



*Friends of the International Center,  
at UC San Diego*

# *Newsletter*

Volume XLVII, No. 6

February 2020

## **President's Column**

Dear Friends,

It is impossible not to see hearts all around us during the month of February, not only because Valentine's Day reminds us to honor our relationships, but also because February is Heart Health month with its reminder of the importance of living a healthy lifestyle. I have previously opined that Friends of the International is good for your health and in support have shared research about the health benefits stemming from friendship, giving, and volunteerism, so this year I add another branch of research supporting my hypothesis that Friends is good for you and your wellbeing!

An ever-growing number of studies have shown a clear connection between travel and wellbeing (Global Coalition on Aging, Framingham Heart Study, AARP to name a few) such that it is now well accepted that travel has wellness benefits at virtually every age: think family vacations, college study abroad (a not-so-subtle plug for our Friends scholarship program), and leisure adult travel. And, yes of course, I recognize that Friends is not a travel agency, yet I nonetheless trust you will agree that notwithstanding the absence of physical travel, through your attendance at Friends gath-

erings you encounter the same experiences associated with travel as you are transported outside of San Diego, reliving places visited or learning about and imagining places yet-to-be seen, all while meeting new people from all over the world.

Traveling removes us from routines, allowing us time to decompress, as does attending our programs and activities which are never dull, mindless routines and are usually stress-free (absent fire alarms); traveling opens us to new ideas promoting our creativity—even simple things like observing new color combinations, sounds, or material usage to hearing others' solutions to common problems; and it prompts us to learn new things stimulating our minds—heretofore unknown cultural practices, new words and/or expressions, new areas of research, etc.

Research by Dr. **Michael Merzenich**, acclaimed father of brain plasticity, reveals that people who travel, learn additional languages, and continue to experience new things throughout their lifespan, are far less likely to develop cognitive decay than their peers who do not embrace the unfamiliar (*Soft-Wired: How the New Science of Brain Plasticity Can Change Your Life*).



### **ETHNIC DINNER: INDONESIA**

**Saturday,  
February 29, 2020  
6:30 PM  
Great Hall  
International House**

Join us at a Catered  
Dinner, enjoy a  
Gamelan Concert and an  
Illustrated Presentation,  
*Amazing Indonesia*,  
by Prof. Christopher Wills

**A FUNDRAISER FOR  
FRIENDS SCHOLARSHIPS**  
with a brief talk by one of our  
Friends scholarship recipients

**To Make Reservations:**  
[ficIndonesia2020.eventbrite.com](http://ficIndonesia2020.eventbrite.com)

**RESERVATIONS DUE BY  
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19**

Apparently, exposing our brains to something new is not only a positive exercise for our brain's mental acuity, but also leads to increased social connections, good for our brain, since when learning something new we are compelled to interact with other people with greater intensity than we experience in our daily life.

With luck, I retain some persuasive art skills and have convinced you to increase your participation with Friends, if not for the fun, collegiality, or community spirit, then at least for your good health! We have daily programs year-round and in February have two evening events that are sure to be rewarding travel experiences, so do not be a recluse.

Wishing you a very Happy Valentine's Day and Heart Health month!

*Katya*

Katya Newmark  
PresFIC@ucsd.edu



Red Bird of Paradise

search station. It was a memorable day starting with a large male orangutan who greeted us at the end of the pier and grabbed a can of beer from me. (We had brought a six-pack of beer as a token present for the research team.) In seconds, the 300-pound primate popped the can open and chugged the beer down! It happened so quickly that I barely had time to try to wrestle the can back. Then I realized that the orangutan was much, much bigger and stronger than I am and I would never win the tug-of-war.

We spent the day spotting orangutans, including one that Birute had nurtured and released into the wild, 200 feet above our heads. It was really hard on our necks! At the end of our visit, we left the way we had come,



Sulawesi bride and groom

## AMAZING INDONESIA

—by Liz Fong Wills

In August 2019, the President of Indonesia announced that the country's capital would move from Jakarta to Kalimantan, which is the Indonesian portion of the island of Borneo. (Also on Borneo are the Malaysian states of Sabah and Sarawak, plus the tiny nation of Brunei.) Jakarta has more than 10 million people and has serious sinking problems that will result in the city being underwater by the year 2050. Some streets are already more than one meter below the water level and seawater comes through the pavement. The sinking is due to the explosive growth of the city and the pumping of deep underground water. In addition, the traffic is beyond horrible and the air severely polluted.

Construction of the new capital will begin in 2021, but currently the eastern portion of Kalimantan still has orangutans, clouded leopards, and local people called Dayaks. **Birute Galdikas** is one of three famed primatologists trained by **Louis Leakey** (along with **Jane Goodall** and **Dian Fossey**) and she has been working with orangutans in the pristine rainforests of Kalimantan since 1971.

When she arrived, tropical rainforests were everywhere. Birute has fought deforestation and the building of palm oil plantations ever since. It takes 300 acres of rainforest to support a single orangutan, because there must be enough trees of different species, fruiting at different times, to provide enough for the orangutans to eat year-round.

My husband **Chris** and I spent a day with Birute in the summer of 1996, recording the sightings and activities of orangutans near her re-



in a little outboard motor boat down the river. There were proboscis monkeys in the trees along the riverbanks that tried to cross the river by jumping from one tree to another. Most ended up doing spectacular belly flops, but at least they didn't have to swim all the way. The river was polluted by mercury used to separate the gold by miners upriver—a fact that was likely not known by the fishermen we saw. When it got dark, the riverbanks were filled with fireflies flickering in unison, making for a magical and memorable ride.

These forests, with their incredible inhabitants, are already at severe risk from logging, mining, and replacement with vast ugly oil palm plantations. I fear that all of this destruction will be accelerated when the Indonesian capital is rebuilt in Kalimantan.



Chief Willem of the Dani tribe of western New Guinea

### **Friends Ethnic Dinner: Indonesia Saturday, February 29, 6:30 PM Great Hall, International House**

Like its many predecessors, our February 2020 Ethnic Dinner will highlight the cuisine of the featured country in combination with an educational program. Many of Friends dinner guests are familiar with the adventurous spirit of our main speaker, Professor of Biological Sciences Emeritus **Christopher Wills**, and sign up for our Ethnic Dinner simply to see his marvelous photographs and hear him speak. In the Friends January *Newsletter*,

Chris told us briefly about some of the stories he intends to tell about his and his wife **Liz's** seven trips to Indonesia. To whet your appetite further, we have included here three of his photos.

Festivities will begin with a pre-dinner concert by the San Diego-based ensemble **Kembang Sunda** that performs Sundanese gamelan degung music from West Java. In ancient times, degung music was played in the royal courts to welcome guests, accompany dance, and aid in meditation. Today, degung music is typically heard at traditional Sundanese wedding ceremonies and other important events where an atmosphere of elegance and Sundanese cultural authenticity is desired. A gamelan orchestra consists primarily of a variety of percussion instruments. Traditionally a musician will play several instruments. The seven-member Kembang Sunda ensemble has performed throughout southern California since 2007, with **Amy Hacker**, music instructor at Cuyamaca College, as its director.



Some of Kembang Sunda's instruments

Indonesian cuisine is an amalgam of regional dishes with steamed rice as a staple. **Katya Newmark** composed the dinner's menu, largely inspired by the delicious food that she and her husband, **Matthew Costello**, ate on their trip to Indonesia in the summer of 2019, in part to showcase the complexity and layers

of flavors used in Indonesian cooking and in part to represent different islands. You can expect a multi-course, catered dinner showcasing dishes from Java, Lombok, Sumatra, Borneo, and Sulawesi.

The dinner being a fundraiser for Friends scholarships, we have invited one of our recent scholarship recipients to speak.

To make reservations:  
[ficIndonesia2020.eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/fic-indonesia-2020-tickets-12345678901234567890)

Please note that reservations are due by February 19 and that a vegetarian/pescatarian option is available on demand.

## **FEBRUARY**

Feb. 1, 8, 15, 22, 29: **Yoga**

Feb. 1: **Friends Dinner Social: Thailand**, 6:00

Feb. 3, 10, 24: **Tai Chi**, 2:00-3:00

Feb. 4, 11, 18, 25: **Gus' Table**, 10:00-Noon

Feb. 4, 11, 18, 25: **FIC Craft Circle**, 1:00-3:00

Feb. 5, 19: **Family Orientation**, 9:15

Feb. 5, 12, 19, 26: **Wednesday Coffee**, 10:00-Noon

Feb. 5, 12, 19, 26: **Mommy/Daddy & Me**, 1:45-2:45

Feb. 6, 13, 20, 27: **Everyday English**, 10:00-11:30

Feb. 7, 14, 21, 28: **Friday Chat**, 10:00-Noon

Feb. 11: **Friends Board Meeting**, 10:00

Feb. 13: **Cooking Class**, 9:00-Noon

Feb. 17: **Presidents' Day**

Feb. 29: **Ethnic Dinner: Indonesia**, 6:30

## MEET SUNIL PRASAD

I'm **Sunil Prasad**, born on 7th December, 1986, in a very small village, Jhinkpani, Jharkhand, India, where I lived until my junior year of schooling. Since I was very naughty in childhood, my parents put me in boarding school for further high school study. We are a family of seven and I am the youngest among the five siblings (all married now). My elder sister gave me the nickname **Sunny** and I am always called by that name by family and friends. It forms one of the strongest senses of identity in my life.

My grandfather, Mr. **Ram Das** was born in Bihar, but due to lack of job opportunities he moved with his family to Jhinkpani in 1951 and started working in a restaurant. My father Mr. **Deo Prasad** (eldest son), was then only 12 years old and used to help my grandfather at work, but also helped his younger brother with his studies. Later, in 1967, after completing his high school, he started working with ACC Limited, one of the largest producers of cement in India. He retired in 2011 and now spends his life with my beloved mother, Mrs. **Bedamia Devi**.

After completing my schooling, I entered Ranchi College in 2004 with a new form of rejuvenation in life. After graduation, I decided to pursue a master's degree and came to Bangalore, Karnataka, in 2008. I completed my Master's in Business Management with a Marketing specialization in 2010. During my college years, I had the best of times with my friends, something I still cherish when I think about it.

Through campus placement, I started my career in the banking industry, where I spent five years, obtaining significant experience as a sales executive to a manager. In 2015, I switched industry and joined Vodafone, a British multinational telecom

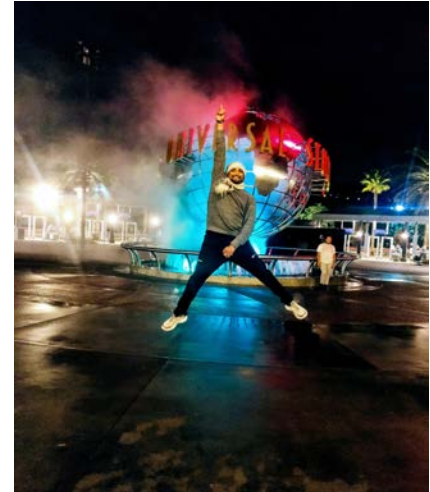
company, wishing to further my own development, as well as understand the field of communication. With my knowledge of business, I had the ability to flourish with minimal guidance, and by using proactive measures could handle uncertainty.

I was soon promoted to Business Development Manager, in charge of a large team working for new channel development, both in retail and sales. With this not only came the responsibility to motivate myself and the team, but I also was responsible for recruiting and training my team and chasing targets. My work involved a balancing act between making my team happy and driving them, and for this achievement I was honored as a "MegaStar" (a national recognition for exceptional professional achievement) thrice in my four-year tenure.

In January 2017 I was married to Dr. **Asha Kumari**, in an arranged marriage, as per Indian custom. This ritual has long been the norm in Indian society. Even today, the majority of Indians have their marriage planned by their parents and other respected family members. Asha is supportive and my perfect better half. I am so lucky to have her in my life.

My wife completed her doctorate degree in Biotechnology from Banaras Hindu University, India, in 2018 (it is one of the oldest and most prestigious institutions in India), whereupon she received an offer to join UCSD as a post-doctoral employee in July 2019, prompting her to move to San Diego, in order to extend her research career. Of course, to stay with my partner and to support her, I moved to San Diego three months later, in October 2019, with the thought that I too could find new opportunities in my field.

We are the first couple from our



Sunil Prasad at Universal Studios

family to visit the U.S., so everyone was delighted. For me, as a J2 visa holder, finding a job is a big challenge, because I have to wait for at least three months after applying to the U.S. government for a work permit before I will be allowed to work here.

Meanwhile, I attended Friends Family Orientation. To keep myself busy, I decided to attend all Friends daytime programs. I enjoyed the classes, because they were so interactive. To keep myself usefully busy, I thought of becoming a volunteer myself, so that I could help new people and families in the same way I was being helped. I did this mainly to understand and interact with people, and to learn about their culture, lifestyles, and beliefs; however, I quickly decided to share my own views and thoughts about our Indian culture that is considered one of the oldest and most diverse cultures in the world.

I shared many things about India, such as its caste system, the tradition of arranged marriages, and the practice of living as a joint family. I also talked at different Friends programs about Indian festivals: how we celebrate, dress, and eat special festive foods, and I volunteered at the Resale Shop.

So far my life in San Diego as an



international visitor is great, with few hiccups. I'm loving it. There are several reasons behind that, i.e.:

- The weather is awesome most of the time, particularly when compared to the heat we face in India.
- People here are so welcoming and never make me feel I'm not one of them. I have observed that if you are a student or dependent, there are plenty of communities and associations that will help you with problems that you may be facing.
- I'm a foodie and love spicy food. This is never going to die with the numerous restaurants in San Diego offering every type of cuisine, including wines and beers, which you can possibly think of. Weekends allow me to explore the food scene more and more. One of my favorite La Jolla restaurants is Red O, a Mexican restaurant, and my favorite dish is Mariscos Chile Relleno.
- Besides food, the lifestyle is great here and people seem to be enjoying every moment. Also, compared to India, there's less traffic, which makes it possible to drive around easily.
- The beaches, along with other great spots like Sunset Cliffs and Sea World, as well as the many parks and the zoo, make San Diego a place like no other!
- Last but not the least: I have found a special friend, cum mentor, in **Cynthia Tozer**. Cindy is a gem and a very cherished person, full of happiness. I love to spend time with her; she has given me so much insight into American values and culture in her unique warm way.

**Friends Volunteer  
Hours for  
December 2019  
566.5 = 3.22 FTEs**



## Editor's Note

Curious to know how, if at all, our Friends program leaders mark Valentine's Day, I inquired. Because I posed my question many weeks before the actual event (Friday, February 14) and my question followed so closely the beginning of the New Year, few program leaders had as yet given the celebration of Valentine's Day much thought. Nonetheless, I received some noteworthy responses.

"*Friday Chat* may have a love theme to the questions we pose. e.g. Where did you meet your spouse or significant other? Describe your first date. Who proposed to whom? The conversation usually just flows and we all get to know a little more about each other," wrote **Cindy Tozer**.

**Nori Faer**, chair of *Gus' English Conversation Table*, responded in a similar vein: "We are likely to discuss the differences in dating customs in each participant's country, and among the married when and how a confession of love was made. I can tell more when we are in full swing."

"Is there an ingredient more associated with love and friendship than chocolate?", asks *Cooking Class* co-chair, Katya Newmark. "For Friends February Cooking Class, we will be offering a range of savory and sweet dishes celebrating chocolate that we know will leave everyone sated and eager for a Valentine's Day celebration."

**Yukina Nakazawa** revealed: "We, *Mommy/Daddy & Me*, usually just sing nursery heart songs and do a few heart-shaped crafts for Valentine's Day. We plan doing the same this year, so it's not a big event like a major holiday, such as Halloween or Christmas, but we at least recognize and take note of Valentine's Day."

Speaking for the *Craft Circle*, **Jennie Chin** wrote: "In the past, as I am aware, we have not really focused on specific projects for any of the holidays, but if something comes up, I will let you know."

According to **Lynn Jahn**, *Wednesday Coffee* will be celebrating Valentine's Day, "but we have not had time to set our schedule. I know that **Katya Newmark** will be teaching a card-making session that will include a Valentine's Day card, but I don't know when. We have other activities as well, but let's make it a surprise, so people will come and discover the fun at Wednesday Coffee."

Don't forget to visit the Friends *Resale Shop* that, as of this writing, was preparing itself for Valentine's Day.



Prototype of Katya's  
Valentine's card

## Visiting an American Home

**Elisabeth Marti** does a marvelous job of matching international scholars and families with local hosts. One Sunday, **Loreen** and **Roland Wilhelmy** treated **Hiroko Kuki Villardi**, husband **Gabriel Porto Villardi**, and their baby to brunch at their Rancho Santa Fé home. Reporting back to Elisabeth, Loreen described the visit as follows:

"We had a lovely visit with **Gabriel, Hiroko, and Anna**. Anna was a delightful, sweet baby girl. Her reaction to **Tajar** [the Wilhelmy's friendly and sometimes enthusiastic dog] was darling and his reaction to her was hilarious. I think he thought she was a live doll toy to play with, but of course



both had to admire each other at a double double-paned window or wire cage/crate.

"Thank you for introducing us to this family. We are looking forward to being with them again before they have to return to Japan."

For her part, Hiroko reported that they had a great time with the Wilhelmys and that they are here because of Gabriel, who is on sabbatical leave studying wireless com-



Gabriel, Hiroko, and Anna Villardi

munications. Hiroko took maternity leave from her bank position, but Anna was still born in Japan and did not come to the U.S. until she was four months old. Gabriel hails from Brazil, but has been living in Japan for 17 years. The Villardis will return to Japan in March 2020.

Should you be interested in opening your home to some of the most fascinating international scholars to come to UCSD, please contact Elisabeth at [hostFIC@ucsd.edu](mailto:hostFIC@ucsd.edu).

## Membership

Membership Chair, **Georgina Sham**, informs that **Xiaowen Zhang** has been attending almost all of the Friends daytime programs and along with her husband, **Yuhao**, a graduate student in computer science, has joined our organization; please welcome them. A native of China, Xiaowen, or **Jane** as she signs her e-mail, has already started volunteering for Family Orientation.

We regret to report the death of **Y.C. (Bert) Fung**, who died in December at the age of 100. The founding chair of the Department of Bioengineering, Bert led the department to international fame, so much so that one of our awestruck Chinese scholarship recipients once told that she could not believe that the author of an invaluable textbook she used in her home country was a member of the UC San Diego faculty. We send our condolences to Bert's children, **Brenda** and **Conrad**, and grandchildren, including **Tony**, a graduate of his grandfather's department, currently working on his master's degree in bioengineering.

## Fiona Digney: 2015 Friends Scholarship Recipient

Some of our members may have seen a prominent article in the *La Jolla Light* (December 26, 2019) or read other notices of **Fiona Digney's** D.M.A. recital held on January 8. A star percussionist, Fiona came to UCSD six years ago upon the encouragement of Professor **Steven Schick**, who heard her play in Australia. Here she has been working towards her doctorate in music and been performing actively—locally, nationally, and internationally—frequently with the percussion ensemble *redfishbluefish*.

Asked about her future plans, Fiona answered: "I am planning to stay in San Diego, as I have a green card now and am the managing director for local non-profit performing arts organization Art of Elan, and as of next year will be the new Executive Producer for the Ojai Music Festival—so lots of exciting things. I still have a dissertation to write, and I plan to defend and graduate in June 2020. Fingers crossed!"

"Hope to see you and many others at the concert on Wednesday—it will be really special. Just over an hour long, two fantastic pieces; a world premiere by myself and my duo partner **Kyle Johnson** [who also received a 2015 Friends scholarship], and the wondrous two piano and two percussion work *Music for a Summer Evening* by **George Crumb**. For this piece, I'll be joined by UCSD professors **Steven Schick** and **Aleck Karis**, as well as recent UCSD graduate **Kyle Adam Blair**. It will be a very accessible concert for all to attend, and I am looking forward to sharing this gorgeous music with the community."

Accepting Fiona's invitation, I found the concert wondrously beautiful.

—Friends Scholarship Chair

# Donations

—by Ruth Newmark

As our Friends President so aptly pointed out in her end-of-the-year request for donations, support for our programs, in particular for our scholarship program, is both crucial and much appreciated:

"By investing in our UC San Diego students YOU have a positive impact not only on one student but on a spider web of students. By supporting programs you have a positive impact on not only on one international visitor, but a spider web of friends and family across the globe. Time and time again, both students and program participants share that the greatest gift they receive from Friends is the knowledge that there are strangers who care about them and believe that they have value."

A few of the end-of-the-year donors were already acknowledged in the January *Newsletter*, but because Friends mail takes a circuitous campus route, here follow the names of many more.

We thank **Conrad Fung** for his loving contribution, made in the name of his late father (see Membership p.6), to the *Luna Fung Scholarship* named in honor of his late mother's many contributions to Friends of the International Center, just as we thank **K.C. & Shu Chien**, who similarly contributed to the *Luna Fung Scholarship*.

Other contributors to our scholarship program are: **Nikki Waters**, **Ellen Warner Scott**, and **Estella Paniagua**.

Many donors sent contributions without specifying how Friends might use the money. We are very grateful to: **Laurette Verbinski**, **Nori & Stanley Faer**, **Stephanie Sides**, **Tazuko Usami**, **Dorothy & David Parker**, **Janet & Martin Chrispeels**, **Gail Fliesbach**, and **Christa McReynolds**.

Donations to the Friends UCSD Foundation account earmarked for undergraduate study abroad came from **Louise Kauffman** and from **Dubhasis Dasgupta** (also known to many Friends as the husband of **Tuktuki Bhattacharya**), whose donation comes monthly.

Not just our scholarship recipients, but many of our international visitors comment how much they appreciate our programs and how Friends welcoming atmosphere provides them with a sense of belonging to a loving community.

I quote from two of the most recent communications I received: the first from an undergraduate majoring in mechanical engineering, the second from a native of Japan.

Wrote **Wells Huang**: "I'm currently near the end of my program in the Netherlands and have had a tremendous time overseas. During my time, I tried to balance my time between exploring the Netherlands and studying for my courses. As I come back next week, I want to thank the Friends of the International Center for providing me a scholarship to aid my travels abroad. It provided me with extra income to finance trips across the country and across Europe that I would not have been able to take otherwise."

Accompanying her Holiday greetings with fond reminiscences

of her time in San Diego, **Mariko Usui**, who headed Mommy/Daddy & Me from 2016 to 2018 until her boys started school, but continued to coordinate the Thursday playgroup until the family moved to Florida, included these words of praise for Friends:

"I want to send you best wishes and my heartfelt gratitude for all your kindness and friendship to me and my family during our time in San Diego that will forever be our treasured memories. It has been half a year since our moving to South Florida and now we are loving our life here, too. Although we are now situated on the opposite side of the continent and seeing a different ocean, anytime we are at the Atlantic shore, we so often think of you, San Diego, and the campus, where all the beautiful things happened!"

So, thank you all for your contributions—large and small, be it in a monetary manner or in kind—that allow Friends to continue to further global understanding by offering friendship, hospitality, and scholarships to our UC San Diego international community.

Thank You

## 2020 Jim Arnold Lecture

Friday, February 21, 2020, 4:00 p.m.

UCSD Natural Sciences Building Auditorium

Speaker: **Jennifer Eigenbrode** from NASA

Friends Board member, **Candace Kohl**, who received her Ph.D. in astrochemistry under **Jim Arnold**, invites us to attend the 2020 *Jim Arnold Lecture* to hear **Jennifer Eigenbrode**, an interdisciplinary astrobiologist at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center. A participating scientist for the Mars Science Laboratory mission, Dr. Eigenbrode's work aims to improve planetary mission design, contamination control, and instrument measurements that will enable the search for life beyond Earth.



---

# SCHOLARSHIP REPORTS

---

**Hello Friends of the International Center and supporters,**



Katya Newmark, Joshua Beal, and Ruth Newmark at the Friends May 2019 scholarship awards dinner

Since my time abroad in Italy is about halfway through, I wanted to reach out and provide you all with a quick summary of my experience thus far because you have all provided so much for me.

When I first arrived in Bologna, Italy, all I can say is that I was astonished—by the beauty of the city, the kindheartedness of the people, the preservation of history, and the incredible food that has a funny way of leaving a smile on your face after every bite. From that moment forward, I was in love with the city of Bologna, and I knew that this experience was going to open my eyes to an entirely new world. Now each new world comes with its own learning experiences, e.g. getting accustomed to Italy's crazy traffic patterns of nimble Vespas, air-drying garments, and its overall fast-paced lifestyle. However, these new ways of life are what I have found to be most enlightening during this study-abroad experience. It has been these minute-by-minute differences that truly set this experience apart from anything else.

As time continued, I found myself encountering incredible opportunities like I could never have imagined. Two

e-mails and one application later, I was provided with the opportunity to intern at a nanobiotechnology laboratory at the University of Bologna, working each week with its team on designing and completing experiments, all while practicing my Italian language skills. I also was able to learn the craft of making tortellini, walk the great halls of the OLD-EST university in Europe, and visit some of Italy's most remarkable cities (Venice, Rome, Turin, and more).

Because of this UC Education Abroad Program, I have also had the great pleasure of making what I hope to be lifelong friends. Not just within my study-abroad program, but with other international and Italian students, as well as with some of the people living in Bologna. I even consider the owner of my local pizzeria as a great friend. I usually stop by about once a week for a pizza and together we sit down and eat a pizza while talking about anything, from Bologna to soccer or even his favorite places in Italy that he likes to travel to. Each and every day, I feel closer and closer to the Italian people and their culture, and that same feeling would not have been possible without studying abroad.

My classes have all been very enlightening and enjoyable! I am currently taking courses for my Italian Studies minor: Italian Cinema studies, Roman History, and Italian Literature with a focus on walking pieces. Now I know that a class on Italian literature and walking may sound strange, but it has to be my favorite of all of the courses. It has been deceptively illuminating ... in the course we have

focused on the physical, political, and spiritual implications of walking. Not only do I appreciate walking much more as an activity (which is pretty crucial for Bologna, since the best way to move around the city is by walking), but I have seen so much more of the city because of walking. Professor **Verdicchio**, who also teaches courses at UCSD, is incredibly knowledgeable and has shaped this course into something truly special.

So, yes, this whole experience did take a little adjusting. Maybe it takes a week for clothes to dry, and crossing the street can seem like a game of Frogger, but without this experience I would not have been able to view life in such a different and unique way. I have learned to follow the Italians in their amazing way of life, especially with how they live in the moment. I love that Italians sit down for every coffee and meal; they never take anything to-go. Rather than focusing on the "next thing" (whether that be work, shopping, getting home sooner, etc.), I find that the Italian people would rather sit down and socialize. What for a majority of Americans may be a morning "pit stop" to get their coffee, becomes instead an opportunity to meet others, socialize, and not focus on that "next thing." I really love this, and I have made many changes in my life due to this one simple lesson.

All I can say is, I am very grateful for this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. I send my thanks to Friends of the International Center and all of its supporters for helping me make this dream come true.

With all of my gratitude from the bottom of my heart, thank you!

*Joshua Beal*

Biochemistry and Cell Biology major

---



## Global Seminar at Saint Andrews

This past summer, I had the joy of visiting Scotland for a UCSD Global Seminars program at St. Andrews University. Thanks to the Friends of the International Center scholarship, I was able to travel and fully experience the wonderful people, nature, and culture of Scotland. Let me take you through a walk of Scotland via my academic and social excursions.

In the first week, our class was fortunate to get a behind-the-scenes tour of two different primate research facilities at the Edinburgh Zoo; one investigating chimpanzee social and learning behaviors, the other looking at monkeys. This trip, along with the other academic excursions, brought our classes to life and helped us connect what we were learning to the real world.

Another class excursion took us just a short distance from the classroom to the beaches of St. Andrews. Here, we learned to create stone tools using an ancient technique called "flint knapping," just as we had learned about in our classes that week. I was so proud when I made a semi-functional arrowhead after hours of hitting rocks together.

On one weekend class trip, we learned how marine mammal researchers use citizen science to gather data. We each took turns trying to spot whales and dolphins with our binoculars, struggling to see a fin or tail amongst the choppy waves. We managed to spot a small pod of three bottlenose dolphins, as well as a couple of whales. We were then taken out on a boat to try to see some animals up close, and observe the behavior we had discussed in class. The weather was wonderful, and we quickly spotted a large group of harbor seals sunbathing and splashing in the water. We watched the seals, and they watched us, each curious about and enthralled by the other.

The following day, some classmates and I took a bus tour up to the Highlands and the Isle of Sky, where

we visited several lochs and ancient castles, some of which are still in use today. The lochs were breathtaking, some as clear and smooth as mirrors, others full of boats and fish farms, supporting the economy of the tiny villages on the shores of each loch.

The most exciting part of that weekend, however, was meeting **Hamish**, the Harry Coo (a sample of an especially furry breed of cattle found throughout the north of Scotland). We all took turns feeding Hamish with carrots, potatoes, and other treats. It was a blast!

The final class excursion before we departed helped us deeply connect to our studies of how humans were able to find edible plants and animals to survive through direct interaction with all that Scotland's nature has to offer. During this guided foraging experience, we learned which plants were edible, which ones had medicinal uses, and which to avoid at all costs. We gathered a few leaves, stems, bulbs, flowers, and berries, and helped cook a delicious vegetable stew. It was the perfect (and tasty!) end to an amazing trip.

The flora and fauna of Scotland were truly breathtaking, from streams and waterfalls, to forests and lochs, Scotland is lush, green, and full of life. It makes perfect sense why people have been living here for millennia.

During my visit abroad, I was able to experience the wonderful sites of Scotland in a social setting as well. My newly acquired friends and I began exploring the small and unique town of St. Andrews. One of our favorite places to spend an afternoon was the cathedral ruins on the edge of town. The ruins overlook the water with numerous historical information plaques telling the story of the cathedral and of the town. It was amazing to see history right in front of us and to be able to touch something that has been around longer than the United States has been a nation!

One of the most impressive his-



Hamish

torical sites we visited was the famous Edinburgh Castle, way up on a hill and surrounded by tall walls. From the top, we had an amazing view of the entire city, a beautiful mixture of old and new, full of life and history.

I have always wanted to study abroad, and I am profoundly grateful to the donors who helped make this experience possible. I will never forget the experiences I had, both in the classroom and out. I know I will be able to apply all that I have learned in my journeys going forward, even after graduation.

Thank you Friends of the International Center for making this wonderful and unforgettable experience possible.

*Grae Maddox*

Cognitive Science major



Grae Maddox

Hello Friends of the International Center, During the summer of 2019, I was able to use my scholarship from the Friends of the International Center to participate in a Medical Spanish Immersion program in Riobamba, Ecuador. I spent four weeks working in a variety of medical clinics during the mornings and then taking Medical Spanish classes in the afternoon.

I worked at a rural clinic in Cacha, two urban clinics in Riobamba, and in the pediatrics department in a hospital in Riobamba. In these settings, I was able to practice the medical Spanish I was learning in my classes to talk to patients and the Ecuadorian medical students and attendings I was working with. It was such an incredible experience to be able to connect to patients in their native language, and learn about a different health care system as well.

During the weekends, my program cohort and I travelled to other cities in Ecuador allowing us to experience Ecuadorian culture through visiting museums, exploring nature, and getting our adrenaline pumping through some extreme sports like canyoneering.

Since returning to San Diego, I have been able to use the Spanish I learned this summer to connect with patients during my medical shadowing experiences and when I am helping at the UCSD Free Clinic. None of these opportunities would have been possible without the scholarship from the Friends of the International Center, and I am so thankful I was selected for this incredible experience.

Thank you again for this opportunity!

*Theresa Asuquo*

M.D. candidate, SOM, Program in Medical Education, Health Equity



Theresa Asuquo on the right

## What is Home?

The month leading up to my flight to Barcelona, my anxiety levels were through the roof. I had so many fears and insecurities about everything that could possibly go wrong the minute the wheels of my plane lifted off the ground. Fifteen weeks. Almost four months. As someone who has only been away from home for a month at the longest, time was my greatest fear. What if I did not like my homestay? What if I wouldn't make any friends? What would I do if I got homesick? If anything went wrong, I would quite literally be stuck in a foreign country for a third of the year. Endless doubts filled my mind and tainted the way I perceived this experience that I had looked forward to all my life. Instead of excitement, all I felt was dread and fear.

Two months in and I could not have been more wrong. My experience here has been more than what the brochures promised, and beyond what I could have imagined.

Growing up as an only child, my parents, with the exception of my dog, were really the only constants in my life. Along with being the greatest support system, they were also my best friends. Being away from the only home I've known for such a long time without my parents to help me out of a pickle was terrifying. Because of that, I had so many concerns about the living situation I had blindly committed to.

When I found out that my host mom spoke absolutely no English, I was baffled. I was positive that the three years of Spanish I had taken in high school had in no way prepared me to live in a household where it would be the only language spoken. Granted, I did want to improve my Spanish skills and diving head first into my homestay would definitely help. Making friends was also a huge concern of mine when it came to living in a homestay. .

Starting out, communicating with my host mom (whom I now call

Happy New Year!

At the end of the year, I like to revisit the best parts of my year and to give thanks to those who made them possible. To you, Friends of the International Center, I would like to give thanks for your financial support towards my summer study abroad program in Paris. As a budding biologist, I had stumbled upon an unexpected interest for sign languages while taking ASL classes my sophomore year. I joined a sign language linguistics lab as a research assistant to further my interest academically, and was then recommended to take the Sign Languages in Paris Global Seminar with Professor Lott for five weeks to explore the historical roots of French Sign Language.

Thanks to your generosity I was blessed with five weeks that gave me the opportunity to network with keystone individuals in the Deaf community in America and France and to visit significant locations in the history of American Sign Language. These five weeks, I was also able to expand my knowledge of French culture and become a better international citizen in the process.

You have enriched my college education with experiences that I may share with those who have not had my opportunity, and so that we may all become better informed and more culturally aware. I thank you from the bottom of my heart for this opportunity of a lifetime. You have inspired me to give back one day, when I have the means to, to help others go abroad and to experience beyond their wildest dreams.

*Jan Hsiao*, Biology Bioinformatics major

**Mama Lluisa**] was definitely a struggle. The combination of not having used Spanish outside of class and the speed at which my host mom spoke made understanding anything she said to me practically impossible the first couple of days. Though communication the first week consisted of a lot of gestures and varying forms of "Lo siento pero no entiendo," patience and intense listening helped me pick up the language. As a personal goal, I tried to avoid using Google Translate as much as possible and forced myself to find alternative ways to describe what I was trying to say, and found that through struggle and asking Mama Lluisa for help, I was able to learn a lot more a lot faster. While I

can't say that I'm fluent yet, I can now understand almost everything Mama Lluisa says to me.

One of the things I love most about being in a homestay is being able to come "home." Having lived in apartments my past two years of college, I never felt extremely comfortable in them. Home to me was still where my parents were. Here this apartment has grown to become my home. I feel at ease when I walk through the door after a day of classes or a long weekend away. Whether it be seeking the comfort of my bed or looking forward to a home-cooked meal, this apartment has become the home where I can be myself. Since I've arrived, it has quite literally been

my happy space, and I can't put into words how grateful I am to have gotten so lucky with Mama Lluisa.

The lyrics from a song a friend recently showed me really resonated with my experience: "If all I have is me, then all I need is family/If all I have is home, then all I am is happy."

All I knew when I came to Spain was myself. Since then, the people I have met and Mama Lluisa have become my family. The kindness and warmth of Mama Lluisa have turned my homestay into my home rather than just a place to live. And as the song says, all I am is happy.

*Win-Ying Zhao*

OAP in Spain

Mechanical Engineering



**GIVE THE GIFT OF LEARNING:  
HONOR SOMEONE SPECIAL with a gift to the  
Friends of the International Center Scholarship Fund**

Birthday ----- In Honor  
In Celebration of ----- Anniversary  
Congratulations ----- Other ----- In Memory

Name of Honoree \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Message \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Donor \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Amount of Gift Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

No donation is too small.

Please make your gift payable to Friends of the International Center Scholarship Fund and mail to: Friends of the International Center, UCSD International Center 0018, 9500 Gilman Drive, La Jolla, CA 92093-0018. Your gift is tax deductible.



**IC TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

Friends Office (858) 534-0731  
Friends Resale Shop (858) 534-1124  
Global Education Main Office (858) 822-0464

***Friends of the International Center,  
UC San Diego***

**Website:**

icfriends.ucsd.edu

**E-mail:**

icfriends@ucsd.edu

The Friends of the International Center *Newsletter* is published monthly, September through June. All material submitted must be received in writing by the editor no later than the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month prior to publication.

Editor: **Ruth Newmark** (editorFIC@ucsd.edu)

Contributors: **Joan Adamo, Jennie Chin, Nori Faer, Linda Ferri, Elisabeth Marti, Yukina Nakazawa, Katya Newmark, Georgina Sham, Cindy Tozer, Eileen Tozer, Liz Fong Wills**

Contributing Photographers: **Lou Adamo, Justin Costello, Katya Newmark, Chris Wills**

Circulation: **Renate Schmid-Schoenbein**

Please report all address changes to Friends of the International Center; the U.S. Postal Service will not forward the *Newsletter*.



FRIENDS OF THE INTERNATIONAL CENTER  
University of California, San Diego  
Global Education  
9500 Gilman Drive, #0018  
La Jolla, California 92093-0018

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
SAN DIEGO, CA  
PERMIT #1909

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



February 2020



## Friends of the International Center

*Friendship • Scholarships • Hospitality*

**Supporting global education  
at UC San Diego for 58 years**

(Please print)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Last

First

Spouse/Partner \_\_\_\_\_

Last

First

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

☐ I wish to make a donation to Friends Scholarships \$ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ I would like to receive the *Newsletter* in electronic form

☐ I am interested in these volunteer opportunities: \_\_\_\_\_

### MEMBERSHIP\*

☐ \$ 35.00 member ☐ \$60.00 supporting member

☐ \$100.00 sustaining member

☐ \$ 1,000.00 life member

☐ \$ 500.00 non-profit corporate membership

☐ \$ 1,000.00 corporate membership

*\*Includes spouse/partner*

Membership and donations are tax-deductible.

Make checks payable to:

**Friends of the International Center UC San Diego**  
**9500 Gilman Drive #0018**  
**La Jolla, CA 92093-0018**

**E-mail:** icfriends@ucsd.edu

**Telephone:** (858) 534-0731

**Website:** icfriends.ucsd.edu

*Friends of the International Center is incorporated as a non-profit educational charitable trust by the State of California and is registered with the Internal Revenue Service as a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization. Thus all donations, including resale items, are tax-deductible to the extent provided by law for those donors who itemize their donations.*

MEMBERSHIP FORM