



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

Newsletter

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June 2016

Farewell to Our International Center

I start my last presidential *Newsletter* column for this academic year with an expression of gratitude to each of you, a supportive member of the Friends, coupled with a few questions: where do you see the Friends in the next five years? What would you like to see the Friends continue to do? And, more importantly, what are you willing to do to help the Friends achieve and be what you want? The need for active members is at an all-time high, so please consider becoming more involved with this remarkable and impressive organization.

This past year has been a triumphant one in so many ways: each of our daytime Friends programs has experienced a robust and dynamic energy with ever-growing attendance and expressions of gratitude: our Family Orientation program now welcomes international families before they even arrive at UCSD; our English Conversation programs have expanded in all directions; our Tuesday Craft Circle has renewed vitality; our Wednesday Coffee program continues to provide a commendable variety of activities, including the well-attended Mommy/Daddy & Me sessions; and our International Kitchen and International Cooking Experience

programs never cease to amaze me with the high quality and thoughtful menus prepared and offered at bargain prices.

Our international participants have accepted greater leadership opportunities and have shown themselves to be invaluable partners; our Resale Shop has had record-breaking sales and has, without question, become a safe haven for people just wanting a place to connect; our Scholarship program has experienced a banner year with the award of \$103,000 (new record) to a truly amazing group of students; our evening programs continue to provide delicious food and engrossing entertainment; and our relationship with the IC Staff has strengthened and we are all the better for the improved bond. We have proven that community, through Friends, works well!

Thus, it is oh so bittersweet to acknowledge that we will be leaving our beloved International Center, home to the Friends since the building's construction, forty-five years ago. To be President and unable to stop the demolition of the building my mother, **Ruth Newmark**, helped found, is doubly devastating. It looks promising that most of our programs will continue at the International

**Farewell Party
June 10, 2016!**

House (north end of campus), but as of the deadline for *Newsletter* submission, the Resale Shop remains homeless, so please keep your fingers crossed, say a prayer, burn a candle (or sage), do Tai Chi, meditate, draw a mandala, or perform any other ritual that you believe will offer the Friends safe passage into its next environs.

Hard to believe I am quoting a basketball coach, but **Phil Jackson** is right: *The strength of the team is each individual member. The strength of each member is the team.*

Congratulations to everyone associated with the Friends of the International Center for an amazing fifty-four year winning streak.

Please know I value each of you and please know that the Friends needs more of you on the court (and on the Board), so please e-mail me your answers to the questions posed at the start of this column—they are not rhetorical.

Wishing you all a very enjoyable summer.

Katya Newmark
presFIC@mail.ucsd.edu

International Center Moves

Dear Friends of the International Center,

It is a pleasure to have this opportunity to communicate with the full membership of the Friends. As many of you already know, the coming months will be a time of transition for the International Center staff and the entire community at UC San Diego. Over the summer the units housed within the International Center and the adjacent annex building, Student Center B (International Center West) will be relocated to transitional locations on campus. This action is being taken to improve the working conditions for the staff while preparing for the demolition of the existing Center buildings. The Friends of the International Center and the Oceanids have contributed to conversations on where to migrate programming within the temporary locations. These moves may impact the continuity of support to campus constituencies on a very temporary basis and our goal is to maintain Friends programs throughout this period of transition. We ask for your patience, understanding, and support as this process unfolds. Please be assured that in this moment there is no higher priority than to ensure that the Friends remain at the center of our vibrant and growing international community.

The major relocations include:

- Study Abroad Office—Building 409 (Matthews Quadrangle)
- International Students and Programs Office—Student Center B
- International Faculty and Scholars Office—McGill Hall, Room 2126 (Muir College)
- Dean's Office—Building 409
- Friends of the International Center—many activities in the Great Hall in Eleanor Roosevelt College
- Oceanids—McGill Hall, Room 2126 (Muir College)

The International Center has served as the nexus of international community at UC San Diego for over 45 years. Since its inception, our international community has grown from a little over 100 visiting scholars and students to numbers that could not be imagined at the time. The Center and the Center annex building, Student Center B, currently serve a core clientele of 7,280 international students, 2,739 visiting international faculty and scholars, and over 7,000 domestic students seeking study abroad opportunities. In addition, the Center also serves 500 student and scholar dependents. These populations have long outgrown the current space. The reimagining of a new nexus of international community for the campus is underway and will strive to capture the historic and unique aspects of the original International Center and, at the same time, provide forward-thinking innovations that will serve the campus far into the future.

The Friends are a key element in the capital planning process for the new campus gateway, which will celebrate UC San Diego's leadership in global education and research.

Historically, the Friends have been one of the key ingredients in the University's outreach to the world, and I assure you that the Friends will remain at the heart of the University's presence in the world community going forward.

Best wishes.

Sincerely,

Jeff Orgera, Assistant Vice Chancellor, Student Retention and Success

Kirk Simmons, Dean of the International Center

**For information on our
planned farewell to the
International Center,
see p. 11.**

Dear Friends Members,

I know that many of you are anxious to know about the status of our beloved International Center and what this means for the Friends. Please be advised that we are confident the majority of Friends programs will continue at I-House, but we have yet to be given a location for our immensely successful Resale Shop or for the highly valued Oceanids Kitchen Exchange. We continue to be optimistic that appropriate space will be found / created for these programs and will, of course, let you know as soon as we know more.

As to our monthly calendar, please confirm time and place of our usual activities with the program chairs.

Thank you for your patience and support.

Katya

June Calendar

June 1, 15: **Family Orientation**, 9:15

June 1, 8, 15, 22, 29: **Wednesday Coffee**, 10:00-Noon

June 2, 9, 16, 23, 30: **Intermediate English**, 10:00-11:30

June 3, 10, 17, 24: **Friday Chat Group**, 10:00-Noon

June 7, 14, 21, 28: **English Conversation**, 10:00-Noon

June 7, 14, 21, 28: **FIC Craft Circle**, 1:00-3:30

June 9: **International Cooking Experience**, 9:30-1:00

June 10: **Farewell Potluck**, 11:30-2:00

June 14: **Board Meeting and Retreat**, 9:30

Oh, The Things You Can Do!

—by Georgina Sham

Friends programs are running more smoothly than ever, largely because of the wonderful participants we have at present. Many have been in America for less than six months, but they have become very involved at the Center. One of the reasons is that we now have almost daily activities, so that they can come to just one place to make friends and to see all their new and old friends.

On Tuesday mornings, they can attend *Gus' English Conversation Table* under the expert guidance of **Nori Faer**, who manages to come up with fun topics of conversation week after week.

They can stay for the afternoon *Craft Circle*, which has become a conversation and projects group. When I was there the other day, some were knitting, some crocheting, and others working on our sewing machines, while right before the start of *Craft Circle*, several were learning/practicing French with one of the visitors! **Mary Woo**, **Lynn Jahn**, and **Jennie Chin** are usually on hand to provide instruction and support.

On Wednesdays, we have *Family Orientation*, *Mommy/Daddy & Me*, and *Wednesday Coffee*, the latter with its varying weekly activities.



Under the parachute: Mommy/Daddy & Me chair, Alice Blake-Stalker, with kids

One of the most popular activities seems to be cooking, such as preparing our *International Kitchen* luncheons for 70 that traditionally are held on the third Wednesday of the month. In April we had a wonderful *Indian Kitchen* led by **Pearl Tangri** with many of the English conversation table participants helping with both cooking and cleanup, so that we were all finished by 1:30, when everyone left full and happy.

On Thursday, sometimes once, sometimes twice a month, there's the cooking class, aptly called *International Cooking Experience*. Chaired by **Tashu Malik**, volunteer chefs take turns demonstrating their cuisine; however, these hands-on sessions are as much about making friends as about learning new recipes.

Recently, I noticed two French participants, **Morgane Bourgeois** and **Emma Forin**, discussing menus for a May cooking class. They were considering a classic French onion soup, *Hachis Parmentier* (reminiscent of shepherd's pie), and *Ile Flottante* (a heavenly dessert consisting of meringue floating on a vanilla custard) knowing that the essential ingredients are readily available and possibly already in our kitchen.

Also on Thursdays, **Diana Saunders** leads an intermediate English conversation group for people struggling with English; yet another good place to form friendships.

And on Fridays, you can find the *Chat Group*, led by **Cindy Tozer**. Some of the chatters have started to play tennis together; others enjoy going on excursions with

each other. Most often, they can be found continuing their conversations at the Center's Friday Café.

Both our program leaders and our international visitors take part in several Friends programs. Cindy Tozer, for instance, became so enthusiastic about our *International Kitchen* program that she volunteered to head an American meal—with apple pie for dessert! Currently, our Brazilian, Mexican, and Korean visitors are all thinking of coming up with menus for an *International Kitchen*.

I seem to have left out Mondays, right? Wrong! Although Friends have no official program scheduled that day, I recently went to the Center on a Monday where I found **Nori Faer** with a group in deep conversation on the front patio, while **Letty Ponomareff** was tutoring someone at another table.

Come any day, any time, and you will find Friends around, and that's not even mentioning the *Friends Resale Shop* that is thriving under **Marion Spors'** leadership and is open four days a week: Tuesday-Friday, 10:00-3:30.

It is hard to believe that May, and at best parts of June, will be the last months for all these activities to take place at our treasured International Center. The transition to another place (see the letter from Vice Chancellor Jeff Orgera and Dean Kirk Simmons and Katya's accompanying note on page 2) may bring some interruptions, but wherever we will be, Friends anticipate being able to continue to provide our international community with our usual hospitality programs, including the many activities that offer them a sense of home away from home. —Ed.

**April Friends
Volunteer Hours
1,115 = 6.34 FTEs**

The Family Orientation Family Gets Together

—by Nancy Homeyer



Nancy Homeyer, Macarena Galaz, Yuuka Nishibori, Noemi Aguirre, Barbara Fitzsimmons, Diana Saunders, Wen Gu, and Joengmin Choi

The volunteers for Family Orientation gathered to share food and conversation on March 28 at my home. We welcomed two new volunteers, **Yuuka Nishibori** from Japan and **Noemi Aguirre** from Mexico. Unfortunately, **Joan Adamo**, **Yoko Kageyama**, and **Madeleine Rast** were unable to attend.

In Friends tradition the food was international and delicious. It ranged from Korean barbecue to Chilean salad to apple jumble with several stops in between.

We are delighted to welcome Noemi, Yuuka, and, more recently, **Emma Forin** to the ranks of international volunteers.



Noemi Aguirre

Each wrote a brief bio to introduce herself.

My name is **Noemí Aguirre**. I am from Mexico and came to San Diego with my husband, who is studying for an MBA at Rady School of Management, the business school at UCSD. Back in Mexico, I used to work in the retail industry as an apparel buyer, and I was very busy. When I got here everything stopped suddenly, and I realized my life was going to be completely different. I couldn't apply for a job, I had no friends, and my husband spent a lot of time out of home.

Because I attended a Family Orientation session, I knew about the International Center and I started to participate in the different and great activities happening there: conversation tables, Wednesday Coffee, and cooking classes. Everything got much better, I started automatically to make friends, improve my English, and feel happy again.

So I decided I wanted to do more for my new community and volunteered for the Resale Shop. Then my good friend Yoko from Japan told me there was an opportunity to join Family Orientation and I gladly accepted. I really want to transmit to people who just arrived here that, despite the struggle they may experience

in the first weeks, this can be an amazing experience that will create life lasting friendships and memories, and will fully enrich their lives.



Yuuka Nishibori

My name is **Yuuka Nishibori** from Japan. I am here for my husband's MBA study at Rady Management School. Actually, this is my third time living in U.S., and second time in California. I am spending a 1/3 of my life in U.S.

Although I am very used to American culture, and as much as I love California, I still had a hard time when I came here. For me, it was not a cultural difference but more of my status, which made me insecure. To come here, I had to quit my job, which I really liked. Accepting me being a "stay-at-house-wife" was the hardest thing for me. (I am not able to work in U.S, under my current visa status.) From fulltimer to a housewife seemed a huge step down, and the situation made me depressed every moment. I felt like I am not contributing or accomplishing anything, and strongly felt that I am left out of society.

But then, my husband introduced me about International Center, and I start to join the conversation group on Friday. I met a lot of people who also came to U.S. to sup-

port their spouses. Sharing the same experiences with those participants took my stress off.

I started to make friends at IC; sometimes we enjoy lunch together, some times we share our difficulties. I believe it is easy to make friends when you are under the same situation, because you can understand and support each other. Those friendships gave me positive energy and I became very active. I try not think about my job as I used to and explore San Diego as much I can.

I truly appreciate what Friends of the International Center has provided for me, so I decided to volunteer as one of the Family Orientation members and help out our newcomers to enjoy their life in San Diego.

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My name is **Emma Forin**. I come from France, and I have been in San Diego for six months. I came with my husband, **Antoine Aubret**, who is a post-doc in physics. He finished his Ph.D. in October 2015, and received a job offer in a new research team in UCSD. I worked as a neuropsychologist at the public hospital in France with a master degree. This profession requires a Ph.D. in the USA, so, there is no equivalence between our two countries.

Actually, the decision to accept or not accept this job was really difficult, not only because it was at the other side of the world, but also because my husband wasn't the only one involved in this new life to come. We finally decided, together and for the two of us, to get this opportunity. I quit my job, knowing that I couldn't work as a neuropsychologist, and we moved in San Diego in November 2015.

One of our main goals was to find, somehow, a way to turn this work opportunity for my husband into a good experience for me, despite of the fact that I couldn't work.

When we received all the papers for the inscription of my husband,

I saw an invitation to join the Family Orientation and the Wednesday Coffee, led by the **Friends of the International Center**. I immediately decided, three months before coming here, that I will join and discover this group. At this moment, I didn't know that it will become my main occupation, and one of the most important things in my life a few months later!

Indeed, when we arrived in San Diego, we attended the **Family Orientation** two days later. I received such a lovely and warmly welcome that I immediately felt comfortable in this organisation. I discovered that they lead different kinds of activities, and decided to attend almost all of them.

At the very beginning, I come to the Center every day except for the Monday. Now, with my husband, we both have a place to go in the morning: he to work and I to the Center!

I didn't speak English very well when I arrived. With the conversation table and the English class, I found caring volunteers, who are always encouraging us to participate and share what we are or what we know. I think I really improved my English and I now feel more comfortable to have a discussion with somebody. I also feel that I am able to understand what someone tells me in the bank or in the supermarket.

Because my husband and I were alone for Christmas, we received an invitation to a Christmas dinner by **Katya Newmark**, President of the Friends, and I think that it really shows the generosity and the spirit of the Friends. I have now friends from all over the world, which helps me to be more open-minded.

I decided why not improve some other skills that could be interesting and fun at the same time? I attend the Craft Circle, the Wednesday Coffee (a different activity each week), the cooking class, and try to help in the kitchen when it's necessary. I learned how to use a sewing machine,

something I was expected to do for a long time. I have always been a bad cook, and I am very surprised to discover that I actually like to cook, when it's made with my friends in a sharing spirit.

I met my new best friends, **Morgane** from France and **Ximena** from South America at the International Center. We spend almost all our weekends together, and it's incredible for me to note that we can share such a friendship in another language with people from the other side of the world. I also created a very strong relation with three volunteers of the Friends: **Lynn Jahn**, **Mary Woo**, and **Jennie Chin**. I can consider them as my "American aunties." I know that I can count on all of the volunteers if something happens or if I have a question, a doubt, or simply something to share, which is really comforting.

In return, I am happy to help for the Family Orientation (helping to welcome the new people and explain what are the different activities).

Well, all of these words to say that I am very thankful to the Friends to be such an amazing association. They always make me feel comfortable, and I really feel that I have my place in there. It's one of the best feelings to be a part of something and to be accepted as you are for what you are.

Thank you Friends! May you last as long as somebody needs you.

Donations:

Our heartfelt thanks to **Debby & Raymond Park** and to **Georgia Crowne** for their scholarship donations. Georgia's was earmarked for the *David Crowne Scholarship*, named in memory of her late husband.

Membership:

Please welcome **Marilyn Meyers** to our membership.

THE BRIGHTEST STARS ARE THOSE WHO SHINE FOR THE BENEFIT OF OTHERS

Volunteer Recognition Lunch



Congratulations



Awardees with Dean Kirk Simmons

The invitation to the May 10, 2016 International Center Volunteer Awards ceremony read: "On behalf of the IC Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon Committee, we'd like to invite you to the 6th Annual Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon to honor you for everything you do for the International Center. All of you are shining stars in the lives of international students, scholars & spouses that you have helped and supported here at the International Center! We are so grateful for your time, dedication, and enthusiasm in helping our international community!"

The well-attended, festive luncheon was held on the I-Center patio. **Courtney Giordano** served as master of ceremonies with **Dean Kirk Simmons**, **Kelly O'Sullivan Sommer**, and **Shelly Taskin** introducing the awardees and handing out the Chancellor's Awards. Reminiscent of a theater awards ceremony, honorees walked the red carpet, had their picture taken, and were offered fun photo ops.

2016 Chancellor's International Center Volunteer Awards

FRIENDS MEMBER OF THE YEAR: TASHU MALIK

Little did **Tashu Malik** know when she came to a Friends Wednesday Coffee as an international participant that she would become so engulfed with the Friends. From the start, Tashu showed herself to be an enthusiastic and immensely capable young woman who took to volunteerism with a penchant we wish we could clone.

Notwithstanding a different cultural background and a lack of familiarity with non-profit boards, Tashu proved to be a quick learner with a keen mind as she embraced the challenges of serving on the Board as the Friends Recording Secretary. She could be counted on to offer insight and help with whatever additional needs the Friends had.

Tashu's prowess in the kitchen is matched only by her organizational skills and admirable level of professionalism—skills that she brings to every activity she is involved in from leading a cooking demonstration for the International Kitchen program, to co-chairing a Friends Dinner Social, to co-leading the popular International Cooking Experience program. Tashu's grace, warmth, and support inspire others to assume larger leadership roles.

Tashu is a wonderful ambassador for Friends, a real treasure, and will be sorely missed when she leaves our area in May.

FRIENDS NEW VOLUNTEERS OF THE YEAR: DANYA COSTELLO & JUSTIN COSTELLO

Sister and brother, granddaughter and grandson of Friends founder **Ruth Newmark**, daughter and son of Friends President **Katya Newmark**, **Danya** and **Justin Costello** have proven to be invaluable and loyal volunteers. Organizers of each of the Friends major events depend upon the pair's energy and willingness to lend a hand wherever help is needed.

Collectively and individually Danya and Justin perform a wide variety of behind-the-scenes support, including: promotion, running errands, writing *Newsletter* articles, procuring needed supplies, moving heavy objects, and providing transportation services for guests no longer able to drive.

At events, it is customary to see Justin overseeing the parking lot before transforming himself into waitstaff and expediter at evening Friends programs. Taking her job as a beverage dispenser seriously, Danya became a certified beverage handler, and typically foregoes eating, so that she can provide continuous drink service throughout the evening.

The two can be counted on to take international visitors on tours of San Diego, hikes, surf lessons, or other activities as interest is expressed. The two also act as unofficial ambassadors for the Friends at local community events and clearly enjoy supporting their grandmother's legacy.

INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR:
DIANA SAUNDERS

Originally from England, **Diana Saunders** came to UCSD in September 2015, with her husband, **Luke**, a post-doc researcher at the Shiley Eye Institute. Diana attended the Friends Family Orientation and clearly felt a connection, as she began to immerse herself in many of the different Friends programs, initially as a participant at Wednesday Coffee, the English Conversation groups, and the cooking classes. Very quickly she took on greater responsibilities as a Friends volunteer in the Resale Shop, as a tutor in the English-in-Action program, and as a server at Friday's International Cafés. Diana also recruited Luke to volunteer at several of our Friends evening programs.

As an English-as-a-Second-Language teacher and an international presenter in the Friends Family Orientation program, Diana watched newcomers struggle with comprehension of information provided, and recognized the need to offer a more introductory English grammar and conversation program to further help our international visitors develop stronger language skills. Diana soon volunteered to launch a new Friends program for less-proficient English speakers, a group that, since October, meets every Thursday morning.

ORGANIZATION OF THE YEAR:

FRIENDS FAMILY ORIENTATION PROGRAM

The Friends **Family Orientation Program** was begun in 2010, at the suggestion of former International Center Dean, **Lynn Anderson**, to provide the dependents of the campus' international visiting scholars with additional resources and support. Originally chaired by **Joan Adamo**, the program has been chaired since 2011 by **Nancy Homeyer**, and could not operate without the faithful support and hard work of local presenters: **Joan Adamo**, **Barbara Fitzsimmons**, **Madeline Rast**, and until recently, **Eleanor tum Suden**.

Family Orientation has undergone a number of changes in the last 18 months: **Katya Newmark** created a PowerPoint presentation that has been revised several times and now incorporates the IFSO's staff presentation for spouses of international faculty and scholars. The first ever Family Orientation for spouses of international graduate students was held in September of 2015. Welcome e-mails with information about Family Orientation are now sent to all spouses of international faculty and scholars *before* they leave their home country—over 250 such e-mails have been sent since July 1, 2015.

Another significant change to the program is the inclusion of international spouses as presenters: their perspective has made the program more relevant as

they courageously share their feelings and problems adjusting to a new culture with complete strangers.

The international volunteers work together to support one another, to collaborate, and to assume greater leadership roles. One project taken on this year by the international volunteers was updating the Friends *Welcome!* booklet, originally put together by Wednesday Coffee. **Wen Gu's** work inputting the revised booklet was critical to its printing. **Yoko Kageyama** coordinated the project to translate the most critical parts of the booklet into several languages. She provided the Japanese translation, **Jeongmin Choi** the Korean, **Macarena Galaz** the Spanish, and **Wen Gu** the Chinese translation.

For many international newcomers to UCSD, Family Orientation has been the portal through which they connected to the great programs and activities of the Friends, as well as their first "Welcome" to the country, the university and the community.

ENGLISH-IN-ACTION TUTOR OF THE YEAR:
EARL WOOD

Earl Wood has been a tutor with the English-in-Action program for 30 plus years. He has worked with over 50 tutees from 15 different countries. When he was attending college, Earl tutored English to make a little extra money. During that time, he enjoyed tutoring and learning about his tutees so much that when he moved to San Diego in 1982, Earl searched for the nearest university that had an English tutoring program. That search brought Earl to our international students in the EIA program at UC San Diego.

What Earl has enjoyed most about the EIA program, aside from seeing improvement in a tutee's language and social skills, is learning about their lives and the living conditions in their different countries.

STUDY ABROAD RETURNEE OF THE YEAR:
KELLY TREJOS-ANGULO

As an ERC student majoring in International Studies with a minor in Japanese Studies, **Kelly Trejos-Angulo** has taken full advantage of the study abroad programs available to her. She spent a summer in London through the Global Seminars program and immediately thereafter found herself studying at Meiji Gakuin University through UCEAP. Upon her return, she became involved with the Study Abroad Office serving as a student ambassador in the STARS program. Kelly also volunteers as a tutor for the English-in-Action program, and over the years has worked with five international students, meeting with them once a week to help improve their English language skills, as well as with the cultural aspects of living in the United States.

SCHOLARSHIP LETTERS

Dear Friends,

The highlight of my summer was my fieldwork in a rural village called Huay Krathing, located in the mountains of Tak Province in Northern Thailand. In preparation for our research, my team and I took three days and evenings to plan a comprehensive agenda for our week in the village. Our greatest challenge here was structuring interviews into activities with an emphasis on drawing and mapping to reduce the barriers of language. After three arduous days of brainstorming, coordination, and frustration, we finalized our plan and set out, rather nervously, for Huay Krathing.

Within ten minutes of arriving in the village, we had already faced complications with our plan. The relentless rain discouraged community members from attending our first meeting, and the lack of light, particularly in the evening after sundown, made it difficult to carry out our intended introductory activity anyway. But to be honest, I was quite relieved that the rain had hindered our plans. I was completely overwhelmed and bewildered by Huay Krathing—the thatched and raised houses, the roaming chickens, the puzzled stares, the darkness, the lack of running water, the endless greenery everywhere. It was very, very different from San Diego. That night, I brushed my teeth outside with my friend's flashlight strapped to my head. I showered with a bucket. I blew out my candle to sleep. I could not believe that I was actually there, but I was absolutely thrilled. This was exactly what I had signed up for.

My most memorable interview was the community mapping activity, in which community members were asked to sketch a map of their community and label places that were significant to them. Participants were broken up into three groups: older men, younger men, and women. My

partner and I facilitated the activity with the group of women. After we finished explaining the directions, the women debated amongst themselves, pushing and volunteering each other to begin the project. After a good ten minutes, the poster remained blank. Our translator explained that they were afraid—they had never picked up a pen before. Despite our gentle encouragement, they insisted on waiting for one of the literate women to come and do the drawing.

When the mapping was over, we had each group present their map and elaborate on the significant places they highlighted. Our group waited until the other two groups had finished presenting, but when their turn arrived, no one stood up. In the end, a few of the men from the other groups presented their poster on their behalf. The reticence of women in Huay Krathing became clear to me through this experience. I was not surprised by this concept, for I have read about the existence of gender inequality in a variety of courses. But the reality of it came to me unexpectedly. Studying the statistics makes it easy to forget that behind these numbers are actual people.

That night, I felt really defeated. We completely forgot about the possibility that some people have never held a pen before. We had embarrassed some community members. We felt a bit of bitterness from some villagers, but it was this slight hostility that allowed me to grow. I learned from these mistakes. We failed to acknowledge literacy rates in the first program, and so we revised our plan to account for such possible hindrances. I learned to be flexible, innovative, compassionate, empathetic. I learned about cultural competence. But perhaps the greatest skill I learned from my experience in Thailand was resilience. I learned to push forward when faced with disapproval and acrimony.

I learned to adapt to constantly changing environments—from bustling Bangkok, to border town Mae Sot, to the rural Bodhivijjalaya College, and finally to Huay Krathing. I learned not only to adjust but also to thrive in these changing physical as well as social environments.

In my short time in Thailand, I acquired skills and collected stories that will stay with me for the rest of my life.

Vennis Hong

EAP, Thammasat University
Muir College, Global Health major

Dear Friends of the International Center,

Thank you so very much for your generous support and encouragement, in particular for the award I received last year. The funds that were so generously gifted to me allowed for the instigation of a very exciting cross-cultural project that will not only be a significant experience for me, but will bring one of the world's top musicians to San Diego to work with me, the UCSD music department, and the La Jolla Symphony.

With the help of the Friends, I have been able to commission the formidable French percussionist, composer, circus artist, director, and instrument designer **Roland Auzet** to compose for me a theatrical percussion concerto. Having worked with Roland briefly in Banff, Canada (2014), I have great confidence that the work we develop together will be an invigorating, innovative, exciting, and dramatic addition to the percussion repertoire.

At the end of May, Roland will travel from France to work with me to start developing a framework for the concerto. We plan to present our work to the La Jolla Symphony and Chorus board of directors with

the hopes that we can have the work premiered during the 2017-2018 orchestra season, which will be conducted by my professor, mentor, and percussion hero: Distinguished Professor **Steven Schick**. This project is an absolute dream come true; to work side by side with my two percussion heroes, and two of the world's most engaging, intelligent, and musical performers: Roland Auzet and Steven Schick.

First, a little about myself. I am an Australian-born percussionist who is currently working on my Doctorate of Musical Arts at UCSD under the guidance of Steven Schick, Distinguished Professor of Music. After studying in Australia, Alaska, the Netherlands, and London, I am happy to call San Diego my home. I have many years experience as a new music specialist, and also have extensive experience in

the theatre, most notably premiering new opera works in the Netherlands, and developing the European premiere of American playwright **Anne Washburn's** post apocalyptic play, *Mr. Burns*, in London (2014).

The planned project is a phenomenal opportunity for me; not only to work with two internationally acclaimed percussionists, my percussion heroes and mentors Steven Schick (directing the La Jolla Symphony) and Roland Auzet, but to also have a major percussion concerto composed not just for me, but developed with me, so that the work is truly a representation of me as an artist, and my collaborations with Roland. It is immensely exciting for me to be able to bring together my American percussion mentor Steven Schick, my wonderful French collaborator (and longtime collaborator with Ste-

ven Schick as well) Roland Auzet, and myself; an Australian percussionist, for such a large-scale and no-doubt dynamic project.

This wonderful project would not have been possible without the generous support of the Friends of the International Centre, and I look forward to providing updates as the project develops. I plan to have a teaser trailer made of Roland and my development days at the end of May to present not only to the Friends, but also to other potential financial supporters who may be able to assist me in gathering the roughly \$20,000 needed to make this project happen. Without the initial boost of the Friends, I would not have been able to enlist the expertise of Roland Auzet, and for that I am forever grateful. Thank you!

Fiona Digney

Diabetes Study

My trip to Oaxaca, Mexico was carried out to conduct research on diabetes prevention and management with emphasis on cultural beliefs and traditional medicine practices among a sample of individuals with and without diabetes. This research was carried out at one of the main health centers in the city with approximately 250 patients participating.

I worked with *Grupos de Ayuda Mutua* (GAM) or Mutual Help Groups, implemented as of 2004 by the Mexican Ministry of Health to address issues related to diabetes, hypertension, obesity, and their related comorbidities in Mexico. These GAM groups aim to promote healthy lifestyles and nutrition as well as chronic disease management. They also provide medical counseling and staff support through the Oaxaca Health Services.

We interviewed patients in GAM programs. The participants were extremely helpful, patient, and so nice to us. It was great to see familiar faces from when I did my thesis in 2010. I was glad to have the opportunity to share my research findings from my thesis with the participants and the health centers and gain more knowledge of diabetes in Oaxaca.

In addition to administering surveys at the community health centers in Oaxaca and working with the Mutual Health Groups that aimed to reduce chronic disease risk factors, I interviewed independent and small businesses in the area that offered a variety of complementary and alternative medicine. These included herbal/botanical supplements specific for diabetes, which generally were taken in the form of tea with specific brewing instructions.

One of the primary aims of my research is to gain knowledge and learn about types of complementary and alternative medicine and types of care used to treat chronic diseases, such as diabetes, in Oaxaca. Mexico's health profile has changed significantly in the last decades as chronic diseases continue to increase. Type 2 diabetes mellitus (T2DM) prevalence in Mexico is among the



Rebeca Espinoza studies a large display of medicinal teas

highest in the world, and is now the leading cause of death in the nation.

Oaxaca is one of the most impoverished, rural states in Mexico with the largest concentration of indigenous people in the country. Despite the increase in T2DM prevalence and associated risk factors in recent years in this area, little is known

about this population's beliefs, understandings, and practices regarding T2DM. In order to address this trend in T2DM growth, more research is needed regarding the existing cultural beliefs and behaviors related to T2DM, which are key to informing diabetes prevention and control.

Thank you for the fellowship that made this research possible!

Rebeca Espinoza

Ph.D. candidate, Public Health

Dear Friends of the International Center,

I wanted to take the proper time to thank you for your financial gift for my study abroad experience in Denmark.

Apart from experiencing a new culture in Denmark, your donation helped me to travel to eight other countries while I was in Europe. Not only were they extremely enjoyable experiences, but I was also able to view the differences in society between all the different countries I visited.

Additionally, I was able to witness the differences in the field of medicine between the United States and Denmark. Being an aspiring physician, it was of great importance to me to be able to volunteer in the field, and fortunately, I was able to in the emergency room at Amager Hospital in Copenhagen. As a result, I was able to see both the benefits and disadvantages of socialized medicine, and compare them to the benefits of medicine in the United States.

Most importantly, your aid helped to establish lifelong relationships with friends and peers that I will always remember. I was able to learn a new language (Danish), which is a great social tie that I formed to my Danish friends and the country of Denmark itself. Thank you so much for helping me to achieve this life-changing experience that I will never forget!

Joseph A. Breuer

EAP, University of Copenhagen
Eleanor Roosevelt College,
Biochemistry/Cell Biology major

On EAP in Italy

Living and studying in Rome during my fourth year of college was a transformative experience. After spending several months living in the historic heart of Italy, I was reminded of my love for all things ancient.

When I decided to declare a double major in history and classical studies, I could have never imagined that I would earn college credit for both of these majors by living and studying in Rome.

During the fall of 2015 I had the amazing opportunity to take courses in Latin literature, Roman history, and Italian through UCEAP's "Rome Through the Ages" program. This program was hosted through the UC Accent Center in Rome, which was conveniently located within steps of the Castel Sant'Angelo, the Pantheon, Piazza Navona, and other famous sites. The most rewarding part of this experience, in my opinion, was connecting to history by visiting museums, historical sites, and ruins throughout Italy.

I appreciate everything that the Friends of the International Center has done for me during this amazing process of studying abroad. I will always be grateful for the support that I received from the study abroad advisers at UCSD.

Amber Knight, Eleanor Roosevelt College

Fieldwork in Cuba

In the Spring of 2015 I was honored to be included among the recipients of a Friends of the International Center award. As an international graduate student in Art History, Theory, and Criticism, my funding options to carry out the field work required for my research are very limited. However, this award allowed me to visit the city of Havana, Cuba, in June of that same year.

In my visit to Havana I engaged in archival consultation at the Centro de Arte Wifredo Lam, headquarters of the Bienal de La Habana, my main object of study for my dissertation. Further, I carried out sessions of participant observation in a workshop organized within the Bienal, as well as interviews with neighbors of the Casablanca district directly involved in the organizing of two exhibitions.

In addition, I got to meet artists and curators working and living in Havana. These people became so important in understanding how interesting and rich the Cuban art world is and has been in the last fifty years. Getting to spend time with them I learnt about ways of working in the arts unique of this country that, at the same time, share some characteristics with other contexts. My perception of artistic production in Cuba became more nuanced and sophisticated.

Opportunities like the Friends award are key aids to advance in our research as international students. Thank you!

Paloma Checa-Gismero

Ph.D. candidate from Spain, Department of Visual Arts

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