President’s Column

I begin with an expression of thanks to the many volunteers who keep Friends programs running over the summer months—the Newsletter, cooking, evening programs, and Resale Shop take a brief hiatus for July and August, while all other programs continue without interruption. Joining our weekly offerings are Tai Chi (Monday, 2:00-3:00 p.m.) and Yoga classes (Thursday, Noon-1:00 p.m.), so I add an official welcome and thank you to our volunteer class leaders, Gladys Wong and Vivian Lin. Please feel free to join these classes any time you are free.

Friends of the International Center’s continuation holds even greater significance given the volatile political climate suggesting reasonable people are on the verge of extinction. It is critical that new arrivals to San Diego be greeted with an open, welcoming, and respectful environment, affirming the Friends mission to support international education, cultural exchange, and, of course, friendships that know no borders or boundaries.

I remind everyone that the University’s International Center, is now known as Global Education and as a result our prior website (icfriends.ucsd.edu) should be replaced with the following link: http://global.ucsd.edu/friends/index.html. On our site, you will find information about all of our programs as well as an interactive monthly calendar. Please rest assured that our name will remain just as it is: Friends of the International Center is a legally incorporated 501 (c)(3) non-profit corporation and after fifty-seven years has no need to change.

The individual units within Global Education will also remain largely the same: Dean’s Office, International Faculty and Scholars Office (IFSO), International Students and Programs Office (ISPO), and Study Abroad UC San Diego (note addition of UC San Diego). And, thankfully, each of these units, along with Student Affairs, continues to provide Friends with invaluable support for which I also express my gratitude.

For example, Friends was made aware of the need to formulate detailed Emergency Action Plans and thankfully Dean Kirk Simmons requested that IFSO and Study Abroad share their respective plans guiding responses to potential emergency situations, providing critical support for our programs operating in McGill Hall and the Dance Studio in Building UC 409.

This past month we were also informed, by our IFSO colleagues, of the need to alter current practices that previously provided our Family Orientation program with data about international families, thereby allowing Friends to extend a welcome to families prior to their arrival. The changes are the result of the University’s need to comply with the new European Union data protection regulations (GDPR).

That technology, regulations, and changes in our everyday world impose additional burdens is a small price to pay for the reward of contributing to a world of tolerance, respect, and friendship. Please mark your calendars for October 13, 2018, for our first Friends Dinner Social of the year (see page 3 for more information).

Welcome to the 2018-19 Academic Year.

Katya
Katya Newmark
presFIC@ucsd.edu
Mah Jongg Madness
—by Nori Faer

It’s been said that the best way to get good at something is to teach it to others. I’ve taken that advice and have introduced the game of mah jongg to the Tuesday participants at Gus’ Table. I am a mere neophyte at playing, so I find myself referring back to the rules book frequently for fear that I will teach them incorrectly. I have images of “old ladies” (probably no more than in their 40s) playing the game at a beach club, their long polished nails clicking against the tiles as the game moves at breakneck speed. That image has now been replaced by a group of young, thoughtful, quiet women, eager to master the rules and strategy.

Sara Khan, from Pakistan, is particularly quiet as she concentrates on her hand as we near the end of the first game. I realize that she is working two possible strategies, something I’ve yet to manage. Sunwon Park, from Korea, wins two games, but restrains from crowing, as she is modest about her victory. Saori Yao, from Japan, has turned out to be an enthusiast and attended both sessions, eager to master the game. Jei Yoon Park, our fearless leader of the conversation table, plays with the intensity of someone at the craps table, while Yeji Kim, also from Korea, who has arrived late, peers over her shoulder, eager to understand the game and Jei’s strategy to win.

There is a lot of whispering going on at that end of the table. Shihoko Kobayashi, from Japan, tries to manage her curious little boy, Yoshito, while studying the tiles in front of her. Yoshito wants to get into the act and grabs some tiles for himself. Mom distracts him with a snack, which lasts only a few moments, and he’s back at the table. It’s Mah Jongg Madness! Susan Graceman, who has successfully mastered the game behind a player and offers advice. I realize that there are already players who don’t want or need the help. As we pack up the game at noon, Claire Harootunian points out that there is little to no conversation happening while we play. We reach a compromise: we will chat for the first hour and play during the second hour. This meets everyone’s approval and all leave with dreams of winning at mah jongg.

Crafters
—by Jennie Chin

Craft projects are pursued at our weekly Tuesday afternoon Craft Circle, but at times also at Wednesday Coffee.

At a recent Wednesday Morning Coffee session, Lynn Jahn led us all doing an embroidery project. Lynn was kind enough to have already cut the fabric shape and added the batting, so that participants only had to pick a fabric backing, decide on a design, and choose the embroidery thread to stitch the design. Lynn and Mary Woo did all the machine sewing, and almost everyone who participated had a finished product by the end of the two-hour session.

Since the weather has been so hot of late, embroidery proved the perfect project: even talking was a bit of an effort, making hand-sewing ideal and a welcome change of pace.

Membership

We regret to announce the death in June of Physics Professor Emeritus Hans Paar and send our love to his wife, Kim Signoret Paar.

September Calendar

Sept. 3: Labor Day
Sept. 4, 11, 18, 25: Gus’ Table, English Conversation, 10:00-Noon
Sept. 4, 11, 18, 25: FIC Craft Circle, 1:00-3:00
Sept. 5, 19: Family Orientation, 9:15
Sept. 5, 12, 19, 26: Wednesday Coffee, 10:00-Noon
Sept. 5, 12, 19, 26: Mommy/Daddy & Me, 1:45-2:45
Sept. 6, 13, 20, 27: Everyday English, 10:00-11:30
Sept. 6, 13, 20, 27: Yoga Class, Noon-1:00
Sept. 7, 14, 21, 28: Friday Chat, 10:00-Noon
Sept. 10, 17, 24: Tai Chi, 2:00-3:00
Sept. 11: Friends Board Meeting, 10:00
Sept. 24: Fall Quarter begins
Sept. 27: Resale Shop reopens, Tuesday-Friday, 10:00-1:00

Family Orientation is delighted to have two new international volunteers: Laura Libotte comes to us from Belgium and Fernanda Vio is from Chile. They both have experience with Friends programs and are eager to meet newcomers and share.—Nancy Homeyer
Support Group Approval

The Friends of the International Center’s application for UC San Diego Support Group renewal for the financial year 2018-19 has been officially approved by Chancellor Khosla, as per his letter, dated July 2, 2018, below.

We thank Friends Financial Advisor, Joan Adamo, for submitting all the required papers; our President, Katya Newmark, and Treasurer, Ruth Newmark, for providing supporting documents; and Dean of Global Education, Kirk Simmons, for his strong endorsement.

Dear Ms. Newmark

I am pleased to acknowledge the Friends of the International Center as an official support group of the University of California, San Diego. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank you and the Friends members for their significant support of the International Center, and student scholarships, as well as their contributions to the international experiences of our students both here and abroad. For 50 years, the Friends of the International Center have provided an integral part of the university experience for our international students and helped to share the diverse cultural landscape of San Diego.

It is a pleasure to recognize you and the members of your group for your continued efforts and commitment. The Friends of the International Center are an invaluable resource to UC San Diego’s international community. I wish you every success with this and future endeavors.

With kind regards,
Pradeep K. Khosla
Chancellor

Friends Volunteer Hours

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total hours for the year</th>
<th>9,537 hours = 4.52 FTEs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>J une 2018</td>
<td>507 hours = 2.88 FTEs</td>
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<tr>
<td>J uly 2018</td>
<td>418.5 hours = 2.38 FTEs</td>
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Donations

Friends are fortunate to have received a fine number of donations, some dating back to the spring.

We thank our loyal supporter Laurette Verbinski for her very generous gift made in honor of her brother, Patrick McGovern.

We are grateful to Deborah & Raymond Park, Mitchell Furumoto, Conrad Fung, Michelle Grandin, Kelly O’Sullivan Sommer, and Ernest Mort for their gifts to our scholarship fund.

July brought a great number of contributions to the Ruth Newmark Scholarship made in celebration of Ruth’s birthday that month. We thank: Alida & Mark Bracker, Brindan Byrne, Alma & Bill Coles, Linda Ferri & Norbert Kubilus, Barbara & Jerry Fitzsimmons, Nancy & Bill Homeyer, Lanna Cheng Lewin, Lily & Shao-Chi Lin, Elisabeth & Kurt Marti, Evan Schapiro, Marion & Kwan So, Peggy Stamon, and Liz & Chris Wills for their thoughtful gifts.

Additionally, we acknowledge with appreciation two further scholarship donations: one by Nona Crampton, earmarked for the David Crowne Scholarship; the other by Michael & Katie Shanks. Good friends of the Crowne family, the latter sent their scholarship contribution to the Friends UCSD Foundation study-abroad account.

Make Your Reservations

Friends Dinner Social:
USA Regional Flavors—Kentucky Bluegrass
Saturday, October 13, 2018, 6:00 p.m., Village 15
https://fdskentucky2018.eventbrite.com

Friends Dinner Social

Last year’s regional American event was such a success that we’re moving to another part of the country and hope you will come experience the distinctive flavors and sounds of the state of Kentucky, nicknamed the Bluegrass State. This will be our first Friends Dinner Social of the year, and is scheduled for Saturday, October 13, 2018. An after-dinner bluegrass concert by local San Diego musician, Jason Diaz, awaits.

Please do not delay in making your reservations by Friday, October 5th, at https://fdskentucky2018.eventbrite.com, where you can find more details.

Katya Newmark
Friends Dinner Social Chair
It was an evening of warmth, a feeling of community, an event to be cherished. We couldn’t have asked for anything more.

The Friends Annual Membership and Scholarship Awards Dinner, held this year on Tuesday, May 22, filled the UCSD Student Services Center Multipurpose Room to capacity with 171 guests. By late afternoon, La Jolla’s all-too-common May grey had let in some sunshine, and although the wind blew in cold air, the SSC courtyard was comfortable enough to hold the check-in and drinks tables and allow guests to mingle prior to the actual dinner.

Barbara Fitzsimmons, Elisabeth Marti, and Cindy Tozer greeted guests as they handed them their nametags with seat assignments. Always eager to save money that can better be spent on Friends programs, Dinner Chair and Friends President, Katya Newmark, had purchased standard white labels at the UCSD bookstore (where she found the best price!) and then colored the ones for adults, so that undergraduates, likely to be underage for drinking purposes, could be more readily identified. This being a family affair, husband, Matthew Costello, was drafted into writing a computer program to facilitate the printing of the nametags, daughter, Danya Costello, made decorations, and son, Justin Costello, volunteered to help take photos.

Liz Fong Wills chilled the wine at her and at Lanna Cheng’s home, then carted the 24 bottles of Chardonnay to the event.

Promptly at 6:30, Katya invited guests to dinner, welcoming everyone.

The room looked positively jubilant with tables covered in alternating kelly green and lime green linens accented by gold napkins, with the dinner program printed in similarly bright colors. Colorful bouquets of flowers lent a further spring air. Candace Kohl, a master at creating lovely centerpieces, combined all types of flowers, with the more exotic coming from her own, extensive garden. Following Katya’s dinner menu described as a mash-up, vases held a mix of delphinium, a classic cottage garden staple; Peruvian lilies; carnations that originated in the Mediterranean; sunflowers native to North America, but extensively commer-
cialized in Russia; along with South African protea, all happily grown in California soil.

The dinner menu, carefully designed by Katya to reflect the Friends cross-cultural mission, invited guests to leave expectations behind and approach the meal with a spirit of openness. UC San Diego Catering was first taken aback by her menu choices, but chefs Josie and Gerardo soon got into the spirit and prepared a delicious meal. At the end of the dinner, Katya thanked the Housing, Dining, and Hospitality culinary team “for being so receptive to my menu requests, for the many tests you do to make sure that what guests receive is the best it can be, and for giving so much thought to presentation! I heard that the Spanakopita Bread Pudding was outstanding and that Josie is adding this item to HDH’s offerings. If this is true, it would be a wonderful thing to know that our collaborations are creating such positive ripples.”

A quote from celebrity restaurateur Guy Fieri underscored the theme: “Cooking is all about people. Food is maybe the only universal thing that really has the power to bring everyone together. No matter what culture, everywhere around the world people get together to eat.”

Already the drinks, offering a choice of either California Oak Grove Chardonnay or non-alcoholic Australian Lemon Lime & Bitters (not just for our many underage student guests) introduced the theme of multiculturalism.

The first course, handsomely presented on stainless steel stands, featured Korean Chicken Tacos on a Corn Tortilla with Kimchi and Sriracha Crema, or a similarly embellished Korean Portobello Taco. This course came with a fitting adage from Cesar Chavez: “If you really want to make a friend, go to someone’s house and eat with him… the people who give you their food give you their heart.”

The main course was a true mash-up: Tandoor Chicken with a Falafel Waffle (or Spanakopita Bread Pudding for the vegetarians) served with a Mexican Corn Salad. The apt description of such a combination of different culinary elements came in the words of Yotam Ottolenghi, a widely-read cookbook author and innovative British chef with deep roots in Israel, thus a bit of a blend himself: “Fusion food as a concept is kind of trying to quite consciously fuse things that are sometimes quite contradictory, sometimes quite far apart, to see if they work.”

Knowing her American audience and our love of sweets, Katya chose a Mark Twain maxim to give us permission to enjoy the final course: “Part of the secret of success in life is to eat what you like and let the food fight it out inside.” We relished the large wontons filled with chunky peanut butter and berries served with a Nutella dipping sauce. At least at my table, people were seen scooping up the remnants of the chocolate/hazelnut sauce with their fork!

Many guests sipped Filipino ginger tea during the brief membership meeting held for the purpose of electing the 2018-2019 Friends officers.

Chair of the Nominating Com-
committee, Elisabeth Marti, presented the proposed slate of officers; Friends members voted by a show of hands; and Friends Parliamentarian, Michelle Grandin, counted the votes. There being no further nominations from the floor, no nay votes, and sufficient proxy votes, Michelle declared that next year’s officers had been duly elected.

On behalf of the Friends Board, Jean Selzer thanked Katya for her exceptional leadership and presented her with a small gift.

Having eaten and taken care of official business, we proceeded to the evening’s speakers.

Dean Kirk Simmons paid tribute to the Friends for the scope of services we provide the international students, scholars, and their families, and for the many scholarships we award in partnership with the university. He thanked members of the Friends Scholarship Committee for the hours spent reading applications. We learned that the department until recently known as International Center has been renamed Division of Global Education, and also learned that UCSD funding for study abroad will be greatly increased with each college receiving a handsome sum for international scholarships. Kirk concluded his words by acknowledging the professional work done by his staff, 15 of which were present, graciously serving as table hosts.

Many will recall the days when we still had our International Center with its large kitchen, making it possible for Friends to prepare meals such as our Membership and Scholarship Awards Dinner. In a spirit of collaboration, staff members volunteered to help serve the meal at this annual event. This extraordinary show of appreciation of Friends contributions has endured, even though the dinner is now catered by UCSD’s Housing, Dining, and Hospitality with dishes being professionally served. While Global Education staff members no longer serve the food, they do continue to assist as table hosts, making sure that guests are introduced to each other and that the conversations flow.

We thank: Lisa Armstrong, Kim Burton, Jim Galvin, Courtney Giordano, Gabriela Hoffmann, Emily Kawahara, Marie Manlapaz, Roark Miller, Kelly O’Sullivan Sommer, Jo Peters, Tonia Pizer, Carol Robertson, David Saide, Nari Shin, and Kirk Simmons, who were aided by Jennifer Leighton from the University Development Office, and by Friends Board member, Jean Selzer, Cindy Tozer, and Liz Fong Wills, in serving as table hosts. To facilitate their task, Katya provided each beforehand with the names of the guests they could expect at their respective table, as well as with a brief description of their status and interests. The same information was laid on each table. It was helpful to know something about each other from the beginning. I can speak for my table, ably hosted by Dean Simmons, that this made us more engaged as Kirk asked each of us to introduce ourselves. Aforementioned knowledge led

### Elected Officers for the Year 2018-2019

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
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<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>Katya Newmark</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vice President, Membership</td>
<td>Georgina Sham</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recording Secretary</td>
<td>Jean Selzer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Ruth Newmark</td>
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<tr>
<td>Corresponding Secretary</td>
<td>Renate Schmid-Schoenbein</td>
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to follow-up questions and to lively discussions.

It is nice to get feedback from our guests. The most elaborate note came from David Saide, who works in the International Students and Programs Office (ISPO) as Intake Advisor. Wrote David to Katya: “It was a WONDERFUL night—now I know what all the hype was about! I had SO much fun with my table and we had perfect intersecting interests and experiences, it was perfect. Congratulations to you and your crew of Friends for being so empathetic and supportive of international education. This night is one of the definitions of why I chose a career in international education: learning, growing, and breaking bread with people of all cultures and interests, especially humane and humanitarian.”

No less effusive comments came from Cindy Tozer, chair of our Friends English conversation program called Friday Chat, “How special, how so good feeling it was for all of us there. I saw it in the emotions of those at my table. Smiling, conversing enthusiastically. You made them feel so good.”

By seating together a mix of Friends, staff, administrators, faculty, and representatives of the San Diego community, we try hard to foster a feeling of inclusivity. Remarked Katya: “I hope that you found your tablemates congenial and interesting, and that you were able to uncover the different intersecting, overlapping interests shared.”

Our next speaker, Dr. Jeffrey Orgera, alluded to his introduction to Friends when he first arrived on campus in the summer of 2015, recently appointed as Assistant Vice Chancellor of Student Retention & Success in the Office of Student Affairs. Without going into detail, Jeff made clear that confronted by a group determined to preserve the International Center, he had felt under attack. Ultimately, Friends and students, who circulated a petition that quickly garnered a large number of supporters in favor of maintaining the International Center, had to accept the administration’s position that the building was too costly to repair. More conciliatory conversations led to mutually agreeable solutions.

Since those tumultuous times, Student Affairs has been generous in finding rooms for Friends activities, despite the scarcity of space on campus, and is generously underwriting a significant portion of the cost of our evening events, as well as our cooking classes, all of which were displaced by the razing of the International Center (an area now, albeit temporarily, used as a valet parking lot). Jeff made clear that our relationship had changed much since his early days, and Jeff could not have been more lavish in his praise for Friends and for our scholarship program.

In a post-dinner note to our President, who had sent him a souvenir photo with her words of thanks, Jeff wrote: “Katya, congratulations to you and the Friends for another spectacular event! It was an honor and privilege to spend time with the community of students, scholars, and supporters. Thank you for the opportunity to attend and be part of this event and great team.”

I received a similarly gracious acknowledgment of my expression of thanks: “Good morning Ruth, thank you for this kind note; you summed up many feelings and emotions from the evening. I was struck by many thoughts during our time together but mostly about the importance of community, as it is a bedrock of social and academic integration of our students, but also staff and faculty. The Friends and their work build large and small communities that make UC San Diego and our society a better place. Thanks for all you do and I’m looking forward to next year!”

As an official UCSD support group, Friends of the International Center have never wavered in our
The purpose of offering friendship, hospitality, and scholarships to the international community. It is wonderful to see it being appreciated and reciprocated.

Our guest speaker, **John Moore**, Professor of Linguistics, past Provost of Muir College, and, as of January 2018, Dean of Undergraduate Education, regaled the audience with an account of his passion for flamenco that led him to buy a one-way ticket to Spain shortly after graduating from high school. He told stories of having to find his way in a totally strange environment, of feeling intimidated by the professional performers he sought out, but also of small successes in finding paid work as a guitarist.

John’s international adventures took him to other countries and at some point he realized that he enjoyed scholarly pursuits. In Turkey, in a bookstore that featured English language material, he picked up a book on linguistics that so captivated him that he soon returned to the United States to enroll in college. An academic career in linguistics followed. While he admitted that his experiences were less structured than the study abroad programs our undergraduate scholarship recipients were about to embark on, he was sure that their experiences would be equally transformational.

John Moore’s dedication to undergraduate education shone through as he told about his participation in faculty-led Global Seminars to Spain and his joy in mentoring students. He became visibly emotional when he described his pride in hearing from students about their accomplishments.

Encouraged by John’s openness, a student who was seated at his table confided that she regretted that she had not talked to him more about her plans, but that she had Professor Moore’s e-mail and would write him. Others too were moved.

**Horst Hoffmann**, former director of UCSD’s International Scholars Office (now IFSO), who spends part of his retirement in his native Germany, wrote Katya: “A big ‘Thank You!’ to you and all the Friends for organizing and helping prepare the Awards Dinner. What an exceptional event! Everything was arranged perfectly, the food was exquisite, and there were so many memorable moments with wonderful speeches. John Moore’s speech was especially touching for me, because it brought back so many memories of my first encounter with California (EAP) students at my university in Göttingen in the early 70s—which became life changing for me and many of my fellow students. I had great conversations with the students at my table who are going to Germany. I’m really happy that I was able to attend.”

**Liz Fong Wills**, who hosted a table at which each guest had some connection to China, commented: “I had a great time at my table. Lanna Cheng and David Jordan needed no urging to talk to the young people! I enjoyed talking to Lily Lin. My guess is that everyone at every table had a great time, thanks to the careful seating of the guests.”

We will report on the more directly scholarship-related portion of the celebratory dinner in following issues of the Newsletter.

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**Wednesday Coffee**

—by Georgina Sham

Wednesday Coffee has met every week during the summer except July 4th, and we’ve created wonderful things under the expert guidance of Lynn Jahn and Marie Perroud. We have scheduled lots of fun activities for the fall quarter, including making earrings, sachets, doing some folk dancing, enjoying a potluck lunch, and more!

We’ve had a baby shower for Noriko Honjo, who expects her daughter in September. Wrote Noriko: “I am sincerely grateful to Georgina, Ginny, Jennie, Mary, and Lynn, who planned and organized and prepared this heartwarming event! And I appreciate that Mariko, Sara, Erika, and Jei took and shared the photos; and I would like to thank everyone who I met today! Today was really like a shower of blessings and well-wishing for me and my baby (Piepmatz).” The tradition of baby showers is little known outside the United States: we play games, eat, chat, and open presents—all with babies as the theme. We will have several more baby showers before the end of the year!

Friends has two other programs that we invite you to join! On Mondays, Gladys Wong Chin teaches Tai Chi (24 form Yang style) from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m., and on Thursdays, from 12:00 to 1:00 p.m., Vivian Lin teaches Yoga. These are great classes that will make you more limber and more fit! Both the Tai Chi and Yoga classes are held in the same place as Wednesday Coffee: UC 409, Dance Hall.
Possibly because there were no La Jolla Cove fireworks to watch this year, a smaller than usual crowd joined Friends and Oceanids in our traditional combined 4th of July celebration. However, thanks to event chairs Georgina Sham and Lynn Jahn, helped by Jennie Chin, Marie Perroud, Miracena Ueyoshi, and Mira Vendler, about forty guests—primarily internationals, some with small children—enjoyed socializing, eating American picnic fare, while taking in the stunning view of the ocean from the Martin Johnson House. Special thanks go to Lanna Cheng Lewin for arranging the venue and to Lynn for baking the delicious brownies.

Resale Shop
Starting September 27, the Friends Resale Shop will be open from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., Tuesday through Friday. Please note the curtailed hours necessitated by the resignation of Marion Spors as Shop Coordinator. Instrumental in finding a new home for the Resale Shop upon the closing of the International Center, Marion infused the thrift store with her inimitable sense of style and camaraderie. She is leaving to take advantage of her husband’s sabbatical that will allow for more travel. We will greatly miss her!

The Shop will transition into a new phase. Hopefully, we will find new talent and someone new to take over.

Mommy/Daddy & Me
Under Mariko Usui’s skillful leadership, the Friends Mommy/Daddy & Me program flourished, but because her boys are growing up, Mariko has turned the chairmanship over to Yukina Nakazawa. Nonetheless, Mariko continues to take an active role in the group’s Thursday Play Date at Doyle Park. Wrote Mariko: “Mommy/Daddy & Me celebrated our first day back at the renovated playground with an ice excavation activity for the kids. My kids and I are happy having the weekly opportunity to continue to see our MDM friends!”

Beach Party
—by Cindy Tózer
Among the significant things Friends of the International Center offer to our international community are opportunities to meet and mingle with others in similar circumstances. What could bring them together better than a party at San Diego’s best resource: the beach?

Our July beach party was well attended and many have asked for another.

We will plan a similar party on a late Sunday afternoon, near the beginning of the new academic quarter. Yes, it will be a potluck, but by early evening we will turn to roasting traditional s’mores over a fire pit.
May 1, 2018

Dear Friends of the International Center,

The Alghazaleen Teabags on the street, hills of bright lights, and green mosques, cats running around, and families picnicking on the weekend are bits and pieces of Amman, Jordan that have become my home. The media rarely captures these types of moments from foreign lands. Instead, the media can influence negative stereotypes or generalizations of regions that are different from individuals’ own societies. Therefore, I want to share a few of my experiences and lessons I learned in order to express how incredibly grateful I am for Friends of International Center in supporting my study abroad program.

One of the most common phrases Jordanians use is Ahlan wa Sahlan, meaning welcome. It may be a cliché to mention that this saying describes my experience living in Jordan because of the hospitable culture, but it truly did. Jordan welcomes individuals to get to know the many traditions and historical sites in the country. The invitational gahwah (coffee) or chai (tea) starts conversations and friendships. This is, though, on the individual level. On a global scale, Jordan has for decades been a home for refugees, asylum seekers, economic migrants, humanitarian workers, and students.

I had originally chosen to study in Jordan because of my work with No Lost Generation, a UNICEF refugee initiative, of which Jordan was the hub. In other words, Jordan is the “The Eye of the Storm,” as scholars state, due to its geographical proximity to international conflicts.

Because of this reality, cultures have been mixed. Through interning at a Jordanian gender empowerment program and teaching English to refugees, I was fortunate to hear experiences from Jordanians, Palestinians, Syrians, Sudanese, and people of many other nationalities who have been affected by conflicts. These experiences humanized local and global issues. They will always remain in my memory while I am working towards a career in development and humanitarian work.

One of the greatest lessons I have learned while living in Jordan was the importance of relationships. I have grown up in a collectivist society because my mom is Peruvian and I lived the majority of my life in Chile. However, after being exposed to an Arab collectivist culture, I was surprised to notice many similarities to Latin American culture, and learned a great deal from these differences.

The first week I was in Jordan, I celebrated Eid Al Adha with my host family. During this holiday, I met almost every family member on both sides of mama and babi’s family. That Friday, we passed around Arabic coffee, dates, and sweets during every visit. Sometimes the reunion lasted five minutes and other times hours. After enjoying one of the national dishes, mansaf, and sleeping the entirety of the next day, I found the experience to be beautiful, and I learned a great deal from interacting with so many families. Yet, it was also a culture shock. I, myself, have not had the opportunity before to visit in one setting with virtually all members of my family.

After the celebration, I initially thought that the visiting of family members only was on holidays, as is typical in the United States; however, every week, a family member, friend of the family, or teacher of my host sister would come to meet us. This surprised me, because after the semester ended, I felt that I had spent more time with this household’s family and friends than I have ever spent with my own close family and relatives. I learned what it means to sit and appreciate the company of others, even if it was in silence. The idea of community became apparent with every family occasion and interaction in Jordan.

Studying abroad gave me the opportunity to form relationships with people from all walks of life, and I will always carry the lessons I learned from them. Overall, the importance of human relationships and their ability to humanize global issues was the most important lesson I acquired from my experience in Jordan. “Welcome to your Second Home,” are the words that greet you at the Jordanian border. I fell in love with this place, the people, the food, the language, and inshallah (God willingly), someday I will return.

Alex Gunn
Eleanor Roosevelt College
International Studies:
Political Science major
EAP: Language and Culture in Amman
Dear Katya Newmark and Friends of the International Center:

As I am preparing to start my three-week trip to Bolivia and Argentina, I wanted to share my excitement and gratefulness for the opportunity of financial support for this research trip. Many positive forces have aligned to make this trip happen: scholars in Argentina who accepted to be interviewed, friends who are connecting me to other scholars and Indigenous youth, family who is helping to open doors for possible sites for the dissertation fieldwork. Specifically, I will be looking for strengths and challenges of teacher preparation for Intercultural Bilingual Programs in Argentina. Additionally, I will connect with the community of scholars working this subject and Indigenous leaders active in this endeavor.

On a personal note, I am very happy because my son is travelling with me and my husband will be able to join me in most of the trip, combining his vacations and some work (obviously, this is with our personal funds). Travelling as a family will also contribute to considering our post-Ph.D. plans, as we are aiming to establish ourselves in Latin America to contribute professionally to the betterment of educational opportunities for Indigenous children and youth in that region of the world, with the capacities developed and the networks established at UCSD.

The Friends scholarship plus a Tinker Field Research Grant combined have allowed me to extend the visit from two to three weeks. I am sorry for not being able to visit personally before the trip, I hope to send pictures of some portions of the trip and fieldwork, and visit when I come back.

Finally, I want to share a personal quote that for me speaks of your work promoting international goodwill and understanding: "It is not for him to pride himself who loveth his own country, but rather for him who loveth the whole world. The Earth is but one country and mankind its citizens" [Bahá’í writings].

Zaynab Gates
Ph.D. student, Education Studies

August 2, 2018
September 2018

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