I hope your summer was filled with spectacular sunsets and adventures and you are ready to start the 2019-2020 academic year with great enthusiasm!

Our daily programs are open to all members and have been operating all summer—a huge thank you to our Program Leaders who do not take summers off!

Friends Resale Shop will reopen on September 24th thanks to our wonderful volunteer team who would love to welcome new team members!

And planning is underway for our evening programs. I hope you will join me throughout the year as we continue Friends ever-timely mission of supporting international education and friendship across borders.

Katya
Katya Newmark
PresFIC@ucsd.edu
Resale Shop

The Resale Shop was closed for the summer, during which time the university moved the shipping container that serves as the Shop’s extra storage facility to a different area of the valet parking lot, making room for new construction that will greatly transform the UCSD campus. Thanks to Debi Gianni’s coordination and other university staff members’ willingness both to pack and unpack the contents of the Friends Resale Shop and the Oceanids Kitchen Exchange containers, the transfer went smoothly. Please check with one of the other Shop volunteers about details regarding where and when to drop off donations.

In anticipation of the Resale Shop’s reopening on Tuesday, September 24, Shop volunteers worked hard to make the Friends shop look spiffy. Business hours are scheduled for Tuesday through Friday, from 10:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Friends Volunteer Hours

May 2019: 682 hours, June 2019: 408.50
July 2019: 316 hours

July 1, 2018 - June 30, 2019: 7,565.50 hours

Mommy/Daddy & Me

During Yukina Nakazawa’s visit home to be with her ailing grandmother, her son, Alex, had to be hospitalized with a serious virus infection, greatly delaying the family’s return to San Diego.

Meanwhile, Mariko Usui, who skillfully chaired the program for several years and had persuaded Yukina to assume the role of Mommy/Daddy & Me Coordinator, has moved to Florida, temporarily leaving the Thursday playgroup without a chair.

Aware of the complicated situations, the other Mommy/Daddy & Me volunteers have kept the program running smoothly and stayed in daily e-mail contact with Yukina, who was unable to book a return flight from Japan until the end of August. Our compliments and thanks to all!

Family Orientation

Eileen Tozer reports that Family Orientation has been meeting regularly twice monthly; both the attendance and length of stay at UCSD vary considerably. It is interesting to see the professions of those that have attended in the last few months; included were a pharmacist, hair stylist, medical student, algorithm engineer, barista, musician/teacher, applications engineer, bank teller, housewife, wife, and mother.
July 4th Picnic  
—by Jennie Chin

Once again Friends and Oceanids held its annual picnic for the many international visiting scholars and their families, along with others who came to celebrate the July 4 festivities at the Martin Johnson House at Scripps Institution of Oceanography (SIO). It was definitely a picture perfect day, as the weather was clear and sunny, but with enough shade on the decks that people could sit down and enjoy being together, as well as look at the spectacular view of the Pacific Ocean.

We had some 50 guests that included Friends and the many families who came with their lovely children. This year we got to see a lot of new babies, so it was a genuine pleasure to be introduced to this next generation. The wonderful thing about these events is the international gathering represented by our visitors: Colombia, Thailand, Japan, Brazil, China, Germany, South Korea, India, France, Spain, Finland, Paraguay, and others, which reminds us that one of the many strengths of America is the melting pot of the many ethnic groups who come to learn, to teach, to exchange ideas, and to be able to experience the generosity of spirit between cultures.

Our typical July 4th picnic fare included hotdogs, potato salad, a green salad, chips and dips in several forms, chocolate and peanut butter brownies, watermelon, lemonade and other beverages. The children were able to play ring toss and bean bag toss, and/or run around on the grass, and all enjoyed a relaxing, comfortable day.

None of this could have been possible without all the friendly volunteers who worked tirelessly behind the scenes to look after the myriad details that make this annual picnic such a success. Many thanks to Lanna Cheng for securing the Martin Johnson House, as always the perfect venue for this festivity. Thank you to Mira Vendler and Miracema Ueyoshi, who took care of checking in the guests. Most especially, our thanks go to Georgina Sham, Lynn Jahn, Ginny Young, and Marie Perroud, who took care of name tags, helping with signing up participants, shopping, preparing the dishes, and cleaning up afterwards, and taking care of all those last minute things we forgot about.

As volunteers, we represent the face of not just UC San Diego, but the larger face of the San Diego community, and of an America that welcomes with open arms and a open heart those who take the leap into a faraway place from home. And our hard work and interaction comes through when we see the smiles, the laughter, and the enjoyment of those with whom we share this special day.

Wednesday Coffee  
—by Georgina Sham

Wednesday Coffee has continued to meet throughout the summer with several participants, in addition to Lynn Jahn and Marie Perroud, leading craft projects. We will continue this trend through the fall.

In August, for instance, we will make pom poms. They are easy and fun to make and we hope to make enough to redecorate the Friends Resale Shop.

A Day in the Country  
—by Nori Faer

A day out in the country was a big hit once again! On a balmy afternoon on August 3rd, thirty-three internationals and their babies came to enjoy Stanley and my park-like backyard. A feast was set out with everyone bringing a native dish, along with hot dogs, hamburgers, and cold drinks provided by the hosts. A few stayed afterwards to enjoy the pool and conversation about best films they had seen.

Everyone left knowing a little bit more about San Diego and how varied are its landscape and climate.
Katya Newmark

“My favorite part of the evening was interacting and making connections with the people at my table. I enjoyed being placed with individuals I had never met, so I could talk to them and get to know all these new people and their roles in this process. I enjoyed the speakers talking about their experiences with the scholarship program and studying abroad. It would have been a lovely dinner without it, but that’s what made it tailored to the event and special. Again, thank you! I will keep the Friends updated during my study abroad experience!” —Hannah Saltman, Political Science major, EAP to England

The Friends of the International Center’s Annual Membership Dinner and Scholarship Awards Ceremony, held this year on May 21, 2019, is truly the highpoint of our fiscal and academic year, one that entails a great deal of preparation, and we all owe a great debt to Katya Newmark for organizing the event. The warmth that permeated the large Student Services Center Multipurpose Room, glowing in different shades of blue, was sufficient evidence that all attention to detail was worth the effort, as a great number of people commented on how much they enjoyed themselves.

Katya, who after cleaning up, went home to write notes of thanks to the speakers, table hosts, dinner committee, and university caterers—each illustrated with photographs and individual words of thanks—received some well-deserved praise in response. That this came from different sources is illustrated by sample quotes:

Our guest speaker, Prof. Ivano Caponigro, wrote:

“I don’t know how you found the energy to write such a beautiful message (with great photos too), so late in the day after the marathon you have must gone through yesterday (and the days before yesterday). It was a very successful beautiful celebration though, full of great moments, great company, and great food. I’m really glad I was able to give my little contribution.”

Michelle Grandin, a volunteer in Friends Friday Chat, who also serves as our organization’s Parliamentarian, commented:

“The dinner is indeed one of my favorite nights of the year. I love meeting and hearing about all the students’ grand plans and upcoming or past adventures thanks to the scholarships, as well as learning about their current research and areas of interest. A room filled with amazing people—especially when
you include all of you who volunteer and donate your time and money to help these students cross borders and boundaries sharing their open hearts and minds around the world. It is a great service. Thanks Katya for being at the helm of FIC, and Ruth for steering the scholarship committee.”

Table hosts: Jennifer Leighton, Emily Kawahara, Kirk Simmons, Jo Peters
Jean Selzer, Rachel Rigoli, Max Reinke, Carol Robertson, Roark Miller,
Tonia Pizer, Lisa Armstrong, Kim Burton, David Saide, Sabrina Kaiser,
Kelly O’Sullivan Sommer, Jim Galvin, Tina Brilli, and Shelly Taskin

Students, who were asked for feedback, responded thoughtfully:
“My favorite part of the event was that students were seated with members of the Friends community and a staff member from the Study Abroad Office. It was a pleasure talking with Joan and Lou Adamo, who told me about how the Friends community started. Once again thank you very much for the scholarship and the invitation to the dinner. I enjoyed the food, the conversations, and becoming part of such a vibrant and caring community.”—Davit Martirosyan, Human Biology major, heading to Japan (see pp. 10-11).

Katya was assisted by an able team, consisting of Lou Adamo who served as photographer; Danya Costello who helped with decorations; Justin Costello who stepped in where needed, including taking photos; Matthew Costello who made nametags and helped with transportation and photo uploads. Barbara Fitzsimmons, Elisabeth Marti, and Cindy Tozer manned the check-in table, Candace Kohl made the lovely flower bouquets, Jean Selzer helped hang decorations, and I, Ruth Newmark, took charge of the printed dinner program and things related to scholarship awards, with Gail Fliesbach making the Friends scholarship certificates.

As has been custom, Global Education staff members served as table hosts introducing tablemates to each other. Just knowing a few facts about each other greatly facilitates conversation; the more so, since great care is given to seating people together who are likely to have things in common. For keeping the conversations rolling, we thank Lisa Armstrong, Tina Brilli, Kim Burton, Jim Galvin, Courtney Giordano, Sabrina Kaiser, Emily Kawahara, Roark Miller, Jo Peters, Tonia Pizer, Rachel Rigoli, Carol Robertson, David Saide, Tricia Schueler, Kirk Simmons, Kelly O’Sullivan Sommer, Shelly Taskin, and MaxReinke who in the last moment stepped in for Dulce Dorado. Explaining that she would attend a conference, Dulce wrote: “The Awards Dinner is always one of the highlights of
the year for me, because of how it allows many of our students to pursue their dreams and participate in transformational experiences abroad, so I regret not being able to attend this year. However, many of the staff from the International Students & Programs Office (ISPO) will be there to celebrate the Friends and our students. Sending my very best wishes for a successful event next week.” A further note of thanks goes to Friends member Jean Selzer and to Jennifer Leighton in the UC San Diego Development Office for rounding out the table hosts.

The theme of this year’s dinner menu was “New Comforts to Be Discovered” and the multi-coursed meal cleverly paired what generally are accepted by those growing up in the United States as comfort foods with similarly–considered dishes in other countries. Thus American Tomato Soup was paired with Mexican Sopa de Lima, Buffalo Wings with Korean Gojuchang Wings. Urged to try something new, the main course featured Chicken Pot Pie paired with African Bobotie, classic Meatloaf paired with Vietnamese Meatballs, Macaroni and Cheese with German Käsespätzle, and Succatash with Chinese Stir-Fried Vegetables.

Inspired by a quote from Ellie Krieger: “Comfort food is the food that makes us feel good—satisfied, calm, cared for and carefree. It’s food that fills us up emotionally and physically…Finding comfort in food is a basic human experience,” the dinner guests were treated to a delicious dessert consisting of a tiny Pecan Tart paired with Greek Baklava and a Chocolate Truffle paired with Brazilian Brigadeiro.

Having now tasted some old and some new dishes, the menu reminded us that “As you move outside your comfort zone, what was once the unknown and frightening becomes your new normal.” (Robin Sharma)

Since the dinner serves as the annual event at which our membership gathers to elect new officers, a quick business meeting took place with Linda Ferri, Chair of the Friends Nominating Committee, presenting the proposed slate of officers for the year 2019-2020. There being no further nominations from the floor and the Parliamentarian having vouched for the fact that a quorum of eligible voters was present, the following were elected by acclamation: Katya Newmark (President), Georgina Sham (Vice President, Membership), Jean Selzer (Recording Secretary), Linda Ferri (Treasurer), and Renate Schmid-Schoenbein (Corresponding Secretary).

On behalf of the Friends board, Linda gave a warm speech thanking Katya for her loving care of our organization and presented her with a small gift.

Katya proceeded to introduce Kirk Simmons, Dean of Global Education, lamenting his announced retirement at the end of June 2019. Katya referenced that she and Kirk shared seven years of working together during which time Friends enjoyed his full support at a challenging time of transition that covered the loss of our physical home.
and the need to find alternate spaces where Friends could hold activities. She followed this by reading a letter from Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs, Alysson Satterlund, thanking Dean Simmons for his service, and introduced Chip Schooley, Professor of Medicine, currently serving as Senior Director of International Initiatives and interim Faculty Director, Global Education.

In a bittersweet speech, Dean Simmons echoed Katya’s remarks, stressing how he will miss working with the UCSD international community and Friends.

Our guest speaker, Ivano Caponigro, Associate Professor of Linguistics and Associate Faculty Director of Study Abroad, offered a passionate account of the value of international education. Taking traveling as the theme of his talk, he used his own experience as illustration.

“My first true experience with traveling was in college, many years ago. I was studying philosophy in Italy and decided to go to Cambridge University for a semester. First time on an airplane, first time in an English-speaking country, first time away alone for several months. It was scary, exciting, and eye opening. I loved their small classes, the libraries, the amazing bookstores where you could sit for hours and read without purchasing anything, the midday free concerts in the colleges. I didn’t like the rain so much, but loved the green grass. I didn’t like their food so much, but I fell in love with (good!) baked potatoes. My English was non-existent (I had learned it on my own by reading books) and I had a hard time understanding anything; I felt lost many times, but I also became aware that I was stronger than I thought.

“This experience also helped me decide to pursue my Ph.D. in linguistics at UCLA a few years later. I left my hometown, Milan, to fly to Los Angeles without ever having been in LA or in the USA before, knowing that I was leaving my family, friends, and country for at least five years. I didn’t know at that time that it would be 22 years up to today, and going.

“The experience at UCLA is the best I’ve ever had in all my life at any level: intellectual, social, human. I grew up a lot. It was not always easy, sometimes it was really hard, but I gained so much and learned so much about myself. I learned to speak English (finally!); I learned to write papers and do research; I learned to be a true scholar. I met great people, some of whom are still close friends.”

Speaking to many students in the audience, Prof. Caponigro continued: “I’m a first-generation college student. My parents were born right after World War II from a very poor family. My mother went to five years of elementary school and my dad to three years of evening elementary school. They had to start working as kids to help themselves and their families. They encouraged me to study from early on, telling me that it would be the pathway to a much better life. And when it was time for me to leave and go far away to pursue my studies, I could see the sadness in their eyes, but they always encouraged me to go, and never complained about my choice of traveling and being away from them.

“Whenever I go back to Italy and talk to young people and students, I encourage them to travel. I do the same with my students in my classes here at UC San Diego and with all those students I meet in my role at Study Abroad.

“Let me conclude with a quote from The Shadow-Line a short novel by Joseph Conrad, a traveler who moved from Poland to the UK and became one of the most important English writers ever. As typical in Conrad, this short novel depicts the development of a young man who is traveling on the sea as the captain of the vessel he’s traveling on.” Citing Conrad, Prof. Caponigro concluded his talk:

“‘The road would be long. All roads are long that lead towards one’s heart’s desire. But this road my mind’s eye could see on a chart, professionally, with all its implications and difficulties, yet simple enough in a way. One is a seaman or one is not. And I had no doubt of being one.’”

Prof. Caponigro’s moving talk received enthusiastic applause. Later, several students commented that they felt inspired, yet also reassured, eager to embark on their own travels.

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The October and November Newsletter issues will cover the equally inspiring talks by Matthew Wills and James Garrafa Luna, our two student speakers, and the presentation of the Friends 2019 scholarship recipients.
Visit an American Home

A variety of people participate in the Friends Visit an American Home program, hosting UCSD international scholars, many of whom come with their families. To wit, several are members of Oceanids, such as Judith Wesling and Jan Ouren.

To quote Elisabeth Marti, “Jan has hosted international visitors for at least the last two years, maybe longer, and hosts two or three times a year, which is great. For a spring gathering at her home, Jan also invited Jim Bunch, a fellow Oceanid, currently serving as the organization’s treasurer.”

Membership

Please welcome new members Anne de Pastors & Guillaume Chevance.

We are saddened to report the loss of two Friends Life Members.

In June Brad Baehr, Barbara Baehr’s son, notified us that his mom had died. “My mother, passed-away on June 12th, 2019, just over two months after her ninety-ninth birthday.”

Barbara could often be seen at the Faculty Club with her English in Action tutees (mainly medical scholars), with whom she would stay in touch long after the international scholars had returned to their native country, continuing to edit their scholarly papers as needed.

For many years, Barbara wrote about her tutoring experiences in the Friends Newsletter. She was recognized for her stellar devotion to the English in Action program by being honored twice as Tutor of the Year: first in 1986 and once again in 2005. She is sorely missed, and Friends send our condolences to the Baehr family.

A month earlier, we learned of the death of Maxine Bloor from Maxine’s daughter, Nadine Wilson, who informed: “Maxine May Rubendunst Bloor was born May 10, 1937 in New Haven, Connecticut. … During her career as an RN she worked in emergency and surgical nursing, post-operative recovery, as well as teaching multiple nursing disciplines. Maxine married Dr. Colin M. Bloor in 1959 and they moved to La Jolla upon the establishment of UCSD’s School of Medicine in 1968. While raising their three children, Maxine was an active parent in all their activities… [while] also contributing to the San Diego and university communities,” including Friends of the International Center.

We send our sympathy to Nadine & Ollie Wilson, Life Members and strong supporters of our orga-

Beach Party

“Come Have S’More Fun!” read the invitation to the latest beach party organized by Cindy Tozer and held on July 19 at La Jolla Shores by the lifeguard station.

Notices went to Friday Chatters, who were urged to bring family and friends and asked to bring a favorite dish to share, while Cindy provided all things necessary for the bonfire and s’mores.

English Conversation

Gus’ Table, the Tuesday morning conversation group, led by Nori Faer and ably assisted by Jei Yoon Park, Susan Graceman, and Claire Harootunian, keeps finding interesting subjects to discuss, subjects that range from how to raise children to how to declutter one’s stuff or whatever other topic Jei, who sends out weekly notices, may dream up.
Ecology of Coral Reefs in French Polynesia

First, please let me express my overwhelming gratitude for your award. I don’t have words enough to express my thanks to the Friends of the International Center for awarding me the 2018 fellowship. The award itself reads for academic excellence and outstanding contribution to international friendship and understanding and I am not exaggerating when I say that, as a young scientist, of all the awards I have been humbled and honored to receive, I am the most honored to receive this fellowship. I think one of the most valuable lessons we can take away from higher education is how to be a better human in this world, and there are so few outlets that express appreciation for this under-valued outcome of higher education. Particularly in my field—that of coral reef ecology and conservation ecology—the human dimension can only be ignored at our own peril, and the peril of the ecosystems and organisms which we seek to protect. Our fates are intertwined.

In terms of the financial award, the funds greatly eased my personal financial burden for this project and allowed this work to become a reality. I used the funding to purchase a Garmin GPS unit to mark and re-locate sites where I was conducting 3D stereo video monitoring of coral reef fish populations, taking thousands of pictures of the habitat to reconstruct a detailed map of the ecosystem, and collecting specimens for biodiversity research. The ability to navigate to site coordinates via GPS is especially important in these fragile ecosystems, as it means that I did not have to disrupt the ecosystem in any way to mark and re-locate the sites. I also used the device to navigate to coordinates where monitoring was already being conducted by the CRIOBE (Centre de Recherches Insulaires et Observatoire de l’Environnement), my host organization in French Polynesia.

The award further helped cover flight costs, as getting myself and my scientific/diving equipment to the island of Moorea, French Polynesia—in the middle of the South Pacific—was not cheap! Another portion of the funding went towards servicing my dive equipment prior to departing; with such a heavy scientific dive load of up to 4-5 dives a day, it was critical that I have working equipment to keep me alive while I conducted this research!

The habitat models of the sites have been fully processed and will soon be made available on the 100-Island Challenge YouTube channel [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCR6xc-3SFQmgdYthU8VrgsQ] for public viewing. Two interns, an undergraduate at Princeton and a Masters student at the University of Bordeaux, helped collect the data during the fieldwork and are now using these underwater ‘maps’ for their own theses.

Mo’orea is a particularly interesting system to look at, as reefs at this island suffered extreme coral decline between 1991 and 2014 due to two cyclones, five bleaching episodes, and an outbreak of the crown-of-thorns seastar (which kills coral) leading to <1% coral cover in 2010. Despite these disturbances, coral cover at several locations has recovered to pre-disturbance levels of ~50%.

For my thesis work, I am currently in the process of coding hundreds of hours of the 3D stereovideo footage to determine differences in space-use between coral reef fish species across a daily cycle, from dawn to dusk. In order to get the necessary replication, this required diving across multiple weeks, under multiple conditions—from sunny to stormy—to get a representative picture of animal behavior during this time.

I further collected otoliths (the ear bones of fish) from specimens, which will be used to age fish species for which we know very little. Otoliths, which are hard structures behind the brain of bony fishes, have rings much like tree rings that can be counted to determine the age of a particular fish. This information gives us insight into population dynamics and the relative “health” of a fish population. The species for which I am investigating this are all important forage fish: that is, prey fish for the fish eaten in artisanal coral reef fisheries. Their population dynamics are important for the entire coral reef fishery, but critically understudied.

The results of this work will eventually become several scientific publications and have further produced material that will be used for outreach with the public, allowing us to bring the amazing underwater world of coral reefs to everyone with access to the Internet. I will share these documents and products as they become available, and in the meantime, I’d like to express my sincere gratitude to the Friends of the International Center and Carol and Stuart Smith for this award, that has enabled not only my own research, but the research and mentorship of two other young scientists. I am truly humbled and grateful.

Beverly French
Ph.D. student,
Scripps Institution of Oceanography
Hello Friends!

I am writing from my host family’s apartment along the bank of the Neva River. I’ve been here almost two weeks now, and the city continues to surprise me. I have visited the Hermitage, Peter and Paul’s Fortress—the origin of the city—attended class across from the beautiful Smolny Cathedral, visited a Russian banya, and much, much more!

In my class, The Cultural Myths and Realities of St. Petersburg, we focus on looking at the contradictions nestled in the literature and history of St. Petersburg, and the notion of a “beautiful, yet tragic” city. We have studied the works of Gogol and Pushkin, and have learned a lot from our Russian professor about how contemporary Russians feel about their place in this city.

I have the privilege of living with a host family and have spent a lot of time with my host mother, Nadejda. She doesn’t speak any English, and my Russian leaves a lot to be desired, but we’ve managed to learn quite a bit about one another. Last night I cooked a spaghetti dinner for her and we made an apple pie together. She has already taken me to a banya, or sauna pool-house, the mall, and tomorrow we will go watch a musical.

I have tried all kinds of foods from the city: from the sweet or savory vereniki dumplings, to pishki (like doughnuts), to borscht, to many, many cups of tea. I have tried many different cafés and restaurants with my friends, and am getting better at conversing with our servers.

One of my favorite memories so far was getting to attend the celebration of the Scarlet Sails. It is a yearly citywide festival for all of the secondary school graduates. I was lucky enough to attend a concert in Palace Square with a couple of my CIEE [Council on International Educational Exchange] friends, and watched the most brilliant fireworks I’ve ever seen on the bank of the Neva. The show was complete with the passing of the Russian Ship with all-red sails proudly displayed. These sails are supposed to symbolize new hope, and it was a truly powerful experience to see how invested the city was in this celebration.

I have learned a lot simply by walking through the streets, or people-watching on the metro, about the differences between Russia and the U.S. I’ve seen how most of the people I have met have lived in this city their entire lives, and how most people would like to one day leave Russia.

Thank you Friends!

Erin Ling
Cognitive Science and Political Science majors

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On Jul 17, 2019

Dear Friends of the International Center,

I am currently studying in Osaka, Japan as part of a UCEAP summer laboratory research program. I am halfway into my program and have decided to share a few of my memorable experiences as well as contrasting those experiences with my time studying in Scotland.

I am staying with a host family who have two sons, one 18 months old and the other seven years old. I am the youngest of three brothers, so you can imagine my surprise regarding the reversal of my situation having to serve as an older brother to these two boys. My host parents speak English, so communication is not a problem, but the seven-year-old son only speaks Japanese, so our communication consists of pointing and Google translate. My two host brothers have taught me responsibility and patience, and to appreciate my own parents who had to deal with my mischievous behavior as a child.

On the weekends, I explore Japan. I am mainly attracted to the traditional side of Japan as opposed to the futuristic, neon, metropolitan Japan. So far, my favorite place is the city of Kyoto, which weaves an old town filled with winding streets and buried shrines into a bustling modern city.

While traveling in Kyoto, my friend and I were approached by three Japanese university students who offered to give us a tour of Kiyomizu-Dera Temple. This was one of many instances where I experienced the warm hospitality of the Japanese. Another instance was when I was...
in Kyoto’s Gion district; It was raining and my friend and I were exploring Gion’s alleyways when a Japanese woman invited us into a studio where a koto concert was being held. There were about twenty people at the venue. The koto players were delighted to see two foreigners present and came to talk to us afterwards.

Although Japan is an extremely developed country, its traditions and etiquette codes still remain. Things such as eating a quick snack while walking or blowing your nose in public can come off as rude. The Japanese are respectful and hospitable, but expect that you to show them the same respect in return.

I had a phenomenal time studying in Scotland. Living in Scotland was not so different from being in the United States: there was little to no difficulty communicating and the culture shock wasn’t as pronounced as being in Japan. Scotland was where I lived with friends and I first learned to cook, take a train, book a flight and hotel on my own, but through all these “firsts” I was still learning the basics of how to be an adult.

Japan and Scotland are two different countries with different cultures. I am keenly aware that I’m not the same traveler in Japan that I was in Scotland. My decisions need to be more calculated—I need to consider the risks of my actions and weigh not only how will this decision affect me, but how will it affect my host family? I have learned to experience Japan independent of my time in Scotland.

Currently, I am on Google maps looking for a new city to travel to this upcoming weekend, but I can’t seem to decide between Kanazawa and Takayama. Whichever one I settle on, I am sure it will be great.

Davit Martirosyan
Human Biology major

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