

February 2005

FLEX Alumni Report

Armenia

Yerevan

Best Youth NGO Award: In February 2005 “Youth For Achievements” educational non-governmental organization was recognized as the Best Youth Non-governmental Organization of 2004 by the All Armenian Youth Foundation and received the “Haykyan 2004” award.

FLEX Alumni Grant Program: Alumni submitted 15 applications for the FLEX Alumni Grants Program. This year alumni from cities and towns outside of Yerevan participated actively. Three alumni from Vanadzor submitted proposals, as did two from Gyumri, and one each from Hrazdan and Kapan.

“Putting Best into Practice” Activity: Seventeen FLEX alumni are taking part in an intellectually challenging and practical long-term project, which involves teams of FLEX and Undergraduate program alumni who will create business plans and project proposals. They met on February 18 to divide interested alumni into teams and explain criteria. Both project proposals and business plans need to capitalize on alumni’s potential and capacities and must actually be implemented or managed by alumni. Teams that submit complete project proposals and business plans will be invited for a series of weekend sessions during which they will present their work, receive mentors’ critiques and constructive feedback for further improvement of project proposals and business plans, and compete for the best project and business plan. Teams are working with mentors.

2005-06 FLEX Pre-Departure Orientation Staff Recruitment: On February 20, Christina Grigoryan '00 and Hrachyan Ghazaryan '03 were selected to be the teacher assistants at the 2005 summer pre-departure orientation. They will attend the Training of Teachers in Moscow, April 15-18.

Alumni Planning Meeting: Nelson Petrosyan '95, member of the Youth for Achievement (YFA) Board of Advisers; Zara Sargsyan '98 Internet Access and Training Program (IATP) IREX alumni coordinator; Anna Matinyan '01 YFA Members Affairs Officer; and FLEX Alumni Assistant Liana Tadevosyan '99 met on February 22 to discuss upcoming alumni events and possibilities for how the three organizations could join their efforts and make their activities more effective.

Charity Event for Vardenis Psychiatric Hospital: Throughout February, Sonya Armaghanyan '04, Sona Mirzoyan '04, Hrachya Ghazaryan '03, Gevorg Manucharyan '03, and Rubina Khachatryan '02 worked with FLEX Alumni Assistant Liana Tadevosyan '99 to make follow up phone calls to local businesses for the charity event in support of Vardenis Psychiatric Hospital. Alumni also collected donations of clothes, shoes, toys, and stationery for hospital patients. Their fundraising efforts with executive directors of various companies and banks resulted in donations from Coca-Cola Company, Atenk meat processing factory, Zohrabyan Tigran Mets, Daroink Co. Ltd., Royal Armenia, International Masis Tabak, and Ashtarak Kat milk processing company.

Upcoming Events:

- **Delivery of donations to the Vardenis Psychiatrist Hospital** will take place on March 14.
- **“Putting Best into Practice”** second stage activity will take place March 11-13.
- **Colorful Faces Project** will happen on March 18.
- **Alumni Planning Meeting** will take place in late March.

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Azerbaijan

Baku

Alumni "Civil Rights" Event: Movsun Aghayev '02, Teymur Aliyev '00, Aysel Allahverdiyeva '01, Chingiz Gadimov '02, Togrul Gahramanzada '02, and Sevinj Rustamova '01 attended a presentation by U.S. Embassy Deputy Chief Jason Hyland on Black History Month. The alumni then watched the movie *Glory*. Sergeant Brandon Harris from the U.S. Marine Corps led a Q&A on the topic of civil rights.

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FLEX Grant Application Collection: On February 15, Alumni Assistant Nargiz Hajiyeva '99 collected seven team FLEX Grant applications from the following team leaders: Vugar Agayev '00, Teymur Aliyev '00, Aysel Allahverdiyeva '01, Emin Allahverdiyev '03, Emil Gafarov '02, Togrul Gahramanzada '02, and Aleksey Proskurin '00.

Roundtable Discussion: The Alumni Association organized a meeting on February 17 with Israeli Ambassador E'tan Naeh to discuss Israeli-Palestinian and Israeli-Azerbaijan relations. Questions from alumni led to an active discussion. The event was facilitated by Mr. Elin Suleymanov, Muskie Alumnus, and was attended by 15 FLEX alumni.

HIV/AIDS Awareness Seminar: On February 18 FLEX alumni organized an HIV/AIDS seminar at Bul-Bul music high school for seventy upper-class students. The alumni introduced themselves, and Ruslan Asadov '04 read the official world HIV/AIDS statistics. A PowerPoint presentation was then given to the students, which was followed by a presentation on solving the problem of AIDS by a UN certified representative named Rasim Khalilov. The students actively participated in the seminar and were given pamphlets on AIDS prevention. The following alumni took part in this event: Ruslan Asadov '04, Raisa Azizova '04, Nargiz Hajiyeva '99, Murad Isgandarov '03, Leyla Mammadli '04, and Tamerlan Mammadov '02.

Grant Writing Seminar: On February 18, alumni coordinators from FLEX, Muskie, and Eurasia Undergraduate Exchange Program organized a joint alumni seminar at the U.S.-Azerbaijan Education Center focusing on the Local Initiatives Grant Program (LIGP) opportunities. Alumni of various programs gathered for the seminar. A presentation on the LIGP grant was made, and FLEX alumnus Teymur Aliyev '00 presented the LIGP grant as an opportunity for FLEX partner participation. Teymur Aliyev '00 also shared his grants implementation experience.

Alumni Soccer Tournament: Alumni gathered at Shafa stadium to support the FLEX alumni team in the soccer tournament with Open Society Institute (OSI) alumni on February 20. Unfortunately the FLEX team lost, but the event gave the alumni the opportunity to show their support for each other.

Alumni Planning Meeting and Movie Night: Thirty-five alumni gathered for a movie night and planning meeting on February 27. Alumni discussed opportunities for the Global Youth Service Day (GYD) grant and brainstormed possible community service events that could be held in April.

Upcoming Events:

- **Educational Fair** will be held on March 2 and 3.
- **Presentation on AIDS Awareness** is scheduled for March 9 at school # 189.
- **Spring Charity Ball** will take place on March 26.
- **Alumni Planning Meetings** regarding Global Youth Service Day will be held throughout March.
- **“Trysting Place” Drama Rehearsals** are scheduled throughout March.
- **Global Youth Service Day Grant Submission** deadline is March 11.
- **Alumni Database Project** will last until March 18.

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Belarus

Minsk

Valentine's Day Contest at School #15 in Borisov: On February 12, Maria Grakhovskaya '04 and Anastassiia Tarassiouk '03 conducted a St. Valentine's contest at School #15 in Borisov. The high school students were asked to write fiction or poetry on topics related to St. Valentine's Day. A total of 11 submissions were received. Maria Grakhovskaya '04, Anastassiia Tarassiouk '03, and the school administration chose the best pieces, and the authors were invited to the alumni movie night.

Valentine's Day Celebration at Gymnasium #1 in Minsk: Margarita Kuleshova '03 and Tatiana Panasik '03 attended a St. Valentine's celebration at Gymnasium #1. For this event the high school students prepared a number of skits on love, friendship, and relationships.

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Valentine's Day Celebration and Contest at Gymnasium #2 in Minsk: A St. Valentine's musical was staged at Gymnasium #2 on February 14. Natalia Atrashkova '02, Aleksandr Kovalev '03, and Anastassiiia Tarassiouk '03 were invited to the performance by the school administration. A poetry contest was also held for students who were did not participate in the musical.

St. Valentine's Presentation and Contest at School #200: On February 15, Ekaterina Skachek '04, Anastassiiia Tarassiouk '03, Program Specialist Natalia Kripinevich '97, and Country Director Kevin Reiling were invited to Art School #200 to conduct a series of St. Valentine's Day events. A contest for best valentine was held among middle school children, and a valentine's Day presentation was arranged for high school students. Alumni shared general information about Valentine's Day, as well as their own Valentine's Day experiences in the U.S.

Movie Night: Twenty FLEX alumni and 14 high school students who participated in the Valentine's Day contest and celebrations attended the movie night held at the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy on February 18. *The Bradley Herald* newsletter was distributed among those who attended the event and then the group watched *Viva Las Vegas*.

Planning Lecture on U.S. Culture: On February 28, Yulia Gladikova '04, Margarita Kuleshova '03, Ekaterina Skachek '04, and Anastassiiia Tarassiouk '03 gathered to work on lectures on U.S. culture. The lectures will be conducted for 40 high school students at Gymnasium #1 in Slonim. The alumni worked hard to combine facts on U.S. history and culture with their own experiences as FLEX students.

Global Youth Service Day (GYSD) Meeting: Alumni met on January 25 to begin planning Global Youth Service Day. The focus of GYSD this year will be the "Save the Library" project, which hopes to improve opportunities to read for those living in small towns and villages with poor libraries. Darya Efimova '02 established contact with one of the libraries, and another possible contact was found by Program Specialist Natalia Kripinevich '97. They will meet again on March 10.

Bradley Herald Article Collection: Alumni were asked to contribute to the next issue of the *Bradley Herald*. Irina Kripinevich '03 and Pavel Vorotilin '01 both submitted articles this month.

Grant Submissions: Three grant applications were submitted to the American Councils office. One application is for an individual grant by Ekaterina Borushko '02. Two other applications are for group grants, the first led by Margarita Kuleshova '03 and the second by Pavel Vorotilin '01.

Upcoming Events:

- **Lectures on U.S. Culture** in Slonim are planned for March 5.
- **Global Youth Service Day Planning Meeting** will be held on March 10.
- **Movie Night** will take place on March 17.

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Georgia

Tbilisi

Seminar about American Sports: At the initiative of FLEX alumni, American Councils is organizing a series of seminars and movie night every Friday. The guest speakers are usually Peace Corps volunteers or other foreigners residing in Georgia. First seminar was held on American sports at the Alumni Resource center on Friday, February 4. Approximately 17 FLEX and 10 Eurasia Undergraduate program alumni attended the seminar led by Peace Corps Volunteer Andy Sweisz. Andy talked about American football: its history and the attitude people have toward this game in various parts of the U.S. The seminar was followed by a movie.

Seminar about "Black" Culture: About 25 alumni attended a discussion with Peace Corps volunteer Terrell Starr on February 11 at the Alumni Resource center. Terrell talked about the development of the African-American people in the 20th century and the role of Malcolm X. He also covered a variety of topics, ranging from affirmative action to hip-hop culture.

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Valentine's Day Celebration: Thirty-five FLEX alumni, alongside 20 Eurasia Undergraduate alumni attended the Valentine's event on Friday, February 11 at the Jam Club. The occasion was full of joyful games, various contests, picture slideshows, and nominations. The certificate for the "Sweetest Couple" was given to Sopo Machablashvili '03 and Niko Totladze '00 (Muskie), who met each other during an alumni event and got married recently. Giorgi Baratashvili '01 won the prize for the most "Preferable Spouse." The nomination ceremony was followed by a dance contest.

Debate Training: Salome Tsereteli '01 and Achiko Lomidze from the Debate Education Association led a seminar at the Alumni Resource Center on February 17. Fifteen alumni attended the seminar together with students from the University of Hawaii. Salome and Achiko explained the basics of debating and its rules and encouraged the audience to participate in the upcoming debate tournament.

Model UN Pre-planning Meeting: Model UN participants exchanged with ideas and their research done on the Security Council on February 18, in advance of the actual event. They worked out event details and discussed veto power, both its nature and importance.

Model UN: On February 19, Model UN was held at the hotel "Varazi." Four FLEX alumni joined 16 Eurasia Undergraduate program alumni in the event. The topic of this year's Model UN was the Security Council's reform issue, aiming to raise the number of permanent and non-permanent members of the Security Council. Irina Arabidze '03, Irina Rekhviashvili '03, Tiko Ninua '98, and Giorgi Datiashvili '03 represented the FLEX alumni.

Seminar on Corruption: Mark Mullen, director of Transparency International Georgia, spoke to alumni on February 24 at the Alumni Resource Center. He talked about one of the biggest problems in Georgia, corruption, and different ways to fight it. Twenty-five alumni attended the seminar, which was followed by a dynamic discussion between Mark Mullen and the audience.

Upcoming Events:

- **Seminars at Alumni Resource Center** are planned for March 4 and 18.
- **Presentation Skills and Grant Writing Workshop** will be held on March 10.

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Kazakhstan

Almaty

Roundtable on African American Muslims: On February 19, the Public Affairs Section (PAS) organized an alumni event within the framework of Black History Month. Four FLEX alumni were among the 17 alumni who took part in this event. After watching the movie Malcolm X, alumni participated in a round-table discussion on African American Muslims. Hibba Abugideiri, PhD from Georgetown University and a specialist on Islam in America, was invited by PAS and moderated the discussion. Dr. Abugideiri, who teaches at George Washington University, is an African American Muslim. Ms. Abugideiri shared very interesting facts and statistics, and explained why so many African Americans find Islam appealing. Alumni learned what role Islamic organizations played in the civil rights movement in the U.S. Alumni admitted that they imagined that most African Americans were Christians and were not aware that Islam also played role in the movement for the rights of African Americans. Inkara Amerhanova '01, Assel Baltabayeva '04, Elena Norakidze '99, and Ayazhan Seitkazina '03 participated.

Gloval Youth Service Day Planning Committee 2005: On February 20, 20 FLEX alumni gathered at the Alumni Resource Center of the Almaty American Councils office for the first meeting of the GYSD 2005 Planning Committee. Before brain storming GYSD projects, alumni shared news and planned alumni events for March. Then alumni discussed the plans for the rest of the spring and beginning of summer. Emphasis was put on the GYSD projects and the AWESome Day clean-up, which are annual events. Senior alumni shared their past experience of participating in those annual alumni activities and gave some practical advice to 2004 alumni about how to organize these projects.

“Mass Media in Kazakhstan” Panel Roundtable Discussion: Dina Astayeva '04, Ainur Kuttumuratova '02, Alexander Parfyonov '04, and Gulnur Yessenbayeva '04 participated in a roundtable discussion on mass media in Kazakhstan at the Almaty American Councils office on February 26. Kazakhstani Eurasia Undergraduate Program Alumni Coordinator Anar Umurzakova organized the discussion as an overview of mass media and its problems in Kazakhstan and Central Asia. She addressed the issues of freedom of speech, censorship, and instances when the rights of journalists were violated. Representatives of the national mass media and international nonprofit organizations, as well as Fulbright and Knight Fellows presented their positions and shared research data and independent analysis.

Upcoming Events:

- **Second Meeting of the GYSD Planning committee** will be held on March 13.
- **The “DIVO” Project (Directory of Internships, Vacancies, and Opportunities)** begins March 16.
- **Creating a Website** for the “DIVO” Project meeting will be held on March 18.

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Kyrgyzstan

Bishkek

Parliamentary Elections Discussion Meetings: Lira Aiykova '02, Dariha Erketaeva '02, Sergey Firsov '00, Vladislav Kulamov '03, Asel Murzatova '02, Damira Musurmankulova '01, and Natalia Ten '04 led discussions with students at 12 Bishkek universities throughout February regarding parliamentary elections scheduled for the end of the month. Alumni emphasized the importance of the elections as one of the primary means towards democratic society and stressed the necessity of youth participation.

Brownie Fundraiser: Ten alumni took part in a brownie fundraiser on February 14. The alumni baked heart-shaped brownies for Valentine's Day and sold them to various international organizations and embassies. The \$150 raised will be used for charity functions for Kyrgyz retirement homes.

Internet Training: Tatiana Kim '02 and Nadezhda Tyan '01 conducted the “Internet and Effective Information Search Skills” workshop for 20 children aged 13 to 15 from the Bishkek Child Protection Center on February 12, 13, 17, and 18. The alumni introduced the children to basic Internet use, email, and how to search for information via the Internet. At the end of the training, each student was assigned a topic to search for on the Internet and subsequently present. This workshop will eventually be implemented on a larger scale throughout all of Kyrgyzstan.

Mountain Trip: Thirty-eight alumni attended a retreat held at a ski resort on February 20. The event helped the alumni bond via teambuilding activities. The most active alumni were given certificates for their involvement and service, and younger alumni received valuable advice from older, more experienced alumni on the trip.

Upcoming Events:

- **Contemporary Gender Issues Workshop** is planned for March 10.
- **Monthly Alumni Meeting** will be held on March 15.

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Moldova

Chisinau

Valentine's Day Planning Meeting: Fourteen FLEX and Eurasia Undergraduate Exchange Program alumni gathered to plan the Valentine's Day event on February 1. Eurasia Undergraduate Exchange Program alumna Veronica Cacean outlined the main concept, and the alumni thought up possible activities. Cristina Gutu '04 agreed to find suitable music for the event, and Igor Garabajiv '03 will make arrangements with the New York Bowling Club manager.

National Odyssey of the Mind Tournament: American Councils, the Center for Youth Development, and Peace Corps Moldova organized the eighth National Odyssey of the Mind Tournament, which was held on February 5. Thirty-five teams from all over Moldova participated in the event, the winners of which were

invited to the European Odyssey of the Mind Festival on April 20-25. The teams presented solutions they came up with to four proposed issues, and a jury scored them based on their performance. The winners also received certificates and prizes.

Second Valentine's Day Planning Meeting: On February 8, the planning committee for the Valentine's Day party met to discuss final changes. The alumni decided to organize a party at the Arena Café in the New York Bowling Club.

Bridges Between Us (BBU) Training: Twelve BBU interns met with Country Director Katherine Correll on February 19 for a monthly "Professional Communication" training session. Lilia Fusa '04 helped organize the training session and made flip charts for Katherine's presentation. Igor Garabajiv '03 also assisted. Alumni brainstormed ideas for future events.

St. Valentine's Day Party: More than 20 FLEX and Eurasia Undergraduate Exchange Program alumni attended the Valentine's Day party held on February 11. Igor Garabajiv '03 made some introductory comments, which was followed by activities initiated by Nadejda Mustea '02 and Eurasia Undergraduate Exchange Program Alumna Veronica Cacean '03. Christina Gutu '04 provided the music for the event. The alumni discussed their U.S. experiences and got to know each other better.

Upcoming Events:

- **Monthly Bridges Between Us Training** on "Volunteer Management" is planned for March 19.
- **Model UN Training for Facilitators** will be held on March 21.
- **Earth Day Clean-up** will take place on March 26.

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Russia

Nizhny Novgorod

American Days: The "American Days" event took place in Nizhny Novgorod on February 7-8. Kseniya Pozdeyeva '00 and Aleksey Valyugin '03 gave a test on U.S. culture and history to ninth and tenth graders at school #67 and gave out prizes. The U.S. Ambassador received the honorary degree of Doctor of Humanitarian Studies during a ceremony held at Nizhny Novgorod State Linguistics University and answered questions from the audience. Ambassador Vershbow then held a reception for alumni of U.S. Government-sponsored exchange programs, which gave the alumni the opportunity to socialize with local government officials and Larry Wohlers, the Minister Counselor for Public Affairs at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow. The Ambassador and guests then attended the "American Soul" concert at the Kremlin Concert Hall. Vladimir Gordeev '98, Natalya Klochkova '00, Alexandra Lyamova '96, Tatyana Movshevich '04, Kseniya Pozdeyeva '00, Aleksandr Sladkov '96, Ekaterina Smayeva '99, and Aleksey Valyugin '03 were invited to an official dinner with the Ambassador in Mon Paris Café following the concert. The Ambassador and the alumni spoke about the impact the FLEX program had on the alumni's lives and their activities in Nizhny Novgorod. The Ambassador's wife, Lisa Vershbow, also invited the alumni to attend her exhibition "An Encounter with the Russian Avant Garde" at the Nizhny Novgorod State Art Museum. The alumni also had the chance to talk with U.S. Embassy Alumni Coordinator Anna Poplavko about various resources for future projects.

Kirov

Valentine's Day Celebration: Maksim Isaykin '04 organized a Valentine's Day celebration for students at Kirov Economics and Law Lyceum on February 14. He also made presentation on the holiday for English classes and organized a Cupid love letter mailing service for the students.

Vyatka Humanitarian Gymnasia (VHG) Valentine's Day Celebration: Sonya Kaplan '04, Evgenia Lyamina '03, and Olga Rebro '04 actively participated in the Valentine's Day celebration held at their school, VHG, on February 14. They assisted in delivering love letters in the school. Natalya Nagayeva '02 also participated in the celebration, creating the cards the children used to write their letters in.

Valentine's Day Presentation: Elena Bakulina '98 made a presentation for her English class about the history of Valentine's Day. The students then made Valentine's Day wallpaper for the teachers to show their respect

and appreciation. They also wrote each other love letters and prepared small presents and letters to be sent to orphanage children.

Kirov State Medical Academy (KSMA) Celebration: Vladimir Gordeev '98 helped organize a St. Valentine's Day party for KSMA students on February 14. Vladimir was a member of the team that decorated the main building and offices with paper hearts and "Happy St. Valentine's Day!" notes.

Valentine's Day at Vyatka State University of Humanities: Anna Milyutina gave presentations for students from the law (30 students) and management (40 students) at Vyatka State University of Humanities.



"My Heart Belongs to Children" Project: Elena Bakulina '98 conducted a project titled "My Heart Belongs to Children" on February 16. Elena held the event for 40 children at a local orphanage. She had a strong team of volunteers from Vyatka State University to help her with this project.

Alumni Meeting: Evgenia Lyamina '03, Anna Milyutina '01, Natalya Nagayeva '02, Olga Rebro '04, and Ekaterina Skopina '96 attended an alumni meeting held on February 28. The alumni discussed the upcoming debate tournament and practiced their skills.

Kazan

Presentation on American Political Parties: Daliya Safiullina '04 and Shamil Valiyev '04 gave presentations about American political parties in civics classes for 50 eleventh graders at their schools. Daliya studies at School #139, and Shamil studies at Lyceum-Internat #2.

Cheboksary

Alumni Meeting: Ksenia Semyonova '02 conducted an alumni meeting at the IATP Center on February 3. Yulia Makarova '02, Irina Obolentseva '00, Tatyana Schetchikova '03, Pavel Trofimov '04, and Daria Zolotova '03 attended the meeting. The alumni discussed participating in the Grants Program, taking online courses, and taking part in courses offered by the IATP Center.

Proposal Writing Seminar: Ksenia Semyonova '02 conducted a proposal writing seminar for alumni. The alumni also discussed upcoming events and formed a team for the Annual Upper Volga Region Debate Tournament being held in Nizhny Novgorod on March 12. The alumni also brainstormed activities for Global Youth Service Day.

Upcoming Events:

Nizhny Novgorod

- **Annual Upper-Volga Region Debate Tournament** will be held on March 12.

Kirov

- **Alumni Meeting** is scheduled for March 19.
- **American English Presentations** at Vyatka Humanitarian Gymnasia will take place on March 21.
- **American Country Testing** is planned for March 31.

Cheboksary

- **Alumni Meeting** will be held on March 30.

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Moscow

Planning Meeting: Yulia Molodtsova '98, Yulia Tell '02, and Evgeny Yankovoy '01 have launched an initiative to develop an HIV/AIDS awareness project. They gathered at the FLEX alumni office on February 2 to plan the project. They set the dates for a Training of Trainers, calculated resources necessary for the project, and developed timelines for it.

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Conservatory Concert: On February 7, 11 FLEX alumni attended a concert of famous American musicians John Ferguson and Ira Spolding at the Moscow State Conservatory. The musicians also performed with the Moscow Chamber Choir. The U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Section provided the alumni with invitations.

Monthly Meeting: On February 9, seven FLEX alumni gathered to discuss plans for the upcoming month. They talked about holding a St. Valentine's celebration, training for professional development, a charity visit to orphanage #50, and a social evening event, going skating. Moscow alumni assistant, Yulia Tell '02, also reminded alumni about the approaching deadline for the 2005 FLEX Grants program. FLEX alumni have also talked about the idea of debates and debate seminars and tournaments to be held especially for FLEX alumni. Alumni participating in the meeting were Evgeniya Bourilova '01, Artur Gerbst '02, Olga Privalova '04, Yulia Tell '02 Lidiya Vetrova '03, Yekaterina Zlokazova '01, and Darya Zolotova '03.

St. Valentine's Evening: On February 10, Yulia Molodtsova '98 invited FLEX alumni to come to the club "Last Money" for a St. Valentine's Day music concert. She and her band "Ch-B" performed during the evening. Ten FLEX came to the club and socialized.

"New England Legends" Lecture at Chekhov Library: Olga Privalova '04, Vitaly Sirotkin '94 and Yulia Tell '02 attended the lecture "An Evening with Some of New England's Legends," which took place at Chekhov's library on February 11. The speaker was Mary Shea, Eurasia FLEX alumni coordinator. Mary shared stories and details from the lives of some great Americans who were either New England natives or who spent important years of their lives there.

Movie Night and Skating: On February 19, ten FLEX alumni came to the movie night organized at the IATP Center to watch *Little Black Book*. After the movie night alumni went skating at the CSKA ice-skating rink.

Internet Access and Training Program (IATP) Training on Professional Development: Tatiana Kolosnitsyna, Muskie '04, who is Eurasia FLEX program assistant, led training sessions at the IATP center on February 24 and 26. The training, aimed at mid-career professionals, provided information and useful tips on writing a successful resume. More than 20 people attended, including Marina Boitsovskaya '97, Irina Chinenova '95, Elena Komarova '03, Elizaveta Koshkarova '01, Maya Reshetnikova '95, Darya Rudenko '02, Mariya Ustyuzhanina '03, and Elena Vasilyeva '98.

Alumni Meeting: On February 24, Yuliya Arkharova '03, Dariya Glukhikh '03, Olga Pryanichnikova '03, and Yulia Tell '02 met to plan the upcoming visit to orphanage #50. They discussed the possibility of conducting computer literacy classes for the group of children from the orphanage.

Orphanage Visit: Yulia Tell '02 visited orphanage #50, for a charity visit dedicated to St. Valentine's Day on February 26. She brought presents for the children donated by FLEX alumni, as well as candies donated by Nataliya Kurenkova '97, who works for Nestle Corporation. Children played several American games. Later Yulia has discussed possible ways of future cooperation with the orphanage administration.

Yaroslavl

St. Valentine's Day Celebration at the Orphanage: Yaroslavl alumni Sonia Gorya '04, and Marina Zavodchikova '02, together with friends and the Yaroslavl representatives of the Cross Cultural Solutions Program, as well as the program's U.S. volunteer, organized a Valentine's Day celebration at the orphanage of the Dzdershinski region of Yaroslavl on February 9. Alumni told the children about the history of the Valentine's Day celebration, played different games with them, and organized contests and competitions. FLEX alumni established good relations with the Yaroslavl coordinator of the program Cross Cultural Solutions Nadezhda Savelyeva and are looking forward new joint projects. All the children received sweets and stuffed animals donated by alumni. Sonia Gorya '04 also donated some clothes for the children.

Upcoming events:

- **Movie Night** at IATP center will take place March 5
- **Monthly Meeting** to be held on March 9
- **Discussion group:** "How do Russians and Americans Measure Success?" to be held at International University Moscow on March 10

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Novosibirsk

Planning Meetings: Alumni met three times to work out the final details of the U.S. school presentation for middle school pupils. Arrangements with the schools have been made, and alumni plan give the presentation at five or six schools and two orphanages in March. Omsk and Kemerovo alumni also met to work on the "U. S. schools" project and are ready to make their presentations in March. Participating alumni are Darya Afonasoova '01, Anna Demidchik '01, Natasha Gashko '04, Maxim Lobaty '03, Alexandr Nozdrin '01, Tatyana Popova '03, and Bella Struminsky '02.

Russians in America Competition: Novosibirsk alumni currently studying at Novosibirsk State University gathered to take part in the "Russians in America" competition, which is being organized among universities in Novosibirsk for the first time. An organizational meeting was held and plans were made. Alumni participating in a project are Darya Afonasoova '01, Igor Babichev '01, Anna Demidchik '01, Natalya Gashko '04, Maxim Lobaty '03, Tatyana Popova '03, and Bella Struminsky '02.

Alumni Meeting: Alumni met to discuss Earth Day and Global Youth Service Day. Some preliminary plans were made.

Upcoming Events:

- **Update Weekend** will be held March 20 for alumni to get together to call other cities and gather update information.
- **No Litter Earth Day Meeting** with local officials will be held to plan the project in late March.
- **Russians in America Competition Meetings** will be held throughout March to prepare for the competition.
- **U. S. Schools Presentations** will take place in Novosibirsk, Omsk, and Kemerovo schools.

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St. Petersburg

Alumni Valentine's Day Celebration: On February 13, over 15 FLEX alumni, together with the Undergraduate program alumni and American language students, celebrated Valentine's Day in an atypical way. They traveled to the Pukhtolova Gora skiing resort outside St. Petersburg to spend a day outdoors. The alumni had a choice of skiing, snowboarding, or sleigh riding; they also had a great time at a tea break, where they got acquainted with a new group of American exchange students who are studying Russian in St. Petersburg.

English Language Movie Nights: Every Thursday night starting February 3, English language movies were viewed and discussed by alumni and the American Councils staff at the local IATP center. American Councils Office Director in St. Petersburg Terrence Graham; Reed Johnson, FLEX Program administrator in the north-west; and Igor Gots, FLEX alumni assistant, led the discussions on "*Good Will Hunting*," "*Donnie Darko*," "*Lost in Translation*," and "*A River Runs Through It*." There's a growing interest to the movie series from the alumni, as about 15 attended the last screening. Olga Kononova '04, Polina Kopneva '04 and Viktoria Mun '03 didn't miss a single movie!

Weekend Sports: Every Sunday, FLEX and Eurasia Undergraduate program alumni met to play basketball and volleyball. The alumni rent a gym for two hours and play an hour of each sport. About ten FLEX alumni attended each of the weekend sport events in February, Ekaterina Gavrilenko '03, Polina Kopneva '04 and Mikhail Stukolkin '96 being the most active ones.

Grant Application Writing Training: On February 26, FLEX alumni in St. Petersburg participated in a grant writing training at the IATP Center. Elena Gayevskaya, International Cooperation Expert from St. Petersburg State University, prepared and ran the training. The alumni learned about successful grant projects of the past, discussed various aspects of working on a grant application, and worked on sample projects which were presented at the end of the training day. Oksana Hodjaeva '02, Anna Loskutova '02, Polina Petrun '02, Veronika Sokolova '03, Natalia Tulieva '94, and Roza Vasilieva '04 participated in the training.

Petrozavodsk

“Goodbye, Winter” Holiday at Petrozavodsk Boarding School #22: On February 20, FLEX alumni in Petrozavodsk organized the holiday "Winter, Goodbye" for children from boarding school #22. The alumni played with the children outside and organized some fun contests. They also baked pancakes and one big pie for the tea party, which was held after the outdoor activities. Alumni who organized and participated in this event were Lyudmila Chistiakova '01, Elena Lavrentieva '03, Anastasia Nerovnaya '03, and Nikita Vorobyov '03.

Alumni Meeting with U.S. Consul for Press and Culture: On February 11, FLEX alumni in Petrozavodsk and alumni of other exchange programs had a meeting with Consul for Press and Culture Jeffrey C. Murray. Lyudmila Chistiakova '01, Natalia Gomankova '02, Ekaterina Ivankina '04, Anastasia Nerovnaya '03, Anastasia Razhikova '02, Anna Tomchik '96 and Nikita Vorobyov '03 made presentations, illustrating different aspects of everyday life in the U.S. for the Consul, about 50 students, and National Library staff. The alumni also prepared a large collage with pictures from their FLEX year to give the guests an overview of their U.S. exchange experience. After the presentations, the alumni were invited to a banquet where they talked to Jeffrey Murray in a less formal atmosphere.

“Youth Organizations: Exchange of Experience” Seminar: On February 27, Lyudmila Chistiakova '01 and Anastasia Nerovnaya '03, together with IATP Center Coordinators Natalya Bogdanova and Elena Pavgurt, attended the seminar "Youth Organizations: Exchange of Experience," conducted by an Open World Program alumnus Alexey Andreev. After the seminar the alumni came up with a new project to help the orphanage student improve their professional orientation. The alumni are planning to start the activity by taking orphanage students on an excursion to Petrozavodsk State University.

Upcoming Events:

- **Weekly Sports** (volleyball/basketball) for alumni will be held each weekend.
- **Weekly American Movie** club will be held once a week in March.
- **4th NW Russia Alumni Congress** is scheduled for March 19.
- **“Unknown America” Presentations** by alumni will start March 19.
- **Alumni Photography Exhibition** will be held on March 21.

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Samara

Monthly Alumni Meeting: Ilya Brezhnev '02, Valentina Dolgikh '02, Ekaterina Gafarova '03, Timur Kurmaev '02, Tatyana Lebakina '03, Irina Malakhovskaya '98, and Elena Pastukhova '00 discussed possible opportunities for the Global Youth Service Day project and February plans at a meeting on February 11.

Winter Amusements at the Skating Rink: Valeria Baburina '99, Valentina Dolgikh '02, Timur Kurmaev '02, Elena Pastukhova '00, Anna Shegurova '04, and Alexandra Visloguzova '04 met to celebrate St. Valentine's Day at an ice-skating rink on February 26. The celebration helped alumni bond, which will be useful when they work together to plan future events.

Psychological Training: A series of psychological training sessions began on February 24 at the IATP Center. Maria Nikonova, a psychology instructor at the Samara Municipal Institute of Management, conducted the session, which was intended to help alumni better understand their abilities and potential. The alumni took part in various exercises that helped them get to know themselves and each other better. The following alumni participated in the event: Pavel Alashev '01, Valeria Baburina '99, Tatyana Lebakina '03, Elena Pastukhova '00, Anastasia Pechkurova '03, Veronika Pestova '03, Elizaveta Spiridonova '03, and Maria Soutchkova '02.

Career Day: Project Harmony representatives Dmitry Bulavin and Alexandr Rodichev conducted a seminar on searching for jobs on February 28 at the IATP Center. They covered different aspects of this topic, including online and off-line communication with potential employers. Dmitry and Alexandr also prepared various exercises to highlight business ethics. A discussion was then held, during which alumni could ask questions. The alumni closed the event by putting the knowledge they had received into practice: they composed resumes

and began searching for potential jobs online. Fourteen alumni participated in the event: Valeria Baburina '99, Viktoria Brezhneva '94, Valentina Dolgikh '02, Ekaterina Gafarova '03, Alexandr Kuznetsov '01, Tatyana Lebakina '03, Irina Malakhovskaya '98, Elena Pastukhova '00, Anastasia Pechkurova '03, Anna Shegurova '04, Daria Shlikova '96, Elizaveta Spiridonova '03, Maria Smetannikova '98, and Maria Soutchkova '02.

Upcoming Events:

- **The Seminar “The Gender Stereotypes in Mass Media and Commercials as a Threat to Human Rights in Russia”** will take place on March 2 at the Samara American Alumni Club.
- **Psychological Training Sessions** will continue on March 3 at the IATP.
- **Monthly Alumni Meeting** will be organized in the middle of March to prepare for Global Youth Service Day.
- **Non-hub Psychological Training Session** will be held for Togliatti alumni on March 26.

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Vladivostok

Leadership Seminar by Joel Ericson: On February 1, American Councils Regional Director Joel Ericson, Ph.D. conducted a “Leadership Seminar” for Vladivostok alumni and general public. This seminar was filled with different leadership examples such as Joseph Shakelton and his trip to Antarctica, discussions of types of human guilt, and other interesting topics. At the end of the seminar, everybody participated in an exercise that showed how many types of teamwork exist. Alumni in attendance were Pavel Khizhnyak '96, Anna Ustugova '99, Valentina Yurenok '98, and Polina Zavyalova '00.

Movie Night: Anastasia Aleshkina '04, Olga Bukach '04, Yana Boroday '02, Marina Kaurova '99, Diana Kolesnikova '04, Anna Koneva '99, Polina Sergienko '04, Dmitriy Shatokhin '02, Anna Ustugova '99, Valentina Yurenok '98, and Polina Zavyalova '00 gathered at the American Councils Office on February 18 to watch the movie *Frida*, the true story of Mexican painter and 20th century icon Frida Kahlo. For many of the alumni, this movie was introduced a lot of new information, as many people had not heard of Frida Kahlo.

Meeting with the Primorskiy Krai Youth Parliament: Olga Bukach '04, Yana Borodai '02, Dmitriy Shatokhin '02, and Polina Zavyalova '00 gathered at the American Councils office on February 22 to meet with members of the Youth Parliament of Primorskiy Krai. Alexander Maltsev, the chairman of the Youth Parliament, described the projects they are currently working on and possible ways to collaborate with alumni. It was ultimately decided that they would fundraise together to encourage alumni to take a more active part in Primorskiy Krai community life.

Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskiy

Alumni Planning Meeting: Alexandra Arzhakova '04, Ekaterina Goryuk '01, Denis Savelyev '95, and Yelena Shindyapkina '03 attended a meeting with American Councils Russian Far East Director Denis Boyle; Eurasia Undergraduate Alumni Fellow Ivan Pechorin; and FLEX Alumni Assistant Polina Zavyalova on February 6 in Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskiy. The alumni shared their experiences and discussed upcoming events. Denis Savelyev '95 talked about difficulties he experienced after returning to Russia from the U.S. and about possible ways to develop Kamchatka through community service projects. Ekaterina Goruyk '01, Maria Retueva '03, and Yelena Shindyapkina '03 are currently offering free English classes for children.

The International Education Resources Seminar: The International Education Resources Seminar was held at the American Corner in Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskiy on February 7. This event was opened to the general public and more than 25 people gathered, including FLEX alumni Alexandra Arzhakova '04, Denis Savelyev '95, and Elena Shindyapkina '03. Polina Zavyalova '00 and Ivan Pechorin talked about long and short-term international education opportunities, including the application and admission procedures for various programs, including the FLEX program. Internet resources such as www.takingitglobal.org and <https://statexchange.state.gov> were also presented to the general public.



Yelizovo

Yelizovo Alumni Meeting: Julia Oleinik '99 and Tatiana Senichkina '04 attended an alumni meeting that was held in Yelizovo on February 9. They talked about their experiences in the U.S., the projects they are involved right now, and their plans for future. Tatiana Senichkina '04 helped organize a meeting with teachers from Yelizovo for the new teacher's program (3TP) and was greatly interested in future alumni activities.

Chita

Anti-drug Roundtable: Anna Anisina '04, Tanya Haikina '02, Ayuna Munkueva '04, and Natalia Smetanina '03 took part in a roundtable entitled "We are against DRUGS" on February 11 in Chita. The roundtable was organized in cooperation with the Russian Federation Regional Department of the Federal Service of Drug Control and the local Russian Youth Union committee. The harmful effects of drugs were discussed, and well-known politicians and doctors touched on topics such as drug trafficking, drug rehabilitation, and the use of drugs by young people. Possible ways to stop this problem were suggested, and pamphlets were distributed to all 400 people in attendance.

Upcoming Events:

- **Alumni Planning Meetings** will be held on March 4 and 25.
- **"Time Management" Seminar** by Maksim Korenkov is scheduled for March 11.
- **American Movie Night** screening of *Aviator* by Martin Scorsese will be on March 17.

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Volgograd

Meeting with Erin Doran: Daria Karpenko '01, Marina Karpushko '04, and Oksana Panfilova '04 attended a meeting with American Councils Program Officer Erin Doran at the Volgograd Russian-American Center on February 16. Ms. Doran led a resume-writing seminar and taught the alumni resume structure and the most important points of a successful resume. Ms. Doran then described how human resource managers usually work with resumes and how to bring their attention to your resume.

Unemployment Research Project: Throughout February, 13 Volgograd alumni continued working on their research project regarding the problems of youth unemployment in their city. This month alumni distributed questionnaires to young people in their communities. Each person received about 100 copies of the questionnaire and was asked to collect responses.

Upcoming Event:

- **Community Service Activity** with the Volgograd Regional Foundation "Dar Nadezhdy" is planned for March 26-27.

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Yekaterinburg

Local Representatives Seminar: Alumni from six cities, including Perm (Mikhail Tchudin '02, Kseniya Zemlyanova '00), Orenburg (Lidiya Grazhevichus '04), Tyumen (Ruslan Nechay '00), Chelyabinsk (Yelena Babkova '00, Yulia Suchkova '03), Ufa (Svetlana Shammassova '99) and Izhevsk (Yekaterina Sokolova '04, Aleksandr Tazhedenov '04, and Vitaly Dmitriyev '04) came to Yekaterinburg for a local representative training seminar. Among the topics discussed were alumni motivation strategies, alumni event planning, budgeting and reporting, and grant and study-abroad opportunities, as well as other general discussions. Ruslan Nechay and Kseniya Zemlyanova shared their experience in organizing different events. Kseniya talked about volunteering. She and Perm alumna Alissa Klots '99 keep in touch with local orphanages and meet with the children regularly. They have even started their own charity organization and welcome others to join it. Ruslan shared his experience in getting alumni together and have them organize events, like a Halloween party and Christmas caroling. He explained that many alumni have left Tyumen for Moscow and other cities. He stressed that the most important thing is to keep in touch with those who are eager to participate in FLEX community life. FLEX Alumni Assistant Yelizaveta Gladkovskaya '95 talked about the conference for alumni assistants that was held in Moscow in the fall 2004 and provided each participant with a copy of the CD-rom with information from the

conference. Participants also received another CD containing useful information provided by the American Consulate in Yekaterinburg. Former FLEX Alumni Assistant in Yekaterinburg Anastasiya Syrchina '99 made a presentation on organizing debates. Most alumni seemed to be interested in debating, considering that some of them proved themselves to be professionals and participated in the debates organized by American Consulate in autumn 2004 prior to the U.S. Presidential elections.

Valentine's Day Celebration: Five alumni watched the comedy *When Harry Met Sally* and presented each other small gifts. They also received information about studying at American University in Bulgaria. Antonina Ivanova '04, who is particularly interested in learning French, received a brochure about French universities edited by French Alliance in Yekaterinburg. American Councils Office Director Stephen Houtsma,

Meeting with American Consul in Tyumen: Ruslan Nechai '00 and Natalia Shurshikova '00 met American Consul General Scott Roland at the Tyumen American Corner on February 9. They discussed the U.S. role in WW2 and Soviet-U.S. cooperation. The group watched a movie and after that asked Mr. Roland questions about the political situation in the U.S. after the presidential elections.

"America: Know It All" Continued: Vera Aminova '03 continues working on the project "The USA: Know It All" at the lyceum where she is studying. Once every two weeks, Vera hangs a set of questions in her lyceum, and afterwards she collects the answers from the students. As Vera noted, more people are getting involved and it might be a good idea to try a similar project in other schools. Recently Vera received a certificate of achievement from the American Councils Office for her contributions.

Upcoming events:

- **Poetry Evening** is planned for March 15.
- **"Share Your Success" Day** will take place on March 26.

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Tajikistan

Dushanbe

Goodbye Party: On February 18, Miskola Abdulloeva '02, Firuza Djabbarova '04, Daler Khakimov '04, Malika Khakimova '04, Nasiba Khalikova '04, Shohina Touraeva '04, and Nadejda Tretyakova '95 organized a farewell party for American Councils Senior Representative Patrick Lee. The alumni expressed their gratitude to Patrick for all the work he has done for American Councils and the alumni community during his time in Tajikistan. As a farewell gift, the alumni prepared a survival kit, which included different humorous and meaningful objects to help him through his life journey. Guests such as TEA Program Manager Michelle Garren; IREX Coordinator Parviz Muborakshoev; IREX Regional Program Manager Lorry Trawis; and U.S. Embassy Representative Jennifer Washeleski also attended.

Political Parties and 2005 Elections: On February 24, Dmitriy Frolov '02 and Akmal Karimov '02 conducted a seminar about political parties and upcoming parliamentary elections for students from Tajik Technical University, Russian Tajik Slavonic University, and students from secondary school #4. The alumni introduced six political parties, gave information about the representatives' backgrounds, and when the parties were established. Dmitriy Frolov '02 talked about the election process, the Parliament, and the expenses of a political campaign. Akmal Karimov '03 gave a PowerPoint presentation about the possible winner of the election. The alumni provided the homepages of the parties and encouraged the participants to vote on February 27.

Computer + Keyboarding Training: Akmalxon Ibragimov '04 and Firuz Oyev '02 completed their computer and keyboarding training project for high school students from secondary school #4 on February 24. The alumni taught the students how to use Microsoft Word, Excel, typing, Internet Explorer, email, search engines, and the use of computers in general. The classes were conducted twice a week for half an hour. Now the participants can teach their peers at school how to use computers. Firuz Oyev '02 encouraged the students to keep working on the skills they obtained, and suggested that they visit the IATP center no less than once a week.

English Week Celebration: English Week was held from February 28 to March 4 at Dushanbe International School. Shelley Adamik, an English teacher at the school, invited the alumni to talk about the FLEX program on February 28. The alumni talked about the competition process and timelines for the FLEX program. The alumni shared their U.S. experiences and answered the students' questions. The students were very excited that the alumni brought their U.S. photo albums. *Bradley Herald* newsletters were also distributed.



Upcoming Events:

- **Peace Corps Week Celebration** will be held March 1-6.
- **Canned Food Drive for Veterans** will be held from March 14 through May 2.
- **Celebration of Navruz** with orphans is scheduled for March 19.
- **Best Alumni of the Month Recognition** is planned for March 26.

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Turkmenistan

Ashgabat

Auditions for “Beauty is a Beast” Play Production: On February 5, 50 teenagers came to the American Councils office for auditions of the play “Beauty is a Beast”. The selection committee consisted of Bahar Agayeva '02, Bahar Nuriyeva '02, Peace Corps volunteers Shawn Baxter and Christine Tam, and English teacher Guzel Saryyeva. During the auditions, the children were very excited to demonstrate their acting skills. Despite their anxiety, participants performed actively and showed their interest in the play. Participation in the auditions gave students the chance to try something new and experience themselves as potential actors.

FLEX Alumni Start Debates Club for Local Community: On February 7, Serdar Karliyev '04 and Bahar Nuriyeva '02 conducted try outs for the Debates Club. They selected 15 participants out of 70 interested people. During the test, attendees were given a statement which they had to either support or oppose, providing their answers with reasoning and facts. They were given 30 seconds to think about their answers, take a position, and a minute to perform. Participants were able to show their presentation skills and interest in debating. The selection criteria were based on critical thinking and creative expression of their points of view. The Debates Club is intended to develop the public speaking skills of the local community.

Practice Rehearsals for Beauty is a Beast Play: On February 12, 13, 16, 19, 20, 26, and 27 Bahar Agayeva '02, Bahar Nuriyeva '02 and Peace Corps volunteer Shawn Baxter conducted rehearsals for the *Beauty is a Beast* play. The cast gathered to work on first, second, and third scenes. At the beginning of the practice rehearsals, participants did warm-up exercises. They learned how to control their emotions when acting out different feelings. At the end of the rehearsals, participants gave a description of their character's emotions and feelings in each scene.

Turkmen Alumni Meet Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European and Asian Affairs, Laura E. Kennedy: On February 10, Bahar Agayeva '02, Serdar Karliyev '04, and Bahar Nuriyeva '02, along with other alumni of U.S. Government-sponsored programs met Ambassador Laura E. Kennedy at the U.S. Agency for International Development conference hall. Alumni warmly welcomed Amb. Kennedy and talked about their successes.

Dashoguz

Alumni Meeting: Alumni gathered at the Dashoguz American Corner on February 4, 9, 15, and 23 to discuss community activities. They talked about Women's Day, St. Patrick's Day, alumni activities for students, youth, adults and teachers, and ideas they have for spring. Mehrijemal Altybayeva '04, Jalal Bekchanov '02, Laziz Hudaybergenov '02, Leila Ischanova '03, Maral Ilyasova '04, Irina Kletchuk '04, Dariko Mkrtyumyan '04, and Viktoriya Orazova '04 attended the alumni meetings.

Acting Club: Dariko Mkrtumyan '04 cooperated with Peace Corps volunteer Matthew Stein to organize an acting club at the American Corner of Dashoguz for all interested visitors. More than seven people attended the classes, which were held every Monday in February.

“Children Against Pollution”: Dariko Mkrtumyan '04 conducted a “Children Against Pollution” class at the American Corner in Dashoguz. More than ten people attended the event, which was held each Friday in February. During the classes Dariko Mkrtumyan '04 discussed different pollution issues in Turkmenistan and the world with attendees. In addition, attendees drew pictures of how they see our environment.

Newsletter Class: Mehrijemal Altybayeva '04 conducted a newsletter class for interested visitors of the Dashoguz American Corner. Each Thursday, more than 25 people attended the class at the Dashoguz American Corner. Mehrijemal Altybayeva '04, Irina Kletchuk '04, Dariko Mkrtumyan '04 and Viktoriya Orazova '04 organized a newsletter for the Dashoguz American Corner. The main idea of the project is to help attendees develop their writing skills.

Roundtable with U.S. Embassy Representative: On February 15, the American Corner organized a roundtable with alumni of U.S. Government-funded programs and Ian Turner, Third Secretary of the U.S. Embassy. The following alumni attended the roundtable: Mehri Altybayeva '04, Jalal Bekchanov '02, Laziz Hidaybergenov '02, Irina Kletchuk '04, and Dariko Mkrtumyan '04. FLEX alumni and Turner discussed different topics, including development issues affecting the Dashoguz region. They also talked about the educational system, volunteerism, younger generation, etc.

St. Valentine's Day Preparation: Altybayeva Mehrijemal '04 and Irina Kletchuk '04 conducted a Valentine's Day celebration at the American Corner in Dashoguz. More than 23 people attended the meetings, which were held every Wednesday and Thursday of February. During the classes, attendees learned American songs about Valentine's Day, and poems. The main idea of class was to develop acting, English-speaking and listening skills. The main goal was to prepare the St. Valentine's Day concert at the Dashoguz American Corner.

St. Valentine's Day Celebration: Mehrijemal Altybayeva '04, Irina Kletchuk '04, and Viktoriya Orazova '04 organized a Valentine's Day concert at the Dashoguz American Corner on February 14. More than 35 people attended the concert. During the event, attendees performed a skit about St. Valentine's Day history, sang songs, and read poems.

Turkmenabat

Meaning of Love Nowadays: On February 14, FLEX alumni who returned in 2003 and 2004 conducted a St. Valentine's Day celebration at the American Corner in Turkmenabat. Seven alumni, six visitors, and three volunteers attended. Yuliana Kuzyayeva '03 and Serdar Yoldashev '04 congratulated everyone with holiday, and then led a discussion about the holiday's importance today. They shared historical background and interesting facts about this holiday, which they found on the Internet. Participants learned more about American holidays and expressed their opinions in discussion. Sabina Huseyinova '03, Nazira Jorayeva '04, Farhad Yagmurov '04, and Djeyran Babajanova '04 led a series of games and contests that required participants' involvement, enthusiasm, and creativeness. At the end of the program, participants and alumni made Valentine's cards for the people they love.

Turkmenabat Youth Stands Against Racial Discrimination: On February 25, Yuliana Kuzyaeva '03 initiated a movie night at American Corner, Turkmenabat. Three alumni were among the ten people who attended the event. Two documentaries about Afro-American history, difficulties, hardships and discriminations they experienced. Two films were shown *America Beyond the Color Line*, and *The Black Belt and Street of Heaven*. At the beginning of the event, participants received lists of new vocabulary to make the film more understandable. After the film they discussed the importance of equality among races and nations. Participants learned about prominent Afro-Americans and the importance of equal rights of all people. Yuliana encouraged attendees to read books about Afro-Americans available at the library.

Turkmenbashy

Balkan Region Girls' Basketball: During February, fifth through seventh grade girls in Turkmenbashy, Balkanabat, and Serdar attended basketball practices three times each week. An estimated 450 students took

part in the practices. American Corner Turkmenbashy organized the event. Peace Corps volunteers and FLEX alumni helped to run the practices at local schools. The aim of this sport project of Balkan Region is to empower girls in athletics, teach basic basketball skills, and encourage teamwork and sportsmanship. The girls are encouraged to lead a healthy lifestyle, in part through extracurricular activities. Organizers believe that by developing the basketball teams in the Balkan Region, they can raise the sports levels among school students in Turkmenistan.

“How to Write an Effective Essay” Presentation: On February 2, Kristina Razahova '04 made a presentation about how to write an effective essay for admission to educational programs. She explained the structure of the essay, including the main points of the work. Kristina encouraged her audience to use productive words, avoiding unprofessional phrases and terms. Then Alina Penjiyeva '04 described the structure of an essay: head, body, and feet represented the steps of the work. Twelve people, including candidates for the American University in Bulgaria and FLEX programs, participated in the presentation. Presenters also distributed handouts for further review.

Creative Writing Workshop: On February 4, Iyera Askerova '04, Yuliya Hayrutdinova '04, Kristina Razahova '04 and English teachers from Turkmenbashy schools participated in a creative writing workshop, led by Anna Grehova, TEA program coordinator, and Peace Corps volunteer Ray Nayler. Speakers helped their audience learn about the differences between various types of literature. They also encouraged the audience to try writing poems as a way to practice critical and creative thinking, as well as to share each other's ideas. FLEX alumni were encouraged to conduct similar creative writing classes at the Turkmenbashy American Corner to develop the writing skills of the general public of Balkan community.

Internet Training for the Students from a Local Vocational School: On February 3, 4, 10, 11, 17, and 25 Kristina Razahova '04 organized Internet training for students from the Turkmenbashy vocational school, studying management and computer programming. The purpose of the classes is to familiarize the students with the basics of Internet and e-mail. Besides the theoretical base regarding the Internet access, the participants were given a chance to practice by doing research and learning how to use a personal e-mail account. Sixty students attended the class. Participants received basic information about the Internet, which will assist them in developing their careers. Students learned how to do research for their current field of study according to the vocational school program.

Computer Classes for Local Orphanage Children by FLEX Alumni: On February 7, 14, and 28 Minara Ismailova '04 and Alina Penjiyeva '04 provided students from the local orphanage of Turkmenbashy city with basic knowledge of computers. The classes are organized at the American Corner. Forty-eight students attended the class. All students received the chance to use the American Corner computers to improve their knowledge. The students are taught computer system basics and its main principles, which will help them in their studies. The children from the orphanage value the new and modern technology.

Joyous Sports: On February 8, Kristina Razahova '04, American Corner Turkmenbashy, and local school # 2 organized the sport event “Joyous Sports” for 30 fifth and sixth grade pupils. After welcoming guests, children were invited to participate in sports games and competitions, including football, basketball and relay races. They were divided into the teams for these activities and led by trainer Olga Victorovna, two students from upper classes, the Regional Representative of Turkmenbashy American Corner Yazgul Ishanova, and Peace Corps Volunteer Laura Myerburg. At the close of the event, Yazgul Ishanova congratulated all participants and awarded the school with sport supplies from the American Corner. This event encouraged children in Turkmenbashy to be more interested in sports and to realize the importance of a healthy lifestyle. It also developed closer teamwork between the American Corner and other local public organizations.

Blues, Rap, and the Rhythm of Black History Month: On February 10, Alina Penjiyeva '04 and Peace Corps Volunteer Alex Minier organized the presentation “Blues, Rap, and the Rhythm of Black History Month.” During the presentation Alex Minier talked about various types of music: African, soul, funk, jazz, rock, rap, and reggae. Nine people, including the 2004 FLEX alumni, were interested in this activity. Participants listened to music and discussed it. They also were provided with information about the history of the different styles of music and worked with the map to see what music was the most popular in each state. Alex also talked about outstanding singers like Bob Marley and Elvis Presley. Then Alina spoke about the African-American boycott in Alabama and gave handouts for further study.

Happy Valentine's Day Presentation: Alina Penjiyeva '04 made a Valentine's Day presentation for 12 participants on February 14. She introduced historical events related to Valentine's Day in different parts of the world such as Ancient Rome, Ancient Greece, Great Britain, the U.S. France, Germany, Japan, and some other countries. She spoke about traditions, customs and people's superstitions on Valentine's Day. During the presentation Alina talked over the many symbols of the holiday, such as the heart, flowers, sweets, Cupid, dove, and the color red. Participants were provided with some poems, and they learned how to say "I love you" in 20 languages.

Turkmenbashy Girls' Basketball Meeting: On February 17, the Regional Representative of Turkmenbashy American Corner Yazgul Ishanova and Kristina Razahova '04, together with Peace Corps volunteers Becky Bowman and Laura Myerburg, organized a meeting for Turkmenbashy Girls basketball team to discuss their work and plans for future. Thirteen girls who are playing on the team took part in this meeting. During the meeting girls played games to get to know each other better. The goal of this event was to make the girls one strong team and think about their future achievements. Becky Bowman spoke about the National Basketball Association (NBA) and famous basketball players. Then girls watched sports news to become more involved in the sports world.

Movie Night: On February 17, Kristina Razahova '04 and Peace Corps volunteer Elynn Walter held a movie night for the interested visitors of the American Corner, English students from the Educational Center "Diller Dunyasi" and "Bashkent." Six students participated in the event, including Yulia Hayrutdinova '04. Attendees were provided with a list of new vocabulary words and expressions to complete all the suggested tasks regarding the movie. They also completed different assignments, such as writing an essay about relationships between the movie heroes, writing their thoughts about the movie, and describing their favorite part.

Black History Month Presentation by PAS: Two FLEX alumni attended a special program at the American Corner Turkmenbashy organized by Gulyalek Soltanova from the U.S. Embassy in Ashgabat PAS on February 23. Kristina Razahova '04 assisted in organizing the program and Alina Penjiyeva '04 attended the presentation. More than 20 people attended the presentation. Gulyalek Soltanova told important facts about Black History Month, and encouraged the audience to look at the proclamation by the President of the U.S. She also described "the Niagara Movement: Black Protest Reborn, 1905." Among the significant people in black history, she talked about Special Counsel Thurgood Marshall, Louis Redding, U. Simpson Tate, Rosa Parks, and others. The group also watched a documentary film, and then received information on CDs. They looked at a book on exhibition at the American Corner as well.

Alumni Monthly Meeting: On February 25, Kristina Razahova '04 and Regional Representative of American Corner Turkmenbashy, Yazgul Ishanova had a meeting with Iyera Askerova '04, Yulia Hayrutdinova '04, Minara Ismailiova '04, Alina Penjiyeva '04 and Arzu Talapova '04 at the Turkmenbashy American Corner. Peace Corps volunteers, Alex Minier, Becky Bowman, Laura Myerburg, and Allen Park appeared really interested in the meeting to put their ideas for the coming month into action. Kristina asked all alumni about their personal successes. During the meeting, approval for the sport event grant from the Public Affair Sections was announced. The alumni and Peace Corps volunteers discussed the March work on the basketball project. The group also talked about improving the alumni associations and developing professional abilities.

Upcoming Events:

Ashgabat

- **Debate Club** will be held every Monday by Serdar Karliyev '04.
- **Movie Nights** are planned for every Friday at the Educational Advising Center.
- **Practice Rehearsals for *Beauty is a Beast* Play** will happen three times a week to get ready for the performance.
- ***Beauty is a Beast* Scenery Building** is planned twice a week alumni. Volunteers from the American Councils office will meet to work on play scenery.
- **"How to Initiate and Conduct an Event" Training** will be held on March 27. Alumni will be invited to learn about managing an event.

Dashoguz

- **American Movie Class** will continue every Wednesday and Thursday of March.
- **Literature Class** will take place every Monday of March.
- **Newsletter Class** will take place every Friday of March.

Turkmenabat

- **TOEFL Classes** will be held every Tuesday.
- **Girls Club** will be held every Monday.
- **Literature Club** will be held every Thursday.
- **Conversational Club** will be held every Friday.
- **Poetry Night** will be held on March 20.
- **International Women Day Celebration** will be held on March 7.

Turkmenbashy

- **“Creative Writing” Classes** are planned for March 7 and 12. Iyera Askerova '04 and Yuliya Hauritdinova '04 will lead the creative writing classes at the American Corner Turkmenbashy.
- **Computer Classes for Disabled Children** are planned for March 7, 14, 21, and 28. Alina Penjiyeva '04 and Minara Ismailova '04 will continue computer classes for children from the local orphanage.
- **“Debates Skills”** are scheduled for March 14. Alex Minier and Kristina Razahova '04 will demonstrate the next steps in developing debate teams.
- **Balkan Region Book-of-the-Month Club** will meet on March 8, 10, 15, 17, 22, 24, 29, and 31.
- **“Girl’s Basketball” Tournament** will be held on March 12. The girls basketball team of the Balkan region will have its final tournament at local School #3 in Balkanabat.
- **“Resume Writing”** is planned for March 15. Kristina Razahova '04 will introduce the basic structure for writing an effective resume.
- **Gender and Development Roundtable** will take place March 11 in the American Corner.
- **“St. Patrick’s Day” Presentation** will take place on March 17. FLEX 2004 alumni and Peace Corps volunteers will introduce the American holiday at the American Corner.
- **Fundraising** will continue throughout March. FLEX alumni are planning to fundraise to put into action a project dedicated to the Global Youth Service Day.
- **World Tuberculosis Day - Health Hike with Youth** is planned by FLEX alumni, Peace Corps volunteers, and other teenagers from the local school and orphanage later in March.
- **Essay Contest “Pollution of the Caspian Sea and its Coast”** results will be announced in March by Minara Ismailova '04.
- **Alumni and PCVs monthly meeting** will take place at the American Corner on March 25 with all alumni to discuss the following up events and holidays, to set up a schedule for the next month.
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Ukraine

Kharkiv

Alumni Planning Meeting: Yevhen Bobyk '03, Anton Borisov '02, Iryna Horb '04, Natalya Kasyanenko '04, Oleksandra Lytvynova '04, Ihor Murashko '04, Kyrylo Orach '04, Oleksandr Peshykov '04, Roman Shatov '04, Iryna Shpak '04, and Oleksandra Tsymbal '04 attended the alumni planning meeting held on February 20. The meeting was held so alumni could share their experiences and work out a plan for upcoming events.

English Speaking Club: Anton Borisov '02, Kyrylo Orach '04, Anna Smirnova '03, Sasha Tsymbal '04, and Viktorya Vasylyeva '03 attended English Speaking Club meetings organized by Arnab Synha every Tuesday in February. The club is for alumni and members of the local community, and participants discuss a chosen topic in English.

Valentine’s Day Celebration: Yevhen Bobyk '03, Iryna Gorb '04, Natalya Kasyanenko '04, Ihor Murashko '04, Kyrylo Orach '04, and Viktoria Vasylyeva '03, Peace Corp volunteers, and active members from the local community participated in a Valentine’s Day celebration held on February 12 at Orphanage #4. The alumni played different games with the children and awarded them prizes.

Luhansk

English Speaking Club: The club meets every week and is organized by Olha Samarska '03 for students of Luhansk National University of Internal Affairs. The club is very successful and about 30 people usually participate in the discussion sessions.

Job Search Seminar: Olha Samarska '03, Todavchych Vyacheslav '04, and Olha Zhdanova '03 attended a seminar on job searching held on February 18 at the IATP Center. The seminar was organized by Anna Yablonska '03 and provided information about interviewing and resume writing.

Upcoming Events:

- **Alumni Planning Meeting** will be held on March 5.
- **Resume Writing Seminar** will be held on March 20.
- **Roundtable Discussion** on traveling abroad will be held on April 16.
- **“Citizen of the World” Speaker’s Contest** will be held on April 23.
- **Easter Celebration** is planned for April 29.
- **English Speaking Club in Kharkiv** will take place every week at School # 4.
- **English Speaking Club in Luhansk** is scheduled to take place every week.

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

Kyiv

Junior Chamber International –Ukraine (JCI) Meeting: On February 5, members of JCI Ukraine met with representatives from several youth NGOs, including the Kyiv FLEX Alumni Association, to discuss possible joint projects and to decide if a separate JCI branch should be opened for younger activists. Participants came up with an environment awareness project and planned professional development trainings for students and NGO leaders.

St. Valentine’s Celebration: Anton Antonenko '04, Olena Biloka '03, Igor Mulyarchuk '04, Natalya Kazmiruk '03, and Hanna Zubko '03 celebrated Valentine’s Day with children from Kyiv boarding school #11. The alumni prepared small treats and gifts for the children and had a raffle contest on February 12.

Informational Educational Campaign: The Kyiv FLEX Alumni Association has become a partner organization with Kyiv Children’s Parliament for organizing an information campaign throughout 50 schools in the city and in the region. The purpose of the campaign is to find out what materials are lacking in the teaching and development of pupils and to provide the schools with the necessary posters, books, training materials, interactive seminars. Alumni will make informative presentations about the FLEX program, conduct training sessions on leadership, and help with organizational tasks between February and May.

Upcoming Events:

- **Fifth Annual Benefit Evening** will take place on March 5, and all proceeds will go to the children’s department of Kyiv Psycho-Neurological Hospital #1.
- **Global Youth Service Day Preparations** will be held to learn about the needs of Psycho-Neurological Hospital #1 and its patients in order to plan activities of interest to them.
- **Mock Job Interviews** will take place on March 26.

Contact: Kyiv Alumni Assistant Maryna Yaroshchuk '02, flexalumni@americancouncilskyiv.org.ua

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Lviv

Regular Alumni Meeting: On February 10, a regular alumni meeting was held to discuss the upcoming All-Ukrainian Odesa Debates, as well as applying for FLEX Alumni Grants and the recruitment of candidates for the Alumni Assistant position. Olha Dehtyarova '02, Olesya Fedun '04, Maryana Khokhla '04, Orysyia Kobel '02,

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Oksana Nos '03, Iryna Odrehivska '02, Yaryna Ravlyk '04, Natalya Salo '01, Stepan Shakhno '01, and Olena Turchyn '02 took part in the meeting.

All-Ukrainian Odesa Debates Tournament: Twenty FLEX alumni from various cities came to Odesa for a two-day debate tournament and workshop hosted by the American Advising Center and organized by FLEX alumni in Odesa. Alumni learned the basic rules of American parliamentary debates and held their first tournament. In addition to improving their debating and public speaking skills, they met fellow alumni and built friendships. Lviv was represented by the largest group and won the tournament: Olha Dehtyarova '02, Olesya Fedun '04, Maryana Khokhla '04, Oksana Nos '02, Iryna Odrehivska '02, Natalya Salo '01, and Iryna Tsyupa '04.

Upcoming Events:

- **Regular Alumni Meeting** will be held on March 15.
- **Training in Customer Relations and Telephone Skills** will take place on March 19.
- **Clean-up Day** is planned for April 9 at a park.
- **Regular Alumni Meeting** will be held on April 1.

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Odesa

All-Ukrainian Debate Workshop & Tournament: On February 19, 20 FLEX alumni from various cities came to Odesa for a two-day debate tournament and workshop hosted by the American Advising Center and organized by FLEX alumni in Odesa. Alumni learned the basic rules of American parliamentary debates and held their first tournament. Kateryna Komarova '02, Kateryna Zhyrova '01, Olena Zubareva '01, and Mariya Polner of the Odesa Dispute Club served as judges for both the preliminary and final rounds. The overall theme of the tournament was freedom of press. The team from Lviv with Natalya Salo '01 as the leader won the tournament.

General Meeting: Dmytro Aver'yanov '04, Mykyta Basyuk '02, Mariya Hontar '04, Kateryna Komarova '02, Yuliya Malikova '04, Gennadiy Starostin '02 attended a meeting at the American Advising Center on February 28 to discuss Global Youth Service Day and the AIDS awareness project. The alumni discussed several activity options and the organizational aspects of these events.

Sevastopol

American Councils Presentation in Sevastopol: Andriy Agapov '03, Volodymyr Bilay '03, Yulia Limorenko '00, Andriy Poteryahin '02, and Hanna Zarichna '03 assisted the American Councils initiative group organize a presentation on the new European Crossroads program in Sevastopol on February 20. The program allows university students and young professionals to work in the development of export/import strategies at various European enterprises. Thirty people attended the event.

Upcoming Events:

- **Global Youth Service Day Organizational Meeting** will be held on March 15.
- **Roundtable on Women's Rights** is planned for March 26.

Contact: Odesa Alumni Assistant Ekaterina Komarova '02, flexalumni@americancouncilsodesa.org.ua Tel: +380 (48) 222-90-77.

Uzbekistan

Tashkent

Alumni Prepare for Global Youth Service Day (GYSD): Throughout Uzbekistan, alumni have started to organize projects for GYSD. So far, over 25 alumni have signed up to organize or assist GYSD projects in their regions. They will hold their first local meetings early in March.

Rehearsals for *The Dining Room*: Twenty-five alumni rehearsed the play *The Dining Room* by A.R. Gurney on February 6, 7, 8, 9, 14, 14, 15, 16, 20, 21, 22, and 23. The play will be performed on April 16. The play

depicts U.S. culture, and the alumni added three supplementary scenes to the original script, all of which will be included in the eventual performance.

Charity Ball Meetings: Over 10 alumni have met every week in February to plan for the April Charity Ball. In addition to making logistical plans, they have been delivering letters to companies, asking for their financial support. So far alumni have delivered over 150 letters, and have received a variety of pledges from companies such as the Ragu Restaurant and Disco chain, Coca Cola, and Sevara Nazarkhan, one of the most famous singers in Central Asia.

Grant Proposal Workshop: Four FLEX alumni participated in the workshop "Secrets of Writing a Winning Grant Proposal" on February 5 in connection with the approaching deadline for FLEX Alumni Grants. Ravshan Yakubov, a Eurasia Undergraduate Exchange Program alumnus who won a Local Initiative Grant Project, shared his experiences with alumni and stressed the importance of explaining the feasibility of achieving the proposal. Then FLEX Alumni Assistant Emiliya Asadova '02 discussed the FLEX Alumni Grant application and gave the alumni tips.

Alumni Meet with U.S. Ambassador Jon Purnell and other U.S. Diplomats: Ten alumni met U.S. Ambassador Jon Purnell and other U.S. Embassy representatives on February 10. Ambassador Purnell talked about his career experiences and answered alumni questions regarding U.S.-Uzbekistan relations and educational opportunities. Shehroz Narzikulov '00 asked about future plans for a U.S. military base in Karshi, and Dilyara Yusupova '04 asked how alumni could help the U.S. mission in Uzbekistan. The meeting was followed by a dinner with other U.S. Embassy representatives.

Alumni Meeting and Movie Night: On February 11, over ten alumni attended the monthly meeting to discuss upcoming events. Alumni Assistant Emiliya Asadova and FLEX Program Director Nathan Truitt showed the new issue of *The Bradley Herald* and gave updates on events such as Global Youth Service Day and the need for more volunteers. The alumni then watched the movie *Napoleon Dynamite*.

Black History Month with the U.S. Ambassador: On February 15, 12 FLEX alumni attended an event held in honor of Black History Month. U.S. Ambassador Jon Purnell talked about the changes race relations in the U.S. have undergone and then introduced the alumni to Jackie Robinson. The documentary *After Jackie: Black Baseball in the 1950's* was then shown, after which U.S. Embassy Representative Sylvia Curran discussed the significant effect Jackie Robinson's achievements had on U.S. society. The alumni asked questions and discussed their U.S. experiences concerning racial diversity.

Black History Month Movie Nights: On February 18, ten FLEX alumni attended a movie-night organized by the U.S. Embassy and American Councils to celebrate Black History Month. U.S. Embassy Representative Sylvia Curran gave real life examples of how African Americans were treated in the U.S., before the alumni watched the film *A Raisin in the Sun* about the difficulties blacks faced when moving to all-white suburbs. Ten alumni then watched *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* on February 22, which was organized by the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy. The final movie night was held on February 28. Eleven alumni watched *Lilies of the Field*. All the films gave the alumni a better understanding of the hardships and progress African Americans have experienced in the U.S.

International Publishing Workshop: Ten alumni took part in a workshop entitled "Publish Internationally, Research Locally" conducted by Dr. Daniel Stevens on February 23. Dr. Stevens has a Ph.D. in development studies and wrote his dissertation on the promotion of civil society in Uzbekistan. His workshop gave alumni a to better understanding of what to do to successfully conduct and publish research.

Nukus

Nukus Alumni Visit a School: Gulsanem Allambergenova '04, Tumaris Matekova '04, and Regional Representative Khabipnazar Daujanov organized an event for 70 eighth and ninth graders at a high school situated next to the military barracks in the suburbs of Nukus on February 15. The alumni talked about the FLEX program and answered questions about their U.S. experience. The alumni hope that such presentations will encourage more participation in the FLEX program.

Upcoming Events:

- **Counterpart International's Regional Conference** will be held on March 4 and Emiliya Asadova '02, Mastura Maradjapova '04, and Shehroz Narzikulov '00 will represent the FLEX program.
- **Reception at the Residence of the U.S. Ambassador Jon Purnell** is planned for early March.
- **Monthly Alumni Meeting and Movie Night** will take place on March 11.
- **Global Youth Service Day Planning Meetings** will be held in the regions of Uzbekistan.

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

ALUMNI SUCCESSES

Armenia

Lusine Arakelyan '04 is volunteering at Youth for Achievements Educational NGO.

Mariam Aslanyan '02 works as a translator at University Scientific-Education Union NGO.

Lilit Babayan '98 is vice-president in marketing at Vayk Group Company in Vayots Dzor, Armenia

Tatevik Baghdasaryan '03 is an English language teacher at "OK" English school in Yerevan.

Hrachya Ghazaryan '03 works as an Internet administrator at Arnaco internet club in Yerevan, Armenia.

Artur Grigoryan '04 works as a system administrator in RAJA Co. Computer & Electronics Company.

Ani Hakobyan '00 has been promoted to be the Project Development Officer at Youth for Achievements.

Gurgen Hakobyan '94 works as a business consultant at Grant Thornton Amyot Business and Legal consulting Company.

Gayane Harutyunyan '99 works as a translator and administrative assistant at Shirak LTD in Hrazdan, Armenia.

Sona Manucharyan '00 works as the Legal affairs liaison at Youth for Achievements Educational NGO.

Hasmik Matsakyan '02 is volunteering at the IATP Vanadzor site.

Anna Minasyan '01 works as a part-time trainer at the IATP Kapan site.

Marianna Movsisyan '00 is an administrative assistant at Vahagn Kakosian Security Services Company.

Mariam Nahapetyan '00 works the commercial and marketing assistant at CMN I-transport Company.

Arpine Porsughyan '00 works as assistant project manager at Ajakits NGO in Gyumri, Armenia. She also works an interpreter/translator at the Avedis TV station.

Ruzanna Safaryan '01 is volunteering at Youth for Achievements.

Sona Sargsyan '00 is a part-time trainer at IATP Vanadzor site.

Azerbaijan

Emil Gafarov '02 is an intern at the Ministry of Ecology.

Dilara Jafarova '99 works as a monitoring and evaluation specialist at the World Bank's Azerbaijan Rural Investment Project.

Leyla Mammadli '04 is a program assistant at the Azerbaijan Caspian Environment Program of the United Nations.

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

Belarus

Ekaterina Apet '04 was chosen to represent her dance club at a belly-dance competition on March 14.

Yulia Gladikova '04, Mariya Grakhovskaya '04, Aliaksei Kudzin '04, and Evgeniya Sadovnikova '04 were admitted to Lithuanian Christian College in Lithuania. Mariya Grakhovskaya and Evgeniya Sadovnikova received full scholarships.

Olga Kapylova '04 proceeded to the state English language Olympiad.

Aleksandr Kovalev '03 was chosen to represent Belarus at an international youth camp in Germany.

Irina Kripinevich '03 won the International Star Parade at Lithuanian Christian College on February 4.

Evgenia Sadovnikova '04 participated in a scientific conference at School #65 in Minsk on February 18. Evgenia was awarded a diploma for her outstanding presentation on the peculiarities of the English language based on her U.S. experience as a FLEX student. She also successfully passed admission exams to American University in Bulgaria and now is working towards getting a scholarship to this university.

Ekaterina Skachek '04 and Anastassia Tarassiouk '03 were invited to attend a conference on terrorism held by a group of students from Belarusian State University in February.

Yulia Rakevich '99 graduated from the Belarusian State Economic University department of statistics on February 25.

Georgia

Keti Magalashvili '04 started working at the oil and gas company ENKHOOIL as an interpreter/translator.

Nino Vardiashvili '01 started working at Savings Banks Foundation for International Cooperation (SBFIC) as an office manager/junior bank analyst.

Salome Tsereteli '00 started working at World Vision International as a project officer in the Human Rights Program. She will be working with young people of different ethnic backgrounds in community youth centers.

Irina Arabidze '03 started working at the LTD. Quartzite as an administrative assistant.

Shota Gvaramadze, Giorgi Dvali, Lana Chkhartishvili, and Sophie Tabatadze all '04 have been volunteering as IT trainers at the special Training Center of Ministry of Interior Affairs of Georgia during January and February. They have been conducting trainings in basic computer and training skills for staff of the Ministry.

Giorgi Chaladze '03 started working at the Baku-Tbilisi-Cayhan (BTC) corporation as an administrative manager.

Archil Lezhava '96 started working at the United Energy Distribution Company of Georgia as the assistant to the General Director.

Kazakhstan

Ksenia Bakarasova '02 is a sales manager at Kazakhstan Press Club and Promo Group Communication.

Aizhan Mendygarina '03 was accepted to Peking University for a one-semester program of Chinese language.

Zhibek Karamanova '03 was named the best speaker at a Regional Debate Tournament organized by the republican party *Otan*.

Diana Kudaibergenova '04 took first place at the Regional Debate Tournament that was organized by the republican party *Otan*.

Marzhan Serekova '04 participated in the bi-annual “E-Education Without Borders” International Student Conference that took place on February 19-21 in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

Kyrgyzstan

Elnura Djenish '02 and *Karina Madylova '03* presented their electronic learning education project at the Electronic Learning Educational Conference in Abu-Dabi.

Shamamed Seitmuradov '03 and *Vladislav Kulamov '03* were invited to represent the FLEX Alumni Association at International Student Week in Berlin, Germany.

Nadezhda Tyan '00 works as a marketing and public relations officer for British Petroleum Company.

Moldova

Vadim Dubceac '04 got a job at a local television channel. He also took third place at the Balti student conference on ecology.

Cristina Gutu '04 was appointed chief-editor of the lyceum newspaper.

Victoria Tataru '01 received a grant as part of her Alumni Resource Center internship.

Adrian Terus '04 was awarded second place at the English Language Olympiad in the Orhei District.

Russia

Kirov

Sonya Kaplan '04 took third place at the Kirov Region English Language Olympiad.

Evgenia Lyamina '03 and *Olga Rebro '04* took first place at the Kirov Region English Language Olympiad and will participate in the Upper Volga Region English Language Olympiad.

Ekaterina Skopina '96 began working at Luna advertising company.

Kazan

Alina Gilmudinova '04 won the English Language Olympiad in her district in Kazan, and took seventh place in the Kazan English Language Olympiad. She also took second place again in the Zona English Language Olympiad and will participate in the Republic English Language Olympiad on March 12.

Daliya Safiullina '04 won the English Language Olympiad in her district in Kazan and took sixth place in the Zona English Language Olympiad. She will also participate in the Republic English Language Olympiad on March 12.

Shamil Valiyev '04 won the English Language Olympiad in his district in Kazan and took third place in the Kazan English Language Olympiad. Shamil then took first place in the Zona English Language Olympiad and will participate in the Republic English language Olympiad on March 12.

Yoshkar-Ola

Vera Sergeeva '04 participated in a conference during International Relationships Week in Yoshkar-Ola in December 2004. She also represented Great Britain during the Diplomat Day celebration in Yoshkar-Ola on February 10.

Anzhelika Timanova '02 received the Rector's Prize for founding the student government in Mari State Technical University in November.

Cheboksary

Yulia Makarova '02 graduated from high school this year and entered the State University of Management.

Tanya Schetchikova '03 graduated from high school with a gold medal and entered the Russian State University of Humanities to major in Persian. She also plans to visit Iran in 2005.

Dasha Zolotova '03 graduated from high school and entered the Russian State University of Oil and Gas to major in economics and regulations. She was also best in class. Dasha also participated in a scientific conference in the International Petroleum Business Department and will participate at the all-university level. Her topic is "Organization of the Negotiation Process: Pre-contract Work."

Moscow

Elena Intsertova '02 (Ryazan), *Elena Kim '00 (Tambov)*, *Andrey Konyaev '00*, *Polina Makova '03*, and *Anna Shishkova '99(Vladimir)* were selected to be teaching assistants for PDOs for FLEX finalists 2005-2006.

Vladimir Ivanov '01 recently got a job as assistant of the appraiser position at Neo Centre of Professional Evaluations, one of the leaders on the Russian market of corporate evaluation services.

Anton Khokholov '98 traveled to the United Kingdom for a three-week internship at Bournemouth University. This internship, sponsored by the government of the Sakha Republic (Yakutiya), is part of the program Young Leaders of the Sakha Republic. Each year the ten best Yakut students from all over the Russian Federation are selected for this internship. The program included lectures on international relations and philological problems of the English language.

Dmitry Mironenko '98 was admitted to the Harvard University Graduate School of Arts and Sciences to the Regional Studies -- East Asia A.M. degree program. The two-year program starts in the fall of 2005. He was also awarded a Fulbright fellowship and a full-tuition scholarship from Harvard.

Yulia Molodtsova '98 and her music band "Ch-B" performed a special concert devoted to their two-year anniversary. The past two years have been really successful for the band, which has released songs that are playing on major Russian radio-stations.

Denis Pimenov '00 (Voronezh) became the prize-winner of the Gold Fund of Voronezh oblast: New Faces from the administration of Voronezh oblast. He is the youngest recipient of this prize in the Voronezh oblast.

Novosibirsk

Elena Astakhova '01 received the Potanin stipend for academic excellence and leadership skills.

Anna Demidchik '01 found a new job as a freelance interpreter for one of the biggest Novosibirsk fast food companies.

Anna Demidchik '01, *Tatyana Popova '03*, and *Bella Struminsky '02* and took part in the Unique Resources of Siberia forum, where Siberian students were able to learn about job offers in Novosibirsk and participate in classes given by local professionals.

St. Petersburg

Elena Anikina '03 is a first year student at the University of Stockholm, Sweden, majoring in international economy and business administration.

Yevgeniy Goman '96 works for the Murmansk Regional Board for Youth Affairs as a Consultant on Art, Creativity and Information. In 2003-2004, Yevgeniy staged and acted in Murmansk musicals *Notre Dame de Paris* and *Romeo and Juliette*, which were both a huge success in the region. Now together with a group of authors, he is working on a genuine Murmansk production of a musical called *Sister Linda*. It is a musical about

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Soviet and British relations during World War II in the Murmansk region in 1942. In January 2004, together with a group of young people, Yevgeniy started a youth Internet site for the Murmansk region www.4erdak.ru. At present, it is the only regional Internet site for youth and is updated everyday. It is acknowledged by many mass media resources of the region. In January 2005, he released his first album called *Wild Thing*. On February 25, Yevgeniy received the award Person of the Year from a Murmansk radio station.

Andrey Fedoruk '02 had his works exhibited at the America through Russian Eyes exhibition, organized by the American Corner in St. Petersburg. Andrey was also invited to the reception in honor of the American Corner's third anniversary, where he met Jeffrey Murray, U.S. Consul in St. Petersburg.

Anastasia Furman '04 (Monchegorsk) ran a roundtable on leadership at the Red Cross Youth Leaders seminar in Kirovsk, Murmanskaya Oblast.

Irina Kobzeva '99 is an International Education and Study Abroad Program Coordinator at Park University, Parkville, Missouri.

Maria Smirnova '98 (Vologda) got a permanent position as an Industrial Performance Specialist at Nestle Vologda Baby Food.

Samara

Anastasia Ekkert '95 delivered a speech on "Utilization of Internet Technologies in Universities as a Means of Fundraising" at the Povolzhskaya regional conference entitled "Electronic Business Technologies. Practice of Utilization in Commercial and Noncommercial Sectors," which was organized by Project Harmony on February 4-6.

Elena Pastukhova '00 participated in the Povolzhskaya Regional Conference "Electronic Business Technologies. Practice of Utilization in Commercial and Noncommercial Sectors."

Anna Shegurova '04 and *Alexandra Visloguzova '04* continue to amaze the Samara Alumni Association and their teachers with their successes at various contests and Olympiads. Anna Shegurova won second place at the "Longman English Olympiad," third place at the Oblastnaya English Olympiad, and she also became a laureate of the first level at the Samara City Lingvotour. She continues to participate in the Cambridge English Olympiad.

Alexandra Visloguzova '04 also took second place at the Oblastnaya Olympiad in business.

Maria Soutchkova '02 participated in the International Moot Court Competition in Moscow on February 9-15 as one of five members of the law faculty team from Samara State University. The Samara team came in fourth among 22 teams from all over Russia.

Vladivostok

Alexandra Cherepanova '03 is a second year student studying international relations at St. Petersburg State University.

Alexandra Chernova '96 was hired as an office manager at General Dynamics in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk.

Alisa Glukhoedova '03 is a first year student studying organizational administration in the tourism industry at the St. Petersburg Humanitarian University of Trade Unions.

Tatiana Haikina '02 and *Natalia Smetanina '03* took part in the First Youth Forum in the Zabaikalye region. Both of them were chosen as delegates to the Zabaikalye region Youth Parliament.

Vitaliy Isakov '02 is working as a trade representative for the major beverage company SUN Inter Brew.

Mikhail Navitskiy '03 started his studies of business administration at St. Martin's College in Lacey, Washington.

Dmitriy Shatokhin '02 was accepted as a teacher's assistant for 2005 PDO.

Lidia Trushnina '01 is studying at Colorado State University in the U.S.

Polina Zavyalova '00 was chosen as a delegate to the 2005 World Youth Congress in Scotland.

Volgograd

Elena Fomenko '03 wrote the script for the Valentines Day performance at her school.

Oksana Panfilova '04 wrote a research paper entitled Literature on History and War.

Anna Romasheva '04 participated in the open regional English Language Competition and was invited to take part in the Final Regional English Language Contest held at Volgograd State University on March 9-12.

Yekaterinburg

Nataliya Alabusheva '02 has become a member of a Cinema club, organized by Ural State University students. They will obtain different films and organize movie shows for young people in Yekaterinburg.

Lidiya Grazhevichus '04 (Orenburg) is working as a reporter for a local newspaper *Komsomolskaya pravda*.

Vera Aminova '03 was one of nine students, who placed first at the "Road" competition, organized by the British Council. This essay competition was open to young people in many countries, including Russia and other countries of Eurasia. The contest's board of international judges reviewed more than 1000 entries, from which they selected 27 for the final stage of competition. Vera wrote an essay about her perception of the word "Road" for which she was awarded first prize. The winning pieces of work will appear on the British Council website in March, together with works Hungary, Romania, Georgia, and Azerbaijan. As one of the winners, Vera is invited to participate in a professional training course in Sochi this spring, where famous British writers will share their experience with and help talented young people practice their writing skills.

Ruslan Nechay '00 made a film about FLEX students for soon-to-be alumni.

Polina Rogozhina '04 (Snezhinsk) works as a chairperson of the charity organization Dobry Club. Last month volunteers from this club gathered 486 books for the school library. In the middle of February, a local TV station interviewed Polina and other club members.

Mikhail Tchudin '02 (Perm) was chosen to be Teaching Assistant at the pre-departure orientation in Yekaterinburg this summer.

Marijya Trofimova '03 and her team will participate in a university aerobics competition. In December 2004, they won the award for the "most original dance."

Svetlana Shammasova '99 (Ufa) was chosen to be a teaching assistant at the PDO in Yekaterinburg this summer.

Nataliya Shipulina '03 received all "A"s at her first session in the Ural State University, Department of International Relations. Nataliya is an active member of the English club. Its members gather every month at the American Information Center and discuss different issues related with American culture and the relationship between Russia and the U.S.

Kseniya Zemlyanova '00 (Perm) won the journalistic scholarship from *Moskovsky komsomolets* and a prize from Russian Union of Journalists, as she was the best one in covering the problems of disabled people.

Yelizaveta Zyryanova '04 successfully presented her research paper "Volunteering in the USA" at an oblast event.

Tajikistan

Shohboz Asadov '94 is working as an economics expert at the Support for the Implementation of Trade, Commercial, and Economic Co-operation Agreement between the EU and the Republic of Tajikistan Project (ITCA).

Saodat Asanova '97 was hired by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) as a political and media officer assistant in the media department.

Furiza Djabbarova '03 started working as a student action committee assistant for Relief International Schools Online.

Umed Hoshimov '98 began work as a media analyst assistant at the Office for Democratic Institution of Human Rights as part of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Election Observation Mission.

Khurshed Isamov '04 was hired by Telecom Technology as a video graphics supervisor.

Nigina Kudratova '03 was hired as a secretary/translator by the Association of NGOs on Gender Equality and Prevention of Violence against Women.

Gulbahor Negmatova '95 is working as a deputy area manager at Communities Programme/UNDP.

Elena Volovich '03 is working as an interpreter/translator at the Support for the Implementation of Trade, Commercial, and Economic Co-operation Agreement between the EU and the Republic of Tajikistan Project (ITCA).

Turkmenistan

Djeyran Babadjanova '04 (Turkmenabat) took the third place in the 2004 FLEX Photo Contest.

Lalita Elen-Nur '97 (Turkmenbashy) opened her own advertising agency in Ashgabat in August 2004.

Maya Saryyeva '02 (Turkmenbashy) was invited to the Southeast Model United Nations in New Orleans to represent Turkmenistan. The purpose of the conference was to see the future leaders of the country, all participants were giving the two topics, Regional Integration of Transitional Economics and Tribal Identity and Democratization.

Myahri Karyagdyeva '00 (Turkmenabat) and *Erkin Yoldashev '03* (Turkmenabat) were selected as teaching assistants for the FLEX PDO in 2005.

Kristina Razahova '04 (Turkmenbashy) and *Bahar Orazmuhammedova '04* (Balkanabat) received a Democracy Outreach/Alumni Grant from the Public Affair Section of the U.S. Embassy to hold a basketball tournament for young girls in Balkan Region. Alumni have arranged basketball practices at local schools in three cities, for which they received permission from the Educational Department of Balkan Region.

Ukraine

Kharkiv

Yevhen Bobyk '03, *Svetlana Semko '02*, and *Lisa Tymofeeva '02* founded and registered the NGO Democracy Dimension, which aims to develop knowledge about democracy, civil society, and social state.

Anton Borisov '02 created a website that was nominated by the Kharkiv IATP Center for the award Website of the Month.

Olha Samarska '03 holds the English Speaking Club in Luhansk every week for students of Luhansk National University of Internal Affairs. The Club is very successful and about 30 people usually participate in discussion sessions.

Oleksandra Tsybal '04 published her article “What does real democracy look like?” in a regional newspaper.

Kyiv

Antonina Armashula '97 was selected as an employee of the year at KyivStar national telecommunications company.

Tetyana Bohdanova '01 works as an educational program manager at Fiesta Tour agency.

Maryana Bozhak '99 is completing her masters degree in Spanish linguistics at Pennsylvania State University.

Tetyana Mulesa '02 participated in an international conference organized by the Jewish Community Club “Hillel” on February 1-7, 2005. Tetyana is also working part-time as an assistant to the producer at the ARD channel, a German TV channel.

Nataliya Shturkhetska '03 is working in London at the YMCA office. She initiated a pen-pal program, as well as the Children's International Exchange Programme between the West London YMCA and YMCA Ukraine. As a result, at the end of March, a group of nine Kyiv children aged 9 to 12 and two adults will visit London. This group will then go to an English camp for a week. Moreover, Nataliya was chosen as a director of a new YMCA in Kyiv.

Valeriya Zasyedyatelyeva '03 was selected for Student Week in Ilmenau, Germany. Participants from more than 85 countries were selected for the program, the topic of which is “One World--One Vision.” This conference is designed to promote peace and understanding among youth around the world (www.iswi.org).

Lviv

Olha Dehtyarova '02, Olesya Fedun '04, Maryana Khokhla '04, Oksana Nos '02, Iryna Odrehivska '02, Natalya Salo '01, and Iryna Tsyupa '04 represented Western Ukrainian alumni at the All Ukrainian Odesa Debate Tournament.

Iryna Orkush '99 graduated from a university in Kansas last May and just took a position as a marketing coordinator for a large sales and marketing company in the area.

Oleksandr Peryk '04 entered the National University of Ostrog to major in English.

Odesa

Kateryna Komarova '02 was accepted to American Institute on Political and Economic Systems (AIPES), an intensive three-week summer course organized by Georgetown University held in Prague in July. <http://www.tfas.org/aipes>

Natalya Kovyilkina '04 was selected to represent Odesa National Medical University at the All-Ukrainian English Language Olympiad for university students.

Yulia Malikova '04 won second place at the Odesa Regional English Language Olympiad and was selected to participate in the All-Ukrainian English Language Olympiad for high school students.

Uzbekistan

Emiliya Asadova '02 took first place in the English competition at the Faculty of International Journalism and will soon participate in the Republican round.

Karina Halilova '96 is working as the family education/early childhood development program assistant for UNICEF Uzbekistan.

Javlon Jahanov '02, Oybek Khayitov '02, Shehroz Narzikulov '00, and Jasur Rahmanov '02 worked as interpreters at an exhibition on February 25, where major chemical enterprises were presented to possible foreign investors.

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Sanjar Khudayberdiev '02 was awarded third place at the national rounds of the Phillip Jessup International Law Moot Court Competition organized by the American Bar Association, Central European and Eurasian Law Initiative, the International Law Students Association, and USAID. He also recently received an internship at the Center for Economic Research.

Anastasiya Logay '00 took first place in the English competition among English language students from Urgench State University. She is now preparing for the All-Uzbekistan English competition, the winners of which will travel to America for a month.

Marchad Nuniyazov '98 became vice-president of Urgench Regional Pakhta Bank. He also organized a joint-venture with a U.S. entrepreneur to produce soft drinks.

Anvar Rakhmetov '03 published an essay entitled "The Revolution Inside a Man" in his university's literary almanac. He was also on the Dean's List and has organized a regional branch of the Young Political Scientists Association and the "PoliticON" club. He is a second year student at the American University - Central Asia.

Alisher Shukurov '02 is working as the administrator of customer service at East Telecom, a big communications company in Uzbekistan.

Shahnoza Urunbaeva '03 is on the volleyball team representing Uzbek State University of World Languages.