specific job was to manage contracts and verify that the large number of restaurants and airport shops complied with the payment of their fees.

In my free time, both in Mexico and the US, I enjoy exercising, especially Zumba. Here in East Lansing, I am the Web Master for the ISC Facebook page.



Katayoun Bahrami. My name is Katayoun but everybody calls me Katy. I was born and grew up in Tehran, the capital of Iran. I came to East Lansing with my husband, an attorney in Iran. He is studying for an LLM degree at the MSU College of Law.

I graduated in fabric design in 2005. I managed several art festivals at my university in Iran. Those festivals included contests in different arts such as print-making, painting, fabric and fashion design. I also managed galleries in which my friends and I sold the paintings, prints, and garments I made. I created a brand, Iran Design & Fabric Center, and started a business to design and produce my own garments for everyday wear. I designed different prints using ancient and contemporary Iranian motifs.

I have not found a major in my field at MSU, so I have joined programs like ISC, which help me to make friends and to understand American culture. I volunteer at the CVIP office twice a week. I was elected this summer as a vice president of the MSU PSA (Persian Student Association), which helps to take care of new Iranian students and holds many cultural events. I keep active doing yoga, swimming and jogging.

The ISC meets each Friday from 1-2:30 at Friendship House. For more information, contact **Jan Bernsten** (351- 5063).

International Friendship Program

The International Friendship Program (IFP) at MSU gives international students opportunities to get to know an American family or individual and to feel welcome in the community. The American friends benefit by getting to know international students and learning about their countries, cultures, and languages. These relationships are mutually rewarding and often last well beyond the conclusion of the student's studies at MSU.

IFP held its Fall Semester orientation meeting at the International Center on October 11. This represented the culmination of several months' work by the IFP committee. Applications from new international students and local volunteers were reviewed and interviews completed by our committee volunteers **Midge Morrow**, **Patrice Klein**, **Cindy Walter**, **Susan Ventocilla-Gailey**, and **Larry Karnes**.



We were able to match local friends with 32 international students from 14 different countries, including Afghanistan, China, Egypt, Ghana, India, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Taiwan, Tanzania, Thailand, Turkey, and Vietnam. A special thank you to **Joy Walter** of the MSU Office of

International Students and Scholars (OISS) for her assistance with the orientation.

New friends and new students are encouraged to submit applications for participation in the program beginning in the Spring semester. The next deadline for these applications will be early January 2016. Visit our website at cvip.isp.msu.edu/friendship for on-line applications.

If you are a returning volunteer and are ready to be matched with another international student, just send us an email at cvip@msu.edu or leave a message at the CVIP office (353-1735). You may also contact **Larry Karnes** at lbkarnes@att.net for further information.

World Gift Shop

The World Gift Shop will be open from 1-6 pm at the Global Festival on Sunday, November 22, on the third floor at the MSU Union. The shop is the main fundraiser for the Lillian Kumata Scholarship Fund that provides scholarships to spouses of international students.

Items for sale include artwork, ornaments, fabrics, jewelry, etc. from around the world. Our team of **Gengen Chan**, **Mona Brandou** and **Ou Ni** has been pricing and packing the items in the past two months. We have had help from **Mitsuko Marx** and **Jim Stedman**. Thanks are due to **Pat Barrett** for preparing and mailing the gift solicitation letters and to **Dottie Schmidt** and **Joy Walter** for their work in arranging volunteer help on the day of the sale.

Donations of international items can be left at the University Lutheran Church office from 8-5, Monday to Friday, or by arrangement with **Dottie Schmidt** (351-2812) or **Wendy Pope** (381-9039).

I SPEAK: Beyond "Tell Us about Your Homeland"

International Speakers (I SPEAK) receives many requests from schools, service clubs and senior citizen groups for international speakers to share information about their countries' history, geography, traditional culture, and contemporary life. We welcome these opportunities to carry out our mission of promoting cultural exchange between visiting internationals and our local citizenry.

Occasionally we also receive requests for more specific programs:

The East Lansing Women's Club asked for a panel of students from different regions of the world to discuss their experiences in adapting to life in the US. The Club prepared a list of suggested questions, such as, "What was the most difficult thing for you to adjust to in this new culture?" "What do you miss the most about your homeland?" "What can we as Americans in the local community do to help you adapt to life here?" These questions sparked lively discussion among the women and students from India, China, and Mexico.

A teacher of World History at Haslett High School asked for a panel of international students/scholars from post-colonial nations to discuss the influence, good and not so favorable, of the colonial rule in each country. Students from India, a couple of African countries and Southeast Asian nations offered meaningful insights.

One Girl Scout troop invited us to participate in a "mini global fest," staffing culture tables from several countries where the girls circulated, carrying their "passports" to be stamped by each country's representative.

Our most recent special request came from a group called Interracial Fellowship. They want to hear from one or more international students

about their perception of the current racial tension here in the U.S. We're preparing a list of discussion-starter questions and look forward to a productive discussion.

If you would like to have an international visitor in your classroom or at your organization's meeting, visit the CVIP website, www.cvip.isp.msu.edu and follow the International Speakers link, or contact **Carol Towl** at ispeak.cvipmsu@gmail.com. Perhaps you can share with us a new special request topic!



A+ English Language School

This fall we have over 120 students registered from literacy to advanced levels. Field trips have helped our students become acclimated to the community. We've gone to Jiffy in Chelsea, the Farmer's Market at the Capital, and Old Town for a scavenger hunt. Representatives from St. Vincent's Catholic Charities and East Lansing Library have come to speak.

Our advanced class created a booklet about community resources. The intermediate class worked on measurement and baked muffins from Jiffy.

Lending Center

Since Spartan Village apartments are closing in 2017, CVIP is looking for a new location for the Lending Center.

MSU has been generous in the past by providing space for free at Cherry Lane apartments and then at Spartan Village. They have not charged for rent or utilities. It has been an ideal situation for us to loan housewares for free. We are grateful to MSU for their support for over fifty years.

The Lending Center has been a valuable resource for international visitors who come to MSU for several months to a year. It is costly for them to stock an apartment with all the necessities for such a short period of time. Then they have the dilemma of what to do with the items when they leave.

The students have encouraged Erika and the workers at the Lending Center to continue the service. “This helps us so much!” “This saves us so much money!” “What are students going to do next year?”

CVIP is also looking for a new Lending Center chair, who will serve on the CVIP board. Erika Larson has been chair for 14 years and will be stepping down in Spring 2016.

We also need a group of lively volunteers to help hand out items to international students and scholars. Call Erika if you would like to be a volunteer at the Lending Center.

If you want to donate household items to the Lending Center, please contact **Erika Larson** enwank@yahoo.com (351-4548). The Lending Center is at 77 Middlevale Road, 1434 F. Open hours are Tuesdays 1:00-2:00 and Thursdays 3:30-5:00.

Home Visits

We were thrilled to have a large number of students from Okemos A+ English Language School participate in Home Visits this fall. A total of 72 students took part in this program, including 18 men. This is notable since it is usually mostly women participate.

Twelve host homes welcomed the students. One group had a slightly different experience than others since this group went to two homes. First, they visited a condominium that a couple purchased upon retirement and second, a home in a traditional subdivision. The rest of the groups went to one home. In all cases, the students greatly enjoyed the hospitality of their host family.

Members of the CVIP Board and other volunteers transported the students. Eight teachers and staff of the Okemos A+ English Language School also drove.

Some volunteers have participated in Home Visits for many years. **Lois and Harold Sollenberger** have opened their home for eleven years and are always willing to welcome students.

We need more drivers and cars to accommodate the large number of participants in this program. If you are interested in participating as a driver or a host in Home Visits in the Spring semester, please contact **Jim Steadman** at jas12745@aol.com.



Good-bye to Every Tuesday

Over the past three decades, Every Tuesday (ET) has said a warm “Welcome! Bem-vindos! Karibu!” to hundreds of international student wives from dozens of countries. Conceived as a way to introduce local culture and customs to international women, ET provided a place to meet new friends, practice English conversation and engage in a fun activity, with childcare provided.

In 1981, when Every Tuesday began, activities centered around crafts, cooking and home-making tips. Over the years, the interests of the international participants have shifted. Recent favorite activities included Zumba, scrap-booking, and a field trip to an antique mall. A perennial favorite was the fall picnic at Alice Cook’s farm, including a hayride out to the pumpkin patch. The following week’s activity, of course, was pumpkin carving.

Every Tuesday owes a tremendous “Thank you! Arigato! Grazie!” to the **University Lutheran Church** for generously hosting ET since the beginning. The fellowship hall and children’s play area provided a cheerful and spacious place for crafting and conversation. ULC’s wonderful industrial kitchen held countless demonstrations, from International Pancake Day (Russian potato, savory Korean, and sweet blueberry) to the preparation of a traditional Thanksgiving feast.

A typical participant walked from her home in Cherry Lane or Spartan Village apartments, enjoyed an afternoon of friendship and conversation where her young children could play within sight, then walked to Red Cedar school to pick up her older children.

Today, the time has come to say a fond “Good-bye! Sayonara! Adios!” to Every Tuesday. With

the demise of the Cherry Lane and Spartan Village apartments, the niche that ET filled for so long is fast disappearing, but the need for friendship and human connection will never disappear. Other CVIP programs continue to bring people together from around the globe.

THANK YOU for friendship-making over three decades to the Every Tuesday chairwomen, including **Betty Robertson, Eileen Magee, Nancy Kopka, Carol Walter, Emily Wolf, Mary Barrett, Jane Featherstone, Shirley Walter, Lucile Ketchum, Lois Park, Marie VerHeyen, Kazuko Ozaki, Christine Van Nada, Sarah Phillips, and Shawn Gallagher.**

Volunteer Opportunities Now

Looking for a way to volunteer? Consider these opportunities with CVIP:

Global Festival: On Nov. 21-22, help is needed to set up the World Gift Shop and to serve as a sales person.

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

I SPEAK (International Speakers Program): Drivers are needed to take international student speakers to presentations off campus and return them to campus.

International Friendship Program: Local community residents are needed to share friendship with international students who want to learn more about American people and our culture.

Go to the CVIP website, cvip.isp.msu.edu, and read about the programs and how to make out an application or call the CVIP office (mornings, Monday-Friday, 517-353-1735).