

December 2004

FLEX Alumni Report

Events during the month of December focused on World AIDS Day during the first week in December holding seminars, roundtables, and commemorative events. Alumni also worked to bring holiday joy to schools, orphanages, veterans' homes and homes for the elderly across the region. The Christmas holiday is celebrated differently in Eurasia, and the alumni talked about their experience of this holiday in the United States.. Ukrainian alumni remained involved in their elections and Ukrainian politics following the Orange Revolution

Armenia

Yerevan

AIDS Awareness Day Project: American Councils organized a seminar at the Internet Access and Training Program (IATP) Center on the December 2 to honor the World AIDS Awareness Day. Speakers from World Vision and the AIDS Center led some interesting discussions and distributed materials and statistics from various sources to alumni. Over ten alumni attended the event, and refreshments were provided by the IATP Center. Some of the alumni suggested distributing similar information about HIV/AIDS throughout other regions of Armenia.

Orphanage Christmas Party: After collecting donations for the past four months, Artur Grigoryan '04, Nune Khurshudyan '04, Zara Sargsyan '98, Lilit Ter-Azaryan '04, Konstantin Ter-Nakalyan '04, and Agnessa Topuzyan '98 went to celebrate Christmas with the children at "Huys" Orphanage in Gyumri. The alumni distributed individual gift packages with toys, stationary, balloons, and candy to the children, and also donated 50 books to the library and toys for the game room. The 70 children ages 3-17 then performed a show for the alumni as a sign of their gratitude.



Alumni Planning Meeting: Youth for Achievement (YFA) Board of Advisors Member Nelson Petrosyan '95, IREX Alumni Coordinator Zara Sargsyan '98, YFA Members Affairs Officer Anna Matinyan '01, and FLEX Alumni Assistant Liana Tadevosyan '99 met on December 17 at the YFA office to discuss ways to establish connections with the alumni group in Azerbaijan using IATP resources. Some possible projects for 2005 that were discussed include the "Men against Domestic Violence" campaign, the "Youth Councils South Caucasus Initiative," and "Youth Engaged in Society" Debate Club Creation Project. Both of these projects received funding in 2004 and will be implemented in 2005. Gurgen Hakobyan '94 is the project coordinator and Hayk Arakelyan '94 is the project accountant for two new projects. Varya Merouzhanyan '00 is the project coordinator for the debate club creation project and will be assisted by trainer Sona Manucharyan '00. Ani Hakobyan '00 will serve as project coordinator for the "Men against Domestic Violence" campaign and is waiting for the project contract to be signed.

Upcoming Events:

- Delivering Donations to the Vardenis Psychiatrist House is planned for the second week of February.
- Mock Trial Planning Meeting will be held on January 21 – 22.
- Mock Trial Team Assignments will be given February 1 – 2.

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Azerbaijan

Baku

"AIDS Today" Roundtable Discussion: Nargiz Hajiyeva '99 and Khalida Nurmetova '00 attended a roundtable discussion entitled "AIDS Today" at the U.S.-Azerbaijan Education Center on December 1. The seminar was organized by Salzburg Medical Seminars alumni and was dedicated to World AIDS Day. Following the roundtable discussion the alumni watched the documentary film *Pandemia* on the topic of AIDS.

OXFAM Roundtable Discussion: Movsum Aghayev '02, Ruslan Asadov '04, Fariz Ismailzade '96, Emil Gafarov '02, and Fuad Guliyev '04 attended a meeting organized by the Azerbaijan Alumni Association (AAA)

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on the topic "Caucasus at Crossroads: Time to Think and Act" with Adam Leach on December 2. Mr. Leach, regional director of the British non-governmental organization OXFAM, was accompanied by Wael Ibrahim, OXFAM's regional program manager for Middle East countries. The gentlemen answered questions regarding their organization's work in Iraq and Iran.

FLEX Program Recruitment Volunteering: Nargiz Akbarova '03, Ruslan Asadov '04, Raisa Azizova '04, Nadi Gulam '03, and Gunay Hassanova '03 volunteered to inform FLEX applicants regarding the results of the second round and to give them the dates of the third round of the competition.

"Exchanges to Internship" Project: Twenty-three alumni-internship applicants were interviewed by Public Affairs Officer Neil McGurty, Country Director Shane Austin, and FLEX Alumni Coordinator Nargiz Hajiyeva '99 on December 11. Ten alumni and four alternates were selected for internships at five different ministries: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Economic Development, the Ministry of Communications, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Ecology. The decisions were made based on written essays, CVs, and personal interviews. The following alumni were finalists: Nargiz Akbarova '03, Rishad Aliyev '04, Ruslan Asadov '04, Aysel Aslanova '03, Mamed Bayramov '04, Togrul Gahramanzada '02, Fuad Guliyev '04, Farida Hasanli '04, Tamerlan Mammadov '02, and Govhar Yagublu '03.

HIV/AIDS Awareness Seminar: FLEX alumni organized an HIV/AIDS seminar for 60 upper-class students at high school #23 on December 14. To begin the seminar, they read an official letter from U.N. General Secretary Kofi A. Annan, and then shared official HIV/AIDS statistics from around the world. Samir Mammadli '00 and Nargiz Muradova '00 then gave a PowerPoint presentation on AIDS, which was followed by a speech by Pastor Rasim Khalilov, a U.N.-certified representative. Pastor Khalilov offered ways to avoid contracting AIDS, and alumni translated his speech into Azeri. Alumni have decided to hold similar seminars in different schools every month based on the success of this activity. The following alumni participated in the event: Nargiz Akbarova '03, Kamran Aliyev '04, Rishad Aliyev '04, Ruslan Asadov '04, Raisa Azizova '04, and Nargiz Hajiyeva '99.

"Exchanges to Internship" Project Planning Meeting: Public Affairs Officer Neil McGurty, American Councils Country Director Shane Austin, and FLEX Alumni Coordinator Nargiz Hajiyeva '99 met with 10 internship finalists at the U.S.-Azerbaijan Education Center to introduce ministry contacts, discuss reporting requirements, present the stipend schedule, obtain signatures from the interns, and to answer their questions.

Christmas/New Year's Party: One hundred FLEX alumni gathered at the Ramses Club for a Christmas/New Year's party. The club provided discounts for alumni, and the popular new group "Creative" gave a free concert at the party. Refreshments, awards, and various contests were all part of this special evening as well.



English Language Lessons in hilar Orphanage: Aysel Allahverdiyeva '01 organized a project in September to teach English in the Neftchilar orphanage. Aysel Allahverdiyeva '01 and Aygun Husseynova '04 purchased the needed school supplies for the orphans and went to the orphanage every Sunday this month to give English lessons. Instruction on English grammar and vocabulary as well as language contests was part of the project.

New Year's Party at Neftchilar Orphanage #1: Kamran Aliyev '04, Ruslan Asadov '04, Mamed Bayramov '04, Gulara Hajiyeva '99, Nargiz Hajiyeva '99, Aygun Husseynova '04, Dmitry Kirillov '02, Jale Kazimova '01, and Taghi Tagizada '02 went to Neftchilar Orphanage #1 to present the 10 children they teach English there with school supplies, presents, and clothing on December 24. The alumni then held a small New Year's party at the orphanage, where the children sang songs, danced, and recited poems.

Upcoming Events:

- FLEX Alumni Grants Program Information Seminar will be held on January 15.
- Orphanage Clothes/Toy Drive is planned for January 16.
- AIDS Awareness Seminar at School #46 is scheduled for mid-January.
- Teaching Assistant Interviews will be held on January 26 and 27.

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Belarus

Minsk

HIV/AIDS Seminar: On December 1, Daria Efimova '02, Margarita Kuleshova '03, Alina Pryvalchuk '02, Evgenia Sadovnikova '04, Ekaterina Skachek '04, Polina Smykovskaya '03 and Ekaterina Stratskevich '00 attended the HIV/AIDS awareness seminar that took place in the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy. Dr. Sergei Golubev, who has been doing research on this issue both in the U.S. and throughout Belarus, conducted the seminar. During this seminar Dr. Golubev shared statistics on HIV/AIDS in Belarus and useful tips on its prevention. He has also encouraged all the participants of the seminar, including the alumni, to share their acquired knowledge within their communities.

Conference on Volunteering: Twenty alumni were among the group of 80 people who attended a conference on volunteering, which was held in the hotel "Belarus" on December 3-5. One of the guest speakers was Dr. Adam Bruner from the United States. During this event the alumni established useful connections with volunteers from various Belarusian organizations. They also got to share their thoughts on volunteering with the other participants of the conference. Four alumni, Margarita Gurtsevich '03, Alina Pryvalchuk '02, Anastassiiia Tarassiouk '03 and Tatiana Yakubovich '03, presented their alumni volunteer grant project: teaching English to children in one of the Minsk orphanages. The members of the Conference Council suggested the given project for further development not only in Minsk, but also throughout Belarus.

Movie Night: Twenty alumni came to watch the movie *Christmas Story* on December 15 in the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy. Before the movie Alexander Shlyck, the Eurasia Undergraduate alumni fellow, and Anastassiiia Tarassiouk, FLEX alumni assistant, held a leadership game for the alumni. The movie and communication contributed to the holiday spirit.

Grant Writing Seminar: On December 19, Alexander Shlyck, the Eurasia Undergraduate alumni fellow, and Anastassiiia Tarassiouk, FLEX alumni assistant, conducted a grant-writing seminar for the alumni. Seven FLEX alumni, including Ekaterina Apet '04, Ekaterina Chetyreva '02, Margarita Gurtsevich '03, Aleksandr Kozhura '03, Larisa Prokopenko '01, Ekaterina Skachek '04, and Ekaterina Stratskevich '00, attended the event. During the seminar Alexander Shlyck and Anastassiiia Tarassiouk shared the basic concepts of grant writing and introduced application forms for grants available to their alumni. The alumni came up with interesting ideas on the aims of their proposed grant projects.

Father Frost Project: Nineteen alumni gathered on December 22 in the American Center office to answer the letters written by children throughout Belarus to Father Frost. This year the annual project was slightly changed, as the alumni obtained the letters not from the Central Post Office, but directly from various schools, health centers and from youngsters themselves. Alumni answered more than 80 letters. Children who wrote the most original letters were visited by Father Frost's alumni helpers or received a small gift from the North Pole.

Upcoming events:

- **Movie Night** will be held on January 20.
- **Planning Meeting** is scheduled for January 25.

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Georgia

Tbilisi

Preparation Meetings for Charity Action: During the month of December, seven FLEX and three Eurasia Undergraduate Program alumni regularly attended preparation meetings for the Shardeni Street Charity Action, which took place on December 19. The seven FLEX attending planning meetings for the Shardeni Street Charity Fair were Sopo Balavadze '96, Irinka Rekhviashivli '03, Irina Kvividze '03, Gigi Vashakidze '02, Sopo Tabatadze '04, Shota Gvaramadze '04, and Salome Tsereteli '00.

American Cooking Lesson: Amy McGoldrick, deputy director of American Councils, organized a special alumni event: an American cooking lesson, in which alumni had the opportunity to learn how to make chocolate chip cookies. On December 7, around 20 alumni had the chance to make cookies themselves and then to sample the results of their cooking. The alumni spent the evening with American Councils staff, shared reminiscences about their time in America, and discussed plans for upcoming events.

Farewell Party: American Councils for International Education and the alumni organized a farewell party for Amy McGoldrick, deputy director of American Councils, on December 10. After two and a half years working at American Councils, Amy took a new position at the United Nations. The event took place at the American Councils office, and FLEX, Eurasia Undergraduate Program, and Muskie alumni, as well representatives of the U.S. Embassy, Project Harmony and other international organizations came to wish Amy success in her future career.

Shardeni Street Charity Action: On December 19, St. Nicholas Day, American Councils and the “Shardeni Group,” a coalition of students and recent graduates from various higher education institutions, held the annual Shardeni Street charity drive action. The aim of the action was to raise funds by selling items displayed at the action to support the Gldani Orphanage House. Among the exhibited pieces for sale were artifacts, photos, books, CDs, DVDs, and Christmas presents, which were donated by individuals and organizations. A lot of people attended the event, including many young people from Tbilisi, government officials, and representatives of the international community. Live music performances and exciting games made the event even more entertaining and amusing. FLEX alumni Sopo Balavadze '96, Ketu Botchorishvili '98, Irinka Rekhviashvili '03 and Eurasia Undergraduate Program alumni Andro Gigauri '02 and Manana Tevzadze '00 and several other young people were the main initiators of the event. They mobilized more than 70 alumni to help with organizing and managing the thousands of people who came during that day. Salome Tsereteli '00 set up the food corner with contributions from local restaurants. Giga Vashakidze '00 arranged a carload of Pepsi, with a total worth of 1000 GEL. Sopo Tabatadze '04 organized a corner with more than 200 handmade items. Shota Gvaramadze '04 and Salome Moistrapishvili '04 gathered second-hand goods. Irina Kvividze '03 contacted local music groups and took care of the cultural part of the event. Before the event, alumni were responsible for advertising, which included e-marketing and leaflet distribution. On the day of the event, they were in charge of selling items, general supervising, and promoting the idea of volunteerism and community service. Organizers raised almost \$2000, which will be used to support the Gldani Orphanage House.

Christmas Alumni Reunion: More than 100 FLEX alumni, together with 40 Undergraduate and 20 Muskie alumni, attended the Alumni 12th Anniversary Christmas Reunion held on December 25 at the club Noa-Noa.



Participating alumni had a wonderful chance to meet and get to know each other better and to strengthen existing friendships. Alumni dressed in 70s style costumes, and the music throughout the evening was from that period. FLEX and Eurasia Undergraduate Program alumni presented a program of Georgian and English Christmas carols. Organizers Ketu Botchorishvili '98, Eurasia Undergraduate Program alumnus Giorgi Meladze '01, Salome Tsereteli '00 and Irinka Rekhviashvili '03 then awarded certificates of recognition to highlight the activism and commitment of some alumni. FLEX alumna Darejan Tsutrustumia '04, Ugrad alumni Mari Antia '04, and Sopo Kordzakhia '04 were honored for their support during the Shardeni Street Action; Giorgi Dvali '04, Lana

Chkhardtishvili '04, Shota Gvaramadze '04, and Sopo Tabatadze '04 were nominated as the most active alumni; Nino Abralava '03 and Nini Panjikidze '03 were recognized because of their devotion during the Youth and Police Extreme Sports Competition; and Muskie alumni Tamar Kochakidze '04 and Vasil Kenkishvili '04 were recognized as the best business partners. Giorgi Dvali '04 and Giorgi Meladze '00 designed the certificates. The prize for the best costume was given to Nana Aburjanidze '95 and Archil Lezhava '95, both of whom are from Poti, and the two awards for two best dance couples went to Irine Rekhviashvili '03 and Irakli Makatsaria '01 from Batumi and Tina Mikadze '97 and her partner.

Upcoming events:

- **Media group meeting** will take place on January 13.
- **Grant writing workshop and movie night** will happen on January 21.

- "American Figures of Speech" seminar and a movie night will take place on January 28.
- Debate training workshop and tournament will take place in February.
- St. Valentine's Day activity will be on February 14.

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Kazakhstan

Almaty

Alumni Planning Meeting: Sixteen FLEX alumni gathered at the Alumni Resource Center on December 12 to plan activities for December and the beginning of January. They then decided to implement a project entitled "Christmas for Orphans" on December 22. The alumni, divided into three groups, shared duties, including preparing games and activities, purchasing refreshments and presents, and communicating with orphanage staff and general logistics.

Christmas "Elf Gift Delivery" at the Orphanage: Twelve FLEX alumni dressed up as Christmas elves and paid a special visit to Almaty Regional Orphanage #2 on December 24. The alumni arrived with bags filled with candy, toys, and hygiene products for the surprised orphans aged 2-7 years old. The alumni first sang Christmas carols and played games with the children before teaching them the importance of dental hygiene. Due to a lack of funding, the orphanage authorities asked that the alumni provide the children with hygiene supplies.

Upcoming events:

- "Staryj Novyj God" (Old New Year) Trip to Chimbulak mountain resort is planned for January 20.
- Fundraising Seminar will be held on January 27.

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Kyrgyzstan

Bishkek

Reproductive Health Seminars: Selbi Djumaeva '03 and Anna Kirey '97 visited three high schools in Bishkek and Kara-Balta every Saturday in December to conduct reproductive health seminars for 80 students. The goals of the project were to raise awareness about sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS in particular. The seminars also introduced basic issues regarding sexual and reproductive health and encouraged a healthy lifestyle. The presentations were made in an informal manner so that the participants felt free to discuss various issues openly.

Diversity Week: Maya Berdiklycheva '02, Vladimir Inozemtsev '01, Anton Sherbak '03, Ksenia Tsoi '04, and the World Club organized Cultural Diversity and Tolerance Week at American University Central Asia from December 10-17. The goal of the project was to help raise awareness regarding cultural diversity in the Central Asian region and the university in particular. Several activities were organized, and a festival day was organized for cultural groups to perform their traditional folk arts.

New Year Performances: Twenty-seven FLEX alumni participated in a project to raise money for a local orphanage. The alumni divided into two groups and performed a New Year's program for the children of employees at six companies from December 25 till January 2. The alumni raised \$600 and purchased warm clothes, boots, sweets, and fruit for children from the Bishkek Children Protection Center. Diana Mamatova '04, Elena Sharomova '04, Aliya Suranova '04, and Maya Toktorbaeva '04 were the most active alumni and acted as group leaders.

New Year's at the Children's Cancer Center: Elnura Adylova '02, Sergey Firsov '00, Joldosbek Osmonov '04, Aliya Suranova '04, alumni from other U.S. exchange programs, and local high school students visited the Bishkek Children's Cancer Center to perform a New Year's fairytale, give a concert, and play interactive games with the children. At the end of the visit the children received sweets and drawing/painting supplies as gifts.

Upcoming events:

- Monthly Alumni Meeting is planned for January 12.
- Orphanage Clothing Donation will be held on January 19.

- Grant Writing Seminar is scheduled for January 15.

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Moldova

Chisinau

Christmas Planning Meeting: On December 1, FLEX and Eurasia Undergraduate alumni gathered at the Alumni Resource Center to plan activities for the coming month. Igor Grabajiv '03 and Veronica Cacean '03 gave alumni the assignment of placing collection boxes at various organizations as part of the fundraising project that will last until December 20. The alumni then decided to celebrate Christmas and the New Year on December 23. Valentine Brega '04 volunteered to be Snow White and Igor Garabajiv '03 said he would be Santa Claus.

Clothes, Toys, and School Supplies Fundraiser: Alumni from various U.S. Government-sponsored exchange programs conducted fundraising from December 1-20. As part of this project, the alumni made colorful collection boxes and posters to place in different institutions and businesses. Alumni collected items such as clothes, toys, and school supplies to donate to a local orphanage during the December 24 Christmas celebration.

Winter Art Festival: FLEX and Eurasia Undergraduate alumni met with volunteers from the Academy of Economic Studies at the Alumni Resource Center on December 13 to make Christmas decorations for the Christmas celebration. Lilia Fusa '04 was in charge of the event and explained the guidelines for making the cards. Valentina Brega '04, Igor Garabajiv '03, Maxim Semiono '04, and volunteers from the State University of Moldova then decorated the room.

Second Christmas Planning Meeting: FLEX and Eurasia Undergraduate alumni met on December 14 to finish planning the Christmas celebration. During the meeting the alumni developed a detailed agenda of activities for the event and delegated responsibilities amongst themselves.

Interview Preparation Training - Part II: Twelve "Bridges Between Us" interns attended the second monthly training on preparing for interviews. Igor Garabajiv '03 organized the training and prepared reports from the Peace Corps volunteers who interviewed the alumni. The interns were very intrigued by the results and the entire interviewing process and enthusiastically asked questions about how they could improve their performance during interviews. The interns took a test related to the interview and showed high results, which is good feedback for the trainers.

Christmas Celebration at Gimnaziul Internat #1: A Christmas celebration was held for 100 children at Gimnaziul Internat #1 by FLEX alumni, Eurasia Undergraduate alumni, volunteers from the State University of Moldova, and the Italian organization "Amici dei Bambini" on December 23. Valentina Brega '04 played the role of Snow White, and Igor Garabajiv '03 performed as Santa. The children put on their own performances following those from the alumni and volunteers and were happy to receive the presents collected during the clothing, toys, and school supplies drive. Following the Christmas party the alumni and volunteers attended English movie night at the Alumni Resource Center.

Upcoming events:

- **Monthly Intern Training** on fundraising and grant writing will be held for interns from the Bridges Between Us Program on January 15.

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Russia

Kirov

"Life without Drugs" Flipchart: Beginning December 1, school children at Vyatka Humanitarian Gymnasia were invited by alumni to express their opinion regarding drugs via a flipchart hanging on a wall. The "Life without Drugs" flipchart was available to the students to draw and write on for two weeks.

AIDS Prevention Seminar: Vladimir Gordeev '98 conducted an AIDS prevention seminar for tenth-graders at Vyatka Humanitarian Gymnasia on December 8. The students discussed the AIDS problem, the ways HIV can be transmitted, and brainstormed how to prevent AIDS. The seminar concluded with a statistical overview of the AIDS situation in Russian and the world. On the following day, he conducted a discussion with the school's ninth-graders about living an AIDS-free life. The discussion fit perfectly with the students' anatomy lesson, and they expressed their view of AIDS prevention nicely with their conclusion that "health is above everything."

Training Conference: A city representatives training conference was held on December 18.

Alumni Meeting: Maksim Isaykin '04, Sofya Kaplan '04, Evgenia Lyamina '03, Natalya Nagayeva '02, Olga Rebro '04, and Ekaterina Skopina '96 attended the alumni meeting held on December 19. Moscow Program Hub Director Kore Gleason conducted an interesting English language workshop for the alumni.

Christmas Presentation: Natalya Nagayeva '02, who currently works as an office manager at the Vyatka Humanitarian Gymnasia, gave a presentation about Christmas in the U.S. to eleventh-grade American literature classes on December 22.

Clothing, Toy, and Sweets Drive: Alumni at various educational institutions participated in a clothing, toy, and sweets drive held December 20-28. Alumni cooperated with their university student councils to collect needed items, which were then passed to representatives of the city and regional governments, and the Russia Children's Fund for distribution to the most needy children. Vladimir Gordeev '98 and Ludmila Rossinskaya '99 represented Kirov State Medical Academy; Elena Bakulina '98 participated at Vyatka State University; Anna Milyutina '01 represented Vyatka State University of Humanities; and Sofya Kaplan '04, Evgenia Lyamina '03, Natalya Nagayeva '02, and Olga Rebro '04 joined in at Vyatka Humanitarian Gymnasia.

Nizhny Novgorod

Orphanage Christmas Party: Ksenia Gorshenina '04, Natalia Klochkova '00, and Ksenia Pozdeeva '00 held a Christmas party for children at the orphanage for the blind and weak-sighted on December 21. The alumni taught the orphans Christmas songs, made a presentation about celebrating Christmas in U.S., and conducted a small quiz about Christmas traditions. The children were awarded with prizes. In return, the children invited the alumni to a tea party they had organized.

Clothing and Toy Drives: Nizhny Novgorod alumni also participated in clothing and toy drives organized by the universities and schools they attend throughout December.

Cheboksary

Clothing and Toy Drives: Cheboksary alumni participated in clothing and toy drives organized by the universities and schools they attend throughout December.

Kazan

Clothing and Toy Drives: Kazan alumni participated in clothing and toy drives organized by the universities and schools they attend throughout December.

Upcoming events:

- **Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) Training** will be held January 26-29 in Kazan. The training, offered by the English Language Office of the U.S. Embassy, will be for alumni in the Upper Volga Region and will focus on teaching English to secondary students in a camp setting.
- **Proposal Writing Workshops** are being planned for alumni in Penza, Nizhny Novgorod, Cheboksary, and Kazan in late January and early February.

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Moscow

International AIDS Day Concert: Twenty-four alumni went to the "Time to Live" concert devoted to International AIDS Day on December 1. Darya Zolotova '03 volunteered to help with the preparations for the concert, and Yulia Molodtsova '98, who works at Focus-Media Fund, one of the organizers of the event, donated

the tickets for the concert. The concert featured famous Russian rock-bands, and various brochures on the HIV/AIDS problem were distributed, making the concert both entertaining and educational. The alumni, and Yulia Molodtsova '98 and Evgeny Yankovoy '01 in particular, are planning an HIV/AIDS awareness project for high school students in January/February of 2005.

Team-building Training: Anna Elyasova '00, Elena Intsertova '02, Andrey Kiselev '01, Daria Rudenko '01, and Yulia Tell '02 attended a training session on team building held by Nataliya Yeremeyeva '95 in the American Center conference room on December 5. The participants discussed their views on teamwork and why it is important. Nataliya then gave them a problem, which they had to solve as a team. The participants also had to learn as much as possible about their team members in a few short minutes. Nataliya led several active exercises, in which the alumni competed in teams. Nataliya works as a training manager for the company "Service Center PC HELP," which assists people with computer emergencies.

Monthly Meeting: Evgenia Bourilova '01, Aleksey Erushkin '96, Ekaterina Isinova '03, Oksana Klimovich '03, Elizaveta Koshkarova '01, Yulia Molodtsova '98, and Yulia Tell '02 attended the monthly meeting on December 8 to discuss December activities. The alumni primarily considered the upcoming charity event for children from Orphanage #50 in Moscow. They thought about the best ways to gather presents for the children and used pictures of the children and their "wish lists" to help them better understand what kind of materials they needed.

International AIDS Day at Club "Orange": Yulia Molodtsova '98 donated tickets to another event devoted to International AIDS Day. The event took place on December 15 at the Moscow nightclub "Orange," where the famous Russian bands "Dolphin" and "Nogu svelo" performed, and FLEX alumni received different brochures with information about the HIV/AIDS problem. The alumni who attended the evening were Igor Danchenko '95, Ekaterina Isinova '03, Elizaveta Kabaeva '96, Anton Khokholov '98, Anton Melnikov '98, Yulia Molodtsova '98, Egor Tsarev '96, and Ekaterina Zlokazova '01.

Charity Week: December 16-23 was Charity Week for the "Happy New Year Project." FLEX alumni were encouraged to contribute either money or presents for orphanage children. Information about the project, names and photos of the orphanage children, and their "wish lists" were posted on both the unofficial Moscow FLEX website (www.flexible.ru), and Aelita Purnashkina '97 posted the information on her company website (www.TopCareer.ru). Information about the project was also then mailed to FLEX alumni. Alumni could either choose a specific child or simply donate a present. Sweets were also welcomed as part of each present for the orphans. All the donations were brought to the FLEX alumni office, and the names of those who donated presents and money were recorded.

Movie Night: Eleven FLEX alumni gathered at the IATP Center to watch *Intolerable Cruelty* and have a social evening on December 18.

Alumni Meeting: Aleksey Erushkin '96, Tatyana Golubko '98, Yevgeniya Kazakova '96, Oksana Klimovich '03, Anastasiya Makeeva '04, Tatyana Maksatova '03, Yulia Molodtsova '98, Maksim Selivanov '97, Yulia Tell '02, and Lidiya Vetrova '03 gathered at the alumni office following Charity Week to wrap the presents they collected and to determine which children still had not received any. The amount of cash donations was also calculated. The presents were then packed, and Aleksey Erushkin '96, Tatyana Golubko '98, Yevgeniya Kazakova '96, Anastasiya Makeeva '04, and Maksim Selivanov '97 volunteered to go purchase the presents that were still needed. Yulia Molodtsova '98 volunteered to buy fruit for the children. Alumni also discussed the activities they would conduct at the orphanage and how to organize their visit.

Christmas Orphanage Visit: Ekaterina Isinova '03, Tatyana Maksatova '03, Yulia Molodtsova '98, Olga Semyonova '00 and Yulia Tell '02 went to Orphanage #50 in Moscow on December 24 for a Christmas celebration with the children. They played several games with the children and then distributed Christmas presents to them. The alumni also brought fruit for the orphans to make the celebration even more special.



Alumni Christmas Celebration: Ten FLEX alumni gathered at the IATP Center for a Christmas celebration on December 25. The alumni watched a movie, played the game “Yankee Swap,” listened to Christmas songs, and even sang along to some.

Upcoming events:

- Monthly meeting will be held on January 15.
- Happy Hour is planned for January 30.

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Novosibirsk

Monthly meeting: Sixteen alumni met on December 15. They discussed their projects for the coming month and planned the New Year celebration for the orphanage children and for children at the oncology dispensary.

New Year's Celebration: On December 26, alumni went out to bring New Year spirit to children. Together with Father Frost -- this year he was played by FLEX Recruiter Joshua Lamb -- they made a presentation with New Year's characters, played games with the children, and gave out New Year's presents. Darya Afonasova '01, Natalya Gashko '04, Elena Khruleva '01, Alexandra Mironova '00, Alexandr Nozdrin '01, Alexey Poleschuk '02, Tatyana Popova '03, and Bella Struminski '02 brought the fun to the children.

Alumni Celebration: Darya Afonasova '01, Elena Khruleva '01, Alexandra Mironova '00, Alexandr Nozdrin '01, and Alexey Poleschuk '02 met on December 27 to celebrate Christmas and send Christmas cards to their host families and American friends.

Upcoming events:

- Grant Writing seminar is planned for late January.

Contact: Novosibirsk Alumni Assistant Daria Afonasova '01, alumflex@ieie.nsc.ru +7 (3832) 34-42-93

St. Petersburg

Christmas Letters to FLEX Participants: It has become a tradition for St. Petersburg alumni to send Christmas cards to the FLEX participants who are currently in the US. This year Mikhail Chudotvorov '04, Varvara Miroshnichenko '03, Natalia Makarova '99, and Maria Zolotokrylina '02 composed short Christmas poems and prepared the envelopes to have the cards mailed to the U.S.

American Studies Contest Planning Meeting: On December 15, the St. Petersburg alumni who traveled to Petrozavodsk in November to participate in the American Studies Contest Training of Trainers (TOT) held a planning meeting. Yulia Diundikova '03, Yekaterina Gavrilenko '03, Natalia Makarova '99, and Anatoly Naidionov '04 discussed in which schools they would hold the events, assigned preparation tasks, and decided to ask younger alumni to help them set up the competitions in their schools. The alumni also agreed to hold the events later in January and in February after exams were over.

Alumni Christmas celebration: On Christmas eve, over 15 FLEX alumni, together with the alumni of the Eurasian Undergraduate and Junior Faculty Development Programs, held a Christmas celebration at the IATP Center. The alumni enjoyed a few team and role-playing games. Alumni made it a tradition that everyone brings a wrapped gift to the event so that everybody receives a Christmas present in the end to create a real holiday atmosphere.

Petrozavodsk

Petrozavodsk Alumni Organization Planning Meeting: On December 13, members of the Petrozavodsk FLEX Alumni Organization held a meeting to plan and prepare an upcoming event at a local boarding school. The City Representative, Lyudmila Chistiakova '01 also announced the FLEX Grants program to other alumni and asked each of them to be prepared to share their thoughts on a possible project at the next meeting.

Upcoming Events:

- **Weekly sports** (volleyball/basketball) for alumni.

- **American Movie Club** will be held on a weekly basis, starting end of January
- **Grant Writing Training** for various program alumni will be held in late January

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Samara

World AIDS Day: Timur Kurmaev '02 and Elena Pastukhova '00 joined the People Services International (PSI) representatives in conducting activities at the Samara Institute of Management on December 1. The alumni and PSI volunteers answered questions from curious students about AIDS and AIDS prevention.

“Anti-AIDS-phobia and Stigma” Seminar: On December 3, Valentina Dolgikh '02, Timur Kurmaev '02, Elena Pastukhova '00, and Anastasia Pechkurova '03 took part in the “Anti-AIDS-phobia and Stigma” seminar organized by IREX and Samara People Services International (PSI) for the members of the American Alumni Club. The seminar was lead by young American volunteers and a volunteer from Germany. Samara PSI representative and FLEX alumni assisted Mikhail Volik in interpreting their speeches for non-English speakers. The alumni were acquainted with the fears, stigmas, and stereotypes people infected with HIV/AIDS struggle with, and participated in exercises designed to help them overcome such forms of discrimination. The alumni asked many questions and decided to cooperate with PSI in the future.

Orphanage Visit: Pavel Alashev '01, Elena Pastukhova '00, Anna Shegurova '04, and Alexandra Visloguzova '04 visited their little friends at the Samara Orphanage #3 “Malyutka” on December 10. The alumni delivered them a long-expected present – a VCR so they can watch cartoons. Alexandra Visloguzova '04 played a major role in raising money to buy the VCR, as she found a company, which was willing to help.

Monthly Alumni Meeting: The monthly meeting took place at the Samara Municipal Institute of Management on December 20 and was attended by Pavel Alashev '01, Ekaterina Gafarova '03, Timur Kurmaev '02, Aleksandr Kuznetsov '01, Tatyana Lebakina '03, Elena Pastukhova '00, Anna Shegurova '04, and Alexandra Visloguzova '04. The alumni had the chance to discuss the Christmas and New Year celebration at the “Malyutka” Orphanage planned for December 30.

Christmas at “Malyutka:” Ekaterina Gafarova '03, Tatyana Lebakina '03, Elena Pastukhova '00, and Anna Shegurova '04 cheered up the children at “Malyutka” Orphanage on December 30 with fruit and toys collected during their toy drive. After delivering the treats the alumni took part in the dancing and singing section of the children’s Christmas celebration.

Upcoming events:

- **Meeting with Ohio Senator Mark Mallory** is scheduled for January 10. Several alumni were invited to the meeting, which will focus on the Samara Region-Ohio State partnership.
- **Monthly Alumni Meeting** will be held in a non-traditional setting in January. The alumni will gather at a skating rink to combine planning future events with a fun winter activity.

Contact: Samara Alumni Assistant Elena Pastukhova '00, samaraflexalumni@rambler.ru

Vladivostok

American Culture Night – AIDS Discussion: On December 1, seven Vladivostok alumni gathered at the American Councils office to discuss AIDS/HIV problems and share their own ideas about possible ways of cutting down the rate of this disease in Primorskiy Krai. FLEX alumni who study in school talked about the impacts of AIDS prevention seminars in which they have participated. After the discussion alumni observed a moment of silence in memory of those who have died from AIDS/HIV. Afterwards everybody watched *Philadelphia*, the real-life story about a talented person who had AIDS and who tried to defend his rights. This movie raised a lot of questions about people who have AIDS and who suffer more from other people’s reaction than from the illness itself. Alumni who attended included Anastasia Aleshkina '04, Olga Bukach '04, Zoya Nabatova '97, Ekaterina Pavlova '03, Anastasia Prokonich '02, Anna Ustugova '99, and Polina Zavyalova '00.

Big and small secrets of PR Seminar: Dmitriy Chubaev, a leading PR specialist in Vladivostok, made a presentation “Big and Small Secrets of Public Relations” on December 22 for alumni at the American Councils

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office. He started his career as a journalist at a small newspaper and he advanced to the position of the press-attache for The Second Vladivostok International Film Festival. Mr. Chubaev talked not only about the theory of public relations, but also gave a lot of examples of ways in which local companies create their public image. All alumni found this seminar quite informative and noted that the PR tips could be used in their future careers. Anastasia Aleshkina '04, Marina Kaurova '99, Pavel Khizhnyak '96, Dmitriy Mitrofanov '00, Zoya Nabatova '97, Anastasia Prokonich '02, Valentina Yurenok '98, and Polina Zavyalova '00 attended.

Clothes & Toys Drive for Orphanage: During the month of December, American Councils held a toys & clothing drive where alumni of U.S. Government-sponsored programs donated clothes, toys, and sweets for children at an orphanage. All alumni groups were invited to participate in this community service project, and it became a friendly competition. FLEX alumni were once again declared the winners. On December 25, Anastasia Aleshkina '04, Dmitry Shatokhin '02, and Polina Zavyalova '00 helped deliver the gifts. Together with alumni of other U.S. government programs, and VladEcoRotary and VladEcoRotaract representatives, they traveled to an orphanage in the village of Noviy in the Nadezhdiskiy region. They brought more than 50 individual gifts of bags of candies and toys, 25 kilograms of sweets and fruits, five cakes and lots of clothes and other toys. In New Year's holiday tradition, American Councils also brought *Ded Moroz* and *Snegurochka*, who entertained the children and played different games with them. During the event the children also showed alumni how they could dance, shared their dreams of going to the U.S., sang songs, and recited New Year poems.

Upcoming events:

- **Meeting with the members of "Free Travels Academy"** will be held on January 8.
- **Canned Food Drive** for the "Living Hope" is planned for January 19.
- **American Culture Night** will take place on January 21
- **Grant Writing Seminar** for the newly returned alumni and inexperienced proposals writers will be offered on January 28.

Contact: Vladivostok Alumni Assistant Polina Zavyalova '00, flexalum@vlad.ru +7 (4232) 22-37-98

Volgograd

Christmas Celebration at School #3: Oksana Panfilova '04 organized a Christmas celebration for children at School #3 in Gorodische on December 20. Oksana told the children about how this holiday is usually celebrated in the U.S., including various kinds of Christmas activities, the most common customs and traditions in U.S., and favorite Christmas foods. Oksana also prepared gingerbread for the children as an example of American food. The children liked the presentation a lot and their English teacher thanked Oksana for promoting U.S. culture among her students.

Alumni Christmas Celebration: Olga Melnikova '03, Oksana Panfilova '04, and Anna Romasheva '04 attended the December 25 Christmas celebration held at the Volgograd Russian-American Corner. The alumni sang Christmas carols and shared their experience of celebrating Christmas with the other members of the American Club and the American guests that were there. The alumni also discussed their plans for January and decided not to have any activities due to the fact that most alumni are busy with winter exams.

Contact: Volgograd Alumni Assistant Nelli Khachaturian '03 nellyi-volgograd@yandex.ru

Yekaterinburg

Meeting on AIDS Prevention: On December 1, a meeting was held at the Tyumen American Corner as part of AIDS Prevention Day. Natalya Shurshikova '00 delivered a speech devoted to AIDS prevention, and Ruslan Nechai '00 also participated in the meeting. There were many students from the local university and high school in attendance.

Thanksgiving Night: Ruslan Nechai '00 organized "Thanksgiving Night," at the Tyumen American Corner on December 2. The party was held partially in English, and students discussed some elements of the Native American culture.

"The USA: Know It All" Project: A contest entitled "The USA – Know It All" was held from December 6-15 as a continuation of International Education Week. The project was meant to increase high school students'

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awareness of U.S. history, culture, economics, and politics. Vera Aminova '03 played a key role in the project by preparing questions about the U.S. to be answered by the students. The questions varied in difficulty, and some were in English. The students were allowed to consult secondary sources to obtain the answers, and more points were given to those who answered all the questions correctly, including those in English. All the winners received certificates signed by American Councils Office Director Stephen Houtsma.

Meeting with Project Harmony Regional Coordinator: Yelizaveta Gladkovskaya '95, Lyubov Okulova '04, and Nataliya Shipulina '03 met with Project Harmony Regional Coordinator Alexander Rodichev at the American Information Center. Mr. Rodichev inspired the alumni by describing projects taking place in other cities. Natalya Shipulina proposed exploring the possibility of creating an alumni site for the Urals region.

Izhevsk

Izhevsk Photography Exhibition Opening: Yekaterina Naymushina '00, Alexander Semenovych '99, Yekaterina Sokolova '04, Alexander Tazhedenov '04, and Dmitry Zhizhin '00 attended the official opening of a photography exhibition devoted to the history of U.S.-Russian relations at the National Library of Udmurtia in Izhevsk on December 16. U.S. Ambassador Alexander Vershbow and Branch Public Affairs Officer Bradley Hurst also attended the event. Alumni appreciated the opportunity to gather and share news.

Ufa

Meeting with Ufa Representatives: Alumni Assistant Yelizaveta Gladkovskaya '95 met with Ufa city representatives Artem Rublev '00 and Svetlana Shammassova '99 on December 16. Yelizaveta shared information concerning grants and scholarships available to students, and the alumni discussed possibly having a conference for local representatives in the beginning of 2005. Artem suggested having a professional training session as part of the conference, and then went on to discuss possible reasons why FLEX alumni are active or not.

Meeting with Ufa High School Students: On December 18, American Councils Office Director Stephen Houtsma and Alumni Assistant Yelizaveta Gladkovskaya '95 met with students at School #91 in Ufa. The meeting was organized by Inna Lvovna Fenina, TEA alumna, who works as an English teacher at the school. The meeting was informal, and Stephen primarily answered the students' questions, while Yelizaveta spoke about the U.S. system of education.

Upcoming events:

- **Visit to an orphanage** is planned for mid January.
- **Meeting with Chelyabinsk alumni** will be held at the end of January.

Contact: Yekaterinburg FLEX Alumni Assistant Yelizaveta Gladkovskaya '95 flexalum@ural.actr.ru + (343) 257- 82-05

Tajikistan

Dushanbe

Computer and Keyboarding Training: On December 11, Akmalxon Ibragimov '04 and Firuz Oyev '02 started a small alumni project. The eight participants for this project were chosen from among ninth and tenth graders at School #4 in Dushanbe, which lacks computer equipment, though the pupils want to study. The lessons are being conducted on Tuesday and Saturday afternoons and cover basic computer language, Microsoft Word, and Microsoft Excel. The entire training process is planned for three months.

Russian Keyboarding Training for FLEX Alumni: On December 13, Firuza Djabbarova '04, Javohir Homidov '04, Malika Khakimova '04, Alfiya Kulmamadova '03, and Kamina Shamsieva '04 attended the first lesson of keyboard training. The alumni will meet with Miskola Abdulloeva '02 for lessons on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday for two months. The goal of the training is to teach the alumni how to type quickly without making mistakes using the Russian keyboard layout.

New Year Celebration at the Orphanage: Ten alumni and two non-alumni, Aga Khan Humanities Project Web-designers Bobojon Turaev and Parviz Davlatov, went to Orphanage #2 in the Leninski District on December 25 to celebrate Christmas and New Year. The orphans were waiting for the alumni in the room with a

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big Christmas tree in the corner. Dmitry Frolov '02 played the role of Father Frost and asked the orphans to recite poems and sing songs. Suddenly, the children realized that Father Frost came without his granddaughter, Snegurochka (played by Parvina Gafurova '01), and began calling for her, too. Parvina Gafurova '01 wished everyone a happy holiday and asked everyone to dance. After the celebration 75 orphans received Christmas presents. The following alumni participated in the event: Miskola Abdulloeva '02, Dmitry Frolov '02, Parvina Gafurova '01, Daler Irmatov '02, Malika Khakimova '04, Daler Khakimov '04, Alfiya Kulmamadova '03, Shahnoza Mansurova '02, Nickolai Schwarz '03, and Faridun Sanginov '03.

Alumni Donation: On December 25, FLEX alumni distributed 12 coats and 10 hats to first and second-grade orphans after the New Year celebration. The deputy director of Orphanage #2 had asked for winter jackets for ten newly accepted orphans, which prompted Mohira Kurbanova '96 to take the initiative to donate the clothes. Unfortunately, due to her busy work schedule, she had to ask her fellow alumni to hand out the clothing for her during their visit to the orphanage.

Charity Ball: Thirteen alumni participated in the Christmas Charity Ball on December 26. During the event the alumni watched two slide shows prepared by Dmitry Frolov '02 and Nasiba Khalikova '04 about alumni life. Half of the money charged for the admission ticket was used for rent and food expenses, and the rest was used to support the needs of the orphanage.

Upcoming events:

- **Orphanage Visit** to assist with the heating is planned for January 10.
- **African-American Heritage Day** will be recognized on January 18.
- **Parliamentary Elections Roundtable** with a guest speaker is planned for January 22.
- **AIDS Awareness Workshop** entitled “СПИД НЕ СПИТ!” (AIDS isn't Asleep!) will take place on January 23.

Contact: Dushanbe FLEX Alumni Assistant Miskola Abdulloeva '02, flexalum@americancouncils.tj +992 (372) 21-21-03

Turkmenistan

Ashgabat

Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) Training: Bahar Nuriyeva '02 and Mariya Papina '04 held pre-TOEFL training classes for high school students at the Educational Advising Center throughout December. Ninety potential FLEX students attended the classes, which introduced the three sections of the tests: listening comprehension, written expression, and reading. The training sessions were meant to help potential FLEX participants increase their chances of getting good scores on the TOEFL.

FLEX Alumni Unite With Peace Corps Volunteers to Work on Play Production: Bahar Agayeva '02, Myahri Gurbanniyazova '04, Nadejda Lee '04, Bahar Nuriyeva '02, Mariya Papina '04, and Diana Shaimova '00 met with Peace Corps volunteers at the American Councils office on December 21, 22, and 26 to talk about developing a grant proposal for the Play Production Project. The alumni brainstormed ideas and set goals for the project. They hope the play will help increase the opportunity for students to practice their English skills and increase awareness of U.S. culture in the Turkmen community. The play will be performed in English, and profits from ticket sales will be donated to the Retirement Home in Ashgabat to buy needed sheets, blankets, and general supplies. Auditions for the play will be open to the local community.

FLEX Alumni Meeting: On December 24, Bahar Agayeva '02, Elena Dovletova '04, Myahri Gurbanniyazova '04, Vasilina Haritonova '03, Serdar Karliyev '04, Nadejda Lee '04, Kamal Orzabayev '03, Arslan Penjiyev '03, and Mariya Papina '04 met at the American Councils office to discuss plans for FLEX testing, the alumni New Year celebration, “The Longest Night” event with IATP, and the FLEX Alumni Grants program. Alumni shared ideas about new events, and information regarding international conferences was distributed.

Alumni Help with FLEX Testing: Yusup Ashirov '03, Elena Dovletova '04, Myahri Gurbanniyazova '04, Vasilina Haritonova '03, Tatiana Kirsanova '03, Nadejda Lee '04, Lyudmila Mansurova '00, Jemal Meredova '04, Bahar Nuriyeva '02, Kamal Orzabayev '03, and Arslan Penjiyev '03 went to the FLEX Testing Center in Ashgabat on December 27 to help distribute and fill out cards, glue pictures, and help manage the crowd.

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“The Longest Night Event” with IATP: On December 28, Bahar Agayeva '02, Sergey Atliyev '01, Selbi Jumayeva '03, Bahar Nuriyeva '02, Kamal Orazbayev '03, Mariya Papina '04, and alumni of other U.S. Government-sponsored programs gathered at the IATP Center to participate in a chat contest between five Central Asian Countries. Every country had to prepare four questions about their culture and history to ask the people representing each country. The atmosphere of the event was filled with excitement. Alumni were eager to find the correct answers. Turkmenistan won the first place. After the chat everyone enjoyed the movie *Jersey Girl*.

Dashoguz

Alumni Meeting: Mehrijemal Altybayeva '04, Jalal Bekchanov '02, Laziz Hudaybergenov '02, Maral Ilyasova '04, Leila Ischanova '03, Irina Kletchuk '04, Dariko Mkrumyan '04, and Viktoriya Orazova '04 gathered at the Dashoguz American Corner to discuss community activities on December 3, 6, 9, 17, and 25. The alumni talked about the New Year's celebration, alumni activities for students, youth, adults and teachers, and presented ideas they have for late winter and early spring activities.

FLEX Program Presentations at Local Schools: Mehrijemal Altybayeva '04, Ahmed Hojaev '03, Laziz Hudaybergenov '02, Maral Ilyasova '04, Irina Kletchuk '04, Dariko Mkrumyan '04, and Viktoriya Orazova '04 made presentations about the FLEX program at Dashoguz schools #1, 24, 3, 10, Yilanly School #1, and Koneurgench/Boldumsaz school #1 on December 6, 7, 8, 10, and 15. One hundred twenty six high school students attended. The alumni talked about their U.S. experiences and gave out information about the program and eligibility requirements.

Movie Night: On December 3 and 10, Laziz Hudaybergenov '02 hosted a movie night for interested visitors of the American Corner. More than 20 people attended the activity. Attendees watched *Enemy of the State* and *Shrek 2*. After the show Laziz Hudaybergenov asked questions about the movie and explained new English words and expressions to the visitors.

“Christmas Preparation” Class: Mehrijemal Altybayeva '04 organized a Christmas preparation class at the Dashoguz American Corner for 25 visitors. Attendees were given the lyrics of famous Christmas songs, such as “Jingle Bells” and “Merry Christmas.” The attendees also prepared Christmas plays and poems. The main goal of the class was to prepare a Christmas concert for Dashoguz American Corner visitors.

Christmas Celebration: Mehrijemal Altybayeva '04, Irina Kletchuk '04, Dariko Mkrumyan '04, and Viktoriya Orazova '04 organized a Christmas party at the Dashoguz American Corner, which was attended by more than 45 visitors on December 22. Mehrijemal Altybayeva '04 organized Christmas preparation classes at the American Corner, and the students who attended prepared skits, poems, and Christmas songs. FLEX alumni and students also organized games for the attendees.

Debate Class: Mehri Altybayeva '04 organized a debate class at the Dashoguz American Corner for 15 people. The main goal of the class was to develop English listening and speaking skills, as well as leadership and critical thinking skills. The attendees, divided into four groups, each discussed a problem Mehri gave them. At the end of the class one group was declared the debate winners and received an honorary title.

Turkmenabat

Sharing Ideas About World Leadership: Arzuw Shamuradova '04 facilitated a Model UN workshop at the American Corner for six high school students, four alumni, and two American Corner volunteers on December 3. The workshop opened with a slide show presentation on the 2004 Summer International Youth & Leadership Conference in Prague. They discussed differences between the United Nation and the Model UN conference, and then participated in a workshop on travel grant writing. The purpose of the activity was to emphasize the importance of world leadership, global politics, cross-cultural communication, and international relations.

American Corner Tea Party: On December 8, Regional Alumni Assistant Yuliana Kuzyayeva '03 and FLEX alumni held a “Welcoming Tea Party” at the Turkmenabat American Corner for new Peace Corps volunteers in the Lebap Region. The event, attended by about 26 people, served to introduce new Peace Corps volunteers to the American Corner, its mission, and the projects it has conducted. The Peace Corps volunteers introduced themselves and spoke with the alumni about possible joint activities they could hold in the future.

Basic Steps for Effective Public Speaking: On December 10, Yuliana Kuzyayeva '03 conducted a workshop called "Basics for Effective Public Speaking" for ten alumni at the American Corner. Yuliana discussed the importance of public speaking skills when applying for jobs, and presented the basic steps for preparing to speak: topic selection and the research process. Speech anxiety and how to cope with it was also covered in the workshop. Alumni then discussed problems they had experienced with public speaking and were given handouts on the topic to take home.

Presentation by U.S. Embassy Representatives: Public Affairs Section Alumni Coordinator Gulyalek Soltanova and Grants Coordinator Nafisa Yuldasheva from the U.S. Embassy visited the American Corner on December 22 to introduce "University Search and Scholarship Opportunities" and the "Small Grant Program." Approximately 21 people attended the presentation. Gulyalek gave tips on effectively searching for U.S. educational institutions using the Internet, and explained how to complete application forms. News from the State Alumni website (<https://alumni.state.gov>) was also presented. The 2005 Alumni Grants Program was then discussed and handouts were distributed. Nafisa led a discussion with members of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) regarding small grant awards sponsored by the U.S. Embassy that are available to them.

Christmas Celebration: Dovlet Babajanov '04, Sabina Husseynova '03, Nazira Jorayeva '04, Yuliana Kuzyayeva '03, Farhad Yagmurov '04, Serdar Yoldashev '04, and Peace Corps volunteers held a Christmas celebration at the American Corner on December 23. Twenty-one high school students and four Peace Corps Volunteers attended this event. Volunteers Matthew Briggs, Kellie Good, Eren McNally, and Ian Reynolds talked about Christmas traditions in the U.S. and answered questions from the audience. They also asked the alumni questions regarding the celebration of Christmas and the New Year in Turkmenistan. Games and contests designed to demonstrate the participants' English abilities were then held, the winners of which received prizes. In closing a gift exchange was held.

Regional Debates Leadership Preparation: Mehry Karyagydyeva '01 and Peace Corps volunteers Sandra Ball and Tom Bruey held meetings every Monday and Friday to prepare a debate course at the American Corner. 2004 Fulbright Alumnae Mubarrak Kurbanova, Allevtina Ahkalinskaya, and seven English teachers attended the event. Thomas Bruyer opened the event by discussing the importance and benefits of debates. Sandra explained that the debates would be conducted according to the International Debate Education Association's "debate format," and how judges and coaches will be trained. Those in attendance then determined where and when the debate tournament would be held, who would be selected to participate, and how to prepare the participants. They decided to hold training sessions twice a week, focusing on public speaking, critical thinking, and understanding democracy.

Turkmenbashy

HIV/AIDS Day in Turkmenbashy: On December 1, six schools competed in an event organized by the organization "Red Crescent" in recognition of HIV/AIDS Awareness Day. The competition was intended to introduce HIV/AIDS and how to prevent it to high school students. Alina Penjiyeva '04 participated in the competition as the leader from School #13. Alina came up with the script for the team's skit with help from Peace Corps Volunteers Alex Minier and Laura Myerberg. Each team had to present a 15-minute skit about AIDS and its prevention and also answer questions about HIV/AIDS. Alina's team did an outstanding job and received first place. The winning team received a telephone and camera as prizes, which they chose to donate to their school for future use.

Anti-pollution Meeting: Minara Ismailova '04 called on volunteers to help with the alumni's "Pollution of the Caspian Sea and its Coast" project. During a meeting held on December 2, Minara explained the importance of the project, which is aimed at encouraging the community to keep the coastal area along the Caspian Sea pollution-free. In particular, the "Kindergarten Contest" was discussed, which hopes to bring the issue of pollution to the attention of kindergarteners. The meeting helped get local students from Turkmenbashy interested in the project and help them realize the importance of keeping the environment clean.

Book Of The Month Club: On December 2, 7, 14, 16, 21, 23, and 28 Yuliya Hayrutdinova '04, Minara Ismailova '04, and Kristina Razahova '04 continued their participation in the Book Club at the Turkmenbashy American Corner. Gulruh Niyazova '03 also continued participating in Balkanabat. There were 22 advanced students and 7 teachers who regularly attend this activity. The club is intended to help develop the attendees'

advanced English abilities. The club met twice a week to practice their English by discussing books such as *Animal Farm* and *Lord of the Flies*.

Internet Training for Teachers: Regional FLEX Alumni Representative Kristina Razahova '04 and Peace Corps Volunteer Rebecca Bowman organized Internet training for five teachers from a local school in Turkmenbashi on December 3. The class helped familiarize teachers with the Internet and using email, and to explain the benefits of both. The teachers also learned how to use the Internet for research purposes, which will help them in preparing for classes.

“American Club” in Balkanabat: Ilona Tumina '04 began an American club in Balkanabat, which met on December 3, 7, 9, 14, 16, 20, 23, 27, and 29. Thirty students from local schools attended each of the meetings, which cover U.S. history and culture. Ilona plans to continue her classes and hopes that the club will help create a bridge of cooperation between the U.S. and Turkmenistan by getting young people interesting in the U.S.

Women’s Club: Yuliya Harudinova '04, Minara Ismailova '04, and Kristina Razahova '04 attended the women’s club held by Peace Corps Volunteer Elynn Walter on December 3. The club participants had the opportunity to discuss their thoughts on women’s opportunities in life and the differences between women’s position in U.S. and Turkmenistan society. The alumni also read poems about women’s life and made a scrapbook and collage describing their lives.

FLEX Program Recruitment Process: American Corner Representative Tatyana Yunusova and her assistant, Kristina Razahova '04, helped organize the first two rounds of the FLEX recruitment for high school students in Balkan Region on December 6 and 7. Iyera Askerova '04, Minara Ismailova '04, and Alina Penjiyeva '04 helped in the logistics part of the process and controlled the crowd during the tests in Turkmenbashi School # 2. Olesya Kucherova '04, Gulruh Niyazova '03, Zohregul Sultanmammedova '02, and Ilona Tumina '04 did the same in Balkanabat. American Councils Director Daniel Klaus and FLEX Program Officer Tatiana Minaeva headed the program. A total of 218 students participated in the competition.

Education in the U.S. Presentation: Regional FLEX volunteer representative Kristina Razahova '04 conducted a presentation on “Education in the U.S.” for seven visitors on December 7. Kristina spoke about the school system in the U.S., and the differences between the public and private sectors. General information about the university system was also presented. Attendees also discussed points such as college requirements, eligibility, and the study process. Kristina provided a brief history of the U.S. education system, as well as information regarding the various degrees offered in the U.S. In addition, Kristina talked about her experience studying in the U.S., which helped give the students a better understanding of how the U.S. education system differs from that in Turkmenistan.

The U.S. Club: Alina Penjiyeva '04 led a club called “The U.S. Club” for students studying English at the American Corner language centers on December 9, 15, and 23. The club covers aspects of U.S. history, such as the lives of former U.S. presidents. The Holocaust Museum was also discussed. The club helps improve the community’s attitude towards the U.S. by giving them additional insight into life, history, culture, and politics in the U.S.

Music Club: Kristina Razahova '04 helped Peace Corps Volunteer Alex Minier organize the Music Club on December 10. Yuliya Hayrutdinova '04 and others in attendance at the club meeting enjoyed singing English songs, which Alex explained to those not familiar with the words. The alumni talked about their impressions of U.S. music, and the visitors were acquainted with different types of U.S. music. Twelve local students attend the club, which helps improve their English and knowledge of the U.S. through music.

“Hanukkah Day” Presentation: Minara Ismailova '04, Alina Penjiyeva '04, and Kristina Razahova '04 attended a presentation about Hanukkah by Peace Corps Volunteer Ellen Walter on December 13. The event helped introduce the alumni and other attendees to the history, tradition, and symbols of the Jewish holiday of Hanukkah. The alumni were also taught traditional Hanukkah songs and games, and chocolate was handed out as well. This event helped bring Jewish-American culture to the people of Turkmenbashi.

“Debate Skills” Club: Iyera Askerova '04, Minara Ismailova '04, Alina Penjiyeva '04, and Kristina Razahova '04 attended the Debate Skills club, which was led by Peace Corps Volunteer Alexander Minier on December 13

and 20. The club introduced the reasons for debates, how to apply debate skills to everyday situations, and public speaking. The attendees were divided into two groups, and each one debated the opposite position on a topic decided by Alex. The debate sessions helped the participants apply what they had discussed, and also helped develop their critical thinking abilities.

Computer Classes for Orphanage Children: Minara Ismailova '04 and Alina Penjiyeva '04 conducted computer classes for the students from a local orphanage in Turkmenbashi on December 13, 20, and 27. Ten students attended the classes, which provided basic information about different computer programs and equipment. Minara and Alina also provided the children with handouts for them to review after the lectures. The classes were intended to help the children become comfortable using new technology, a skill that will be vital to them in the future.

“Global Warming” Discussion: Iyera Askerova '04 and Minara Ismailova '04 held a discussion about global warming for seven interested visitors of the American Corner on December 15. The discussion was aimed at informing the public of the problems and consequences related to global warming. Human actions that exacerbate the problem were then discussed, as were the ways global warming can be addressed. The event helped bring this serious world issue to the participants' attention.

“Arts and Crafts” Club: Kristina Razahova '04 helped Peace Corps Volunteer Laura Magdeburg run the meeting of the Arts and Crafts club held on December 16. The participants had the chance to make their own comics, and were also introduced to the history of comics and the various genres into which they fall. The final comics created by the students will be displayed at the American Corner.

Internet Training for Advanced Students: On December 10 and 17, Regional FLEX volunteer representative Kristina Razahova '04 and Peace Corps Volunteer Rebecca Bowman held Internet training sessions for advanced students from a local school in Turkmenbashi. The project helped introduced students unfamiliar with computers to basic computer programs and equipment. The students were also provided with handouts on the topic. After discussing the practical purposes of using the Internet and computers, Kristina and Rebecca helped the participants set up personal email accounts.

Christmas Celebration: Iyera Askerova '04, Minara Ismailova '04, Alina Penjiyeva '04, Kristina Razahova '04, and Arzuv Talapova '04 attended a Christmas party held for students of the ACCESS program at the American Corner on December 18. The alumni talked about U.S. Christmas traditions, and a traditional Christmas song was taught to the audience. The ACCESS students played various games, and a good time was had by all. The party was intended to give the children a better idea of how Christmas is celebrated in the U.S.

Orphanage Christmas Celebration: Alina Penjiyeva '04, Kristina Razahova '04, Arzuv Talapova '04, and four Peace Corps volunteers organized a Christmas party for children at a local orphanage on December 18. Santa Claus was first introduced to the children, and then various games were played. The children also learned to sing English Christmas carols and received presents at the end of the event from Santa. The party helped show the children how Christmas is celebrated, and also brought them some much-needed attention and fun.

“Volunteers In Our Community” Training: On December 19, American Corner, in cooperation with a local trainer named Mered Arazmamedov, conducted a one-day training session on volunteerism. Kristina Razahova '04 was one of the 11 people who attended the event. The training was divided into three sections: who is a volunteer, why we need volunteers in our community, and how volunteers can affect the community. The attendees took part in games and activities to help them get to know each other, and they also talked about their own volunteer experience. The training session helped the students better understand the importance of volunteerism, and how it can be implemented more effectively.

“What Must We Do about Drugs?” Seminar: Minara Ismailova '04, Alina Penjiyeva '04, and Kristina Razahova '04 took part in the “What must we do about Drugs” seminar conducted at the American Corner by Janet Tachkuliyyeva on December 22. Twenty people attended the event, which introduced various types of drugs and how to fight the problem of drug addiction. The participants were then divided into two groups and had to perform a brief skit regarding the danger of drugs. They also watched a documentary about drugs in the life of children around the world. The attendees discussed their personal opinions about drugs, and Janet

Tachkuliyeva gave an effective speech to the youth of Turkmenbashi about improving the health of the future generation.

Christmas Stories by FLEX Alumni: Iyera Askerova '04, Minara Ismailova '04, Alina Penjiyeva '04, and Kristina Razahova '04 presented a series of Christmas stories to approximately 15 listeners on December 24. The attendees seemed genuinely interested in the U.S. culture and tradition of Christmas. The alumni also brought pictures from Christmas during their year abroad in the U.S., which helped illustrate the way Christmas is celebrated abroad. The event also served as a means for the participants to practice their English.

Movie Night at the American Corner: On December 24, Kristina Razahova '04 and Peace Corps Volunteer Ellyn Walter held a movie night for interested visitors at the American Corner. Fifteen students attended the event, including Yulia Hayrutdinova '04, Minara Ismailova '04, and Alina Penjiyeva '04. The participants watched *Mona Lisa Smile* and were provided with handouts highlighting new vocabulary and expressions. The students then wrote an essay about the relationship between the movie's heroes or their favorite part of the film.

Monthly Alumni Meeting: Yulia Hayrutdinova '04, Minara Ismailova '04, Alina Penjiyeva '04, Kristina Razahova '04, and Arzu Talapova '04 attended an alumni meeting at the American Corner on December 27. The alumni discussed upcoming events, such as several activities related to ecology, health, and the community. The alumni were particularly encouraged to participate in the upcoming Model UN event and activities at the American Corner.

"Trip to Spain" Presentation: Iyera Askerova '04 assisted Peace Corps volunteers Allen Park and Laura Myerburg in their "Trip to Spain" presentation on December 29. Fifteen students attended the event, which introduced Spanish culture, traditions, history, and geography. Iyera Askerova shared the knowledge of Spanish-speaking people she attained during her stay in Arizona. The history of the Spanish language and basic vocabulary was also presented.

Kindergarten Contest: Approximately 15 children submitted compositions as part of the "Kindergarten Contest." The children, aged 3-6 years old, expressed their ideas about "Sea life," and the best papers will be recognized in January with a prize. The contest hopes to encourage young children to take care of the environment.

Mary

World AIDS Day Presentation: Bahar Aidogdyeva '04, Gaygysyz Charyyev '00, and Ahmed Tagiyev '04 gave a presentation on December 1 about World AIDS Day. The alumni introduced the global problem of HIV/AIDS to 25 local students. The presentation covered the most effective ways to prevent HIV/AIDS, and the prominent role the U.S. plays in this international battle was mentioned. Bahar then conducted an interactive exercise involving real life situations related to AIDS. Later the students shared their personal opinions and asked many questions.

FLEX Program Presentation: On December 2, 6, 7, and 9, FLEX alumni Rejep Abdyev '04, Bahar Aidogdyeva '04, Gulya Dukenova '03, Jahan Memmeyerova '04, and Ahmed Tagiyev '04 gave presentations for 76 middle and high school students in schools # 5, 13, 17, and 3. The alumni supplied general information about the FLEX program, and also discussed their U.S. experiences. The alumni also stressed the great advantages of studying in the U.S., and the audience showed great interest in the many questions they asked at the end of the presentation.

Alumni Book Club: Rejep Abdyev '04, Bahar Aidogdyeva '04, Gulya Dukenova '03, Jahan Memmeyerova '04, Ahmed Tagiyev '04, and Govher Yazmuhammedova '03 attended a book club meeting on December 3. The alumni read the book *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding and did exercises to help expand their vocabulary. At the meeting they discussed the book, which helped improve not only their knowledge of English-language literature, but also their public speaking skills.

Debate Club: Gulya Dukenova '03 worked with Peace Corps Volunteer Maria Acosta in continuing the debate club. Gulya and Maria held a debate tournament on different resolutions and issues on December 7. The topic for the debate was "Environment Has More Effect on the Individual than Heredity." Two groups of 12 students participated in an open discussion, and developed speaking and listening skills.

Video Presentation: On December 13, Gulya Dukenova '03 and Ahmed Tagiyev '04 made a video presentation on "Southampton College" for 23 visitors of the American Corner. In addition, alumni led a discussion, and invited the visitors to share their opinions of what they had seen of the college. The alumni mentioned some useful information on applying the U.S. universities, standardized tests and necessary web sites.

Leadership Class: On December 17, Jahan Memmeyeva '04 led a leadership class for 12 high school students. The class was dedicated to personal development. The students were willing to talk about their troubles, share opinions, and give advice. They touched on problems such as stress, anxiety, and disagreements, and they also had the chance to take tests intended to help them better understand themselves. The event helped each student identify the strong and weak points of their personalities and also gave them a chance to practice their English.

Toys and Clothing Drive: Bahar Aidogdyeva '04, Gulya Dukenova '03, and Ahmed Tagiyev '04 made a trip to the House of Disabled Children in Yoloten on December 20 to deliver clothing and toys that had been donated. The alumni frequently organize events for the children, which helps expose them to the outside world and the U.S., in particular. The children were happy to receive the donated clothing and toys, and the event was deemed a success. After the event, the alumni discussed possible ways to help disadvantaged children through future projects.

My Glance at the U.S. Picture Contest: Bahar Aidogdyeva '04, Gulya Dukenova '03, Jahan Memmeyeva '04, and Ahmed Tagiyev '04 organized an exhibition of photographs by local students on the topic "My Glance at the U.S." on December 21. More than 25 pictures from 18 schools were presented, in which the students creatively expressed their ideas and feelings. Three contestants will be selected for their work during the winter holidays.

Sample Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL): Ahmed Tagiyev '04 conducted a session about the TOEFL test for 24 students. Gulya Dukenova '04 and Jahan Memmeyeva '04 assisted Ahmed during the presentation. The structure and procedure of the TOEFL, as well as effective test-taking techniques, were presented. The students then took a sample test. At the end of the session the students reviewed their tests and asked questions about anything they did not understand.

Alumni Meetings: Rejep Abdyev '04, Bahar Aidogdyeva '04, Gulya Dukenova '03, Jahan Memmeyeva '04, and Ahmed Tagiyev '04 gathered on December 2 and 30 to discuss all alumni issues and upcoming events. The most interactive topic was in regard to increasing alumni involvement in developing the community. Suggestions for doing this included running more clubs for the visitors of the American Corner and making interactive workshops where alumni can share their skills with the local community. The alumni also focused on grant writing, and shared their ideas on writing a FLEX alumni grant proposal. The alumni then helped the American Corner staff plan their schedule for next month.

Upcoming events:

Ashgabat

- **Conversation Classes** will be held every Monday by Nadejda Lee '04.
- **Movie Nights** are planned to take place at the Educational Advising Center every Friday.
- **Visit to the Senior People's House** will take place in early January.
- **Alumni Professional Development Training** will take place in Turkmenabat.

Dashoguz

- **ACCESS Class** will be held every Wednesday in January.
- **Acting Class** will be held every Monday in January.
- **Computer Courses** will take place every Thursday in January.
- **Current Events Club** is planned for every Tuesday and Thursday in January.
- **Debate/Improvisation Class** will be held every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday in January.
- **Literature Class** will take place every Monday in January.
- **"Lord of the Rings" Club** is scheduled for January 3-11.
- **Movie Night** will take place every Friday in January.
- **Spanish Club** is planned for every Tuesday and Friday in January.
- **Spoken English Classes** will take place every Tuesday in January.

Turkmenabat

- **American History Club** will be held once a week.
- **World Study Club** will be held once a week.
- **TOEFL Class** will be held twice a day, once a week.
- **Literary Class** will be held every Thursday.
- **Movie Class** will be held every Friday.
- **Conversational Club** will be held once a week.
- **Girls' Club** will be held every Monday.
- **Current Events Club** will be held every Wednesday.
- **Comparative Politics Club** will be held once a week.
- **Grant Writing Meetings** will be held once a week.

Turkmenbashy

- **Alumni Grant Writing Discussion** is planned for January 3.
- **Computer Classes for Handicapped Children** will be held on January 3, 10, 17, and 24. These classes for children from the local orphanage are run by Alina Penjiyeva '04 and Minara Ismailova '04.
- **Talent Show Meeting** is scheduled for January 4.
- **"How to be a Pleasant Person" Roundtable** by Daniel Cornea will be held on January 5.
- **Debates Skills Courses** by Alex Minier and Kristina Razahova '04 are scheduled for January 5 and 26.
- **ECO Meeting** led by Minara Ismailova '04 will be held on January 6 with local students at the American Corner.
- **Book Club** will be held on January 4, 6, 11, 13, 18, 20, 25, and 27.
- **The U.S. Club** plans to meet with Alina Penjiyeva '04 on January 6, 12, 20, and 26.
- **Women's Club** with Peace Corps volunteer Ellen Walter is planned for January 7 and 21.
- **Music Club** will take place January 7.
- **"American Colleges and Universities System" Presentation** by Alina Penjiyeva '04 is planned for January 11.
- **"A Key to Democracy" Panel** will be held on January 12 by Minara Ismailova '04.
- **"The History of the Rock and Roll" Lecture** will be held on January 13 at the American Corner.
- **Movie Night** will take place on January 14 and 28 at the American Corner.
- **Healthy Living Seminar** is scheduled to take place on January 15.
- **Science Corner** will be held on January 18.
- **"Central Asian History and Geography" Presentation** at the American Corner will be on January 19.
- **Martin Luther King Jr. Day** will be introduced on January 19 at the American Corner.
- **Art and Crafts with Peace Corps Volunteers** is planned for January 20.
- **Art Show** organized by American Corner staff and Minara Ismailova '04 will take place January 21.
- **Model UN Training** is planned for January 22.
- **"Evolution or God: Science or Religion" Discussion** led by Yuliya Hayritdinova '04 and Minara Ismailova '04 will be on January 26.
- **World Leaders Course** for local students will be held January 27.
- **Monthly Meeting** will take place at the American Corner on January 28.
- **Model UN Conference** is scheduled for January 29 and 30.

Mary

- **Alumni Book Club** will be led every Friday by Peace Corps volunteer Ben Graham.
- **Debate Club** will be held every Tuesday by Gulya Dukenova '03.
- **Computer Class** led by Rejep Abdyyev '04 and Bahar Aidogdyeva '04 will take place every Tuesday and Thursday.
- **Email Workshop** is scheduled for January 4, by Rejep Abdyyev '04 and Ahmed Tagiyev '04.
- **Discussion on Grant Writing** is planned for January 5.
- **Video Presentation on U.S. Colleges/University** by Ahmed Tagiyev '04 is scheduled for January 13.

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Ukraine

Kharkiv

International HIV/AIDS Awareness Day: Nine FLEX alumni organized presentations and a film screening at a local theater on December 1 to educate the public about AIDS in the world and Ukraine. American AIDS

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expert George Friou, who has done HIV/AIDS work of over 20 years, spoke to an audience of 80 people about the AIDS epidemic in Ukraine. He presented the latest statistics on the death rate and speed of the pandemic in Ukraine. Catherine Apio from Uganda also spoke about denial of the problem by Ukrainian authorities, as well as the general population. After the speeches, the group watched the touching and informative movie *A Closer Walk* and then discussed it. All participants received red ribbons, a symbol of their awareness and willingness to combat HIV/AIDS, which had been made by FLEX alumni in advance of the event. The movie will be shown again in early February as part of a joint action "Movies against AIDS" together with the Centre Francais de Kharkiv. Alumni who worked on this event were Anton Borisov '02, Hanna Berezdetska '03, Tetyana Chupylko '03, Maryna Davydenko '03, Ksenya Isayenko '01, Kyrylo Orach '04, Anna Smirnova '03, Ludmyla Suprun '99, and Oleksandra Tsymbal '04.

How-To-Start-Your-Own-Project Workshop: Ludmila Suprun '99 and Peace Corps volunteer Heather Sarkisian led a training seminar on December 11 for seven alumni who want to develop skills needed to realize local or national projects. Both speakers have successfully conducted a number of community-based projects in Kharkiv and the U.S. They offered primary tips and skills building and answered specific questions on fundraising and evaluation. Anton Borisov '02, Hanna Berezdetska '03, Tetyana Chupylko '03, Maryna Davydenko '03, Kyrylo Orach '04, Anna Smirnova '03, and Oleksandra Tsymbal '04 attended the seminar.

Merry Christmas, Children in Dvurechie! On December 24, a FLEX alumnus from Dvurechie in the Kharkiv region, proposed the idea to organize a Christmas celebration in his town. He found support within the city administration, and together with FLEX alumni from Kharkiv, they organized Christmas and upcoming New Year's festivities for 200 local secondary school pupils. FLEX alumni found it exciting to volunteer in preparing and holding the event. On the appointed evening, alumni played games, sang Christmas carols, and distributed small gifts to the children. This was the biggest Christmas event ever for Dvurechie children. Anton Borisov '02, Maryna Davydenko '03, Ksenya Isayenko '01, Kyrylo Orach '04, Anna Smirnova '03, Ludmyla Suprun '99, and Oleksandra Tsymbal '04 participated in the event.

Christmas Ice-Skating: FLEX and Eurasian Undergraduate alumni held a fun-filled Christmas networking event on December 25. They gathered at the Kharkiv Sport Palace to skate together. Alumni played many interesting games on the ice. Active members of the local community also joined in. Alumni also shared their U.S. Christmas experiences. Anton Borisov '02, Maryna Davydenko '03, Ksenya Isayenko '01, Kyrylo Orach '04, Anna Smirnova '03, Ludmyla Suprun '99, and Oleksandra Tsymbal '04 skated that evening.

Upcoming events:

- **Alumni Planning Meeting** will be held on January 20.
- **English Club Opening** led by Natalia Bibik '04 will have its official 2005 opening for the new year on January 21.
- **Outing for Orphanage Children** will be held on January 28. Alumni will take them to see the stereo-film *Karlik Nos*.

Contact: Kharkiv Alumni Assistant Yevhen Bobyk '03, flexalumni@americancouncils-kharkiv.org.ua +380 (572) 45-62-78.

Kyiv

HIV/AIDS Awareness Day: Lyubov Blin '02 organized a movie night for third-year students at Ivan Franko University on December 1. The students watched the film *A Closer Walk*.

Presentation of Global Village: Karina Makarenko '98 gave a presentation on the Global Village summer program for ten FLEX alumni and three non-alumni leaders on December 15. Karina participated in Global Village in the summer of 2004.

St. Nicholas Celebration at Boarding School #12: Hanna Zubko '03 organized a holiday celebration for a group of children at the local orphanage where alumni teach leadership, public speaking, math, and other subjects. Her team of alumni and members of the Youth CAN non-governmental organization played with the children and gave out clothes gathered from a drive. Alumni also took pictures of



children and presented them with picture frames. Other alumni involved in this activity on December 18 were Nataliya Balyuk '04, Maryna Haydak '04 and Iryna Tokatly '01.

St. Nicholas Celebration at Boarding School #10 for Children with Mental Disabilities: Olga Lebedyna '03 and a group of students from Shevchenko National University celebrated St. Nicholas on December 18 with orphans. The students dressed up and organized a holiday performance, played games, and treated the children with presents.

Televised Presidential Debates: On December 20, 12 FLEX alumni gathered at the American Councils office to watch the televised debates between presidential candidates Viktor Yushchenko and Viktor Yanukovych. Afterwards, the alumni discussed the performance of each candidate.

Alumni Elections Discussion: Tetyana Bohdanova '01, Yuliya Idemenko '02, and FLEX Alumni Assistant Maryna Yaroshchuk '02 met with Moscow alumnus Evgeny Yankovoy '01 on December 21 to talk about Ukraine's elections, the Orange Revolution, alumni involvement, and political youth activism. Evgeny Yankovoy was an observer for the third round of voting. On December 22, Maryna Yaroshchuk '02 also met with two Armenian alumni Hayk Arakelyan '94 and Tigran Karapetyan '96 who came to Kyiv as observers for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) during the third round of voting. The alumni discussed Ukraine's elections and the Armenian alumni talked about their NGO's (Youth For Achievements) projects and expressed interest in joint events.

Ukrainian Economy Seminar: Andriy Mykytiv '95, who specializes in macroeconomic analysis, economic modelling, and forecasting at KPMG Ukraine, helped organize a seminar for alumni on December 23 and was one of the speakers. Andriy spoke about inflation, investment, and future tendencies for Ukraine. Serhiy Kulpinskiy, a strategist at Integrated Structured Financial Products (ISFP) Company Kyiv, PhD in economics, and a former deputy head of the Analytical Department at the National Bank, was the seminar's guest speaker. Mr. Kulpinskiy explained the situation with Ukraine's banking system and answered alumni's questions. Fourteen FLEX alumni attended the event, which shed light on the current economic situation in Ukraine after the elections.

New Year Visit to Zhytomyr Orphanage #4: Five Zhytomyr FLEX alumni and Regional Representative Ilya Dyadyk '01 visited orphans at Zhytomyr Orphanage #4, brought them sweets, and wished them a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year on December 30.

Upcoming events:

- **Caroling at a Retirement Home** will be held on January 13-14.
- **Martin Luther King's Day Essay Contest** will take place at the Linguistics University. The essay, entitled "I Have a Dream," will ask students to describe how they think Ukraine will be in the future.
- **Grant Writing Seminar** is planned for January 22.
- **5th Annual Benefit Evening** will take place on March 5. The alumni will help visually impaired children by providing their boarding school with Braille textbooks.

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Lviv

Alumni Meeting With U.S. Congressmen: Oksana Arkhynchuk '01, Olha Halyabar '99, Olena Hulyaihorodska '03, Alla Ivanova '03, Tanya Keyvan '03, Stanislav Kukhlevskiy '02, Mykola Pekh '00, Yulia Pukhalska '01, Iryna Rak '01, Solomiya Rozhko '95, Nataliya Salo '01, Ivan Senyk '01, Stepan Shakhno '01, and Polina Verbytska '02 had the opportunity to meet with the following U.S. Congressmen on December 20: Roscoe G. Bartlett (R-Maryland), Maurice D. Hinchey (D-New York), Darrell Issa (R-California), Marcy Kaptur (D-Ohio), Dana Rohrabacher (R-California), Adam B. Schiff (D-California). The alumni and congressmen discussed serious issues facing Ukraine today, such as Ukraine's integration into the West and its involvement in international organizations, Russian-Ukrainian relations, the U.S.'s stance on the Ukrainian elections, new international security systems, threats to both Ukraine and the U.S., and the important question of funding cuts to exchange programs.

Regular Alumni Meeting: A regular alumni meeting was conducted at the Lviv American Councils office on December 28. Alumni discussed how to work together in light of the office closing, as well as activities for the next six months.

Upcoming Events:

- **Christmas Together Party** will be held with Eastern Ukrainian students coming to Lviv for Christmas on January 7.
- **Regular Alumni Meeting** will be conducted at the Ukrainian Catholic University on January 28.

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Odesa

Annual Odesa National University Model UN: Anton Borisov '02, Yevhen Bobyk '03, Hanna Smirnova '03 and others participated in the Odesa Model UN conference, which took place December 3-5. The conference, organized by Eurasia Undergraduate alumna Olga Zhurzhenko, offered students in Ukraine the opportunity to explore some of the world's crucial concerns, while playing the roles of the ambassadors to United Nations in Odesa. Among the topics on the agenda were Security Council exploration of the Georgian-Abkhazian and Georgian-South Ossetian conflicts; Economic and Social Council's analysis of the correlations between innovative technologies and the increase in investments, and the European Council's common foreign and security policy of the enlarged European Union. More details may be found on the official website at <http://www.onumun.iatp.org.ua>. Alumni participants appreciated the opportunity to discuss important problems, write thoughtful, complex resolutions, and make engaging presentations about their conclusions. At the closing ceremony, the best speakers received prizes, including a digital photo camera and a mobile phone.

Lecture on AIDS Prevention: Tea Bebia '04, Nina Borysova '02, Kateryna Komarova '02, and Nataliya Kovyilkina '04 attended a lecture on AIDS Prevention conducted by Dr. Sergey Pozdnyakov (Odesa Institute on National Biological Security) on December 3. Dr. Pozdnyakov provided statistical data on the current AIDS situation in Ukraine, and southern Ukraine, in particular. Alumni discussed holding possible follow-up activities, such as an AIDS Awareness Teaching of Teachers training session and lectures on AIDS prevention.

Meeting with U.S. Embassy Representatives: Tea Bebia '04, Mariya Bepalova '04, Nina Borysova '02, Kateryna Komarova '02, Nataliya Kovyilkina '04, Dmytro Lulka '02, Yuliya Malikova '04, Gennadiy Starostin '02, Dariya Ul'yanova '02, Ihor Yeremenko '04, Kateryna Zhyrova '00, and Olena Zubareva '01 gathered at the Advising Center to meet with U.S. Embassy representatives on December 9. The alumni shared their ideas about the current political situation and the future of Ukraine.

Meeting with Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Mission Representative: On December 27, Mariya Hontar '04, Kateryna Komarova '02, and Yuliya Malikova '04 met with Hayk Arakelyan '94 of Yerevan, Armenia, who came to Odesa as an OSCE Mission observer during the third round of presidential elections. The alumni asked questions about opportunities for FLEX alumni to assist the OSCE Mission in Ukraine. Hayk Arakelyan then shared his impressions of observing elections in a town in the Odesa region.

Third Annual Christmas Celebration at Odesa Orphanage # 4: As tradition would have it, seven FLEX alumni brought a Christmas tree to third-graders at Odesa orphanage #4 on December 25. The alumni spent three hours with the children decorating the tree, playing games, coloring, and socializing. Also, FLEX alumni brought sweets and toys donated by parents at the Thanksgiving Dinner a month earlier. Dmytro Aver'yanov '04, Tea Bebia '04, Nataliya Buyevska '04, Kateryna Komarova '02, Nataliya Kovyilkina '04, Yuliya Malikova '04, and Karen Yablonskiy '04 attended the event.

Upcoming events:

- **General Meeting** will be held on January 20 to discuss future alumni events and to plan the upcoming debate tournament.
- **Organizational Meeting** is planned for January 26. The FLEX alumni will discuss the HIV/AIDS Prevention project, which is to be launched in mid-February.

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Uzbekistan

Tashkent

Youth Theater of Uzbekistan Visit: Thirteen FLEX alumni took 65 children from the Republican Children's Poliomyelitis Hospital to the Youth Theater of Uzbekistan on December 8 in honor of International Day of Disabled People and Constitution Day. The children went to see the play "The Party of Misbehavior," and alumni helped interpret words or actions they didn't understand. Many of the children at the hospital live a very isolated life due to their illnesses, so this trip to the theater and the attention from the alumni was highly appreciated.

"Resume Writing and Interview Skills" Workshop: American Councils invited professional trainer Mikhail Khadayev to conduct the "Resume Writing and Interview Skills" seminar for ten FLEX alumni and seven Eurasian Undergraduate Exchange program alumni on December 12. The alumni were particularly interested in this topic, as advancing their careers is of the utmost importance to them. Mikhail Khadayev shared his experience composing resumes and talked about how to impress during an interview. The alumni also took part in interview role-plays, and an objective and scientific method of appraising one's professional attributes was also introduced. Umid Khudaykulov, an experienced jobseeker, also talked with the alumni about common mistakes people make when composing their resumes.

HIV/AIDS Awareness Activity: On December 16, ten FLEX alumni gathered at the IATP center in Tashkent to increase their awareness of HIV/AIDS by watching and discussing the Academy Award-winning film *Philadelphia*, which is about a man suffering from AIDS.

Grant writing Workshop: Twenty-four alumni gathered at the Educational Advising Center on December 17 for a grant-writing workshop led by FLEX Program Director Nathan Truitt. The workshop focused on the secrets of writing good grant proposals by determining what needs to be done before the process is started. Mr. Truitt also explained how to properly fill out both Public Affairs Section and FLEX alumni grant applications.

Monthly Alumni Meeting: Alumni met on December 17 to discuss upcoming events such as a charity ball, a Martin Luther King Jr. event, and a charity activity at the Veterans House on December 28. The alumni also discussed organization of the FLEX alumni Christmas party.

Chess and Checkers Tournament for Disabled Children: Atabek Rimbayev '01 and Alexander Solohin '04 assisted in organizing a chess and checkers tournament for disabled students in Karakalpakstan on December 21. Thanks to funding from the FLEX program and Karakalpak State University, the alumni were able to create a wonderful tournament for the children, who unfortunately are often isolated from society. Twenty-eight children participated in the event, which lasted for five hours. Following the tournament the winners were awarded certificates and cash prizes, and all the participants were treated to a meal.



Meeting with U.S. Embassy Representative: Sardor Djurabaev '99, Rashid Gabulhakov '04, Sevara Hadjaeva '03, and Rauf Salohodjaev '04 met with Second Secretary of the Economic/Political Section of the U.S. Embassy James Dasney at the Namangan American Councils office on December 23. The alumni discussed their year in the U.S. and future plans before giving Mr. Dasney a tour of the Academic Lyceum and Namangan.

Alumni Christmas Party: Over 50 alumni from various U.S. exchange programs gathered on December 24 at club Pharaon to celebrate Christmas. Shehroz Narzikulov '00 and Jasur Rahmanov '02 helped organize this party, which included games, dancing, and the unveiling of a new alumni anthem written by Mastura Maradjapova '04, Shehroz Narzikulov '00, and Jasur Rahmanov '02. The party also allowed alumni from different years to get acquainted in an informal atmosphere.

Veterans House Visit: On December 28, FLEX alumni joined alumni from other U.S. exchange programs to continue their support of the local Veterans House. Alumni also brought performers from the National Theater of Uzbekistan and the Russian Drama Theater of Uzbekistan to help them bring joy to the 180 elderly residents of the Tashkent Veterans House before the New Year. The performers sang songs from the residents' youth, and many members of the audience were moved to tears while others danced. The alumni had helped decorate the clubroom the day before, which added to the festive atmosphere. Following the performances the alumni led the residents to the cafeteria for sweets, tea, and cake, and personally delivered food to those who are unable to walk or have serious diseases. The senior citizens expressed their thanks and encouraged the alumni and theater performers to come again.

Upcoming events:

- **Charity Plays** “The Dining Room” by A.R. Guthrie and “Much Ado About Nothing” by William Shakespeare will go into rehearsals in January.
- **Charity Ball** is planned for late February.

Contact: Tashkent Alumni Assistant Emilia Asadova '02 alumni@flex.bcc.com.uz, tel: +998 (71) 152-12-81.

ALUMNI SUCCESSES

Armenia

Sona Baghdasaryan '01 is an intern at the Armenian-European Policy and Legal Advice Center (AEPLAC.)

Karine Botoyan '02 presently works at the Cafesjian Museum Foundation as the public relations and events coordinator assistant.

Ani Grigoryan '99 works as an administrative assistant at the Armenian-European Policy and Legal Advice Center (AEPLAC.)

Hasmik Harutyunyan '01 is the director of the Gyumri Education Advising Center, which represents the Education USA Network in the northern regions of Armenia.

Kristine Israyelyan '98 is currently working as an administrative assistant at the American University of Armenia.

Lusine Khachatryan '03 has been selected to take part in the Real Life TV show/competition called “Healthy Lifestyle.”

Misak Krkyasharyan '03 is working as an announcer at the “Max Liberty” radio station.

Ashot Margaryan '01 was awarded a scholarship by the Yerevan State University Immunology Department to study in London for three months. He has a 4.0 GPA.

Sona Mirzoyan '03 has been selected to volunteer at American Councils as a receptionist.

Mariam Nahapetyan '00 is currently working as an intern at the firm KPMG.

Arpine Porsughyan '00 is the president of the Khorhrdatu and Benevolent Foundation in Gyumri.

Arevik Stepanyan '01 is an intern at the Armenian-European Policy and Legal Advice Center (AEPLAC.)

Azerbaijan

Nargiz Akbarova '03 is an intern at the Ministry of Economical Development.

Rishad Aliyev '04 is an intern at the Ministry of Ecology.

Ruslan Asadov '04 is an intern at the Ministry of Communications.

Aysel Aslanova '03 is an intern at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Mamed Bayramov '04 is an intern at the Ministry of Education.

Togrul Gahramanzada' 02 is an intern at the Ministry of Economical Development.

Fuad Guliyev '04 is an intern at the Ministry of Communications.

Farida Hasanli '04 is an intern at the Ministry of Ecology.

Emiliya Kazimova '01 works for Ceska BPA (Bruno Poggi Associati) as a telephone interviewer for a European research project. The survey results will offer new statistics regarding women's involvement in Europe's development. This is the first survey on this topic. The results will be presented to the EU Parliament on March 8, International Women's Day.

Tamerlan Mammadov '02 is an intern at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Govhar Yagublu' 03 is an intern at the Ministry of Education.

Belarus

Ekaterina Apet '04 became a member of the dance club in her high school.

Ekaterina Chetyreva '02 was awarded the first place in the regional English language Olympiad. *Olga Kopylova'04* came in second.

Ekaterina Denisjuk ' 03 was admitted to Lithuanian Christian College and was awarded a full scholarship due to her academic excellence.

Daria Efimova '02 took the second place in the Partisansky region track competition.

Maria Grakhovskaya '04 has shown great successes in basketball and volleyball competitions.

Aleksandr Kovalev '03 participated in the international educational program in Poland "Study Tours and Poland." The participants of this program were chosen on a competitive basis. During the week-long program he participated in studies and research on the issues of leadership and volunteerism. As the part of the program Aleksandr also got a chance to visit the historical sights of Poland.

Sergei Smal '02 got a job as a supervisor at the police department at his university. He also took the second place in a boxing competition.

Ekaterina Stratskevich '00, a member of an art club at Belarusian State University, had her work chosen for the art club's annual exhibition.

Anna Tretiakova '01 and *Yulia Zenkovich '02* were chosen as class presidents in their respective universities – Belarusian State University and Mink State Linguistic University.

Georgia

Natia Bzhalava '99 graduated from the foreign languages department of Grigol Robakidze University with a specialization in western European languages and literature. She also completed the *Business Women Leadership Program* at Caucasus Business School in Tbilisi, Georgia, and is one of the founders of *Information Delivery and Employment* Association in Zugdidi. She also passed the test of "Principals of International Accounting Standards" at the Georgian Federation of Professional Accountants and Auditors, for which she received a certificate of successful completion. She is currently acting as the branch manager of the non-

governmental organization *Support for Development* that delivers credit and consultations for the purpose of small business development.

Nino Kemoklidze '00 was one of 41 successful candidates selected out of 2200 applicants at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and will take up her first diplomatic job as an attaché in the American Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia.

Mariam Mrevlishvili '99 interned this past semester at the U.S. House of Representatives with Congressman John Hostettler from Indiana. Her responsibilities included research on various issues, correspondence with the constituents, covering briefings, and committee hearings, and assisting with office work. During her internship, she also attended Georgetown University and was involved in the Fund for American Studies. Mariam will be graduating from Wichita State University in May 2005 and plans to pursue a degree in law.

Kazakhstan

Zhibek Karamanova '03 was selected as a finalist in the Third National Independent Student Olympiad of Scientific Projects. She made it to the top 10 lawyers out of the 250 best law students.

Ainur Kuttumuratova '02 works as a database operator at Check Point Central Asia.

Lena Norakidze '99 became one of the seven Kazakhstani semi-finalists chosen for the Open Society Institute Master's program, sponsored by the Soros Foundation.

Shukhrat Sadyrov '98 received a scholarship to study management accounting at the University of California via the IATP Distance Learning Program.

Yulia Serova '94 is a program associate for the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Judicial Systems Development Project in Central Asia.

Kyrgyzstan

Saida Gaibulina '03 works as the executive sales manger assistant at BETA STORES super market.

Damira Musurmankulova '02 works as an accountant assistant at "Inter-Adrea" Personnel Company.

Kamal Orozbaev '03 works as an administrative assistant/interpreter at American Bar Association/Central European and Eurasian Law Initiative.

Moldova

Valentina Brega '04 took first place in the regional English contest and will compete for the national award.

Igor Garabajiv '03 participated in a TV program on the NIT channel about the relationship between government and local businesses.

Alexandr Snaidruc '98 together with the non-governmental organization "Youth for Change" co-organized a Christmas charity concert "Young Talented Singers" at the National Palace of Music and Arts on December 29.

Russia

Kirov

Tamara Borovkova '00 (Nizhny Novgorod) took part in a training program in Grenoble, France as part of the Russian-French University.

Vladimir Gordeev '98 was chosen as one of the academy's best students and he participated in the "Perviy Gubernskij Novogodniy Bal" (First provincial New Year Ball).

Ksenia Gorshenina '04 (Nizhny Novgorod) will take part in a conference in Holland in late January devoted to European development.

Ilya Kalashnikov '95 (Penza) graduated from Penza State Pedagogical University in 2002 with a major in foreign languages (English, German) and a specialization in teaching English and German/translator. Ilya currently works for the company "Fakel" as an engineer-programmer.

Ksenya Lapteva '96 (Yoshkar-Ola) served as an Open World facilitator for a Rule of Law group, which visited Gainesville, Florida. The group of prominent lawyers from Saratov, Moscow, Tver, and Tomsk discussed economic, political, and social issues with their American colleagues and were also introduced to American culture.

Moscow

Aleksey Erushkin '96 is playing in a musical group "Day" and has created a web-site about his band www.day-band.narod.ru.

Konstantin Goncharov '99 took the position as editor of *PC Gamer* magazine. *PC Gamer* is the Russian edition of a popular British magazine devoted to computer games. Konstantin works on the hardware section of this magazine.

Olga Krylova '02 runs *Sponsor a Child* project for Downside Up (DSU) on a volunteer basis.

Tatyana Moiseenkova '98 is a certification manager for "Confael" Confectionery Ltd. She graduated from the College of Optics and Electronics with a specialization in interpreting and translation in June of this year. She now combines work with studies at the Moscow State Open Pedagogical University.

Yulia Molodtsova '98 began graduate school at Moscow State University of Humanities in the history and philology faculty.

Olga Petrova '03 entered the Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Worcester, MA.

Alexey Rumyantsev '95 and *Yulia Tell '02* were judges at the second *Moscow League of Champions* tournament, which is a debate contest run throughout the year.

Yulia Tell '02 passed the state exam in English language and linguistics, which is her second major, and got a 5 (excellent mark).

Evgeny Yankovoy '01 served as an elections observer for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) during the third round of elections in Ukraine.

Novosibirsk

Tatyana Popova '03 was invited to work as a counselor this summer at a Spanish children's camp.

Katya Matina '02 passed the entrance exams to attend a university in France. She has been invited to continue her education there.

St. Petersburg

Lyudmila Dunaeva '98 is a student at the University of Texas – San Antonio (UTSA). She is enrolled in a two-year Master of Business Administration program.

Sergey Duvanov '04, who is currently a student at school #21 in Cherepovets, held a series of round-table discussions at his school on Elections and Education in U.S., American families, American teenagers, and Russians in America.

Svetlana Minakova '03, originally from Vologda, is now a first year student at the St. Petersburg University of Humanities and Social Sciences.

Maria Smirnova '98 is now working as an interpreter at Nestle Vologda Baby Food, LLC. Her responsibilities also include assistance to the production manager.

Mikhail Stukolkin '96 traveled to New York State as a facilitator for the Open World program.

Samara

Valeria Baburina '99 is working as an English teacher at a Samara kindergarten. She also studies law at Samara State University, is writing her thesis, and is head of the European Law Students Association in Samara.

Timur Kurmaev '02 now works as administrator at the best hotel in Samara, "Renaissance Hotel." Timur is also a student at Samara State University.

Elena Pastukhova '00 traveled to Yekaterinburg in December and had the chance to visit her American Councils colleagues, participated in the activities carried by the office staff and FLEX Alumni Assistant Elizaveta Gladkovskaya, and took part in a meeting with the Ural Director of Project Harmony Alexandr Rodichev.

Anastasia Pechkurova '03 was proud to become an official member of the Samara State University volleyball team, which holds the top position on the rating list of Samara sport teams.

Anna Shegurova '04 and Alexandra Visloguzova '04 actively participated in the Samara City Olympiads for high school students held during the previous semester. Anna took first place in the City English Olympiad and is studying hard for the Samara Region English Olympiad. Both of them are going to participate in the City Olympiads in economics and civic education -- "grazhdanovedenie."

Maria Smetannikova '98 entered Samara Institute of Management to obtain a second higher education degree.

Vladivostok

Stanislav Anikin '02 (Chita) is an intern at a university near St. Gallen City, Switzerland, where he studies German.

Olga Bukach '04 from Vladivostok participated in her first Model UN Conference that was held in Irkutsk. Her team took third place.

Ksenya Butkova '02 (Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskiy) is in her second year of study at Tver National University, in the faculty of Western European studies.

Irina Kim '97 (Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk) works for Sakhalin Energy (Sakhalin-2 Project).

Kirill Peryan '94 (Khabarovsk) lives in Alaska, where he has graduated from University of Alaska with MS in Global Supply Chain Management. He works for PANALPINA as an Operations Supervisor at the Anchorage branch.

Ekaterina Prokoshina '95 (Blagoveshensk) moved to Novorossiysk, Krasnodarskiy krai where she has started a company that sells international literature and opened a bookstore called "Polyglot."

Volgograd

Natalia Bochkareva '01 got a job at the Volgograd Internet Access and Training Program Center.

Tajikistan

Daler Irmatov '02 works for Subsidiary Enterprise on Projections as a manager. He assists the bookkeeper, manages the staff members, and helps them with logistics.

Timur Rakhimov '02 participated in the week-long Ethnic Diversity and Conflict Management Training of Trainers Program, which was held in Budapest, Hungary and became a certified trainer. The program was designed for participants from eastern and western Europe by the Managing Multiethnic Diversity Program of

Open Society Institute, Budapest, but due to Timur's outstanding achievements and professional background he was accepted to the program from Tajikistan.

Turkmenistan

Merdan Khalilov '98 graduated from American University in Central Asia, and currently works as a Humanities Fellow at the Aga Khan Trust for Culture in Dushanbe, Tajikistan.

Alina Penjiyeva '04 took part in a city competition on December 1 held in recognition of HIV/AIDS Day. Alina led the group from her local school. She did an outstanding job and received first place at the competition. The team members received a telephone and camera as a prize, but they donated them to the school.

Ukraine

Kharkiv

Oleksandra Tsymbal '04 had her article *Say "YES"* printed in the local newspaper. This was her second official publication.

Hanna Tarasenko '04 took the third place in the "Miss Zaporyzhzha" beauty contest.

Kyiv

Tetyana Bohdanova '01 translated reports for the European Network of the Election Monitoring Organizations (ENEMO) Mission in Ukraine, which observed the election process. Tetyana interpreted for Peter Novotny while he attended the Supreme Court hearings.

Kateryna Golitsina '02 worked as an independent observer in Berlin for the third round of Ukrainian presidential elections. Kateryna is currently working on an au-pair program in Germany.

Hrystyna Kushnir '01 and Maryna Yaroshchuk '02 took part in the Simulation of Ukraine's Integration into European Union on December 10-12. The simulation of EU integration was played with three countries: Bulgaria, Croatia and Ukraine. The project was organized by Konrad-Adenauer Stiftung and the German Youth Organization CAP, and was targeted at students majoring in international relations and law. During the simulation Hrystyna played the role of EU commissioner, and Maryna performed the duties of the Bulgarian foreign minister.

Karina Makarenko '98 and Anna Opanasyuk '98 interpreted for a group of U.S. Congressmen who observed the third round of Ukrainian elections. The delegation of congressmen was brought to Ukraine by the U.S.-Ukraine Foundation and worked during the third round of voting.

Anna Opanasyuk '98 was involved throughout November and December with the tent city on Khreshatyk Street in Kyiv. She started her involvement by joining the ranks of protesters sleeping on Kyiv's main street in protest of election violations during the second round of Ukrainian elections. While living in the tent city, Anna began her participation in the administration of the tent city by serving food at one of the food tents. Within a few days she had been promoted to "deputy information coordinator" for the tent city, working on public relations by sending out press releases, organizing a web site (www.nepokora.com.ua), and holding press conferences. Following her public relations work, Anna also took on the responsibility of financial accounting for the tent city, working with others to account for donations and recording expenditures.

Tetyana Poladko '00 interpreted for U.N. officials Helen Petrozzola and Ruken Tekes Calikusu during a live radio program on the national radio station *Era* on December 7. The program was dedicated to the human rights situation in the context of the presidential elections. Tetyana also stressed that human rights are fundamental for establishment of a truly democratic society.

Maryna Yaroshchuk '02 interpreted for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) observers during the third round of presidential elections in the Rivne region.

Lviv

Olha Halyabar '99, Valeriy Kashkarov '94, Roman Khokhla '02, Valeriy Prokhorov '01, Ivan Senyk '01, and Polina Verbytska '02 worked as observers for Viktor Yushchenko during the elections on December 26.

Maryana Khokhla '04 worked as an interpreter for the international observers from the European Network of the Election Monitoring Organizations (ENEMO) on December 26.

Anton Podilchak '03 and Stepan Shakhno '01 worked as official observers for Viktor Yushchenko in the Kryvyi Rih, Dnipropetrovsk region during the elections on December 26.

Odesa

Nina Borysova '02 was selected for a three-month internship at *Presidential Classroom*, which is a workshop organized by Georgetown University for high school students.

Yevhen Kubrak '01 (also known as DJ Eugene) successfully works as a DJ in several Simferopol nightclubs.

Dmytro Lulka '02 was accepted to the University of Texas where he will work towards a Bachelor's degree in government.

Hanna Zarichna '03 conducted a lecture on HIV/AIDS Prevention for ninth-graders at Simferopol gymnasium # 2 on December 15.

Uzbekistan

Dildora Akhmadalievna '94 is working as an office manager/accountant at the Fergana office of the International Secretariat for Water's Rural Water Supply Project funded by the Swiss Agency for Cooperation and Development.

Umid Azimov '04 is studying at Austin Community College in Texas.

Raisa Bogdanova '04 served as an interpreter for an Iranian delegation of businessmen at the exhibition of small businesses of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which took place on December 3-8 in Tashkent.

Yusup Karadaliyev '97 has moved to Tashkent from Nukus and is now working as a coordinator for the Drug Demand Reduction Program.

Ilya Kruchinin '99 has started work as the systems administrator at the pharmaceutical company "Asklepiy."

Tuichy Meliboev '97 is moving from American Councils to the American Embassy, where he will work as a translator for the Consular Section.

Kamoliddin Narbaev '04 is creating an IT center with Professor Kim Hyonkgi from South Korea. The center will open soon for students and teachers of Tashkent State Agrarian University.

Ozoda Ruzmetova '04 was a chief organizer of the Christmas party at Tashkent State University of Economics, and helped write and direct an adaptation of *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*. Ozoda was also chosen as one of the 15 most talented students at Tashkent State University of Economics.

Guzal Sultonhodjaeva '04 has been awarded a 20,000 *sum* grant and a certificate as "The Best and The Most Neat Student" at Tashkent Institute of Oriental Studies.

Evgeniya Tsoy '04 has been invited as a guest speaker for one of the English classes at the Tashkent Institute of Oriental Studies. She served as an evaluator of English for first-year students.