Whether you ascribe to a social network theory, credited to psychiatrist Jacob Moreno (1930s), or the belief in six degrees of separation, coined by social psychologist Stanley Milgram (1960s), or small-world network, as defined by sociologist Duncan Watts and mathematician Steven Strogatz (1990s), or even just kismet that brings people together, it is clear that the power of social connections is an important one spur-ring increased scientific study in a myriad of both social and physical sciences. Of course, the focus of the research varies greatly from trying to predict our economic spending habits to understanding the development of human cellular circuitry, yet it is clear that the role social connections plays in our day-to-day existence is critical, and its impact not yet fully understood beyond general agreement that there is a positive correlation between feelings of social connectedness and good health.

It is my belief, empirically if not scientifically supported, that Friends of the International Center is good for our health and plays an invaluable role in providing feel-good social connections for international visitors, volunteers, Friends members, scholarship recipients, University colleagues, and the local community alike. Not only are Friends activities and programs an easy way to surround ourselves with like-minded people and a great way to expand our cultural knowledge, but they are also an invaluable way to discover new social connections with a diverse and fascinating group of people that we might not otherwise meet.

I recently learned of a marriage that traces its genesis to the Friday Café (when Friends still operated the program) and I am repeatedly thanked for helping to ignite professional collaborations that would not have otherwise occurred but for chance meetings at Friends events—not always by chance, since we try to matchmake where we can. Friend-ships are an everyday occurrence and it is wonderful to know that together we have created a community that transcends the political turmoil that staves off the all-too-often isolation that can occur for us all, especially following the holiday season.

Wrote Adi Hercowitz-Amir, a sociology post-doc from Israel at UC San Diego’s Center for Comparative Immigration Studies:

“I wanted to thank you from the bottom of my heart for the wonderful work you are doing for international scholars here at UCSD. My husband Oded and our three kids had the privilege to join the FIC Kentucky dinner, and besides enjoying the evening immensely and getting the chance to get to know you and Matthew and the incredible work the FIC does, we also felt in such good company, meeting other international scholars. In a multi-cultural campus like UCSD, the FIC has a crucial role in getting international visitors to interact. We all lead such busy lives that we do not always have the opportunity to meet so many interesting people working right beside us.”

It took us only 2 degrees to establish my personal connection with the Amir family: my Dutch/Israeli cousin, a structural engineer, and Adi’s husband, a structural engineer, co-supervised a Ph.D. candidate in Israel, though they are at different universities.

Opportunities to connect await you at our upcoming events: the Brazilian-themed International Café at I-House on Friday, January 25 (Friends is the sponsor), our Vietnamese-themed Friends Dinner Social on Saturday, February 2, 2019, and our Indian-themed Ethnic Dinner on Saturday, February 23, 2019.

I look forward to connecting soon,
Katya
Katya Newmark
President, Friends of the International Center
presFIC@ucsd.edu
Between 1860 and 1954 Vietnam was part of French Indochina, which also included Cambodia and Laos. At that time, colonial Vietnam consisted of Tonkin (North Vietnam), Annam (Central Vietnam), and Cochin-china (South Vietnam). They were governed by a dual imperial administrative system—the native imperial court located at Huế (Annam) and the French administrative government based in Hà-Nội (Tonkin)—although in practice the French colonial government controlled all national affairs, including financial, diplomatic, and military matters.

In 1915, after having experienced a shortage of labor in war factories and suffering a great number of casualties on the battlefields in World War I, France turned to its colonies in the Far East and tapped into their labor reservoir and material resources. As a result, nearly 100,000 men from colonial Vietnam went to France to serve as workers in factories, agricultural sectors, and as labor and combat soldiers from 1915 to 1919.

Indochina also provided France with cash, raw materials such as rubber, coal, zinc, and cement, as well textiles and raw silk.

My talk, however, will focus only on the experience of Vietnamese soldiers and workers in France and will discuss the following issues: why did the Vietnamese “volunteer” to serve France in the war? What were some of their major experiences in France? What were their perceptions about France and its people? How did their experience change their worldviews about France and the established power in Vietnam, namely French colonial and native Vietnamese power, in the postwar period? And finally, what was the impact of this event on French colonialism in Vietnam?
The Friends Family Orientation Program
—by Nancy Homeyer

Around 2009, several members of the Friends Board asked Lynn Anderson, the Dean of International Education from 2007 to 2012, what else the Friends might do to support the international students and scholars on campus. In Lynn’s own words, “The real needs that the Friends of the International Center could address, I felt, would be to provide information about the campus and the San Diego community, provide a venue where family members of international scholars could meet and get to know each other, create a sense of community for these family members at the International Center, and make family members aware of the resources at the IC and on campus. The Friends of the International Center, in characteristic fashion, took on this challenge and developed the Family Orientation program.”

Joan Adamo was the first coordinator until she became the President of the Friends in 2011. Then I took over the position. Eileen Tozer became the new coordinator in November 2018 and will surely add new ideas and direction. At the present time, several things have made the program more effective and efficient. The newcomers are sent an e-mail about the program prior to leaving their home country. We use a PowerPoint program full of photos to present the many different Friends programs and activities.

We have published and frequently revise a small booklet with plentiful information about resources available at UCSD and in the community. Everyone attending receives a copy of Welcome! Information for New UCSD International Arrivals. We provide a translation into several languages of the important parts.

Best of all, well over half of our volunteer presenters are internationals themselves. They are knowledgeable about Friends programs and can readily relate to moving to a foreign country. The program is very well received.

Kudos to Nancy Homeyer for significantly expanding Friends Orientation during the seven years (2001-2018) that she chaired the program.

Family Orientation is now in the able hands of Eileen Tozer, who is helped by longtime Friends volunteer Barbara Fitzsimmons and newcomers Jean Selzer and Loreen Wilhelmy, with Nancy continuing to present and provide counsel.

The current international presenters are many: Tuktuki Bhattacharya (India), Emma Forin (France), Laura Libotte (Belgium), Mariko Hattori (Japan), Mayra Nevárez (Mexico), Maki Sakai (Japan), Yuki Tokuhara (Japan), and Fernanda Vio (Chile).

No wonder that the program is well received with so much expertise!
MEET TWO OF OUR FAMILY ORIENTATION VOLUNTEERS:
Laura Libotte and Fernanda Vio

Dear Friends,

My name is Laura Libotte and I am Belgian. I am an actuary and worked in an insurance company in my home country. I like to travel, to ski, and to sew. I arrived in San Diego in August 2017 to follow my husband, who is a postdoc at Scripps Institution of Oceanography. We both really enjoy San Diego, its beautiful weather and the ocean.

One week after our arrival, I attended Family Orientation and I could not imagine how helpful this was. The activities developed by the Friends of the International Center are really important in adapting yourself to this new, big country. We internationals have to speak a different language, generally cannot work—certainly not immediately—and miss our friends and family that we have left behind, not to mention that the culture is different, so that we can sometimes feel lost.

But at the Center, all the volunteers are so devoted to helping us that I never feel lonely. I practice my English; I make really good friends from all over the world; and I have developed a new passion. Thanks to the Tuesday Craft Circle (and its enthusiastic volunteers), I now truly like to sew during my free time.

My volunteer work with the Friends started in the Resale Shop. I really enjoy the time I spend there with the other people of my team. We meet a lot of students and the vibes are really good. For me, volunteering is a way to feel useful, and I think that I have become more open-minded and more confident because of it.

I now also volunteer at Family Orientation. This is really meaningful, because this program was the beginning of everything. I want to help and to show the newcomers how amazing this Friends of the International Center community is.

I am so thankful for all the unforgettable moments I am experiencing since this adventure started.

Hi Friends!

I am very excited to finally be a part of the UCSD Friends of the International Center (FIC) community.

I am a biologist specialized in Environmental and Natural Resources. Before coming to the U.S., I worked as a researcher in Ecosystem Ecology in Chile studying the impact of global warming in temperate rainforests in South-America, because I want to contribute to nature conservation. I was amazed by the beautiful landscapes and ancient forests I visited in very isolated places.

I arrived to San Diego in 2014 with dreams, doubts, nervousness, and expectations. My husband has just received a postdoc position at UCSD, and I always thought about the pivotal role of a global approach in the development of my career. Therefore, this was also a great opportunity for me.

I had never thought about San Diego as an option, but after my first week here I was already charmed by this beautiful city and the kindness of its inhabitants. As days went by, I found that Chile and California were very much alike. The warm people, the weather, food, and geography are very similar. I immediately felt in good hands, which was very helpful in reducing the stress of moving to an entirely new place.

Moreover, I was amazed by Southern California’s culture. I was pleased to discover that San Diego was selected as one of the World’s Smart Cities by National Geographic, and that it is a world-class leader in sustainability, giving special attention to the urban impact on the environment. This is exactly the direction that I want to take in my professional career.
Nevertheless, things weren’t easy for me. Newcomers usually go to Friends activities after attending Family Orientation, but my case was different. Even though I knew about FIC activities for a long time, I decided to give them a try only four years after I arrived. Why? I was very shy and had a really hard time adapting to living in a new country.

In 2018, I finally took courage and began to attend the Friends Craft Circle, Wednesday Coffee, English Conversation, Yoga, and even Tai Chi that I had never tried before. One month later, I joined the Family Orientation program as a volunteer. All these activities have given me the opportunity to learn new skills, to get to know wonderful people, and to share with other internationals my experience upon arriving in the U.S., including how to overcome the difficulties related to making such a drastic move.

I am very thankful for the incredible opportunities that I have now and to work with the volunteers that support the Friends of the International Center. I really wish to learn from all of you and I hope to build long-lasting friendships with all the members of the FIC community.

Fernanda Vio

Friday Chat

Cindy Tozer, chair of Friday Chat, reports: “We continue to have various activities on days other than Fridays. Walks/hikes are well received. The next one may be to Annie’s Canyon or to Potato Chip Rock. And we continue to enjoy chatting about whatever. It’s the way we learn about each other and form friendly and caring bonds”.

Cindy also shared a Holiday note with photo from one of the Friends former international participants, Junko Takemasa, who returned to Japan, where she and her husband live in Tokyo. Junko has begun looking for a job. “I don’t have any opportunity to speak English these days. It’s so sad. But I often practice speaking by myself. I miss International Center community.”

Dear Cindy,
How are you? I’m Junko from Japan. It has been a long time since I left San Diego. I hope you are doing well and enjoying your Thanksgiving holidays. This holiday reminds me of the dishes we learned in the cooking class: turkey, cranberry sauce, pumpkin pie, and so on.

By the way, do you enjoy Friday Chat and tennis? I guess you do not have both of them this week because of the holidays. How are they going these days? I started to take tennis lessons this month. I need exercise for my health. What is interesting is tennis courts are on the rooftop of a building. You would be surprised at it. Please see an attached picture.

Have a wonderful holiday,

Junko Takemasa

Craft Circle

Jennie Chin states with pride that the very talented Craft Circle participants are doing a fabulous job creating lovely and practical items using our sewing machines, as evidenced by the intricate table runner made by Sara Khan. According to Mary Woo, many have taken to sewing with such passion that they have purchased their own sewing machine.

Sara Khan from Pakistan shows her beautiful table runner
Grazie tante!
—by Liz Fong Wills with photos by Katya Newmark

It is amazing to think that our recent Sicilian dinner was the 119th Friends of the International Center Ethnic Dinner, once again a fundraiser for Friends scholarships. It was held on November 17 in the Great Hall at the International House, the venue that replaces our beloved but now-vanished International Center. Although beautiful, the Great Hall is dauntingly difficult to decorate. Luckily Danya Costello is an artist and was able to make large colorful paintings of Sicilian scenes to fill the great barn-like space. She also made fun pasta “flowers” to augment the very colorful bouquets that were created by Candace Kohl (and that were sold to eager customers to raise even more money for the Friends scholarship fund). Matthew Costello was responsible for expertly mounting the paintings and helping to arrange the tables and chairs.

Joan Adamo had help from Barbara Fitzsimmons and Elisabeth Marti in welcoming the guests. Although Georgina Sham was babysitting in Silicon Valley and not able to join us for this dinner, she made all the attractive nametags and dinner programs ahead of time, and helped with the seating arrangements. (Georgina wins the title of “Best Flying Granny!”)

Our Sicilian dinner was a multicultural experience, starting with a musical performance by Professor William Propp. Although he is the Professor Emeritus of Ancient History and Jewish Studies and the Bookheim Chair in Biblical Hebrew and Related Languages, Propp is also a professional musician who sings, conducts, plays the piano, bassoon and contrabassoon, arranges and lectures about music! Propp treated us to a medley of Sicilian songs sung in Sicilian, accompanied on the piano by Kyle Adam Blair.

A highlight of the evening was hearing from one of the Friends scholarship recipients. Ruth Newmark, Friends Scholarship Committee chair, arranged for us to hear from Daniela Vidart, a Ph.D. student in the Department of Economics from Colombia. Daniela received two scholarships from Friends, one in 2016 and another in 2018. We are so happy to be able to support her and her important work in development economics.

Chris Wills presented us with “Ten Millennia of History in Sicily,” a lecture replete with his photos taken last spring during a trip to see the elaborate Easter festivities in the hill towns in Sicily. Sicily has a great deal of history that does not involve
what is now the rest of Italy. This understanding helped us recognize why Sicilians insist on identifying themselves as Sicilians and NOT as Italians.

Special thanks go to Katya Newmark, who was the chief organizer of this event. Katya worked with the UCSD Catering team to serve us a Sicilian meal, a cuisine that is a little different from the Italian cuisine with which we are more familiar. (The beautifully presented meal was particularly appreciated by Pat Fleming, who inquired who prepared the meal, so that she might consider using the service for another organization she belongs to.) Katya also coordinated with the RG Bar Services, now required in the new venue, and with UCSD Student Affairs. Friends are most grateful to Student Affairs for their financial support of the dinner.

Responsible for most of the seating arrangements, Katya was pleased to hear from Claudia Barton, who wrote: “Thank you and all your team for a lovely evening with dinner and Chris Wills’ talk on Sicily. The table pairing was very carefully done, as I was able to meet a French lady and her husband, physicists—just about what we are ourselves! I was sitting next to a Korean couple; he was doing a Ph.D. in computer science, my old teaching and research field.”

Katya arranged for the concert and all the details that made for a memorable evening with one of our most varied programs. This time our lucky attendees were treated to a wide variety of entertainment, as well as having the satisfaction of knowing that they were supporting deserving international students like Daniela.

We hope to be able to provide similarly varied programs in the future. Grazie tante everyone!

Of course, Liz is far too modest to praise herself for her part in this delightful evening and the many other Ethnic Dinners that she has helped mount, going back as far as 1986! We hope that she and her husband, Professor Chris Wills, will continue to explore interesting places, so that Friends may continue to travel vicariously with them.

Our next Ethnic Dinner is not far off: please mark your calendar for Saturday, February 23, when we will travel to Northeast India. The intrepid couple will then just have returned from their latest adventure and guests can expect to see some remarkable photos that Chris will bring back from that trip, planned in part to follow in the steps of Chris’s grandfather, a geological surveyor, mapping mineral deposits in that part of the world.—Ed.
Do you have thoughts of being Mary Poppins, or, perhaps of being any lovable Dick van Dyke character (e.g., Caractacus from Chitty-Chitty-Bang Bang), or are you just someone who loves young children? Why you ask? Because we have a help wanted request from our fabulous international families participating in the Friends Mommy/Daddy & Me program.

For many years, Friends member Alice Blake-Stalker has been known as “Grandma Alice” to hundreds of international families, infusing not only her playful exuberance, but also her sage counsel and knowledge of American culture.

Regrettably, Alice is no longer able to continue in her role on a regular basis and the group is in strong need of a new grandparent, or set of grandparents, willing to share themselves with a dynamic group of young international families. Our new grandparent(s) don’t have to be from the same family and may be of different or the same gender—we are quite modern! It is also possible that this role could be shared.

The program meets at McGill Hall (2nd floor in IFSO Office Program Room) on Wednesday afternoons, from 2:30 – 3:30 p.m. A volunteer parking pass can be provided for the very proximal Faculty Lot, which at that hour might even have parking, though no guarantees!

If you are interested and/or know someone who might be interested, please contact Mommy/Daddy & Me chair, Yukina Nakazawa, at mdmfic@ucsd.edu. Please spread the word with any you know who might be interested, especially former teachers and/or those who live far from their grandchildren.

I would be quite sad if we could not find a new lovable grandparent to replace Alice and to provide appreciated support for our young families.

Thank you,
Katya
Katya Newmark

Resale Shop Hours

The Friends Resale Shop will reopen on Tuesday, January 8, 2019. Days of operation are: Tuesday through Friday, from 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Congratulations to Mayra Nevárez on the birth of her daughter, Emilia.

Friends sponsor International Café
Friday,
January 25, 2019
Brazilian Lunch,
12 Noon - 1:30
I-House, Great Room

Visiting an American Home
brings as much pleasure to the hosts as to the guests. Wrote Edwina and Art Curtis: “These are the pictures from our dinner with Yume and Taki on November 19. They were such a lovely couple. It would be great to have them visit again.”

To host one of our international scholars, please contact Elisabeth Marti at hostFIC@ucsd.edu.

Tai Chi Class: Please note that Tai Chi is on temporary hiatus until the instructor, Gladys Wong, returns from Hong Kong, probably at the end of January.
Scholarship Letters

South Africa and Zambia

My experience in Africa was, to describe in one word, unexpected. Although I knew that going to a whole new continent would be an eye-opening experience and that I would learn so many new things, the quality and quantity of the things around me were overwhelming. From seeing a completely metropolitan city with its racial and economic divisions to being attacked by elephants at our camp in the middle of nowhere, this trip has given me so many memories and moments of self-reflection that I would not replace with anything.

I went into this study abroad trip feeling a little lost. Although I came into college knowing I wanted to educate myself to help others, exactly how I was going to do this and the steps I would have to take confused me everyday. Would I really be able to accomplish something like this? Am I dreaming too big and being naive?

However, studying and volunteering in Africa taught me that even the smallest actions can help. One of my most memorable experiences was when I was talking to some of the girls from an elementary school in Cape Town, and one of them said: “I want to go to Harvard one day!” When I asked her why, she said that she wanted to become a university student in America and learn how to help her country be better. In that small body of hers was so much passion, so much love for the country she grew up in, and seeing her face glow up after hearing me say: “It’ll be a lot of work, but I believe in you” made my heart warm.

So yes, Africa was different. But in a way, it was the same, and that was what made this trip so unexpected. Little girls dream of going to big universities everywhere in the world and seeing that with my own eyes has made me eternally grateful for the opportunities I have. Even though I still do not know for sure how I want to contribute to people, I know that with passion and effort, I can make a change.

Aki Fujimoto
Global Seminar: Change in Modern South Africa
Eleanor Roosevelt College, International Studies: Political Science major

Dear Friends of the International Center,
I can hardly do justice the amount of gratitude I feel for the scholarship that was so generously given to me, or the amazing experience that it allowed, but I’ll try my best.

Your gift, which allowed me to spend five weeks in Greece, truly immersing myself in a different culture, was a life changing experience. Getting to spend my summer eating amazing foods, going to iconic sites from the Peloponnese to Thessaly, and meeting new friends both Greek and American, was the best study abroad experience that I could have asked for.

Professor Gallant, the instructor of the course, was fascinating to listen to, and made every day a memorable learning experience. But beyond the classwork, just getting to live in another country for a month, and experience life through a completely different lens has allowed me to approach the world, and specifically my study of politics, from an entirely new perspective. Talking with average Athenians has given me many insights, not only into the politics of Greece and Europe, but also into those surrounding immigration, national identity, and many other areas.

Mere words cannot do the value of this trip justice, and therefore all I am left to say is “thank you!” From the deepest recesses of my heart, I am in gratitude, and eternal debt to you for the experience you allowed me to have, and can only hope that I will be able to provide a similar gift in the future to other potential students seeking to study abroad.

Nathan Stull
Global Seminar, Modern Greece
Eleanor Roosevelt College, Political Science major
Dear Friends of the International Center,

I am honored to have been a recipient of your scholarship that allowed me to experience study abroad. I am thankful for your generosity, whose funds helped me pay a significant part of the Global Seminar in Granada, Spain.

I am still trying to process the experience of studying in another country. I am still having a hard time believing the things I experienced. As a person who grew up in a small town in Mexico, I never thought that I would ever be able to experience what the world had to offer. Being a student at UC San Diego has given me unimaginable opportunities and resources to be and do what I once thought impossible.

The involvement of the Friends of the International Center is the perfect example of that. Having people who are willing to do everything they can to help students experience the world is something that I admire and aspire to be.

While being in Spain, I learned a lot about the country’s history, art, food, and culture. Surprisingly, I also learned so much about myself. Being in a Spanish-speaking country that is so welcoming to the LGBT community allowed me to feel fully accepted and became a space in which I could heal from my experiences in the United States and Mexico. Spain was the place where I made meaningful relationships with locals, people from California, and even Missouri.

Although Spain was my host country, I also fell in love with other places that I explored while I was already in Europe. Thanks to your scholarship I was able to visit two continents, 6 countries, and 13 cities. After experiencing just a small part of the world, I now desire to know more. This is one reason why I have decided that this will not be the only time I study abroad during my academic career here at UC San Diego.

I would like to thank you for believing that international education is important. Thank you for believing in me and supporting me through this journey. I am the most thankful for receiving this scholarship not merely for the funds, but because of the support system I am receiving. For me this scholarship means that I have a new family here at UC San Diego, and that family is the Friends of the International Center.

With gratitude,

James Garrafa

Global Seminar, Spanish Memories, African Hopes through Literature and Film
Revelle College, Chemistry major

STUDY ABROAD IN SOUTH KOREA: A Closer Look at Korean History and Culture

During Fall 2018, I studied abroad in South Korea and was able to see and gain many new experiences. I learned about Korean history on my visit to the demilitarized zone (DMZ) and was able to engage in Korean traditional culture by wearing a hanbok at the royal palace!

During my time here, I went on a DMZ tour and got a glimpse at North Korea and learned about the tense history between the two Koreas. We saw the Bridge of Freedom over which prisoners of war were transported during the Korean War, the Dorasan Station that has a railway track that goes to Pyongyang, North Korea although it is not in service, and walked in the underground infiltration tunnel that North Korea had secretly built in plans to attack Seoul. My favorite part of the tour was seeing through binoculars while still standing on the South Korean side, a fake North Korean town that North Korea had built as propaganda.

A popular tourist attraction is to rent and wear a hanbok, a traditional Korean dress worn for festive occasions, while visiting the Gyeongbokgung Palace, the main
royal palace built, in 1395, during the Joseon dynasty that lasted for approximately five centuries.

The hanbok-wearing experience was extraordinary and unforgettable. There were so many styles and colors of hanbok to choose from, and each one is truly beautiful with ornate detailing and patterns. I learned that hanboks could reveal the social status of the wearer. Royals for example, wore brightly colored silk hanboks; commoners wore lighter or earth-colored cotton hanboks. Each color and pattern, as well as the head ornaments and other accessories, also symbolized different meanings. For a day, I was a Korean princess [or who knows, maybe a commoner judging from my dress color] at the royal Korean palace! I loved that through this experience, I was able to engage and immerse myself in traditional Korean culture of the past.

Thank you once again for the Friends Scholarship.

Victoria Zhang
EAP, Yonsei University

Scholarship Gifts

We acknowledge with many thanks the latest contributions made to the Friends scholarship fund; they came from: Christa McReynolds, Yumi & Ryosuke Fjioka, Richard Chim, and Claudia Lowenstein.

Our thanks are best conveyed by quoting several Friends 2018 scholarship recipients whose recent reports were accompanied by these additional words of appreciation: “Thank you once again for helping to fund my Global Seminar trip. It really helped out my family, and I had the best experience of my life.” (Sarah Litto); “It is with my sincerest gratitude that I share a short summary report of my research. Thank you for all your kind support.” (Maxie Gluckman); and “I am honored to be a recipient of your scholarship; it has impacted me in such a positive way.” (James Garrafa).

Thank You!
January 2019

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