
January 2007

FLEX Alumni Report

SUBMITTED BY AMERICAN COUNCILS FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION: ACTR/ACCELS

Armenia

Yerevan

Grant Writing Seminars: On January 12, 17 and 23, American Councils Country Director Ian Cornell and Sonya Armaghanyan '04 led grant-writing seminars. Fourteen alumni attended the seminars and discussed their projects.

Martin Luther King Jr. Day: To celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. Day, 14 alumni watched the movie *Mississippi Burning* at the Moscow Movie Theatre. Andrey Frolov '04 and Lusine Stepanyan '06 introduced the movie by giving speeches on Martin Luther King's work and the civil rights movement in America.

Visit to the Fanarjyan National Oncology Center: On January 19, American Councils Country Director Ian Cornell, Sonya Armaghanyan '04, Stella Matevosyan '00, Anush Palyan '02, Lusine Stepanyan '06, and co-actors of Thornton Wilder's play *The Matchmaker* met the children at the Oncology Center and gave them presents that were bought from the ticket sale proceeds of the play *The Matchmaker*. The presents included a DVD player, puzzles, pillows, stationery, games and books and they will help to develop the children's playroom at the Center.



Upcoming Events:

- **Valentine's Day Party** is planned for February 14.
- **Debate Planning** will take place throughout February.
- **Alumni Meeting** is scheduled for the end of February.

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Azerbaijan

Baku

Movie Night: On January 13, 80 students and 10 alumni watched the movie *V for Vendetta*. Movie nights introduce students and community members to the Alumni Association and their activities.

Family and Gender Issues Discussion: The Azerbaijan Alumni Association office organized a presentation and discussion by Hijran Huseynova, head of the State Committee on Family, Woman and Gender Issues, on January 15. Participants learned about the activities of the State Committee and discussed their opinions on topics of family and gender issues. Ruslan Asadov '04, Anar Askerov '05, Aysel Aslanova '03, Nargiz Hajiyeva '00, Sevda Ismayilova '02, Tamerlan Mammadov '02, Lala Safarali '06, Kamila Verdiyeva '06 and 40 other students attended the discussion. Mass media representatives were also present.

Azerbaijan in the International Community Lecture: On January 16, American Councils and the OL! Azerbaijan Youth Movement (OL-AYM) organized an open discussion at the Alumni Association office on the role of Azerbaijan in the international community. Political Analyst Rasim Musabekov talked about the direction of Azerbaijan's foreign policy, Azerbaijani Diasporas abroad, the Nagorno Karabakh conflict and Azerbaijan's bilateral relations with neighboring countries. Sixty-five students and 10 alumni attended the lecture.

Proposal-writing Seminar: Program Specialist from the Academy for Educational Development Jale Sultanli conducted a proposal-writing seminar for five alumni on January 20. Participants proposed project topics and event organizers explained the basics of proposal writing. Hamzayeva Arzu '06, Rena Hajiyeva '00, Mina Huseynova '04, Ramil Kazimov '05, and Khalilov Samir '06 attended the seminar.

Exchange Programs and Internship Information Session: On January 25, American Councils and the U.S. Embassy conducted an information session on exchange programs and internships for 15 alumni. Organizers promoted the program Exchanges to Internships, a joint U.S. Embassy and American Councils program, that offers FLEX alumni the opportunity to serve as interns in various Ministries in Azerbaijan. American Councils Country Director Shane Austin and U.S. Embassy Public Diplomacy Officer Elizabeth Murphy informed alumni about the program and application procedures. Previous participants Govhar Yagublu '03, Ruslan Asadov '04, Mamed Bayramov '04, and Vusal Mammadov '05 shared their experiences from the Exchanges to Internships program with alumni and encouraged them to apply.

Seminar on Human Rights: Eleven alumni and 24 students attended a seminar on January 28. Representatives from American Councils and the Human Rights club from OL! Azerbaijan Youth Movement (OL-AYM) conducted the seminar on the history of human rights and its general concept. OL-AYM Member Munir Mammadov informed those in attendance about the activities of international human rights organizations and led a discussion on protecting human rights in Azerbaijan.

Presentation on Government and Economy: On January 31, American Councils and the Economics club from OL! Azerbaijan Youth Movement (OL-AYM) conducted an open discussion with Economist Dr. Nazim Imanov. His presentation, entitled "How far should Government Interfere in the Economy?" discussed the interference of government in economy and socialistic and capitalistic movements within free market economies. Fifty-six students and 14 alumni attended the presentation.

Western and Eastern Civilizations Discussion: American Councils organized a presentation by law lecturer Erkin Gadirli entitled "Comparative Analysis of Western and Eastern Civilizations" on January 26. The 85 students and 16 alumni in attendance learned about philosophical aspects of Western and Eastern civilizations and debated the question of Azerbaijan integration into the European Union.

Upcoming events:

- **Field Trip with Orphans** is scheduled for February 7.
- **Training on Combating Bird Flu** will be held on February 8.
- **Lecture on Freedom of Speech** is planned for February 9.
- **Grant-writing Seminar** will be held on February 14
- **Movie Night** is planned for February 16.
- **Open Discussion with Hafiz Pashayev**, Ambassador of Azerbaijan to the U.S. will take place on February 20.
- **Open Discussion with Film Director Ayaz Salayev** is scheduled for February 27.

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Belarus

Minsk

Miraculous Christmas Tree Project: On January 9, Alesya Mitrofanava '06, Olga Naumchik '05, Vadimir Zaryankin '05 and members of the Belarusian chapter of Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE) visited Ivenets orphanage for children with physical disabilities. Organizers delivered presents, which were collected during the Miraculous Christmas Tree project in December and organized a Christmas celebration for the orphans. Alumni collected more than 300 presents, which allowed them to deliver presents to Ivenets, Navinky, Baraulyany and Zhdanovichy orphanages.

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Event in Baraulyany: Olga Naumchik '05, Veronica Savitskaya '05, Olga Smirnova '06 and Vadimir Zaryankin '05 organized a Christmas celebration for the children at Baraulyany orphanage on January 13. Alumni put on a play for the children and gave them Christmas presents, which were collected during the Miraculous Christmas Tree project.

Movie Night: Fifteen alumni watched the movie *Ladykillers* on January 24. Alumni also had a chance to interact and discuss upcoming events.

Grant Writing Seminar: On January 25, five alumni participated in a grant-writing seminar. Kevin Reiling, director of the American Center for Education and Research in Belarus explained how to write a successful grant proposal and gave participants suggestions on their proposals. Ekaterina Bogaleisha '06, Dmitriy Dubovskiy '02, Daria Efimova '02, Vadim Marasanov '06, and Vadimir Zaryankin '05 attended the event.

Discussion with Robert Boehme: Robert Boehme, director of the U.S. State Department's Office of Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus Affairs, met with 11 alumni and students from the Belarusian State University on January 29. Alumni talked to Boehme about topics ranging from politics to education. Alumni helped Boehme understand the opinions and the thoughts of Belarusian youth about various situations in the country.

Upcoming Events:

- **Presentation of American Authors** at Ivenets Orphanage is scheduled for February 17.
- **Alumni Meeting** will take place on February 20.
- **Movie Night** will take place on February 28.

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Georgia

Tbilisi

Movie Night: On January 12, 16 alumni watched and discussed American movies. American Councils representatives provided refreshments.

Alumni Meeting: Nineteen alumni planned and made final touches on their grant proposals on January 16. Alumni worked together to develop interesting grant proposals and brainstorm new ideas.

Meeting with the Rustavi Scouts: On January 22, 15 alumni met the scout group from Rustavi to plan joint activities. These Georgian scouts have experience working with teenagers and were eager to share their knowledge with alumni. Kopale Jabanishvili '06 suggested the idea of a joint FLEX/scout organized summer youth camp.

Seminar on Luck Culture: Giorgi Nadareishvili '04 conducted a seminar for alumni on January 30. The 13 alumni in attendance learned about the Luck culture, which is connected to a 17th century Georgian tribe, and some alumni identified with this culture. Alumni also discussed other ethnic minority issues in Georgia. After the seminar, alumni played intellectual and cultural games.

Upcoming Events:

- **Alumni Meeting** will be held on February 5.
- **Soccer Game** will take place on February 7.
- **Movie Night** is planned for February 9.
- **Grant Writing Meeting** is scheduled for February 12.

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Kazakhstan

Almaty

Grant Opportunities Conference: On January 20, 16 FLEX and two Eurasian Undergraduate Exchange Program (UGRAD) alumni attended a conference at the Kazakhstan Institute of Management, Economics and Strategic Research (KIMEP) University conference hall. Conference organizers aimed to inform alumni about conferences and exchange program opportunities and develop projects for the FLEX Alumni Grants Program.



U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Officer Inga Litvinsky gave opening remarks and Bates Asilbekova, Outreach and Alumni coordinator at the U.S. Embassy in Astana, spoke about available resources for alumni at the U.S. Embassy. Soon after, Stanley Currier, American Councils country director, led a grant-writing seminar. Alumni brainstormed projects and drafted grant proposals on a variety of topics. Alumni left the conference inspired by new ideas and determined to implement new projects.

Belarusian Model UN Conference: In January, the Alumni Association won a U.S. Embassy Travel Grant amounting to \$2,220 for three alumni to participate in the Belarusian Model United Nations conference on February 8-11 in Minsk. Assel Baltabayeva '04, Marzhan Serekova '04, and Dinara Urazova '04, students in the department of international affairs will participate in the conference and will, upon return, organize events for Global Youth Service Day in collaboration with the Belarusian Cultural Center.

Taraz

Alumni Meeting in Taraz: On January 14, Yernat Berdigulov '05, president of the FLEX Alumni Association, organized a meeting to introduce Kseniya Shilina '06, and Arman Abitov '06 to the Alumni Association and encourage them to participate in and organize activities. Alumni discussed projects that could be implemented in Taraz and the vacancy for the position of City Representative there.

Upcoming Events:

- **Alumni Meeting** is scheduled for February 17.
- **City Representatives** will be chosen for Taraz, Shymkent, Aktobe, Pavlodar, and Astana in February.
- **Database Update** for '03 and '04 alumni will take place throughout February
- **Knitting Competition** submissions are due March 20.

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Kyrgyzstan

Bishkek

New Year-New Constitution Discussion: On January 10, The Institute of Public Policy in Bishkek organized a lecture at the Press Club. Lawyer Gulnara Ishakova and Parliament Deputy Nurlan Masaliev answered questions regarding the new constitution that was adopted on December 30. Alumni Gulnisa Asymova '05, Maksat Doolotbekov '04 and Alexandra Solomatova '05 expressed their concern about the present situation in Kyrgyzstan and constitutional reforms that create an unstable situation in the society.

Training on Writing Statements of Purpose: Peace Corps Volunteer Leeze Reed trained participants on effective ways to write and create statements of purpose on January 12 at IREX. During the presentation, Janibek Monolbaev '05 shared his experiences while in the U.S. and made a presentation on writing statements of purpose. Asel Kasenova '97, owner of Intellegium, a management and leadership consulting company, advised the audience how to write a statement of purpose and how to persuade readers. Thirteen alumni attended the presentation.

Clothing Drive: In early January, alumni organized a clothing drive for the Osh Family Urban Center. Collection boxes were placed at the Osh National University and Lomonosova School. On January 14, Binur

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Alibaeva '06, Bernmet Baisakova '06, Zoya Belmesova '06, Robert Karagmanov '06, Zuhrab Karimov '06, and Akram Tursunov '05, went to the center, played with the 25 children, and gave them the proceeds of the clothing drive.

Business Plan Competition: Twenty-five alumni took part in the business plan competition at the American University Central Asia (AUCA) on January 16. The local grocery store Narodniy organized the event to resolve logistical problems at the store. The store and customers endure long lines, stolen items, lack of carts, and parking problems. Teams competed to find the best solution for the store. The winning team receives full scholarship for all of its members to study at AUCA. Results will be announced in February.

Orphanages Visits: Ana Yarieva '04 and Sergey Firsov '01, both from Turkmenistan and studying at American University – Central Asia, won an IREX Smile Grant for their project Art with Children. In January 10 alumni visited the Kant orphanage, Ak-Jol orphanage and Belovodsk orphanage to draw and play games with the children. The goal of their project aims to focus more attention on vulnerable portions of society and give alumni from different countries the chance to work together.

Proposal Presentation: On January 18, at the American University Central Asia (AUCA), Sergey Atliev '01 (Turkmenistan) made a presentation on project design and proposal writing for 13 alumni. He talked about the computer club he created for children with the proceeds of a FLEX Alumni Grant. Alumni asked questions and discussed their ideas for grant projects.

Essay Competition: Mirgul Karimova '05 and Meerim Kuchukeeva '05 were part of a group of Kyrgyz youth that were awarded a grant from the Westminster Foundation, which sponsors political initiatives, in England. With the grant money, they conducted a nationwide competition from January 1-19 for students to write essays suggesting governing ideas for Kyrgyzstan. Alumni were involved in the logistics and selection process. A student from Russian Kyrgyz University won the competition and will go to London for two weeks.

Alumni Meeting: On January 17, 30 alumni met at the American University Central Asia to discuss upcoming events. They made plans to go sledding and discussed ideas for the FLEX Alumni Grants Program. They also implemented the Share Joy Calendar and Card project by distributing 4000 calendars and 500 cards to alumni to sell. The UN House donated \$500 for the calendar and card project.

Sledding Day: Twenty alumni went sledding at the Chon Tash Mountains on January 21. Alumni from 2005 and 2006 got to know each other better and decided to organize an alumni reunion.

Martin Luther King Jr. Day Presentations: On January 22, 10 alumni attended a presentation on Martin Luther King Jr., at the IREX office. Those in attendance learned more about King's life and his contributions to society. Peace Corps Volunteers Amy Rise and Andrew Snover made the presentation.

Constitution Discussion: Mirgul Karimova '05, Alexandra Solomatova '05, and Nargiza Sydykova '06 attended a lecture sponsored by the U.S. Embassy at the Research Center in Kyrgyzstan on January 23. Gulnara Iskakova, author of numerous publications on the presidential and parliamentary power sharing system in Kyrgyzstan, gave a presentation on the background of recent revisions to the national constitution. Iskakova questioned the legitimacy of the amendments and commented on the short and long term impacts of these revisions on the "checks and balances" system in the country.

Meeting with Youth in Service and Development of Kyrgyzstan (YSDK): On January 23, Nurdin Nurmanbetov '06 and Elnura Suleymanova '06 met with representatives of YSDK, an NGO which receives financial support from Japan. This organization educates young people about health related topics. Alumni talked to the organizers about creating joint projects and YSDK bought 100 calendars to support the Share Joy project.

Analytical Writing Training: Maksat Doolotbakov '05 and Alexandra Solomatova '05 attended a lecture at the National Strategic Presidential Research Center on how to write an analytical paper on January 24. Solomatova read her paper and audience members critiqued it. This was the first of a monthly personal development series.

Upcoming Events:

- **Alumni Meeting** is tentatively planned for February 15.
- **Orphanage Visit** will take place in the beginning of February.
- **Nursing Home Visit** will be held in late February.
- **Sharing Joy Project** will continue throughout February.
- **Alumni Reunion** will take place in February.

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Moldova

Chisinau

Grant-writing Workshop: On January 11, Lilia Fusa '04 conducted a grant-writing workshop. Alumni talked about project ideas and brainstormed how to encourage community members to volunteer. Corina Ajder '06, Olesia Brinza '06, Victoria Mihalachi '06, Ileana Partachi '06, Anastasia Pojoga '06, Cristina Poleacovschi '05, Silvia Solonari '02, and Mariana Stratulat '99 attended the workshop.

Social Networking Training: On January 17, Larisa Verstivtschi '06 assisted in organizing a social networking training at the American Corner. Public Affairs Officer Laura Kaufmann led the training and made a presentation on ways to obtain useful information. The training was followed by a question and answer period. University and school representatives in Balti attended the training.

U.S. Presentation: Olesia Brinza '06 made a presentation on the U.S. education system and her experiences while on the FLEX program at Tiraspol school #2 on January 18. The 30 tenth graders in attendance asked questions about U.S. lifestyle and schools.

Bridges Between Us (BBU) Professional Development Training on Fundraising: On January 20, Tatiana Echim '98 conducted a training workshop on fundraising for 11 BBU interns, 10 of which were FLEX alumni. Participants learned about the purposes of fundraising and brainstormed on the most successful ways to fundraise. The participants were then familiarized with the legal procedures associated with fundraising and donations and learned about cost share letter samples. At the end of the training, alumni participated in an interactive exercise on creating fundraising plans.

Odyssey of the Mind Head Judges' Training: Ludmila Bilevschi '97, Ana Ciudnaia '01, Marina Poneatovschi '95, and Ala Ursu '02 participated in the Odyssey of the Mind head judges' training on January 20. During this meeting, they learned about the responsibilities of the head judge and effective ways to lead a team. They designed a judges' training that was scheduled for the following week.

Corruption Discussion: On January 24, Vanessa Valentino, Harvard University student, led a discussion about corruption in the education system in Moldova with nine alumni. Participants identified causes for corruption and discussed solutions. Olesia Brinza '06, Olesia Burdugos '06, Mihaela Ivanov '05, Mihaela Isac '05, Vladlena Milicenco '05, Mihail Popsoi '05, Tiberiu Scutaru '99, Silvia Solonari '02 and Valentina Tirbu '05 attended the event.

Odyssey of the Mind Judges' Training: On January 27, 20 alumni participated in the Odyssey of the Mind judges' training. During this training, participants learned about the competition and the five long-term issues for the national tournament. Alumni were instructed on their responsibilities as long-term and spontaneous problem judges and were divided into judging teams with Peace Corps Volunteers. The Odyssey of the Mind National Tournament will be held on February 10.

Upcoming Events:

- **Odyssey of the Mind National Tournament** is scheduled for February 10.
- **Bridges Between Us (BBU) Grant-writing Training** will take place on February 3.
- **Valentine's Day Celebration** is planned for February 18.

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Russia

Cheboksary

New Year's Celebration: City Representative Kseniya Semyonova '02 and students from the Chuvashia State University organized a New Year's celebration for children at a local orphanage. Organizers played games, lead contests, made crafts, and read poems with the children.

Kazan

Meeting with Joel Ericson: Alumni met with American Councils Director for Eurasia Joel Ericsson and Gouzel Nezhmetdinova, Vice Rctor for International Affairs at the Kazan State Power Engineering University and sub-editor for BBC World in Tartarstan, on January 23. During the meeting, participants planned future alumni activities and shared ideas for clean-up projects and professional development workshops for orphans. Nezhmetdinova offered assistance in hosting the FLEX Alumni Debate Tournament in February and finding a venue. Yuliana Amanova '03, Oleg Fedotov '05, Liliya Iskhakova '03, Marat Khairullin '03, Leila Nurieva '03, Ilnur Rakhimov '05, and Daliya Safiullina '04 attended the meeting.

Orphanage Visit: Alumni continued organizing art workshops for fifth graders at orphanage #2 on January 31. January's theme of friendship was shown through the art activities, games and contests alumni created for the event. Oleg Fedotov '05, Liliya Iskhakova '03, Marat Khairullin '03, Ilnur Rakhimov '05, Daliya Safiullina '04 organized and participated in the events.

Kirov

U.S. Government Exchange Program Lecture: Yelena Bakulina '98 organized and conducted a conference on foreign literature at the Kirov Regional Library on January 31 for 40 interested visitors. Elizaveta Malysheva, head of the Foreign Literature department at the library and alumna of the Open World Program, shared her experiences while on the cultural exchange program. Bakulina made presentations on the FLEX and Legislative Education And Practice (LEAP) Programs and announced an essay contest for high school students devoted to the 200th Anniversary of U.S.-Russian Diplomatic Relations. The lecture aimed to promote cross-cultural exchange and encourage participation in exchange programs.

Nizhny Novgorod

Meeting with Joel Ericson: On January 16, Irina Karyachkina '05, Anna Lomakina '01, Eugenia Lyamina '03, Tatiana Movshevich '03, Aleksey Valyugin '03, and Sergey Vorobyov '06 met with Joel Ericson, American Councils director for Eurasia. Participants discussed political issues, freedom of religion in Russia, the importance of exchange programs, the development of the FLEX program and upcoming alumni projects. Eugenia Lyamina and Irina Karyachkina asked about ways to involve and gain support from government institutions and business organizations in community service projects.

Upcoming Events:

- **Valentine's Day Celebration** at school #6 in Penza is scheduled for February 14.
- **Dzerzhinsk Valentine's Day Celebration** is scheduled for February 15.
- **Kazan Debate Tournament and City Representatives Training Conference** will take place on February 24.
- **Nizhny Novgorod Alumni Meeting** will take place in mid-February.
- **Kazan Orphanage Visit** will be held in late February.
- **Nizhny Novgorod Leadership Workshop** at lyceum #45 is tentatively planned for late February.

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Moscow

English Class at Orphanage # 55: On January 17, Kristina Ivanova '04, Pavel Trofimov '04, and Shamil Valiyev '04 went to orphanage #55 to teach English to third and fourth grade orphans. Organizers taught the children via interactive games and songs. Valiyev played famous English songs from cartoons and movies on his guitar and the children guessed where the song was from. This class is part of an on-going English teaching project.

Alumni Reunion Planning Meeting: Igor Alekseyev '99, Andrey Krikunov '97, Veronika Meksicheva '06, Olga Tomilin '06, Pavel Trofimov '04, Shamil Valiyev '04, Olga Yakovishina '98, and Elena Zubareva '03 discussed the upcoming alumni reunion on January 24. Organizers decided on a Hawaiian theme for the reunion and will decorate and plan the reunion accordingly. Krikunov volunteered to teach salsa line dancing and other alumni volunteered to work on decorations and skits for the reunion.

Clothing Drive: January 26 marked the end of a clothing drive for the Meshchovsky Center in Kaluga. Alumni, community members, co-workers, friends and family began collecting needed items in September. Nikolay Porokhov '02's donation of 10 bags of clothes was a highlight of the drive, but the more than 30 alumni that participated and their monetary and clothing donations helped to make the event a success. A relationship between alumni and Meshchovsky Center of Children Support was established in 2005 when alumni organized the first clothing drive.

Alumni Meeting in Tambov: Tatyana Bortnikova '06, city representative in Tambov, organized the first alumni meeting after a long period without alumni activity in the city on January 27. The 10 alumni in attendance discussed project initiatives and found the meeting useful.

Meeting with Olga Kosareva: On January 31, Dilyara Gazizova '05, Elena Zubareva '03, and Sarah Gershkon, American Councils intern, met Olga Kosareva, coordinator of the American Corner. Participants decided to organize an American Club for 12-14 years old who like to read and are interested in American culture. The weekly club will be led by alumni volunteers and will cover various aspects of American life.

Upcoming Events:

- **Mass Media in the U.S. Presentation** will take place on February 3.
- **Grant-writing Seminar** is scheduled for February 7.
- **Reunion Decoration Committee Meeting** is planned for February 8.
- **Team-building and Brainstorming Techniques Seminar** will be held on February 10.
- **Alumni Reunion** will take place on February 10.
- **English Class at Orphanage #55** is scheduled for February 17.
- **American Club** meeting will be held on February 25.

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Novosibirsk

Alumni Meeting: Alumni discussed ideas for the FLEX Alumni Grants Program and the AIDS awareness project on January 20. Yelena Khruleva '01, Maksim Lobatyty '03, Aleksandra Mironova '01, Aleksandr Nozdrin '01, Tamuna Otiashvili '04, Aleksey Poleshchuk '02, Tatyana Veretennikova '00, and Valerii Yun '03 attended the meeting.

Upcoming Events:

- **Alumni Meeting** will be held on February 6.
- **AIDS Awareness Project** at four schools will take place on February 26-March 3.

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St. Petersburg

Alumni Meeting and Movie Night: Seven alumni discussed plans for upcoming events and projects on January 29. After the meeting, alumni watched the documentary film *This is Spinal Tap* by director Rob Reiner. Olga Barshay '06, Yelena Beketova '05, Oksana Bogachkina '06, Lyudmila Chistyakova '01, Marina Tourenko '02, Ulyana Vasilyeva '05, and Kseniya Zachek '05 attended the meeting.

Reunion Planning Meeting: Yekaterina Vodopyan '94 and Kseniya Zachek '05 met on January 31 to organize the Senior Alumni Reunion, which is scheduled for February 13.

Lecture by Janet Fitch: Darya Berlin '96, Kseniya Makarevich '98, and Taisiya Tikhova '99 attended a lecture on the book *Paint it Black* by author Janet Fitch at the American Corner on January 20.

Upcoming Events:

- **Grant-writing Seminar** is scheduled for February 10.
- **Senior Alumni Reunion** will take place on February 13.
- **Valentine's Day Celebration** will be held on February 19.
- **City Representatives Conference** is planned for late February or March.
- **Movie Nights** will take place throughout February.

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Vladivostok

Charity Concert Planning: On January 7, 15, and 22, 10 alumni made plans to hold a charity concert and analyzed the costs and benefits of holding such an event.

Martin Luther King Jr.'s Presentation: Ten alumni attended an American Culture Night devoted to the life of Martin Luther King on January 15. Aleksandra Korneeva '05, who subsequently made presentations about Dr. King during English classes at her school, delivered a similar presentation at the culture night.

Movie Night: On January 28, alumni watched a movie together at the American Councils office and later discussed plans for the Charity Concert Project. The research responsibilities were allocated among alumni volunteers who are interested in organizing the event. Anastasia Aleshkina '04, Evgeniya Gorovaya '03, Maria Ivanova '03, Artem Kononov '04, Alexandra Korneeva '05, Aleksandra Kulik '05, Maksim Matuynin '06, Anna Shabanova '06, and Alena Udartseva '06 attended the event.

Upcoming Events:

- **Charity Concert Planning** will take place throughout February.
- **Valentine's Day Celebration** is scheduled for February 14.
- **Movie Night** will be held in late February.

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Volgograd

Christmas Party at Podrostok: On January 8, Anna Bakumova '02, Natalia Bochkareva '02, Olga Chervonceva '06, Elena Fomenko '03 (Volzhsky) and Darya Karpenko '01 held a Christmas celebration for orphans from Podrostok. Alumni gave the children toys and played games with them. The toys were part of a toy donation project, launched in December, where alumni collected toys for the children at their schools and universities.

Alumni Meeting: Nine alumni attended a planning meeting on January 28. They discussed grant proposals and planned activities for February and spring. Natalia Bochkareva '02, Anna Bogdanova '06, Anastasiya Elfimova '06, Elena Fomenko '03 (Volzhsky), Marina Karpushko '04, Nina Kazmina '05, Oksana Panfilova '04 (Gorodishe), Anna Potapenko '05 (Volzhsky), and Viktoriya Shlakhter '06 attended the meeting.

“NATO-Russia Rally” Book Presentation: On January 28, representatives of the IATP Center at the Volgograd State Library held a book presentation entitled “NATO-Russia Rally.” Of the 30 people in attendance, 11 were alumni. Lionel Ponsar, from the Information Department of NATO spoke about the book. Guests asked questions about NATO and its cooperation efforts with Russia.

Upcoming Events:

- **Alumni Reunion in Krasnodar** will be held on February 3.
- **Alumni Meeting** is scheduled for February 4 and 24.
- **Valentine’s Day Celebration** in Podrostok Orphanage will take place on February 14.
- **Grant-writing Seminar** in Saratov is planned for February 17.
- **City Representative Training** in Saratov is scheduled for February 18.
- **Alumni Meeting in Elista** will be held in February.

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Yekaterinburg

English Speaking Club: A meeting for members of the English Speaking Club was held on January 21. Participants discussed reforms in higher education systems and agreed that changing education standards is necessary, but should be done gradually. Antonina Ivanova '04, Ilya Korobeynikov '04, Nataliya Medvedeva '05, Vladimir Nasretidinov '05, Mariya Rostovtseva '04, Mariya Semina '05, Nataliya Shipulina '03, and Yelizaveta Zyryanova '04 participated in the event.

Debate Tournament Planning Meeting: Alumni discussed possible topics for the upcoming All-Ural debate tournament on January 29. Antonina Ivanova '04, Ilya Korobeynikov '04, Nataliya Medvedeva '05, Vladimir Nasretidinov '05, Mariya Rostovtseva '04, and Nataliya Shipulina '03 decided that a portion of the debate tournament should be associated with the 200th anniversary of Russian-American diplomatic relationships.

Upcoming Events:

- **English Language Teaching Seminar** is planned for February 3.
- **Grant Writing Seminar** will take place on February 10.

Contact: Yekaterinburg Alumni Coordinator Ilya Korobeinikov '04, flexalum@ural.actr.ru
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Tajikistan

Dushanbe

Alumni Meeting: On January 18, 15 alumni discussed grant proposals and plans for Global Youth Service Day (GYSD) projects.

Education Opportunities Seminar: Farhod Khalikov '05 organized a seminar for 15 students about educational opportunities in the U.S. at the IATP center on January 23. The presentation was prepared with the purpose of informing students from rural areas of educational opportunities, especially the FLEX program. Participants also watched a movie about Khalikov’s experiences while in the U.S.

Illegal Labor Migration Presentation: On January 26, Ilhom Aliev '05 conducted a presentation in English on illegal labor migration for 35 high school students of the International School and 14 alumni. Aliev talked to the participants about illegal labor migration in Tajikistan and ways to reduce these numbers. The participants also learned about the U.S. Government-sponsored Teachers Ambassadors Program (TAP) and FLEX. After the

presentation, participants asked alumni about the FLEX program.

Upcoming Events:

- **Art School for Children with Disabilities** will take place on February 6-10.
- **Valentine's Day Celebration** is scheduled for February 14.
- **Environmental Workshop** is planned for February 17.
- **American History Month Presentations** will be held on February 21.
- **Regional Representatives Training** is scheduled for February 23-26.

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Turkmenistan

Ashgabat

Meeting with Evan A. Feigenbaum: On January 12, Maysa Akmuradova '06, Mehrijemal Altybayeva '04, Diana Chariyeva '06, Selbi Durdiyeva '06, Leila Ishchanova '03, Ejegul Nuriyeva '05, and Anna Titova '06 participated in the informal meeting of alumni of U.S. Government-sponsored programs with Deputy Assistant Secretary of South and Central Asian Affairs Evan A. Feigenbaum at the Public Affairs Office. Feigenbaum was interested in the impact of the U.S. programs in Turkmenistan and alumni's experiences and accomplishments. Alumni talked about their events and activities and the increasing amount of participating alumni.

Martin Luther King Jr. Day Presentation: Leila Ishchanova '03 and Anna Titova '06 held a presentation about Martin Luther King Jr. and his impact on American history on January 20. The eight participants learned about King's life and his fight for the freedom and equality for people of all races and watched a movie about Rosa Parks.



Alumni Reunion: On January 27-28, 35 FLEX alumni took part in a nationwide alumni reunion. The U.S. Embassy, American Councils, and IREX organized the reunion at the President Hotel in Ashgabat. Eighty-five alumni, representing different U.S. Government-sponsored programs, shared ideas and outlined plans for community development projects on health, education, minority groups, and youth development, discussed strategies to develop the Alumni Association, and deliberated on the role of public relations in community development plan. Ene Tuyliyeva '01 gave a

presentation about her achievements and experience while working as a Public Relations Officer at Pittsburgh State University and alumni gave summaries of events and activities while working with participants from other programs. Also in attendance were Regional Information Resources Officer from the U.S. State Department Mary Nell Bryant and Deputy Director to the Office of Press and Public Diplomacy for South and Central Asia from the U.S. State Department Katherine Van De Vate.

Dashoguz

Basketball Club: During January, Ogulsoltan Ashirova '05 conducted basketball practices for 17 people in Gorogly region at school #7. The purpose of this club is to involve youth in sports and introduce them to the Alumni Association. Participants learned the rules of basketball and developed skills.

Computer Class: Batyr Tagishev '06 conducted a computer class for 10 visitors of the American Corner on January 5, 8, and 19. Tagishev taught participants the basics of computer use and how to create documents and power point presentations via lectures and hands-on practice.

Debates Class: On January 10, 17, and 24, Ekaterina Sultanova '06 organized debate classes at the American Corner for 18 visitors. Sultanova taught visitors different forms of debating, ways to state one's opinion, and the rules of debating. In addition, she shared her experiences while on the FLEX program and told participants about the role of community service in the U.S.

Drama Club: At the American Corner on January 11, Ekaterina Sultanova '06 organized a Drama Club meeting for 12 people. Participants made plans for a Valentine's Day performance and began practicing. The play, which will be in English, will be written and directed by members of the Drama Club.

Kunya Urgench English Club: During January, Enahan Shamuratova '06 conducted English classes for 14 seventh, eighth, and ninth graders in Kunya Ugench region. The classes, which were held three times a week at school #2, were designed to improve participants' English language skills. In addition, members of the club prepared skits for school students to encourage larger participation and attendance.

Headway Class: Bi-weekly throughout January, Ekaterina Sultanova '06 conducted a headway class at the American Corner for 25 visitors. Participants practiced their English and played games to reinforce new information.

Intellectual Game Night: On January 25, Ekaterina Sultanova '06 and volunteers from the American Corner organized an evening for playing intellectual game for 34 young people. Organizers explained the rules of the game *Chto? Gde? Kogda?* (What? Where? When?) and the youth answered questions related to history, biology, geography, movies, physics, and intellectual riddles. The winning team received certificates.

Movie Night: Ekaterina Sultanova '06 and Peace Corps Volunteer Scott Milgroom conducted a movie night at the American Corner for nine visitors on January 25. Those in attendance watched *I* and discussed their thoughts on the movie in English.

Mary

Teenager Club: On January 4, Narmina Gasanova '06 held the Teenager Club for 20 students. Participants discussed situation-based questions and developed problem-solving skills. The teenagers also practiced conversational English and learned new vocabulary while discussing the questions.

Reading Club: Serdar Mommadov '06 organized a meeting for the 18 members of the Reading Club on January 5. Members, who are reading the book *The Giver* by Lois Lowry, held a discussion in English about the assigned chapters and practiced using new vocabulary.

Ohio Presentation: Fifteen visitors at the American Corner attended a presentation by Narmina Gasanova '06 about her "host state," Ohio, on January 9. Gasanova talked about the government, geographical location, climate, economy of Ohio, shared memories about her host state, and showed the visitors pictures. In addition, participants played a game in English about places they would like to visit. The visitors learned about the American life, culture, and values and practiced their spoken English.

Martin Luther King Jr. Day Presentation: Shemshat Nazarova '06 made a power point presentation on the life of Martin Luther King Jr. and the civil rights movement on January 15. Additionally, participants discussed their ideas of the fate of African Americans in the U.S. and discussed the idea that one person can change history. Visitors learned about an important figure in American history, practiced their English and were inspired to resolve issues peacefully.

Presentation on Women's Role in Turkmenistan: On January 19, Lyubov Lakomova '06, Serdar Mommadov '06, and Shemshat Nazarova '06 made presentations about the role of women in Turkmenistan. The 27 visitors learned about Turkmen women leaders and discussed gender issues and ways to improve the situation in Turkmenistan. Alumni explained how their opinions on gender issues changed after living in the U.S. and the role of men and women in America. Those in attendance asked alumni to conduct more discussions on gender issues and democracy.

U.S. Government Class: Twenty-five students attended a class on the U.S. government by Serdar Mommadov '06 on January 25. Mommadov taught students about the structure of the U.S. government, the system of checks and balances and process of creating laws. During a discussion in English, students discussed the differences and similarities between the American and Turkmen governments.

Community Service Presentation: On January 24, Lyubov Lakomova '06 and Anastasia Kuznesova '05 made presentations about community service projects in Mary and the importance of community outreach. Alumni

introduced FLEX sponsored and conducted community service projects and encouraged those in attendance to participate and become members of the Volunteer Club. U.S. State Department Regional Information Resources Officer Mary Nell Bryant, Public Affairs Office Information and Resource Center Assistant Azat Muradov and 18 visitors attended the presentations.

New York City Presentation: Lyubov Lakomova '06 gave a Power point presentation about New York City for 17 American Corner visitors on January 25. Lakomova talked about the geography of and historical buildings in New York. Peace Corps Volunteer Isaac Scarborough, who lived in New York for four years, talked about his experiences visiting the Empire State Building and other attractions. After the presentation, those in attendance asked questions about the events of September 11 and the precautions taken after it.

Conversational English Class: On January 29, Lyubov Lakomova '06 and Narmina Gasanova '06 held a conversational English class for 20 students. The students practiced listening comprehension and writing skills. Alumni told the students about the challenges they faced in the U.S. and encouraged them to speak English.

Turkmenabat

Music Club: On January 3, Nasiba Amanova '05 held a meeting for 15 members of the Music Club at the American Corner. Those in attendance chose American songs and discussed their meaning. American Peace Corps Volunteers talked to club members about American concerts and musicians.

Holiday Party: Alumni and Peace Corps Volunteers organized a Christmas and New Year's celebration at the American Corner for 40 visitors. Madina Alieva '06, Nasiba Amanova '05, Sabina Hojakuliyeva '05, Andrey Leskin '06, Sabina Niyazova '06, and Maksat Orazov '06 talked about how they celebrated the holidays with their American families and the PCVs related their fondest holiday memories. To give the visitors a better taste of how Americans celebrate the holidays, Peace Corps Volunteer Richard Fuchs read Dr. Seuss' *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*. The finale of the celebration included a gift exchange.

SAT Class: Sabina Hojakuliyeva '05 conducted a SAT preparatory class for 10 American Corner visitors on January 8. Participants reviewed topics from the previous class, corrected their homework, and learned how to avoid common mistakes. During the class, participants took the practice test for the second time and in general scored better than they had previously.

Intellectual Game: On January 11, Madina Alieva '06 Sabina Hojakuliyeva '05, Andrey Leskin '06 and 16 visitors participated in the intellectual game *Chto? Gde? Kogda?* at the American Corner. Participants answered questions on a variety of topics according to the rules of the game.

Debate Club: Fourteen American Corner visitors attended a Debate Club on January 16. Sabina Hojakuliyeva '05, organizer of the club, explained debating and club rules and distributed the topic for debate. Teams prepared their case, debated, and at the end, the winner team was recognized. This activity gave participants the opportunity to speak English, work in teams, and consider different sides of arguments.

TOEFL Classes: On January 17-18, Zoya Allanazarova '06 and Gulbahar Bazarova '05 conducted TOEFL classes for 15 American Corner visitors who plan to take the test. Participants practiced sections of the test, took a timed sample test, and compared the results to their previous scores.

Good Club: Sabina Hojakuliyeva '05 launched the creation of the Good Club for 17 American Corner visitors on January 19. Participants introduced themselves and Hojakuliyeva stated the goals of the club. It was organized to develop and support community services, fundraising activities, sports programs, and events that benefit orphans, the disabled, the elderly and other people in need. Each attendee submitted project suggestions and later worked on their first project, a clothing drive. Club members will collect clothes, toys, and donations for a local orphanage.

Current Events: Ten members of the Current Events Club watched news programs in English on January 23. Sabina Niyazova '06, club organizer, led the discussion about the topics that were reported during the newscast.

Turkmenbashy

Music Club: Kristina Safarova '06 conducted weekly Music Club meetings for six high school students at the city polyclinic. Participants learned and discussed the lyrics of American songs. The club helps participants enjoy songs and improve listening comprehension skills.

English Class: In January, Sevil Bayramova '06 held weekly English classes at the city polyclinic. The eight students that participated in the class focused on learning new grammatical structures and working on conversational English.

Debate Club: Kristina Safarova '06 and Peace Corps Volunteer Denis Linderman led a weekly Debate Club for high school students at the city polyclinic in January. The nine participants worked on public speaking and critical thinking skills and learned about debate and argument structure.

Movie Night: On January 6 and 11, Kristina Safarova '06 held a movie night for eight community members. Participants watched *Made in Manhattan*, directed by Wayne Wang and *Just my Luck*, directed by Donald Petrie. Safarova led discussions in English about the movies and explained difficult scenes.

Social Behavior Presentation: Nine community members attended a roundtable discussion about conflict resolution by Kristina Safarova '06 on January 8. Participants learned about various methods of responding to conflicts and shared their anger management strategies. This presentation helped those in attendance to manage the conflicts more sufficiently and control their attitude and emotions.

English for Adult Beginners: Sevil Bayramova '06 taught weekly English classes for eight adults at the city polyclinic in January. The participants learned the alphabet, rudimentary reading and speaking skills, and the basics of grammar.

Fun Club: Kristina Safarova '06 and Peace Corps Volunteer Denis Linderman led a Fun Club for 10 children and teenagers on Tuesdays in January. The organizers prepared and created interactive games that developed the children's English.

Martin Luther King Jr. Day Presentation: Kristina Safarova '06 organized a power point presentation dedicated to Martin Luther King Jr. Day at the city polyclinic on January 15. Safarova talked about King's life and his contributions to the civil rights movement to seven community members.

Teen Club: On January 23, Kristina Safarova '06 and Peace Corps Volunteer Dennis Linderman started a Teen Club to help teenagers analyze and understand different problems of this stage of life.

Alumni Meeting: Regional Representative of the American Corner in Turkmenbashi Nurbibi Nuryagdiyeva met with Seyit Annamammedov '06, Sevil Bayramova '06, Kristina Safarova '06, and Peace Corps Volunteer Dennis Linderman. Participants discussed plans for Valentine's Day, a grant writing session, and future events.

Upcoming Events:

Ashgabat

- **Project Development Training** will take place on February 3.
- **Teenager Health Presentation** is scheduled for February 7.
- **Debate Club** will be held every Thursday.
- **Public Speaking Classes** will be taught on Saturdays.
- **All Stars Club** will be held every Saturday.
- **Art Classes** are scheduled for Saturdays.
- **Conversation Class** will be taught on Saturdays.
- **Sixteen and Up Class** will be held on Saturdays.

Dashoguz

- **Alumni Meetings** will be held throughout February.
- **Headway Classes** are planned for Tuesdays and Thursdays.

- **Debate Class** will be taught on Wednesdays.
- **Drama Club** will be held throughout February.
- **English Club** are scheduled daily in February.
- **Movie Night** will be organized weekly in February.
- **Newsletter Discussion** is planned for February 8.
- **Valentine's Day Celebration** will take place on February 14.
- **Baseball Practices** will be held throughout February.
- **Rehabilitation Center Visit** is scheduled for February 20.

Mary

- **Black History Month Presentation** is scheduled for February 1.
- **U.S. Education System Presentation** will take place on February 1.
- **Alumni Roundtable** is planned for February 2.
- **Successful Presentation Training** will be held on February 5.
- **Power Point Presentation Training** is planned for February 8.
- **Presentation on African Americans** will be held on February 8.
- **U.S. High Schools Presentation** will take place on February 12.
- **Presentation on Successful African American Women** is scheduled for February 15.
- **Steps to Freedom Presentation** will be made on February 22.
- **Black History Month Quiz** will take place on February 28.
- **Movie Night** will be held on Tuesdays.
- **Teens' Club** will take place on Tuesdays.
- **E-mail Opening Classes** are scheduled for Tuesdays.
- **Debate Club** is planned for Fridays.
- **Current News Club** will be held on Fridays.
- **Astronomy Class** will take place on Fridays.
- **Conversational English Classes** are scheduled for Mondays.
- **Reading Club** will be taught on Fridays.
- **Newsletter Design Club** will be held on Mondays.
- **U.S. Culture Club** meetings are scheduled for Wednesdays.

Turkmenabat

- **Valentine's Day Celebration** will take place on February 14.
- **Martin Luther King Jr. Presentation** is scheduled for February 15.
- **Black History Presentation** will be held on February 15.
- **American Presidents presentation** is planned for February 22.
- **Music Club** will be held on Wednesdays.
- **Alumni Meetings** will be held on a weekly basis.
- **TOEFL Classes** are scheduled for Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays.
- **SAT Classes** will be taught on Mondays and Fridays.
- **Dance Club** will take place on Wednesdays.
- **Brain Ring Meetings** are planned for Thursdays.
- **English Grammar Classes** will be taught on Fridays.
- **Debate Club** is scheduled for Tuesdays.
- **Good Club** will take place on Fridays.
- **Current Events Club** will be held on Mondays.
- **U.S. Government Club** meetings are scheduled for Thursdays.

Turkmenbashy

- **Music Club** will be held on February 1, 8, 15, and 22.
- **Movie Nights** are planned for February 8 and 22.
- **Journalism Club** will take place on February 2, 9, 16, and 23.
- **Black History Month Presentations** are scheduled for February 5, 12, and 26.
- **Teenager Club** meetings will be held on February 6, 13, 20, and 27.
- **English Classes** will be taught on February 6, 13, 20, and 27.
- **Girls' Club** meetings are scheduled for February 7, 21, and 28.

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Ukraine

Kharkiv

English is Easy Project: On January 25, Kostyantyn Achkasov '06, Igor Murashko '04, and Iryna Shpak '04 taught English to the children at orphanage # 6. Alumni taught English by playing games and working on interesting exercises with the children.

City Representatives Training Conference: Fifteen newly appointed City Representatives and Alumni Coordinators (AC) from Ukraine took part in a training conference on January 26-27 in Lviv. The training was held to bring together Ukrainian City Representatives, familiarize them with the goals of alumni program, and supply them with skills and information necessary to effectively carry out projects and involve more local alumni. Sessions, led and organized by ACs were held on project management, fundraising and leadership. Key speakers included Christina Pendzola-Vitovych, American Councils country director, and Andriy Maxymovych, Eurasia Undergraduate Program alumnus. Special attention was also given to the importance of keeping in touch with alumni and updating information. Kateryna Muryhina '06 (Donetsk), Mariya Stepoura '06 (Dnipropetrovsk), and Zhanna Zherebtsova '04 (Zaporizhzhya) represented Eastern Ukraine.

Upcoming Events:

- **Seminar on Higher Education Opportunities** is scheduled for February 20.
- **Alumni Meeting** is planned for February 20.
- **English is Easy Project** classes are scheduled for February 18 and 25.
- **Become a Skier Day** will take place on February 24.
- **Special Olympics** will be held at the end of February and alumni will volunteer.

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Kyiv

Alumni Meeting: On January 10, 15 alumni discussed upcoming events at the alumni meeting. They planned spring cleanup, recycling, and fundraising projects. They also discussed asking the mayor of Kyiv for support in upcoming events.

United Nations Project: Maryna Gaidak '04 met with Hanna Antonova, representative of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to discuss possible joint collaborations on January 19. They decided to invite alumni and students from the Kyiv National Linguistics University to intern at the IOM and organize a conference on human trafficking on March 15.

Clothing Drive: Alumni concluded their clothing drive on January 22. Olena Bura '04 and Dmytro Kulyk '05 delivering the clothes to an orphanage in Cherkassy Region in Smila. Open Word alumni and Mayor of Smila Andriy Kolesnyk arranged transportation and informed the Cherkassy Regional television station that recorded alumni presenting the children proceeds of the clothing drive.

Charity Ball Committee Meeting: During January, committee members met on Wednesdays to organize a charity ball. Organizers decided that the beneficiary will be the Cherkassy Health Center for children with respiratory diseases and the event will be held on April 14. The committee is currently working with possible sponsors. Dana Depo '03, Dmytro Kulyk '05, and Oksana Mosynets '03 are the key organizers of the event.

Contact: Kyiv Alumni Coordinator Olena Bura '04 and Maryna Gaydak '03, flexalumni@americancouncilskyiv.org.ua (44) 246-82-82

Lviv

Alumni Meeting: On January 10, alumni planned activities for the upcoming months and discussed grant proposals at the IATP Center. Ivanna Danylyk '06, Anna Horodetska '03, Orysia Kobel '02, Vitaliy

Korostyliov '06, Anastasiya Krachkovska '05, Alla Myshalova '03, Olha Panchak '03, Maksym Thoryk '06, and Iryna Zayats '05 attended the meeting.

Upcoming Events:

- **Benefit Evening** with the Zonta Club will be held on February 10.
- **Alumni Meeting** is scheduled for February 20.
- **Meeting with Zonta Club Members** is planned for February 22.
- **HIV/AIDS Seminar** for the Student Honor Society will be held on March 14.

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Kherson

Orphanage Project in Kherson: Alina Manuilova '05 organized the first of a set of four workshops that she designed to develop children's creativity, imagination, and artistic skills at the orphanage in Kherson. To develop these skills Manuilova and fellow students from her university drew pictures with the children on January 14. The pictures will be presented in a charity gallery at the Kherson National Technical University. On January 20, organizers aimed to develop appreciation for literature and poetry by reading a reciting poetry with the children. On February 4, organizers will teach the orphans several dances and on February 11 to develop appreciation for drama and theatre. The goal of these workshops is to include the orphans in a Valentine's Day performance *The Neptune's Wedding* on February 14.



Mikolayiv

Grant-writing Workshop: On January 14, Iryna Lysenko '03 conducted a grant-writing seminar for 10 alumni in Mykolayiv. Besides general grant-writing tips, Iryna shared her knowledge in applying for alumni grants and the FLEX Alumni Grants Program. She showed several PowerPoint Presentations on the respective programs, which were provided by the American Councils office in Moscow. Those who participated in the workshop brainstormed ideas for potential projects.

Alumni Meeting in Mykolayiv: On January 21, inspired by the grant-writing seminar in Mykolayiv, 10 alumni met and discussed current projects and ideas for prospective FLEX Alumni Grants Program projects. Alumni chose to implement a set of seminars promoting volunteerism in local high schools. Dmitry Say '01 and Alyona Gorelova '02 decided to apply for group grants and organize Prom for orphans and promote local musicians.

Sevastopol

Workshops: On January 21, Volodymyr Bilay '03, Dmitry Savchenko '03, and representatives of the local NGO *Mirotvorets* (Peacekeeper) organized a set of workshops for alumni, representatives of youth NGOs, university students and young professionals. Dmitry Savchenko '03 facilitated a workshop entitled "Effective-Presentation Skills," a shortened version of a workshop that he attended in Kyiv. Participants learned about human rights while watching a set of short videos from www.youthforhumanrights.org. Valeriya Fedosova '06, Iryna Kalynychnenko '98, Evgeniy Machehin '06, Evgeniya Musatova '06, Iryna Ogay '04, Andriy Poteryakhin '02, Alina Shyryaeva '06, and 18 other students and young professionals attended the event. The local children's library and youth NGOs provided technical equipment.

International Programs Seminar: On January 24, FLEX and Edmund S. Muskie Graduate Fellowship Program alumni organized a seminar entitled "The Importance of International Programs." The seminar aimed to inform university students and professors about different exchange programs. Volodymyr Bilay '03, Iryna Kalinichenko '98 and Mariya Sarvilova '05 took part in discussion and answered questions regarding life or studies abroad.

Grant-writing Workshop: On February 4, Volodymyr Bilay '03 conducted a grant-writing seminar for six local alumni. The goal of the workshop was to provide alumni with fundraising and grant-writing skills and to

promote the FLEX Alumni Grants Program. Olga Kaluzhna'05, Katerina Masohina'06, Evgeniya Musatova'06, Iryna Ogay'04, Andriy Poteryakhin'02, and Yulia Tiutiunnik '02 participated in a brainstorming session and decided to meet in a week in order to share and discuss ideas.

Upcoming Events:

- **Simferopol Meeting with Fulbright Scholar Bob Zimmerman** is planned for February 10.
- **Sevastopol Alumni Meeting** will be held on February 11.
- **Workshop at the Kherson Orphanage** is scheduled for February 11
- **Play at Kherson Orphanage** will take place on February 14.
- **Volunteering-Promotion Project** is scheduled for February 18.
- **Meeting with Representatives from the U.S. Embassy** is planned for February 21.
- **Kirovograd Alumni Meeting** will take place on February 25.
- **Kherson Alumni Meeting** is scheduled for February 25
- **Simferopol Public Speaking Workshop** is planned for February 25.

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ALUMNI SUCCESSES

Armenia

Lusine Arakelyan '04 was promoted to project officer at the Youth for Achievements (YFA) organization.

Armen Armaghanyan '06 is administrative assistant at the Youth for Achievements (YFA) organization.

Gevorg Avetikyan '04 and *Karine Avetisyan '02* were accepted at the Young Leaders School. This school seeks to assist youth in developing their worldviews, value systems and leadership skills.

Shogher Badalyan '06 is an intern at American Councils.

Andrey Frolov '04 is an intern at the Armenian Tourism Development Agency.

Ani Hakobyan '05 will represent Armenia and teach others about its culture during her theater performance in Italy from March 25-31. She received an annually given scholarship from Italian theater Director Aurelino Sapatino. Each year four students from the Yerevan State Linguistic University receive a scholarship to perform an Armenian cultural performance abroad.

Nektar Harutyunyan '01 is a sales manager at Air Arabia Airlines.

Lusine Stepanyan '06 is an intern at American Councils and volunteers at the Youth for Achievements (YFA) organization.

Azerbaijan

Ruslan Asadov '04, *Adnan Hajizada '00*, and *Rena Hajiyeva '00* will attend the European Week International Student Forum in Eindhoven, Netherlands on March 24-31.

Gafar Ganizade '05 opened The Internet Technologies Service Center (ITSC), an information technologies company, in December.

Dmitriy Kirilov '02, *Tural Mammadov '04*, *Vusal Mammadov '05*, *Tagi Tagizada '02* and *Govhar Yagublu '03* will attend an International Student Festival entitled "Global Boundaries" in Trondheim, Norway on February 15-25.

Yagub Rahimov '06 is teaching English to 10 university and high school students at school #11.

Georgia

Nini Abzalava '03 was hired as a short-term contractor at the World Vision Mission to Georgia.

Matuta Bzhalava '98 is office manager for the NGO United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR).

Irina Iashvili '02 is currently employed as marketing manager at the International Center for Social Research and Policy Analysis (ICSRPA).

Vako Imnaishvili '05 is working with the World Vision Mission to Georgia as a survey operator and interviewer.

Maka Meshveliani '04 was hired as the civic program assistant at the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs.

Nino Samvelidze '05 is the office manager at the Credit Guarantee Fund for the Promotion of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises.

Kazakhstan

Arman Abitov '06 won the Suleiman Demirel University English Language Competition.

Assel Baltbayeva '04, *Marzhan Serekova '04*, and *Aiman Yedigeyeva '05* won travel grants from Kazakhstan Institute of Management, Economics and Strategic Research (KIMEP) University to participate in the Education Without Borders International Student Conference in Abu-Dhabi from February 25-27.

Yekaterina Dzvoniak '04 published an article about Valentine's Day in the *Kazakhstan Institute of Management, Economics and Strategic Research (KIMEP) Times* newspaper.

Diana Kudaibergenova '04 is the chief editor for the Kazakhstan Institute of Management, Economics and Strategic Research (KIMEP) Times newspaper.

ZhanarKumasheva '04 is an intern at Kazkommertsbank.

Roman Lushakov '06, a first year student at the Academy of International Relations, was chosen to be the FLEX City Representative in Uralsk.

Gauhar Magau '04 is a teaching assistant at Kazakhstan Institute of Management, Economics and Strategic Research (KIMEP) University's College of Social Sciences and will participate in an internship in Majilis this summer.

Madi Sarsenbayev '03 currently works at the Deloitte Company.

Kseniya Shilina '06 won the Taraz City High Schools English Language Olympiad.

Aiman Yedigeyeva '05 was named the most active alumni in Kazakhstan for December. Her achievements include establishing the Contact Club, actively participating in a fundraising activity for a local orphanage and diligently updating the database. She was also was hired as a web-site designer for Kazakhstan branch of the *Herald Tribune* magazine.

Nursultan Yeleussinov '06 was chosen to be the FLEX City Representative in Atyrau. Nursultan is the president of his school's English Club and published an article about his experiences in America in the NILE national newspaper.

Kyrgyzstan

Gulnisa Asymova '05 won a Higher Education and Scholarship Program scholarship and will study at Widzema University in Latvia.

Nurgul Iminova '05 participated in a Model UN competition in Dushanbe.

Farida Jailobaeva '01 is a manager at Clientura.

Asel Kasenova '97 opened a consulting company called Business Intellegium.

Diana Mamatova '04 won a Higher Education and Scholarship Program scholarship to fund her studies at the American University in Bulgaria

Maya Toktobaeva '03 is assisting a PhD candidate from the U.S. on his project on corruption in Kyrgyz schools.

Uran Turdumbaev '06 is an English teacher for the American School of English Language.

Moldova

Olga Demcenco '04 was accepted at the International University of Bremen to study in the department of International Logistics Management.

Igor Garabajiv '03 won the Moldcell Scholarship. This scholarship gives 15 fifth-year university students internships at Moldcell and \$100 monthly scholarships.

Mihaela Isac '05 won second place in a municipal English Olympiad and the regional Informatics Olympiad.

Galina Mistreanu '98 (Oglebay) is studying to receive BA in Hotel Administration and Finance at the University of Las Vegas. Mistreanu was accepted as an Honorary Member of the National Society of Collegiate Scholars, awarded a certificate for participating in the Central European Conference in Budapest, Hungary, and named Marketer of the Year for Fairfield Resort in 2004. Presently, she works as a Sarbanes-Oxley/Accounting Consultant for Riviera Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas and is in the process of being licensed as a Certified Professional Accountant.

Andrei Kaigorodov '98 was promoted to senior account manager at Grey Worldwide Romania office and handles communication with the Kent Tobacco Firm.

Mihai Popsoi '05 completed his academic year at Moldova State University in the department of International Relations and Political Studies with the highest grade point average in his class.

Russia

Nizhny Novgorod

Christina Bess '01 (Kirov) was selected to referee for the All-Russia basketball championship in Chelyabinsk and was offered a coaching position for the Kirov regional basketball team.

Novosibirsk

Aleksey Khokhulya '05 and *Alena Zirko '05* organized a bi-monthly English club for blind children.

Tamuna Otiashvili '04 organized an event with Orthodox community members to hold a Christmas show for the children at the Novosibirsk Child Shelter.

Anna Smirnova '06 and *Yuliya Travkova '06* substitute teach English classes for sixth, eighth, and tenth grade classes at their school.

Darya Velikoivanenko '06 made a FLEX presentation at school #9 in Iskitim city.

Alena Zirko '05 sang in the Creative Children Choir performance in Moscow. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) organized the event in October.

St. Petersburg

Oksana Bazhenova '06, *Marina Glushak '06*, *Margarita Potekhina '06*, and *Yekaterina Silkova '06* received Soros scholarships for the American University in Bulgaria Program (AUBG).

Igor Gots '01, *Roza Vasilyeva '04*, and *Kseniya Zachek '05* were recognized as active volunteers at the Future Leaders' American Corner.

Mikhail Vinnintskiy '06 became a FLEX City Representative in Syktyvkar.

Vladivostok

Yuliya Kuznetsova '06 competed in the Regional English Language Olympiad and took 5th place.

Marianna Sidorenko '06 won the Regional English Language Olympiad.

Volgograd

Elena Fomenko '03 (Volzhsky) took part in organizing and leading an annual camp for active youth in Volzhsky.

Ekaterina Khorina '06 (Volzhsky) took first place at a regional English Olympiad among 11th graders.

Osman Mazukabzov '95 (Nalchik), concerned about the high costs of Internet in Kabardino-Balkaria, organized an online conference about this matter. The conference was held between Kabardino-Balkarskaya Respublika (KBR), Nalchik, and New York and raised questions such as high Internet prices and decreasing numbers of Internet Cafes in Nalchik. Boris Pashtov, head of the Parliament Committee of Culture, Sports, Tourism and Public Relations in KBR, Albert Kilchukov, director of the Center for Support and Development of Enterprise in KBR, PR Secretary of the President of KBR Dzhamil Hagarov, Saur Gogunokov administrator of Presidential websites in KBR and journalists were among the participants of the conference.

Yekaterinburg

Ilya Korobeynikov '04, Mariya Rostovtseva '04, Nataliya Shipulina '03, and Yelizaveta Vorokhobova '05 received excellent grades at their respective universities last semester.

Darya Onishuk '06 advanced to the second round of a scholarship competition for the American University in Bulgaria

Svetlana Shammassova '99 moved on to the second round of the Fulbright program.

Nataliya Shipulina '03 advanced to the second round of the Eurasia Undergraduate Exchange Program.

Tajikistan

Aziza Baimatova '98 participated in 6th Annual Conference for Leaders organized by The International Youth Network in Ruppichteroch, Germany on January 26-30. The conference was an extension to internship that Baimatova held upon graduation from the Central European University in Budapest, Hungary.

Azim Ochilov '04, third year student of the Technological University in the economics department has recently found fame together with *Khurshed Isamov '04* and their rock band Ultramarine.

Turkmenistan

Gulbahar Bazarova '05 and *Nasiba Amanova '05* received TOEFL scholarship from the Turkmenistan Civic Values and Youth Foundation.

Ukraine

Lviv

Orysia Kobel '02 as a member of the Cheremosh Choir participated in the Great Carol Festival.

Alla Myshalova '03 was awarded a \$3000 scholarship to participate in the American Institute of Political and Economic Systems Conference in Prague.

Olha Panchak '03 together with the Youth Can Organization, coordinated a workshop entitled Youth Against Trafficking.

Iryna Shumanska '06 hosted an exchange student from Japan that she met in the U.S.

Sevastopol

Olga Kaluzhna '05 visited her host family in Buffalo, NY.

Alina Manuilova '04 (Kherson) received a municipal scholarship for her active involvement in community activities and outstanding grades at the Kherson National Technical University.

Anastasiya Marchuk '01 (Odesa) was elected president of the Odesa local chapter of Association des Etats Generaux des Etudiants de l'Europe (AEGEE).

Katerina Vdovichenko '05 (Kirovograd) was elected president of the Kirovograd local chapter of Association Internationale des Etudiants en Sciences Economiques (AIESE).