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# May 2005

## FLEX Alumni Report

### Armenia

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#### Yerevan

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**Taking Orphans to the Circus:** FLEX Alumni Assistant Sona Gabrielyan '04 negotiated with the administration of the Yerevan State Circus to receive discounted tickets for a group of 25 children from the Zeitun Special Orphanage to attend a performance on May 5. Sonya Armaghanyan '04, Artur Grigoryan '04, Lilit Grigoryan '04, and Konstantin Ter-Nakalyan '04 assisted with negotiations and in taking the children on the trip.

**Arrival of the First Group of FLEX Alumni 2005:** Elizabeth Winship, American Councils director and Stella Matevosyan '00, FLEX program coordinator, greeted 30 new FLEX alumni in the airport and welcomed them back home. The first group of 2005 alumni arrived on the night of May 31. Lusine Danielyan '00 assisted the American Councils staff hosting the flight leader, Michele Hird.

#### Upcoming Events:

- **Central European University Presentation** at the Armenia Marriott Hotel.
- **Alumni Monthly Meeting** will be held in mid June.

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## Azerbaijan

#### Baku

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**HIV/AIDS Awareness Seminar:** On May 13, FLEX alumni organized an HIV/AIDS awareness seminar in the private high school "XXI Century." Fifty high school students gathered for the seminar, which started with PowerPoint presentation on AIDS made by FLEX alumni. Then high school students made presentations, sharing information from their research on HIV/AIDS. Thus, this seminar turned out to be a joint effort. After the seminar alumni presented the FLEX program to the students and answered a number of questions regarding their FLEX experience. The following alumni took part in this event: Rishad Aliyev '04, Raisa Azizova '04, Aygun Huseynova '04, Nargiz Hajiyeva '99, and Govhar Yagublu '04.

**Essay Writing Seminar:** May was "Professional Development Month" for alumni. A series of professional development seminars, lectures, and workshops, including essay writing, CV/cover letter writing, and a "Career Development Stories" seminar were delivered for alumni by alumni at the US-Azerbaijan Education Center. Anar Ahmadov, a very successful Muskie alumnus who teaches at Khazar University, led the essay writing seminar for a group which included 12 FLEX alumni on May 13. Alumni commented that the seminar was very helpful since many of them write numerous essays applying to colleges.

**CV/Cover Letter Writing Seminar:** Nadir Guluzade '94, who is also a Muskie alumnus of 2002-2004, presented a seminar on cover letter writing on May 19 at the US-Azerbaijan Education Center. Nadir currently works as the TEA/PIE program officer at American Councils. Alumni received instruction on how best to present their short biographies in a way that tells what they have done in their lives. In addition to covering key points about what should be included in a CV/resume, Nadir also explained the basic purposes of a cover letter, as well as how to make a good impression on a possible employer. He explained how to use the cover letter to express appropriately how one's skills and qualifications fit the job duties. Fourteen FLEX alumni attended this seminar and found it very useful. As a follow up some FLEX alumni rewrote their CVs and came to Nadir for consultations.

**Roundtable Discussion:** The Azerbaijan Alumni Association (AAA) organized a meeting on May 18, at the U.S.-Azerbaijan Education Center with Minister of Youth, Sports and Tourism Mr. Abulfaz Garayev. Fifteen FLEX alumni, as well as numerous alumni of other programs, discussed a number of important issues with the Minister, including youth problems in Azerbaijan, education issues, the role of alumni in developing Azerbaijan's image abroad, and civil society issues and the role of Azeri youth. Mr. Garayev emphasized that the success of Azerbaijan's future depends on Azeri youth and its involvement in bringing about positive changes in society. Azeri young people are studying successfully abroad and are representing Azerbaijan in the

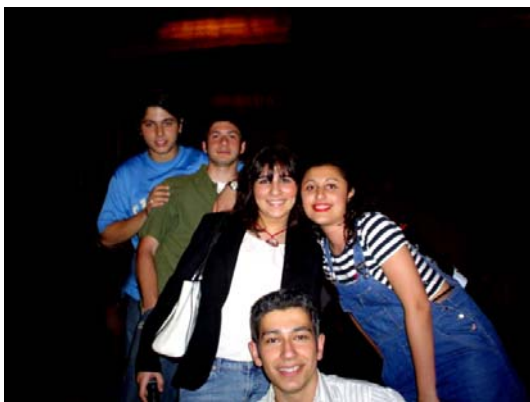
international arena. The minister mentioned that greater investments in the academic development of youth in Azerbaijan are planned. Questions from alumni launched an active discussion.

**Meeting With Alumni Interns:** Bringing to a close the “Exchanges to Internships” project launched in October, a de-brief meeting was organized on May 20 at the U.S.-Azerbaijan Center. Neil McGurty, public affairs officer; Afet Ibrahimova, assistant to the PAO; Shane Austin, American Councils country director; Nargiz Hajiyeva '99, FLEX alumni assistant; and nine alumni who interned at four ministries (Ministry of Education, Ministry of Ecology, Ministry of Communications and Ministry of Economic Development) participated in this meeting. Alumni submitted final reports on their internships and shared their accomplishments. Three alumni were offered jobs at the Ministry of Ecology and at the Ministry of Economic Development. Govhar Yagublu '03 wrote an article on education that was published in the Ministry of Education's newspaper. Govhar Yagublu '03 and Mamed Bayramov '04 participated in TV shows on channels ANS and AZTV, where they answered questions on their FLEX experiences, as well as their internships. Alumni were very grateful for this internship opportunity and offered some tips on making this project even more successful. The group discussed the possibility of organizing a special reception at the U.S. Embassy with the U.S. Ambassador, ministers, supervisors, and the interns.

**Roundtable Discussion:** The Azerbaijan Alumni Association (AAA) organized a meeting on May 20 at the U.S.-Azerbaijan education center with Michael Baranick, the executive director of the Center for Technology and National Security Policy at National Defense University. He presented the topic "Good Governance and Economic Development." Ten FLEX alumni attended the discussion along with numerous alumni of other programs and engaged Dr. Baranick in an active discussion.

**Drama Rehearsals:** Throughout May, seven FLEX alumni rehearsed *The Trysting Place* three times a week in preparation for the May 21 performance of their play at the Shahriyar Culture Center. Alumni who participated were Parviz Akbarov '01, Rishad Aliyev '04, Aysel Allahverdiyeva '04, Sevinj Bilandarli '00, Gunel Babazada '04, Mukhtar Gardaghi '04, and Vugar Mammadov '04.

**Charity Drama Performance:** FLEX alumni conducted a major Global Youth Service Day (GYSD) fundraising project for the Down Syndrome Association. They raised \$250 at the Charity Ball through an auction, and then won \$250 from FLEX as a matching grant. They spent this money on the rental of the Shahriyar Culture Center for their theatrical performance, from which they raised \$800 in tickets sales. The Charity Ball/Auction was the first stage of the GYSD project. FLEX alumni printed brochures and tickets for the Charity Ball for the benefit of children with Down syndrome. The Baku Jazz Center, as a charitable gesture, agreed to a very low entrance fee per person. Down Syndrome Association donated various handmade craft items made by kids for the charity auction. On March 26, 150 people, including alumni, companies' employees,



ex-pats and others, gathered for the Spring Charity Ball and Auction at the Baku Jazz Center. After a welcome speech by American Councils Country Director Shane Austin, U.S. Ambassador to Azerbaijan Reno Harnish addressed the audience. Then alumni organizers showed their guests a short TV news segment on Baku kids with Down syndrome. The charity auction was led by Mukhtar Garadaghi '04, Sevinj Rustamova '01 and Taghi Taghizada '02. Alumni raised \$250 at the auction. Nice jazz music and tasty dishes continued the evening's program. In the second stage of the GYSD project, alumni performed *The Trysting Place* by playwright Booth Tarkington and then children from "Down Syndrome" Association gave a pantomime performance. The aim of the project was to enhance the social activity of kids with Down

syndrome and to fundraise for the Down Syndrome Association's summer camp. Shahriyar Culture Center's administration agreed on a low rental fee. On May 21, 400 people gathered for the charity drama performance. After the performance Mrs. Leslie Harnish, the U.S. ambassador's wife, spoke briefly about the importance of allowing others to see the talents of these young people with Down syndrome. She also spoke about the important work American Councils is doing such as organizing these events. As a result, alumni raised \$800 from the tickets sale. Media coverage included an article in the *Caspian Business News* English Language newspaper and a TV report on the Lider TV channel.

## FLEX May 2005 Report

**Career Development Stories Seminar:** Twelve FLEX alumni attended the “Career Development Stories” seminar on May 25 at the U.S.-Azerbaijan Education Center. Presenters, all successful, active Muskie alumni, spoke about their personal career development. Jale Sultanli, program development officer at the Eurasia Foundation; Zaur Mammadov, director of the Corporate Marketing Department at AtaBank Commercial Bank; and Samir Gasimov, legal advisor at International Finance Corporation/Azerbaijan Corporate Governance Project spoke at the event. They shared tips on reaching professional goals from their own experiences. The quote of this seminar was: “People are not born successful, they become successful.”

**Meeting New FLEX alumni:** Nigina Abbaszadeh, FLEX Program Officer; Nargiz Hajiyeva '99, FLEX alumni assistant; Samir Mammadli '00; Narmina Sadikhova '00; and Farid Zeynalov '00 went to the airport on May 31 to welcome 25 new arriving FLEX alumni.

### Upcoming Events:

- **Online Forum: “Civil Society and Volunteering”** will be held on June 1.
- **“Professional Development Month”** the last seminar on presentation skills and public speaking will be scheduled for June 4.
- **Job Fair** is planned for the end of June.
- **Meeting New FLEX Alumni** will happen on June 21.
- **Alumni Panel and American Dream** will be held on June 29.

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## Belarus

### Minsk

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**Earth Day Project:** The joint FLEX and Eurasia Undergraduate Earth Day project was concluded in May. Seven FLEX alumni, including Yulia Gladikova '04, Yulia Ivaniuk '03, Olga Kopylova '04, Aliaksei Kudzin '04, Mariya Porada '04, Evgeniya Sadovnikova '04, and Anna Tretiakova '01 participated in the event. The alumni donated flowers purchased at the Minsk Botanical Garden, which they had taken care of throughout the month, to elderly shut-ins who were located with the assistance of the State Social Assistance Center. Each individual to whom a flower was given shared with the alumni his/her memories of World War II. Thus, the event became a celebration of both Earth Day and Veterans Day.

**Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Meeting:** Four alumni, including Aleksandr Kovalev '03, Larisa Prokopenko '01, Ekaterina Skachek '04, and Anastasia Tarassiouk '03 attended a meeting at the OSCE on May 13. It was the second OSCE meeting for FLEX alumni, the previous one conducted in November. The alumni were accompanied by a Eurasia Undergraduate alumna and by an American Center staff member. The OSCE Ambassador to the Republic of Belarus, Eberhard Heineken, introduced the visitors to the structure of the OSCE, its mission and current programs. The alumni eagerly participated in a Q&A following the event.

**Negotiations Seminar:** A joint Eurasia Undergraduate alumni and FLEX alumni seminar took place on May 21 in the Lyceum of Belarusian State University. Four FLEX alumni, including Ekaterina Apet '04, Natalia Atrashkova '02, Margarita Gurtsevich '03, and Maksim Znak '98, attended the event. During the seminar such important issues as how to make negotiations successful, how to plan the negotiations, and how to deal with an opponent were discussed. Aleksandr Dmitriev, a young specialist in the issues surrounding state and international negotiations, conducted the event.

**Movie Night:** Twenty-one FLEX alumni and one Eurasia Undergraduate alumna watched *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* for the May movie night, which took place at the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy on May 26. During the movie night the alumni welcomed James Rodriguez, the new Assistant Public Affairs Officer.

### Upcoming Events:

- **Movie Night** is planned for June 23.

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## **Georgia**

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### **Tbilisi**

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**Alumni Council Meetings:** Meetings were held at the Alumni Resource Center on May 3 and 18. About 15 FLEX and 10 Eurasia Undergraduate program alumni attended the meetings. At the first meeting they made arrangements for the upcoming carwash fundraiser and planned how to get alumni involved. At the second meeting, they designed posters and did shopping for necessary car washing supplies.

**Visit of U.S. President Bush:** More than 30 alumni volunteered during the visit of President George W. Bush to Tbilisi, Georgia on May 9-10. Alumni served as the support staff for the White House Press Filing Center. They were also escorts of the media personnel and served as a backup team. During the Presidents' speech alumni had the opportunity to listen first hand on Freedom Square. Irina Gotsadze '94 served as personal translator to President Bush during his speech on Freedom Square. FLEX alumna Nini Panjikidze '03, who is a Public Affairs Section intern at the U.S. Embassy, also had opportunity to meet Mr. Bush. Later alumni were invited to a banquet organized by the U.S. Embassy to celebrate the successful visit of President Bush to Georgia.

**Seminar on Presentation Skills:** Undergraduate alumnus Irakli Matkava '00 conducted a presentation skills workshop at the Alumni Resource Center on May 20. Twelve FLEX and 15 Eurasia Undergraduate program alumni attended the event. Irakli concentrated on how to prepare a successful presentation, stressing the key elements. He also gave suggestions on presenting effectively in front of a large audience. The seminar was followed by questions and answers.

**Reception in Honor of Asian & Pacific-American Heritage Month:** Ketii Botchorishvili '98, Giorgi Datiashvili '03, Bakur Kvaratskhelia '99 from Poti, Tarash Papaskua '03, Nini Panjikidze '03, and Irina Rekhviashvili '03 attended a reception at the residence of U.S. Ambassador Richard Miles. At the event they had a chance to learn about Asian and Pacific American cultures.

**American Dream and Alumni Panel Rehearsals:** Alumni started rehearsing for the upcoming pre-departure orientation, which will take place June 10-13. The alumni participating in this event are Natia Berianidze '04, Megi Gogishvili '03, Shota Gvaramadze '04, Bakur Kvaratskhelia '99, Irina Kvlividze '03, Sophie Machablashvili '03 from Telavi, and Nini Panjikidze '03.

**Car Wash at "Goodwill" Hypermarket:** On May 12, 20 FLEX alumni, together with Eurasia Undergraduate program alumni, organized a carwash in the parking lot of the Georgian supermarket Goodwill. They set out to raise money for the Korjori Orphanage, which is located on the outskirts of Tbilisi. Alumni either helped to wash cars or came with their cars and donated money. Many other people donated money to help the orphanage. During the first event, alumni gathered 580 GEL. Alumni were also very happy and surprised when they saw the U.S. Ambassador to Georgia Richard Miles came shopping with his wife, who donated money for the orphans as well. The event was covered on the **Imedi Channel (internationally broadcast Georgian TV channel)**. The Goodwill supermarket for its part provided rubber gloves and window cleaning fluids, and also bottled water and lunch for volunteers, as the event lasted from 11 a.m. till 6 p.m. Moreover, the following week a donation box with an American Councils banner and a Kojori Orphanage photo stand were displayed at Goodwill. Pleased with the positive fundraising results, alumni decided to continue the carwash on the following weekend. During the second car wash event on May 25, 20 alumni again gathered. The whole sum of the raised and donated money constitutes around 1300 GEL (more than \$700). This money will be used to upgrade the orphanage computer lab, as well for clothes and food for the orphans. Also, alumni plan to visit the children at Kojori Orphanage on June 1, International Children's Day.

**Seminar about American Folk Music:** Pepperdine University graduate student Nate Briley held a seminar on American folk music at the Alumni Resource Center on May 28. About 15 alumni attended the seminar, where Nate talked about the origins of country and bluegrass music and the different kind of instruments used for performing it. Alumni also had a chance to listen to various tracks of folk and bluegrass music.

**Alumni Welcome the Newly Returned Alumni:** The first group of 2005 year FLEX alumni arrived on May 31. Giorgi Baratashvili '01, Giorgi Datiashvili '03, Bakur Kvaratskhelia '98, Tako Purtseladze '04, Irina Rekhviashvili '03, and Salome Tsereteli '00 welcomed them at the airport.

**Upcoming Events:**

- **Meeting with Bob Zimmerman** is planned for early June.
- **Alumni Councils Meeting** will be held in mid June.

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**Kazakhstan**

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**Almaty**

**“Hand of Help” Project:** On May 15, 11 FLEX alumni took part in the Hand of Help community outreach project organized by the U.S. Embassy, IREX, and Eurasia Undergraduate Exchange Program and FLEX alumni. The alumni visited 85 children at an orphanage in Karakestek and donated clothes, toys, stationary, diapers, and toiletries for the orphans using the \$2,600 they had raised through fundraisers prior to the event. Peace Corps Volunteer Carif Cortella, who works near the village and brought some of his high school students along to inspire them, proposed this project.

**Civic Education Workshop on Modernization and Development:** Fourteen alumni took part in the Civic Education Workshop on Modernization and Development conducted by Robert Zimmerman on May 21. Two of Mr. Zimmerman’s former Civic Education students, Alexander Parfyonov '04 and Aliya Moldakhanova '04, prepared a great itinerary prior to his visit, during which he agreed to conduct a Civic Workshop for the Alumni Association. The alumni shared their U.S. exchange experiences at the meeting, and Mr. Zimmerman gave a lecture on modernization and development. Mr. Zimmerman also encouraged the alumni to write a series of essays, which may be included in the book he is planning to publish.

**Civic Education Workshop on Community Action:** Close Up Foundation Instructor of the FLEX Civic Education Week Robert Zimmerman conducted the second part of the Civic Education Workshop for 16 Kazakhstan alumni at the Almaty American Councils Office on May 23. The main topic was community action and role of alumni involvement. Robert Zimmerman and the alumni discussed common problems in Kazakhstan communities and tried to find the ways the alumni can make changes. Mr. Zimmerman also presented his Community Action Plan, which is intended to help alumni plan for organized action. The alumni then chose issues that they wanted to deal with in their community and brainstormed plans they could implement.

**Upcoming Events:**

- **Alumni Planning Meeting** will be held on June 3.
- **Alumni Association Presidential Elections** are scheduled for June 12.
- **Charity Event at Almaty Orphanage #1** will take place on June 18.
- **Almaty AWESome Day** is planned for June 25.

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**Kyrgyzstan**

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**Bishkek**

**Trip to Home for the Elderly:** On May 10, FLEX alumni visited the Bishkek Home for the Elderly. As during past visits, alumni prepared a short concert with popular songs from the residents’ era. Alumni also invited actors from the American University - Central Asia drama club, who performed several skits for the elderly residents. Concert attendees became actively involved in the concert, singing and even dancing together with alumni. The administration and senior citizens, in turn, also performed some of their favorite songs for the visiting alumni. The trip took place in a warm and friendly environment.

**Charity Concert:** Alumni from Ala Too Turkish University Kyrgyzstan Future Club conducted a charity concert to raise the local business community’s attention regarding the needs of children at orphanages on May 15. Alumni and children sang songs, danced various cultural and ethnic dances, and even acted out several comic skits at the main concert hall of Turkish Cultural Center in Bishkek. Concert attendees, who were

representatives of leading businesses in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, reconfirmed their commitment to provide care and assistance to the orphanages and alumni community in their effort to promote responsible community actions among the countries' youth populations.

**Trip to Victims of Natural Disasters:** On May 20, alumni from the Kyrgyzstan Future Club, under the leadership of Nyhsan Uлуу Zarylbek '02, with the support of the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy in the Kyrgyz Republic organized a humanitarian aid trip to the towns, villages and other country sites of southern region where spring flooding and land slides took place. Alumni previously organized several campaigns to raise funds to support victims of natural disasters and managed to collect items of necessity, such as warm clothes, shoes, blankets, packaged food, medicine, water cleaning filters, tents, etc. Alumni successfully delivered and distributed all of the collected goods. They were met with support and gratitude for their efforts to help victims of natural disasters from both authorities and victims themselves.

**Alumni Meeting with Robert Zimmerman:** FLEX alumni had the pleasure of meeting Robert Zimmerman, a retired State Department official and good friend of the FLEX alumni community. Dr. Zimmerman teaches civic education to FLEX finalists during their year-long stay in the United States. During the May 27 meeting, alumni discussed recent dramatic changes in the political life of the Kyrgyz Republic. Together with Robert Zimmerman they identified several of the challenges that the community faces at present and attempted to work out their own plan to address them and thus to contribute toward peaceful development of the country, emphasizing tolerance, diversity and further orientation of respect of democratic values. Robert Zimmerman, in his introduction and concluding speeches, specifically encouraged the FLEX alumni community to continue hard work in promoting community service, volunteerism and efforts of contribution towards democracy building in the Kyrgyz Republic.

**American Football:** On May 28, FLEX alumni from Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan played American football at the main city stadium "Spartak" as members of the Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan national teams. The game was hard in all senses, but both sides showed due respect and played fair. In the last minutes the Kazakhstan team turned out to be stronger and won 14 to 12. Kumar Kainazarov '01 led the Kyrgyz team. Kyrgyzstan FLEX alumni came to support their fellows and even prepared a cheerleading performance to cheer the players of both teams. Most of the members of the Kazakhstan national team are students from the Kazakhstani Institute of Management, Economics and Strategic Research (KIMEP). Their team has four U.S. coaches, who also lecture at KIMEP. Among the 25 permanent team members, there are several FLEX alumni, who are reported to be the best players. One of them is Zhandos Bakbergenuly '01, who is a wide receiver/defensive end. He scored 8 of the team's 14 points. In addition to football, Zhandos is also active in the drama club at KIMEP. Lyazzat Zholyimova '04 is a wide receiver and the only female on the team. After the match alumni of both countries took pictures, and exchanged contacts and comments about their game. Such sports competitions contribute to warm ties between these two Central Asian countries.

**National Testing:** Between May 20-30, 40 FLEX alumni from Kyrgyzstan, as well as four from Uzbekistan, and one each from Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, were among the 312 national testing administrators who took part in the National Testing program, initiated to fight corruption in higher education institutions and provide fair distribution of educational opportunities at state universities and institutions to the talented young high school graduates. Alumni of the U.S. government-sponsored exchange programs, known for their commitment to academic honesty, served as immediate test conductors. The most experienced ones served as leaders of testing groups at the regional sites. Five FLEX alumni, Manas Mambetsadykov '00, Timur Mukhamedov '01, Maksat Tynaev '99, Feliks Tsoy '01, and Azamat Baltabaev '01, were among the 30 leaders. Azamat Baltabaev '01 was awarded best team leader this year.

### Upcoming Events:

- **Alumni Monthly Meeting** will be held on June 16.
- **Trip to Orphanage** is planned for June 20.
- **Selection Process for the Summer Leadership Camp** will be held by June 30.
- **Leadership Training for Young Volunteers** is scheduled for June 1.

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## Moldova

### Chisinau

**Speed-typing Workshop:** Xenia Gleadcenco '04 and Jana Gorodenco '04 led a speed-typing workshop on May 12-13. Ten FLEX alumni attended the event and gained important knowledge about the basics of speed typing. The Balti IATP Center staff assisted the workshop moderators.

**Group Leadership Seminar:** Peace Corps Volunteer Knowles Wentworth conducted the first of four leadership seminars on May 14. Ludmila Ceban '03, Ana Ciudnaia '01, Igor Garabajiv '03, Tatiana Jardan '02, and Inna Ustinova '95 participated in the event, where they discussed the concept of group leadership and watched a presentation entitled "The Concept of the Corona Process."

**Higher Education Seminar:** Eurasian Undergraduate Exchange Program and FLEX alumni organized a seminar on higher education opportunities for 15 high school students from Lyceum D. Cantemir on May 19. Ludmila Ceban '03 introduced the topic and conducted an icebreaker before Natalia Ionel '04 discussed various higher education institutions, including their academic departments, tuition fees, and contact information. Ludmila then challenged the students to think about their futures and led a discussion with them about what they might be doing in 20 years.

**Monthly Professional Translation Training:** Irina Cheptanari conducted the Bridges Between Us monthly training meeting on professional translation on May 21. The event brought alumni from various programs together and gave hints for professional translation and translation difficulties.

**Summer Camp Counselors Meeting:** Ten FLEX alumni participated in the meeting of English summer camp counselors on May 21. The alumni met to discuss final lesson plans and to submit a list of needed supplies. They then signed the camp counselor agreement form.

### Edinets

**Orphanage Seminar:** The Edinets Bridges Between Us team conducted a seminar for 35 children from Cupcini Orphanage on May 28. The volunteers prepared a detailed agenda with activities and interactive discussions about the role of music. Nadejda Gnevaseva '04 led the "name that tune" game, which the children particularly enjoyed. At the end of the day, the children received toys, school supplies, audiocassettes, and posters of their favorite singers.

### Cahul

**Interns Project:** Valentina Brega '04, Constantin Iaconi '04, and Anastasia Leanca '04 conducted a seminar on the importance of community service at Scoala Internat, Cahul for 25 sixth and seventh grade students on May 30. Valentina Brega '04 led the first session about the impact and benefits of community service on society, after which the children brainstormed various volunteering opportunities in the local region. At the end of the day, Constantin Iaconi '04 and Anastasia Leanca '04 supervised, as the children planted trees in the orphanage yard.

#### Upcoming Events:

- **Bridges Between Us Monthly Training** will be held on June 11.
- **Group Leadership Training, Part II** is planned for June 12.
- **English Summer Camp Counselors Meeting** will take place on June 19.

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## Russia

### Kirov

**Congratulating World War II Veterans:** Alumni and schoolchildren congratulated World War II veterans by posting congratulation cards made by schoolchildren from Kirov schools in public transportation and on walls in the beginning of May.

**Alumni Meeting:** Elena Bakulina '98, Christina Bess '01, Vladimir Gordeev '98, Maksim Isaykin '04, Anna Milyutina '01, and Natalya Nagayeva '02 attended the alumni meeting held on May 21. Anna Milyutina '01 and Christina Bess '01 conducted a small workshop called "Practical aspects of social communication: How to become a winner in dialogue" and gave tips on building and developing leadership skills.

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## **Penza**

**Free Legal Consultation:** Alla Chichikina '01 continued her long-term project at Penza State Pedagogical University. She and her classmates provide free-of-charge legal consultations for pensioners and other people.

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## **Kazan**

**Training Sessions:** Approximately 30 FLEX alumni participated in the second English Language Teacher Training Sessions for the youth summer camp for young people from U.S. Exchange Programs, Kazan, TARI, and Ministry of Education of Tatarstan on May 1-2.

### **Upcoming Events:**

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## **Kirov**

**Alumni Meeting** and visit to local orphanage will take place on June 25.

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## **Kazan**

An "**Operation Smile**" **Mission** will be held in Kazan in late June through mid-July. FLEX alumni will volunteer.

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## **Moscow**

**Monthly Meeting:** Fourteen FLEX alumni gathered on May 13 to discuss alumni events. The alumni discussed the results of Career Day, including the fact that several alumni were offered jobs based on the resumes from the FLEX alumni resume book. Yulia Tell '02 talked about the events planned for May and the beginning of summer. The Senior FLEX Reunion initiative was announced, and it found support from the senior alumni present at the meeting.

**Debate Trainings:** Evgeny Yankovoy '01 led two more debate skills training sessions on May 16 and 23. Evgeny also talked about the results of the Kyiv Spring International Debate Tournament. Alumni in attendance were Ekaterina Isinova '03, Anton Khokholov '98, Yulia Makarova '02, Tatyana Maksatova '03, and Darya Zolotova '03.

**Senior Alumni Meeting:** Vyacheslav Boltrukevich '98, Ekaterina Ivanova '96, Tatyana Karpova '96, Olesya Smirnova '97, Yulia Tell '02, Olga Vorobyova '98, and Evgeny Yankovoy '01 met on May 24 in the American Councils conference room to plan the first senior FLEX alumni reunion. The alumni discussed issues such as necessary resources and budget, and the possibility of inviting sponsors. Alumni also discussed staging a continuation of the FLEX hit "Vasya Ten Years Later" and thought of other activities to involve alumni in the reunion.

**Spaso House Reception:** Twelve FLEX alumni attended a reception in honor of the launching of the first Russian edition of J. F. Kennedy's *Profiles in Courage* on May 31. The FLEX alumni judged essays written by high schools students for an essay contest entitled "Russian Profiles in Courage." Approximately 90 students wrote short essays about a Russian government official they think has demonstrated political courage. The winner of the contest was announced at the reception. The first Russian translation of *Profiles in Courage* was published by International Relations publishing house in late May 2005 on the occasion of President Kennedy's birthday. Everyone who attended the event received a copy of the new book.

### **Upcoming Events:**

- **Meeting with Representatives from Houston's Junior Chamber of Commerce** is planned for June 3.
- **Senior FLEX Alumni Reunion** will take place on June 4.

- **Ryazan IATP Center Opening and Monthly Meeting** will be held in Ryazan on June 15.
- **Alumni Panels for Pre-departure Orientations (PDOs)** and the “American Dream” presentation are scheduled for June 22 and 27.

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## **Novosibirsk**

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**Alumni Meeting:** Darya Afonasyova '01, Anna Demidchik '01, Natalya Gashko '04, Maxim Lobatii '03, Valerii Mun '04, Alexandr Nozdrin '01, Tamuna Otifshvili '04, Alexey Poleshuk '02, Tatyana Popova '03, and Bella Struminski '02 attended the alumni meeting held on May 18 to discuss how they would welcome the new 2005 alumni. They decided to organize a welcome home party for them.

**Creative Thinking Seminar:** Anna Demidchik '01 held a seminar on creative thinking for alumni. The alumni learned effective means to facilitate the creative process and practiced these skills during the “how to involve new alumni” brainstorm. Anna promised to prepare additional professional training seminars for the future.

### **Upcoming Events:**

- **Lectures and clean-ups** will be held at two Novosibirsk orphanages in June.
- **Welcome home meeting** for the 2005 alumni is planned in July.

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

## **St. Petersburg**

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parents' questions. They gave advice on packing and preparing for the trip and some alumni were able to provide more specific information to finalists who already knew their placement. Darya Amosova '04, Lyudmila C

**Weekend Sports:** On weekends FLEX and Eurasian Undergraduate program alumni gathered for some outdoor sports. Since the weather was nice, the alumni were able to play sports outside at the beach by the Gulf of Finland. Ekaterina Gavrilenko '03, Pavel Fyodorov '01, and Maria Zolotokrylina '03 have been at the sports events most often in May. The alumni are planning to attract a new group of American exchange students to join them in further outdoor events.

**Alumni Meet Students from St. Petersburg, FL:** On May 19, alumni from St. Petersburg, Russia got a chance to meet a group of high school and college students from St. Petersburg, Florida. The meeting was held in the local IATP Center. Over 15 alumni of State Department-sponsored programs participated in that meeting. The students from Florida who study Russia or Eastern Europe were excited to meet the FLEX alumni first hand and held an informal discussion about the differences and similarities of the two St. Petersburgs and Russia and the U.S. in general. FLEX alumni were represented by Irina Gorelova '03, Oksana Hodjaeva '01, Polina Kopneva '04, Haik Karapetyan '96, Polina Petrun '01, and Roza Vasilieva '04.

## **Petrozavodsk**

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**“University for Everyone” Global Youth Service Day (GYSD) Project:** On May 11-13, FLEX alumni in Petrozavodsk held the “University for Everyone” GYSD grant project. The project was designed to give orphans information on higher education and encourage them to apply to a university. Working closely with Petrozavodsk State University staff, alumni gave the orphans a look at university life. The project agenda included an introductory seminar on the Petrozavodsk State University's history, departments, specializations, and extracurricular activities, which was followed by training on how to behave during exams and interviews in order to pass them successfully. On the second day the group went on an excursion around the university and then participated in a round table discussion. On the final day, they played interactive games, had informal communication, received certificates and had a small reception at a local café. Members of the Petrozavodsk alumni organization “Oasis,” led by city representative Lyudmila Chistiakova '01, in cooperation with Anastasia Gomankova '02, Anastasia Nerovnyaya '03, Anastasia Razhikova '02, and Nikita Vorobyov '03, organized this event.

**FLEX Alumni Panel:** On May 14, FLEX alumni in Petrozavodsk joined the FLEX Program Administrator in the North-West Region Reed Johnson, FLEX Program Assistant Nadezhda Ilyina '00, and FLEX Alumni Assistant Igor Gots '01 at a meeting with this year's FLEX finalists from the republic of Karelia and their

parents. The alumni organized an alumni panel, shared their experiences with the new participants, and answered their questions. Lyudmila Chistiakova '01, Yelena Lavrentieva '03, Anastasia Nerovnaya '03, Alyona Romashkina '04, and Nikita Vorobyov '03 participated in the alumni panel.

**Upcoming Events:**

- **Weekly Sports** (volleyball/basketball) for alumni will be held in June
- **Pre-departure Orientation (PDO) preparations** will be held the last week of June.

**Contact:** FLEX Alumni Assistant St. Petersburg Igor Gots '01 [flexalum@americancouncils.spb.ru](mailto:flexalum@americancouncils.spb.ru) +7 (812) 571-76-55

**Samara**

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**Monthly Alumni Meeting:** Valentina Dolgikh '02, Ekaterina Gafarova '03, Tatyana Lebakina '03, Elena Pastukhova '00, Anastasia Pechkurova '03, Anna Shegurova '04, and Alexandra Visloguzova '04 attended the alumni meeting held at the IATP Center on May 6 to discuss the results of Global Youth Service Day. The alumni had a detailed discussion of their plans for the upcoming month: the volleyball tournament and the Excel Seminar scheduled for May 23. They also shared information about their successes.

**International Trade Law Discussion:** Valentina Dolgikh '02, Irina Malakhovskaya '98, Elena Pastukhova '00, and Olga Shakhova '00 attended a discussion on international trade law at the American Corner on April 19, which was organized by IREX for American Alumni Club members. The discussion was led by Prof. Franklin Gill of New Mexico School of Law in Albuquerque. Prof. Gill explained recent views on problems with Mexico and Russia transitioning to a market economy. The participants expressed particular interest in the question of Russia's pending application to the World Trade Organization.

**Training at the IATP Center:** Project Harmony provided a training seminar on Microsoft Excel for alumni at the IATP Center on May 23. Project Harmony Coordinator Viktor Dzhadzha taught alumni the basics of the Excel program, as it is one of the key programs used at many companies. The following alumni were present at the seminar: Valeria Baburina '99, Valentina Dolgikh '02, Ekaterina Gafarova '03, Tatyana Lebakina '03, and Elena Pastukhova '00.

**Volleyball Tournament:** Timur Kurmaev '02, Tatyana Lebakina '03, Elena Pastukhova '00, Anastasia Pechkurova '03, Olga Shakhova '00, and Elizaveta Spiridonova '03 took part in the volleyball tournament held on May 24 at Samara State University gym. Members of Youth of Samara, representatives from Project Harmony, several students from Samara State University, and FLEX alumni competed. These activities usually help maintain effective communication channels between organizations and inspire the participants to work on joint projects.

**Upcoming Events:**

- **A Discussion on Human Rights** for the alumni of U.S. exchange programs will take place at the American Corner on June 7.
- **Psychological Trainings** with Marina Nikonova have become one of the favorite activities of the Samara alumni. The next workshop is planned for June 15.
- **Delivery of Toys and Clothes** for children from the orphanage in Bogdanovka is scheduled for June 17.
- **Monthly Alumni Meeting** will take place at the end of June.
- **Training at the IATP Center** will be provided for alumni by Project Harmony.

**Contact:** Samara Alumni Assistant Elena Pastukhova '00, [samaraflexalumni@rambler.ru](mailto:samaraflexalumni@rambler.ru)

**Vladivostok**

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**American Culture Movie Night:** Yana Boroday '02, Ekaterina Pavlova '03, Anastasia Prokonich '02, Dmitriy Shatokhin '02, and Polina Zavyalova '00 gathered at the American Councils office to watch the film *Daddy Daycare* on May 6. Alumni talked about their experiences baby-sitting in the U.S. and how they managed all the problems they had with younger host brothers and sisters.

## FLEX May 2005 Report

**Alumni planning meeting:** On May 13, FLEX alumni gathered at the American Councils office to discuss the upcoming charity event in youth BSB club. The main purpose of this event is to raise money for the Children Oncology Department of Vladivostok Children's Hospital. Alumni talked about the possible auctions, games, sponsors, and the organizational committee. Several FLEX alumni volunteered to work during this event. Everybody decided that this event needs to be the biggest ever done. Alumni in attendance were Anastasia Aleshkina '04, Yana Boroday '02, Ekaterina Pavlova '03, Anastasia Prokonich '02, Dmitriy Shatokhin '02, and Polina Zavyalova '00.

**Professionals for Cooperation Conference:** On May 21, three FLEX alumni joined alumni of various U.S. government programs gathered at the recreation camp "Politekhnik" on Shamora Bay to participate in Professionals for Cooperation annual conference. During the conference alumni discussed the work of the association over the past year, as well as plans for the coming year and candidates for the Executive Board. Representatives of American Councils talked about the charity event of June 1, Educational Advising Center, and the June visit of Tolerance Theater. Many alumni got interested in these projects and promised to take part in them. After the discussion everybody worked to clean up the beach nearby. The conference ended with a lunch attended by the Consul General in Vladivostok, John Mark Pommersheim and his family. Alumni present were Anna Koneva '99, Dmitriy Shatokhin '02, and Polina Zavyalova '00.

### Upcoming Events:

- **Charity Concert** for the Oncology Department of Vladivostok Children's Hospital will be held on June 1.
- **Tolerance Theatre** performance in Pushkinskiy Theatre, will be held on June 10.
- **American Culture Movie Night** is scheduled for June 17.

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

## Volgograd

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**Selecting New FLEX Alumni Assistant:** In anticipation of Nelli Khachaturian's departure from Volgograd, she advertised the opportunity to serve as the FLEX alumni assistant for southern Russia. Mary Shea, FLEX Eurasia alumni coordinator, hired Nataliya Bochkarova '01 and Nataliya will begin her work in early June.

**Contact:** Volgograd Alumni Assistant Nelli Khachaturian '03 [nelly-volgograd@yandex.ru](mailto:nelly-volgograd@yandex.ru)

## Yekaterinburg

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**Veterans Day in Orenburg:** Orenburg alumni organized a meeting with World War II veterans on May 6. City representative Lidya Grazhevichus '04 initiated the meeting.

**Meeting with Robert Zimmerman:** Vera Aminova '03, Antonina Ivanova '04, and Yelizaveta Gladkovskaya '95 met with Robert Zimmerman, a former U.S. State Department official and FLEX program supporter during his visit to Yekaterinburg on May 12 and 18. They showed him the city and took him to the American Councils office, where he met Stephen Houtsma, American Councils Yekaterinburg office director.

**Meeting with FLEX Finalists and their Parents:** On May 15, Vera Aminova '03, Yelizaveta Gladkovskaya '95, Ilya Korobeinikov '04, Lyubov Okulova '04, and Alexander Ryumyantsev '02 met with FLEX finalists in the House of Creative Work, Yekaterinburg. Stephen Houtsma and Svetlana Norayeva of the American Councils Office helped finalists fill out all the necessary documents. In the second half of the meeting, alumni shared their experiences and talked about American schools and the problems they faced while they were in the U.S.

### Upcoming Events:

**Pre-departure Orientation (PDO) in Yekaterinburg** will take place June 28-July 9. FLEX alumni will participate.

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## Tajikistan

### Dushanbe

**American Slang Seminar:** Miskola Abdulloeva '02, Alisher Akilov '04, Dmitry Frolov '02, Akmalxon Ibragimov '04, Sehrangez Isomidinova '99, Malika Khakimova '04, Sitara Khalimova '04, and Alfiya Kulmamadova '03 gathered for a fun seminar on American slang on May 11. Mr. Alan Armstrong, the guest speaker, started the seminar by asking alumni what their favorite slang words are. Mr. Armstrong explained that slang is a very important part of young Americans' lives, since it separates them from their parents and other authority figures. Mr. Armstrong said that use of particular slang could identify a person's age, race, geographical area, and even social standing. Pronunciation was discussed, and Mr. Armstrong provided the alumni with handouts with slang broken down into different categories.

**Domestic Violence Seminar:** Miskola Abdulloeva '02, Akmalxon Ibragimov '04, Sehrangez Isomidinova '99, Akmal Karimov '04, and Alfiya Kulmamadova '03 attended a seminar on domestic violence led by Zumrat Khairatova, a trainer, and Inna Sutulina, a psychologist from the Association of Women of Science of Tajikistan, on May 13. The speakers explained what actions qualify as domestic violence and discussed who the victims of such behavior usually are. Domestic violence typically takes place within a family unit and is usually perpetrated against women and children. Ms. Sutulina pointed out that behavior can be violent not only if the abuser uses physical force, but also if he/she uses emotional, psychological, sexual, or economical suppression. Handouts about domestic violence were distributed to the alumni, and the speakers introduced several telephone hotlines for victims and the Association of Women of Science of Tajikistan counseling center for women and children. The alumni asked many questions about the issue, which led to an interesting discussion for everyone involved.

### Khujand

**FLEX Program Presentation:** On May 18, Alibek Djumankulov '04 led a seminar about the FLEX and Eurasia Undergraduate Exchange Program for 25 high school and university students at the American Corner, which recently opened in Khujand. During the seminar Alibek Djumankulov '04 talked about the eligibility requirements for both programs, rules, shared his personal experience as an exchange student, and distributed brochures. After a PowerPoint presentation about the programs, he also answered questions concerning studying abroad. The university students were interested in scholarships, fellowships, and steps they should take in order to apply for them.

**International Children's Day Fundraising:** Miskola Abdulloeva '02 and Sehrangez Isomidinova '99 organized a fundraiser on May 29 to raise money for an International Children's Day event for 40 orphans from Orphanage # 1-2 to be held on June 3. The alumni raised money by selling tickets to a movie at *Molodyezhny* movie theater. Tickets are also being sold for a raffle that will be held before the movie starts.

#### Upcoming Events:

### Khujand

- **International Children's Day Celebration** in Khujand will be held on June 1.

### Dushanbe

- **International Children's Day Celebration** in Dushanbe is planned for June 3.
- **New 2005 Alumni Meeting** is scheduled for June 27.
- **Alumni Panel at Varzob PDO** will take place on June 28.

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

## Turkmenistan

### Ashgabat

**Ashgabat Retirement Home Visit:** FLEX alumni used the 3,700,000 manats (approximately \$200) raised from *Beauty is a Beast* ticket sales to buy supplies for 32 senior citizens at the Ashgabat Retirement Home for Victory Day. Yusup Ashirov '03, Myahri Gurbanniyazova '04, Serdar Karliyev '04, Nadejda Li '04, Mariya Papina '04,

Bahar Nuriyeva '02, and Alumni Coordinator Gulyalek Soltanova visited the retirement home on May 9 and delivered cups, socks, towels, soap, snacks, fruit, and drinks.

## **Turkmenabat**

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**Computer Training:** Sabina Huseyinova '03 and Roman Kurbanov '04 started an email club for eight parents of 2005 FLEX finalists every Tuesday and Friday beginning May 3. Roman Kurbanov '04 taught the participants how to open an email account, send and receive letters, and download pictures. Sabina Huseyinova '03 showed them how to attach documents to a message and sign in and out. The project hopes to help parents use email to keep in touch with their children while they are in the U.S.

**“Brain Ring” Intellectual Game:** Sabina Huseyinova '03, Nazira Jorayeva '04, Guncha Jumakuliyeva '04, Roman Kurbanov '04, Farhad Yagmurov '04, Erkin Yoldashev '03, and Serdar Yoldashev '04 organized a Brain Ring game about health at the American Corner on May 6. Approximately 41 people attended the event, including teachers, students, and center volunteers. Three teams participated.

**Visit to WWII Victims' Graves:** On May 8, Sabina Huseyinova '03 and nine FLEX finalists went to a local cemetery to pay their respects to those who lost their life during World War II. The attendees brought flowers, and Sabrina and FLEX finalists shared their thoughts on the war.

**Meeting with U.S. Embassy Representatives:** U.S. Ambassador Tracy Jacobson, Political and Economic Officer Carla Govenille, Cultural Affairs Officer Anjela Begjanova, and Political Assistant Batyr Geldiev visited the American Corner to meet with ten FLEX alumni on May 12. Anjela Begjanova introduced the guests to the public, and then each participant introduced themselves, the exchange program in which they participated, and the state where they lived. Ambassador Jacobson asked the FLEX alumni how their U.S. experience affected them after returning and whether they liked the program. The alumni also had an interesting discussion with the guests about higher education. The U.S. Embassy representatives donated books and videotapes to the American Corner before leaving.

**Second Meeting with U.S. Embassy Representatives:** On May 25, Dovlet Babajanov '04, Sabina Huseyinova '03, Nazira Jorayeva '04, and Farhad Yagmurov '04 met with Regional English Language Officer Dr. Lisa Harshbarger and Cultural Affairs Assistant Maya Meredova to discuss the alumni activities supported by American Councils. After the official meeting the group had dinner at a restaurant, which Sabina Huseyinova '03, Nazira Jorayeva '04, and Farhad Yagmurov '04 also attended. Dr. Harshbarger and Maya Meredova distributed certificates to the students in recognition of their excellent accomplishments through the FLEX program.

## **Turkmenbashy**

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**World Press Freedom Day Presentation:** On May 2, Kristina Razahova '04 gave a presentation to 18 people devoted to World Press Freedom Day. Kristina presented the history of the day and introduced websites and forums on the topic to the participants. She also spoke about journalism in general and conducted an activity in which the participants had to interview each other. Handouts on World Press Freedom Day and applicable vocabulary were also distributed.

**Computer Classes for Orphans:** On May 2, 16, 23, and 30 local orphanage students attended computer classes taught by Alina Penjiyeva '04. The children practiced their typing skills and learned Microsoft Word. The painting program was also introduced to the students. The orphans had assignments to complete, and individual handouts were distributed for personal study.

**Balkan Regional Book of the Month:** On May 3, 5, 10, 12, 17, 19, 24, 26, and 31, Kristina Razahova '04 led the development of the Balkan Region Book-of-the-Month Club project started by Becky Bowman. The meetings allow students to come together to discuss books they read in English. It is a great opportunity for the participants to practice their spoken and reading English language skills. They are also given handouts with vocabulary to review at home. Kristina's group at a local Balkanabat school is currently reading *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing*.

**Victory Day Celebration:** Alina Penjiyeva '04, Kristina Razahova '04, and Peace Corps Volunteers Alex Minier and Laura Myerburg took part in the Victory Day celebration organized for orphans at the American Corner on May 6. The orphans helped honor WWII veterans, who were given souvenirs and flowers. Fifty-five people attended the event, including representatives from the local government of public organizations. The celebration showed mutual understanding and appreciation to the veterans. The orphanage children had the opportunity to demonstrate their talents to the public.

**Meeting with Local English Teachers:** American Corner Regional Representative Kristina Razahova '04 arranged a meeting between 10 local English teachers, Alumni Coordinator Gulyalek Soltanova, and guest speaker Public Affairs Officer and English Language Specialist Lisa Morgan on May 7 at Diller Dunyasi Educational Center. Lisa Morgan presented several methods for teaching and organizing class activities without using textbooks. The participants had to complete a specific activity in order to understand how to conduct the lesson by themselves.

**Roundtable with Lisa Morgan:** Iyera Askerova '04, Yuliya Hayrutdinova '04, and Alina Penjiyeva '04 were among the 20 people who attended a meeting with Lisa Morgan at the American Corner Turkmenbashi. The students were encouraged to ask questions about U.S. life, educational system, and opportunities. The participants got to use their English language skills to acquire information about the U.S. education system.

**ECO Meetings:** On May 5, 6, 10, and 24, Minara Ismailova '04 led the ECO meeting at the American Corner Turkmenbashi to discuss the upcoming "Pollution of the Caspian Sea and Its Coast" project. Twenty-four people, including Yuliya Hayrutdinova '04, Alina Penjiyeva '04, and Kristina Razahova '04, took part in the meeting. The participants were asked to create a plan for brochures describing the project. During the meeting the participants shared their thoughts about leading a healthy lifestyle, and at the end of the meeting they watched the movie *Shark's Tale*.

**English Classes for Doctors:** Arzu Talapova '04 and Peace Corps Volunteer Laura Myerburg ran English classes for doctors from the local clinic and hospital at the American Corner on May 3, 10, 17, 24, and 31. Sixty doctors attended the first class, which was dedicated to the alphabet and sounds, greetings, and basic expressions. The goal of these classes is to help the doctors learn English so they can develop cooperation with other organizations and access more up-to-date medical information through people and the Internet.

**Meeting with Dr. Lisa Harshbarger:** On May 23, American Corner staff and Peace Corps volunteers met with Maya Meredova and Dr. Lisa Harshbarger to discuss the progress of the ACCESS program in Turkmenbashi. The language course and cultural events for students learning English were also discussed during the meeting, as was the summer camp project for ACCESS students. Dr. Lisa Harshbarger shared her thoughts regarding the program in Turkmenistan and in other countries, and future plans were set up to improve the program and achieve goals.

**Classroom Arrangement Lectures:** On May 23, Regional Representative Kristina Razahova '04 set up a meeting for local teachers with guest speakers from the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy Maya Meredova and Regional English Language Officer Dr. Lisa Harshbarger. Ten teachers and Peace Corps volunteers from the "Diller Dunyasi" Educational Center took part in the event. Lisa Harshbarger discussed classroom arrangement and teaching methods with the teachers, and the participants received individual handouts for further study.

**Monthly Alumni Meeting:** Regional Representative of American Corner Kristina Razahova '04 had a meeting with 2004, 2003, and 2002 FLEX alumni at the American Corner on May 27 to discuss future events. Peace Corps Volunteers Becky Bowman, Alex Minier, Laura Myerburg, and Allen Park also attended and added their activity ideas for the upcoming month. The alumni also shared their personal achievements.

## **Mary**

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**FLEX Finalist Training:** On May 11, Rejep Abbdyyev '04 and Bahar Aydogdyeva '04 held the first "American Character" orientation for eight Mary region FLEX finalists and seven visitors at the American Corner. Bahar asked the participants to think about the question "What is the American Nation?" She then drew their attention to "What are Americans like? What do they like? Is there really a national character in this huge nation of people?" She covered aspects of diversity, typical U.S. values, attitudes, beliefs, and behavior. Bahar

and Rejep also told a few stories from their U.S. experience. After the discussion they did some exercises to build vocabulary, sharpen language skills, and practice sentence patterns.

**Girls' Club:** FLEX alumna Bahar Aydogdyeva '04 and Peace Corps Volunteer Kim McLaury held a meeting of the Girls' Club for 15 girls on May 23. The topic of discussion was the influence of the American Corner and Girls' Club on their development and how to make these organizations more useful to visitors. They also shared their ideas about what they could contribute and role-played the situation "If I were the American Corner Manager, I would...".

**FLEX Alumni Roundtable:** On May 27, FLEX alumni Rejep Abdyev '04, Bahar Aydogdyeva '04, Magtymguly Geldyev '04, Tatiyana Mendikovskaya '03, and Ahmed Tagiyev '04 had a roundtable discussion about upcoming events. Ahmed Tagiyev '04 suggested summer activities they could do for children from the community. Bahar Aydogdyeva '04 then talked about how it would be helpful to have more active participants and visitors involved in FLEX alumni projects, and Tatiyana Mendikovskaya '03 suggested running a debate club where FLEX alumni could hold discussions and help students. They decided to continue running U.S. Culture workshops for new FLEX participants and American Corner visitors.

**Upcoming Events:**

**Ashgabat**

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- **Ultimate Frisbee Tournament** is scheduled for June 11.
- **Annual Alumni Reunion** will take place in Turkmenbashi.
- **Meeting with New FLEX alumni** will be held in late June.
- **Sports with Buzmein Orphans** will be run for Buzmein orphans at the "Yanbash" Camp in June.

**Turkmenabat**

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- **American History Club** will be held once a week.
- **Book Club** will be held once a week.
- **Movie Club** will be held every Thursday.
- **Conversational Club** will be held every Friday.
- **Poetry Night** will be held in the middle of the month.
- **Alumni Meetings** will be held once every week.
- **Internet Training for FLEX Finalists' Families** will be held three times a week over a two-month period.
- **Camp S.E.R.D.A.R. Meetings** will be held once a week.
- **Computer Training for FLEX Finalists** will be held once a week.

**Turkmenbashi**

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- **Environmental Day** will be celebrated on June 6.
- **Summer Camp in Akdash** will be held on June 6-10.
- **Father's Day** will be introduced to the local public on June 17.
- **Movie Night** is scheduled for June 22.
- **"Rock Introduction" Presentation** is planned for June 23.
- **Monthly Alumni Meeting** will take place at the American Corner on June 24.
- **"Cultural Exchange on the Coast of the Caspian Sea" Project** will be held on June 26.
- **Welcome Party for New Alumni** is scheduled for June 27.
- **"Elembus" Rock Concert** will be held on June 30.

**Mary**

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- **Movie Night** will be held every Wednesday.
- **Newspaper Club** will be held every Tuesday by Ahmed Tagiyev '04.
- **Debate Club** by Tatiyana Mendikovskaya '03 will be held every Tuesday in June.
- **Girls' Club** by Bahar Aidogdyeva '04 will be held every Monday in June.
- **"When Sending Email" Workshop** will be held on June 15 by Rejep Abdyev '04.
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**Contact:** Ashgabat Alumni Assistant Bahar Nuriyeva '02, [flexalum@online.tm](mailto:flexalum@online.tm) (+99312) 34-26-34

## Ukraine

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### Kharkiv

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**English Speaking Club:** English Speaking Club sessions were held every Saturday in May. Arnab Synha organizes the club for alumni and members of the local community at School #4. Anton Borisov '02, Kyrlyo Orach '04, Anna Smirnova '03, Sasha Tsymbal '04, and Viktorya Vasylyeva '03 usually attend the meetings.

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

**Business English Class:** Anna Yablonska '03 holds a business English class at the IATP Center every Tuesday. The participants practice writing business letters and learn about correspondence ethics. The classes develop communication and public speaking skills among young people, provide an opportunity for alumni and members of the local community to practice English, and to provide information about special business vocabulary.

**Hortitsa Island Escape:** Anton Borisov '02, Kseniya Isayenko '01, and Mykhaylo Rakhmail '02 visited Hortista Island on May 8-9. Maksym Ostapenko, vice-director of the Hortitsa national reserve, kindly agreed to give a two-day excursion of the Dnieper River's Hortitsa inland. Maksym explained the rich history of the area to the alumni, including the activities of the ancient Cossacks. Alumni also had the chance to see two historical ships excavated from the Dnieper River by Maksym and his crew. The alumni were also shown an ancient sanctuary built at the same time as Stonehedge, which was also used as an observatory.

**Kharkiv Clean up Activity:** Eight Kharkiv alumni cleaned up a local forest on May 22. They also played sports and sunbathed after they were finished with the cleanup.

#### Upcoming Events:

- **English Speaking Club in Kharkiv** will be held every week at School # 4.
- **English Speaking Club in Luhansk** will be held every week at Luhansk National University of Internal Affairs.
- **Alumni Planning Meeting** is planned for June 15.
- **Circus Trip for Orphans** is scheduled for June 11.
- **Youth Day Celebration** will take place on June 26.

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

### Kyiv

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**Magellano Project Presentation:** On May 3, four FLEX alumni attended the presentation on the Erasmus program, which offers new educational opportunities for students. A representative of the international student organization AEGEE organized the event. Anton Antonenko '04, Maryna Gaydak '04, Tetyana Stakhova '02, and Iryna Tokatly '01 attended. Five students from local universities and representatives of AEGEE organization joined the alumni audience.

**Database Update:** Oleksanarda Zhestova '02 was chosen as a FLEX Alumni Database intern. She is contacting alumni to collect the latest information about members of the FLEX alumni association.

**Meeting with NATO Representatives and Preparation of the Simulation:** On May 22, Anna Opanasyuk '99, and Maryna Yaroshchuk '02, alumni assistant, met with Jim Greene and Barry Adams of the NATO Kyiv Office. They discussed the concept of the future international student simulation on NATO and Ukraine's endorsement into this organization. Alumni plan to hold such a conference in October 2005.

**Seminar on Transparency and Anti-corruption in Higher Education:** Four FLEX and seven Eurasia Undergraduate program alumni learned about transparency, suggested their own perspectives on the notion, discussed the situation in Ukraine, and suggested possible solutions to the problem at a meeting on May 28. Among the suggestions were to establish student self-government bodies in each university, organize trainings on transparency for faculty and managers of the universities, write a code of ethics for students and professors to

follow, organize auditing committees comprised of parents, employers, university management, and publish a rating of the most corrupt universities. FLEX alumni present at the seminar were Dmytro Roshchupkin '02, Yuliya Shpak '04, Andriy Syrotenko '98, and Maryna Yaroshchuk '02.

### Upcoming Events:

- **FLEX Alumni Assist with Pre-Departure Orientations** for the finalists of the FLEX program in July.
- **Kyiv Alumni Farewell Evening for FLEX alumni assistant Maryna Yaroshchuk** will be held on June 10.

**Contact:** Kyiv Alumni Assistant Maryna Yaroshchuk '02, [flexalumni@americancouncilskyiv.org.ua](mailto:flexalumni@americancouncilskyiv.org.ua) +380 (44) 246-82-82

### Lviv

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**Alumni Meeting:** On May 12, the FLEX Alumni Association held its regular alumni meeting at the IATP Center. The alumni summarized the Easter for Children project, during which they raised nearly 1000 hryvnias to help children from the Pidhirtsi boarding school for children with visual handicaps. They also outlined their future plans. Participation in the celebration of Europe Day in Lviv was set as objective number one. Objective number two was updating the Lviv hub database. Alumni in attendance: Olesia Fedun '04, Alla Myshalova '03, Mykola Pekh '00, and Nataliya Salo '01.

**Celebration of Europe Day:** Olesia Fedun '04, Maryana Kupriyenko '02, Alla Myshalova '03, Oksana Nos '03, Mykola Pekh '00, Nadiya Ratushniak '03, and Nataliya Salo '01 participated in the Public Unions Fair dedicated to the celebration of Europe Day on May 15. The alumni made an exhibit to present plans for a FLEX-based NGO in Lviv, about the FLEX alumni association and its projects, and about the FLEX program itself. The alumni answered people's questions and were interviewed by a DJ.

**Notification Meeting:** Nazar Mamrokha '04, Alla Myshalova '03, and Nataliya Salo '01 helped American Councils staff conduct a notification meeting for FLEX program finalists from the Western Ukraine region on May 28.

**Creation of a Lviv Hub Yahoo Group:** On May 30, a yahoo group was created for Lviv hub alumni. Its purpose is to facilitate communication within the hub.

### Upcoming Events:

- **“Transparency and Corruption in Higher Education” Seminar** will be held on June 4.
- **Alumni Database Update** will take place throughout June.
- **Alumni Panel at PDO** is planned for July.

**Contact:** Lviv Alumni Assistant, Nataliya Salo '01 [alumni@americancouncils.lviv.ua](mailto:alumni@americancouncils.lviv.ua) +380 (032) 22 93 78.

### Odesa

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**Civil Society Training:** Tea Bebia '04, Tina Goloborodko '95, Mariya Hontar '04, Kateryna Komarova '02, Yuliya Nikolayenko '02, and Kateryna Zhyrova '00 gathered for an informal discussion about civil society and community activism on May 28. Tina Goloborodko '95 conducted the event and began the conversation by asking relevant questions and providing cases from her personal experience. The alumni discussed today's civil societies in Ukraine and the U.S., the activities of local Odesa non-governmental organizations, and ways to promote the FLEX program. The alumni also discussed an article by Sheila Welleron that featured four women who succeeded in their protests against a famous clothing chain in hopes of changing the way an entire segment of the clothing industry does business. Part of the training was based on a re-entry lesson plan prepared by Paige Willan, Kyiv FLEX program officer.

**Q&A Panel with Embassy Representatives:** On May 31, Tea Bebia '04, Mariya Bespalova '04, Nina Borysova '02, Tina Goloborodko '95, Nataliya Kovyilkina '04, Yuliya Nikolayenko '02, and Kateryna Zhyrova '00 gathered at the American Advising Center in Odesa to meet with Dolores Highlander from the U.S. Embassy. The alumni discussed the importance of strengthening the alumni network, shared their ideas for

upcoming events, and asked many questions. The main topic of the conversation was creating a FLEX Alumni NGO in Odesa in order to take alumni efforts to a higher level.

## **Mykolayiv**

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**“Smile” Project:** Dmytro Say '01 and Iryna Lysenko '03 carried out a complex three-step project called *Poshmishka* (Smile). Dmytro prepared an art exhibition featuring work made by children from local boarding schools, including schools for mentally challenged children. More than 110 paintings, drawings, and crafts were displayed at the Petro Mohyla Mykolayiv State University of Humanities Art Gallery. Although winners were selected, all the participants received small presents. On the last day of the four-day exhibition, more than 140 students and teachers came to the gallery to receive awards and watch a concert prepared by university students.

**Student Conference:** On May 13-15, a student conference devoted to developing and empowering the student community took place at the Petro Mohyla Mykolayiv State Humanitarian University. The event was initiated by Iryna Lysenko '03 and sponsored by a U.S. Embassy Democracy Grant. The conference was devoted to starting and managing student governments, clubs, and organizations in Ukraine. Fifty-six students and faculty advisors from Mykolayiv, Kherson, Lviv, Kharkiv, and Simferopol attended the event. The conference was conducted by eight Peace Corp volunteers and supervised by Alexander Pronkevych, dean of the Petro Mohyla University philological department. Sanford DeWitt, who worked as the director of the Development Center at Petro Mohyla University, served as a chief trainer at the event. Vira Maxymova, a public affairs assistant of the U.S. Embassy, also attended the conference. Iryna Lysenko '03 and Dmytro Say '01 were engaged in the project as members of the organizational committee.

### **Upcoming Events:**

- **Greek Evening in Odesa** will be held on June 17.
- **Monthly Meeting** is planned for June 27.

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

## **Uzbekistan**

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### **Tashkent**

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**Computer Seminars:** From April 15 to May 7, alumni joined volunteers at the local IATP site to offer computer literacy, Internet access, and web design courses to local youth and other interested parties. Some courses focused on Internet basics, whereas others covered more complicated topics, such as using Adobe Acrobat or Microsoft PowerPoint for presentations. As a result of the courses, 110 students achieved basic computer literacy, and another five learned advanced web design. Sardorbek Nuritdinov '02 was the project leader.

**Victory Day Celebration:** On May 15, 20 FLEX alumni contributed to the year of health in Uzbekistan by hosting a Victory Day celebration for the approximately 200 members of the Mirzo-Ulugbek Blind Society, many of whom served in World War II. The alumni invited the members to a café, where the 80 veterans in attendance were greeted with delicious food and songs from their youth performed by the alumni and Christian Larson. Afterwards, the alumni spoke with the members of the society and listened to their moving stories from the war.

**Legal Reform Conference:** Shehroz Narzikulov '00 and Jasur Rahmanov '02 participated in two conferences on legal reform organized by USAID/IRIS Central Asian Judicial Systems Development Project held on May 24, 25, and 26. The alumni were responsible for the administrative aspects of the conferences. The goal of the conferences was to give Uzbek legal experts the opportunity to present their work administrative procedure to high-level judicial officials. Judges, prosecutors, lawyers, police officers, and government and prison officials from throughout Uzbekistan participated in the event, as well as speakers from the U.S., France, Russia, Slovenia, and Bulgaria.

**High Performance Team Workshop:** On May 21, ten FLEX alumni attended a one-day training workshop on "Understanding and Running High Performance Teams," conducted by Mr. Bill Lewis, who was invited by the

Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy an. Lewis is the president of Extension Management Inc., a U.S.-based consulting firm. Mr. Lewis employed lectures, discussions, and breakout sessions to provide insight into team-management practices. At the end of the training, all the participants received certificates.

## **Ferghana**

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**Global Youth Service Day (GYSD):** FLEX alumni contributed to GYSD in Ferghana throughout May. An Internet training and web design course for the local community, reproductive health seminars for school-aged girls, and an essay contest were arranged. By alumni counts, 263 people participated in the events.

**Reproductive Health Seminars:** Alumni conducted reproductive health seminars for 103 students at Ferghana School #2 and Kuvasay School #29 on May 6. The seminars focused on informing girls about the possible dangers of sexual activity, such as the possibility of contracting sexually transmitted diseases. Educational materials were also distributed. Dilafruz Zulparova '04 was the project leader and hopes that the seminars will help the girls avoid problems in the future.

**Essay Contest:** FLEX alumni organized an essay contest in five different Ferghana schools from May 1-8. Each participant was asked to write an essay on three different themes: leadership, their part in the future of their community, and their personal goals. Over 50 students participated, and the best essayist from each school was awarded a prize.

## **Urgench**

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**American Art Camp:** Shahnoza Kurbaniyazova '04, Irina Ogay '04, Maria Pak '04, and local Peace Corps volunteers organized an American Art Camp in the Bogot region. The camp was intended to develop children's creativity and imagination. Approximately 65 13- to 15-year-old students attended the camp, which was held from May 30 through June 2. The students were divided into six groups according to what they preferred to study (creative writing; drama and improvisation; painting; music; arts and crafts; and dance and movement).

### **Upcoming Events:**

- **Meeting with Mr. Robert Zimmermann** about a book of alumni essays is scheduled for June 4.
- **Equipment Delivery to the Children's Department of the Cancer Hospital** will take place in June.
- **Earth Day Mountain Clean-up** in tourist areas is planned for June.
- **New 2005 Alumni Meeting** will take place in June.
- **Monthly Alumni Meeting and Movie Night** is scheduled for June

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

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## **ALUMNI SUCCESSES**

### **Armenia**

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*Victoria Baghdasaryan '00* has been promoted to Project Harmony regional program coordinator in Yerevan.

*Sona Gabrielyan '04* has been selected to be the FLEX alumni assistant for 2005 – 2006.

*Christina Grigoryan '00* is giving Armenian language classes to the Diaspora volunteers at the Birthright Armenia Yerevan branch office.

*Zarouhi Harutyunyan '04* is a volunteer receptionist at American Councils for International Education.

*Zarouhi Sargsyan '98* has a new job as trainings manager assistant for the IREX "Media Core Support Program."

*Yevgenya Shamshyan '04* is a volunteer receptionist at American Councils for International Education.

*Davit Tadevosyan '99* is working as a deputy head of the Organizational Committee of the Republican Party.

*Liana Tadevosyan '99* has started working with the Birthright Armenia Organization branch in Yerevan, as an office assistant.

*Agnessa Topuzyan '98* is working presently at the Indian Embassy in Armenia as a commercial manager.

## **Azerbaijan**

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*Elkhan Muradov '02* is currently studying at the International University of Bremen and will then do a two-month internship in London.

*Taghi Taghizada '02* and *Leyla Mammadli '04* attended an international conference in Germany, May 20-June 2.

## **Belarus**

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*Ekaterina Borushko '02* participated in a week-long youth conference in Lublin, Poland, sponsored by the House of Europe. Ekaterina became a leader of the Belarusian group; Belarus was one of the ten countries represented at the conference.

*Daria Efimova '02* took part in the Mobile Telephone and Network Conference in Minsk. The main topic of the conference was the development of mobile communication system in Belarus and the possibilities of promoting it through economic means.

*Svetlana Filimonova '03* became a member of the Study Abroad team at Lithuanian Christian College. Her duties will include introducing the culture of Lithuania, Belarus, Russian and Ukraine to foreign exchange students through a series of lectures, seminars and excursions.

*Irina Kripinevich '03* took a volunteer position at a school camp in Zhitomir, Ukraine. In her capacity as a camp counselor she will be responsible for running an English language class for the children at the camp, conducting leisure activities and assisting camp staff with other duties. Her university, Lithuanian Christian College, sponsored Irina's trip to Zhitomir.

*Irina Mikhailova '96*, recipient of a Muskie fellowship this year, has decided to attend the University of Manchester on a full Chevening Scholarship that is sponsored by the Open Society Institute in cooperation with the British Government.

## **Georgia**

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*Inga Chkaidze '02* started working in Georgia Transit Limited as Administrative Assistant and also just participated in International Student Festival, - International Student Week in Ilmenau, Germany.

*Lasha Chkhartishvili '02* and *Monica Kalandia '02* both became finalists of the Eurasian Undergraduate Program.

*Sergi Kapanadze '97* started a new job at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia as deputy director of the Department on Regional Cooperation.

*Eleonora Turkia '02* attended training about trafficking, which was held in Tbilisi.

*Tamila Vacharadze '02* was awarded a full scholarship in the amount of \$1,400 to participate in the International Summer Institute on European Transformation in Wroclaw, Poland from July 1 to 22.

## **Kazakhstan**

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*Elena Norakidze '99* received an Open Society scholarship to study towards a Master's degree in social work and administration at Columbia University.

## **Kyrgyzstan**

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*Elnura Djenish '02* serves as intern at the Organization for Cooperation and Security in Europe (OCSE) office of Economic and Environmental Development.

*Karina Madylova '03* and *Askar Sheralie '03* are working for P4L YES (Partnership for Education Youth Study and Exchange) an exchange program between United States and Muslim world, based on the FLEX program. They are teaching English and preparing students for a year in the United States.

*Yulia Tsoy '02* is volunteering for Anti corruption non-governmental organization by offering translation her services and interpreting skills.

## **Moldova**

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*Cristina Andoni '00* received a scholarship to take part in the American Institute of Political and Economic Systems' summer program in Prague, Czech Republic.

*Olga Coscodan '00* graduated on May 8 from the American University in Bulgaria with a double major in business administration and economics and a minor in fine arts.

*Serghei Martinenco '95* contributed to the IATP chess team's victory at the National Moldovan Tournament, and qualified for the European Chess Tournament in Sweden.

*Silvia Ursu '02* was awarded a 2005 merit scholarship.

## **Russia**

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### **Kirov**

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*Christina Bess '01* successfully completed the *Au pair* program and returned from Germany.

*Vladimir Gordeev '98* is a member of the Kirov State Medical Academy Choir and participated in several concerts for World War II veterans at the Kirov Regional Veterans' Hospital and other clinics between May 5 and 11.

*Marat Khayrullin '03* (Kazan) was accepted to the summer Work and Travel Program in the U.S.

*Evgenia Lyamina '03* was selected as the best student among graduates from Vyatka Humanitarian Gymnasia.

*Anastasiya Olimpiyeva '03* (Kazan) was accepted to the summer Work and Travel Program in the U.S.

### **Moscow**

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*Nina Batiashvili '01, Natalya Boltukhova '98, Evgenia Bourilova '01, Armen Burnusuzyan '97, Olesya Dianova '97, Alla Groshenkova '00, Kamila Guseinova '01, Vyacheslav Kan '01, Roman Khudaleev '04, Ekaterina Kolerova '95, Olga Lemeshko '97, Tatyana Maksatova '03, Dmitry Mironenko '98, Anna Muravyova '02, Darya Murchenko '98, Anna Oganessian '98, Aleksey Rumyantsev '95, Timur Shikov '95 and Olga Vorobyova '98* volunteered as judges for "Russian Profiles in Courage" essay contest for high school students held at the U. S. Embassy in Moscow.

*Evgenia Bourilova '01* participated in International Student Week in Ilmenau, Germany. Evgenia participated in a series of seminars and lectures. Former German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt was present at one of the lectures.

*Ekaterina Isinova '03* started work for Deloitte and Touche as a receptionist. She was offered job after the FLEX Career Day.

*Lidiya Vetrova '03* is working as a receptionist for McKinsey & Co.

### **Novosibirsk**

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*Maxim Lobaty '03* left for his Work and Travel program and passed the Japanese professional skills test.

*Alexey Poleshuk '02* passed the Japanese professional skills test.

## **St. Petersburg**

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*Yevgeniy Gribov '94* is currently in Fribourg, Switzerland at the Institute of Federalism, doing research on Swiss financial federalism. His advisor in this research is Professor Bernard Dafflon, a respected academic in this field. Yevgeniy's research will last for three months. He will present a few seminars on fiscal federalism in Russia and is planning to write an article.

*Polina Kopneva '04* got a position as a Foreign Studies Manager at Language Link, a Foreign Language Studies Center.

*Pavel Snop '04* and *Ivan Sablin '04* won Olympiads and were accepted to the St. Petersburg State University of Economy and Finance.

*Yekaterina Vodopyan '94* received a FLEX alumni grant to conduct the "Take Me Home" Public Awareness Campaign, which calls attention to the problems of street children and orphans.

## **Samara**

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*Pavel Alasheev '01* is a finalist for the Work and Travel Program; he will spend his second summer in the U.S. working for a well-known software development company.

*Anna Shegurova '04* and *Alexandra Vislogusova '04* were invited to study at the American University in Bulgaria.

## **Vladivostok**

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*Marina Kaurova '99* took part in a visit to Tszisi city, China, where members of the Vladivostok State University of Economics and Service administration met with Tszisi University administration officials. Marina sang in a concert dedicated to this visit.

*Ekaterina Pavlova '03* works as an office-manager in Maritime Consignment Company, Vladivostok.

*Polina Zavyalova '00* took second place in the competition "Best Graduating Student of Far Eastern National University, 2005."

## **Volgograd**

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*Nelli Khachaturian '03* will participate in the Summer Work and Travel Program and has received a placement in North Carolina, that will allow her to visit her host family.

## **Yekaterinburg**

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*Yury Davy '95* participated in a conference held in Moscow for Primavera Company, where he worked as an interpreter.

*Daria Dergacheva '95* is currently working as a director of "Pomogi Sovetom," a project of the Open Russia Foundation.

*Lyudmila Kurochkina '99 (Verkhnyaya Pyshma)* will be working in Chisinau, Moldova as a teaching assistant during a Pre-departure Orientation (PDO) and English-language program for disabled FLEX finalists.

*Lyubov Okulova '04* received financial aid to of the scholarship to study in American University in Bulgaria.

*Yekaterinna Pichugina '04 (Kurgan)* received a full scholarship to study at Appleton University. Lawrence, WI, majoring in arts and business administration.

*Liana Suleimanova '04 (Ufa)* received a full scholarship to study at American University in Bulgaria.

*Anastasiya Syrchina '97* passed her post-graduate exam in philosophy, receiving an "excellent" mark.

*Mikhail Tchudin '02 (Perm)* placed 1<sup>st</sup> on the Oblast English language Olympiad. Mikhail was competing with other students from the Perm region.

*Mariya Trofimova '03* participated in an aerobics contest at Ural State University. Mariya's team placed first.

## **Tajikistan**

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*Bahodur Abdukholikov '03* started work as a lab assistant at Washburn University, Kansas.

*Nigina Ekubova '97* recently started a job with LFS Financial System, International Consulting Firm, working with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) in implementing the Tajikistan Micro & Small Enterprise Finance Facility. Her responsibilities are to review the credit portfolio of Tajik banks in compliance with the procedures and crediting practices of the project, and to train loan officers to eliminate errors found while auditing.

*Umedjon Hoshimov '98* started work as a program assistant for Internews Network, an international media support organization. His duties and responsibilities are monitoring existing grants; maintaining contacts with partner radio stations; coordinating procurement; clerical and information management; and translation to and from Russian/English/Tajik.

## **Turkmenistan**

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*Kristina Razahova '04* was nominated to work as the manager of the American Corner in Turkmenbashi.

## **Ukraine**

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### **Kharkiv**

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*Yevhen Bobyk '03* successfully completed the *Study Tours to Poland* internship project that took place in Warsaw from May 13-16.

*Anton Borisov '02* opened the AEGEE-Kharkiv branch by signing the convention of AEGEE-Europe in Enschede, Holland. AEGEE is the largest European youth organization, which unites more than 17,000 young people all over Europe. For more information please visit: [www.aegEE.org](http://www.aegEE.org)

*Anna Smornova '03* was a member of the Kharkiv National Law Academy team at the European Moot Court competition, and received first prize in the nomination of audience appreciation.

### **Kyiv**

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*Maryna Yaroshchuk '02* worked for CFC Consulting, the Official Partner of Eurovision 2005 in Europe, in April and May, helping to organize eight special events. She involved other alumni as interns. After the successful completion of Eurovision, she was hired at CFC Consulting full-time as a project manager. She is also planning a trip to Azerbaijan and will be hosted by her FLEX friend Jama Efendiyeva '02.

*Anton Antonenko '04* works at the news department of *Nashe* Radio (radio station) as a journalist.

*Ilona Aleksenko '04, Alina Girs '04, Maryna Gaydak '04, and Dmytro Miroshnichenko '03* interned at CFC Consulting Company, Official PR Partner of the Eurovision Song Contest 2005, during the ESC week. Alumni worked in the press centre, where they wrote news, gathered contact information of European journalists, and translated press releases.

*Olha Lebedyna '03* volunteered at the charity concert of Ruslana, Winner of the Eurovision Song Contest 2004. Olga and her friends sold concert tickets, greeted the VIP guests, and helped with the raffle. Ruslana performed on May 17 at Arena Entertainment, Kyiv. All the proceeds went to the Children of Chernobyl Fund. The concert was organized within the framework of the Eurovision Song Contest 2005 in Ukraine.

*Nataliya Shturkhetska '03* wrote an article about her achievements as an YMCA leader in Ukraine, which was posted on the YMCA International website: <http://www.ymca.int/index.php?id=585>.

*Maryna Yaroshchuk '02* gave an interview to the Voice of America TV program *Time*. The topic of the coverage was higher education programs in the U.S. and Ukraine. Maryna briefly explained the advantages of the U.S. Government-sponsored exchange programs, mentioned the FLEX program and FLEX alumni activities, and expressed hope for the continuation of the Muskie program in Ukraine. This news program was shown on Channel 5, a national news channel.

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## **Lviv**

*Tetiana Keyvan '03*, *Mykola Pekh '00*, and *Anton Podilchak '03* successfully conducted the First International Week in Ukraine as part of International Week Association.

*Iryna Odrekhyvska '02* won a scholarship for participation in the International Summer School in Berlin, Germany.

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## **Odesa**

*Iryna Lysenko '03* received a full scholarship from the German Academic Exchange Service to study German philology at the University of Konstanz Germany for one semester. Iryna is the first student from Mykolayiv to receive this scholarship.

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## **Uzbekistan**

*Hurshida Abdullaeva '04* visited high school # 3 in the Urgench District to make a presentation about the FLEX program to students and teachers.

*Hushnud Abdurahmanov '04*, *Emiliya Asadova '02*, and *Ravshan Korabaev '04* participated in the Days of the United States of America Competition at Uzbek State World Languages University.

*Emiliya Asadova '02* and *Evgeniya Tsoy '04* were chosen to be judges at the Annual English Language Olympiad at the only Jewish school in Tashkent.

*Rustam Haydarov '98* is the communications and marketing officer for Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition's Flour Fortification project at the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

*Yusup Karadaliev '97* is a finalist for the Edmund Muskie Fellowship program in the field of economics.

*Olga Li '03* is a welfare and education executive for Westminster International University's student government.

*Nikolay Melnikov '04* won a partial grant to go to Bremen International University in Germany.

*Aliya Prenova '03* participated in the Sixth Central Asian Competition on International Humanitarian Law organized by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Aliya's team took first place among 16 teams. She also won the Best Speaker Award.

*Gulnur Tlegenova '03* became an office manager and interpreter at the South Korean-Uzbek joint venture Shindong-Enercom in Tashkent.

*Evgeniya Tsoy '04* made a presentation about American Councils and the FLEX program in particular at the University of Oriental Studies during a conference entitled The World of International Organizations.

*Dilyara Yusupova '04* assisted with logistics at the Flour Fortification workshop on May 19-20. The workshop was organized by United Nations Children's Fund.