

November 2004

American Councils for International Education

FLEX Alumni Report

Armenia

Yerevan

FLEX Alumni Reunion and Conference: On November 6-7 over 20 FLEX alumni met to hold roundtable discussions regarding the future of the alumni movement in Armenia and ways to improve it. This activity was funded by a FLEX Alumni Grant awarded to Tigran Karapetyan '96. Irina Liloyan '98 presented on the alumni generation gap and how to make it work for the alumni movement and covered the expectations of alumni of different ages. Tigran led a roundtable discussion on planning alumni activities in a more centralized manner, and Gurgen Hakobyan '94 discussed ways to use and capitalize on the experience of older alumni to benefit of the alumni movement in general. Tigran opened the second day of the reunion by emphasizing the need for a mid-term strategy for alumni movement development, and alumni divided into groups to discuss the three roundtable issues and presented activities to be implemented over the next three years.

Alumni Conference: On November 21 over 90 FLEX alumni attended the "10 Years of Success and Leadership" event. Youth for Armenia President Tigran Karapetyan '96, alumnus Gurgen Hakobyan, alumna Zara Sargsyan as well as American Councils and IREX/IATP staff and gave presentations at the conference and workshops helped to generate new ideas aimed at strengthening the alumni movement in Armenia. The project was also funded by a grant given to Tigran Karapetyan's '96 via the Alumni Grants Program.

Movie Nights: Over 20 FLEX alumni attended two movie nights on November 20-21. Alumni watched *Fahrenheit 9/11* and *White Chicks*. The overall message of the movies was discussed informally following each film.

International Education Week: A three-day training course on leadership and management, proposal writing, and public relations was offered to all interested FLEX alumni on November 24, 25, and 26 as part of International Education Week. Andranik Martirosyan '99 conducted the training which was held at the IATP center and attended by over 15 alumni each day.

Job Search Seminar: Thirty FLEX alumni attended a job search seminar held on November 26. Arpi Avetisyan '96, the Director of Career Placement and Counseling Center at the Armenian Agricultural Academy, conducted a panel on resume and cover letter writing, Youth for America Vice President Varya Meruzhanyan '00 shared tips for a successful interview, and Youth for America Project Manager Ani Hakobyan '00 lead the panel on tips on translation.

English Language Training: Fourteen FLEX and Eurasia Undergraduate alumni, in conjunction with the British Council, trained 150 English teachers from 111 schools around Armenia throughout November 2004 as part of the third cycle of the English language teacher training project. This cycle was devoted to guidance on proper use of grammar and vocabulary books provided during previous trainings.

"Bridges of Integration" Project: Anna Blurtsyan '95, Christina Grigoryan '00, Zara Lavchyan '99, Irina Liloyan '98, and Stella Matevosyan '00, all of whom specialize in psychology, took part in the "Bridges of Integration" project, which is aimed at providing treatment and development of communication skills to students with psychological problems who currently attend five designated secondary boarding schools. Students at secondary boarding schools are usually children from troubled and destroyed families, or children with no parental care whatsoever, making them one of the most vulnerable groups in society. Such boarding schools currently lack psychologists, which is why alumni feel this project is so necessary.

Upcoming Events:

- **AIDS Awareness Day project** is planned for December 2.
- **Orphanage Christmas party** will be held on December 23-24.
- **Regional conference planning meeting** will be held in December.

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Azerbaijan

Baku

U.S. Embassy Elections Day: On November 3 FLEX alumni made poster presentations under the supervision of U.S. Embassy Public Diplomacy Officer Neil McGurty and U.S. Embassy Consular Officer Tristram Perry. Mukhtar Garadaghi '04, Gunay Hasanova '03 and Tural Mammadov '04 made a poster called "Biographies of Bush and Kerry," Leyla Mammadli '04 made a poster entitled "Candidates on the Issues," and Khalida Nurmetova '00 made a poster called "Did You Know That...," which gave interesting facts about the candidates' lives. Alumni answered questions about their posters while people watched the election results. Nargiz Hajiyeva '99 and Gunay Hasanova '03 also participated.

Politics Roundtable Discussion: The Azerbaijan Alumni Association organized a meeting with Nikolas Palladino, an intern in the Political Economy section of the U.S. Embassy, on November 5. The group, including Ruslan Asadov '04, Nargiz Hajiyeva '99, Fariz Ismailzade '96 and Khalida Nurmetova '00, discussed youth attitudes towards politics in Azerbaijan. Alumni shared their personal views and experiences in politics.

Muskie Application Collection: Nargiz Akbarova '03 and Nadi Gulam '03 volunteered to collect Muskie applications on November 18 and 19.

Grant Proposal Writing Seminar: On November 20 "Internews Azerbaijan" Agency Media Consultant Meg Gaydosik held a seminar on the topic of "Successful Grant Proposal Writing" at the U.S.-Azerbaijan Education Center as part of International Education Week. Nargiz Hajiyeva '99 and Khalida Nurmetova '00 attended this seminar.

Recruitment Appreciation Party: A pizza party was held on November 20 for the 25 FLEX alumni volunteers who assisted in round one of the recruitment process. The party was followed by an alumni meeting.

"Exchanges to Internships Project" Information Seminar: U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Officer Neil McGurty, American Councils staff and FLEX Alumni Coordinator Nargiz Hajiyeva '99 created the "Exchanges to Internships" project, which they presented at an information seminar held on November 21 as part of International Education Week. Nargiz and Khalida Nurmetova '00 shared their experiences as interns at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and answered questions. The project helps provide alumni with professional experience by taking part in public internships at ministries in Azerbaijan, and gives alumni the opportunity to better understand the need for public sector development. Forty interested alumni attended the seminar which was reported by Azeri television and print media.

Alumni Personal Interviews: Nikolas Palladino, an intern in the Political Economy section at the U.S. Embassy, invited Ruslan Asadov '04, Gunduz Hagverdiyev '04, and Khalida Nurmetova '00 for personal interviews at the U.S. Embassy on November 22, 23 and 24. The alumni were interviewed about their attitudes towards politics in Azerbaijan as part of Mr. Palladin's preparation of a report on youth attitudes towards politics in Azerbaijan.

Public Administration Roundtable: Dr. Beryl Radin from the University of Baltimore gave a talk on November 22 at the U.S.-Azerbaijan Education Center on public administration and public policy and the need for rural development in Azerbaijan. Ruslan Asadov '04, Fuad Guliyev '04, Nargiz Hajiyeva '99, Fariz Ismailzade '96, Dilara Jafarova '99 and Shahin Mammadov '04 attended the event.

Women's Issues Roundtable: Fuad Guliyev '04, Nargiz Hajiyeva '99, and Fariz Ismailzade '96 attended a meeting with Deputy Chairwoman of the Azerbaijan Republic State Committee Mrs. Mominat Omarova about women's issues organized by the Alumni Association on November 23, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. Mrs. Omarova and the alumni discussed prevention of violence against women, gender based discrimination, women's problems in Azerbaijan, gender rights and equity in theory and reality, and how the Azerbaijani government can aid in resolving such issues.

English Language Lessons in Neftchilar Orphanage: Aysel Allahverdiyeva '01 organized a project to teach English in the Neftchilar orphanage, which will last till February. The alumni purchased school supplies for the orphans and went to the orphanage every Sunday in November to teach English grammar and vocabulary and to

organize language contests. Aysel Allakhverdiyeva '01, Aysel Allakhverdiyeva '04, and Aygun Husseynova '04 participated in this event.

Upcoming Events:

- Seminar on AIDS awareness will be held on December 8.
- FLEX Alumni Grant Program 2005 information seminar is planned for December 15.
- Gift and Clothing drive will be held through the entire month of December.
- Neftchilar Orphanage Christmas party is scheduled for December 26.
- Christmas and New Year party will take place on December 25.

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Belarus

Minsk

FLEX Recruitment: Fifteen alumni volunteered to help with registration, crowd control, and proctoring exams during FLEX recruitment from November 2-6.

“Helping the Elderly” Community Service Project: Ekaterina Apet '04, Natalia Atrashkova '02 and Ekaterina Borushko '02 participated in a joint community service project with the “Altera” youth organization on November 2. The project was aimed at helping the elderly in the community by helping them clean their homes, purchase necessary goods, and prepare for winter.

Election Breakfast: On November 3, 35 FLEX alumni from Minsk and other cities were among the honored



guests of an election breakfast hosted by U.S. Ambassador George A. Krol. Together with representatives of the U.S. Embassy, Belarusian politicians, and staff and students of the International Affairs Department of Belarusian State University, alumni listened to Ambassador Krol share his thoughts on the issue of democracy. He also presented the U.S. election system to the group. Alumni watched the final results of the 2004 U.S. presidential election and had the chance to talk with U.S. Embassy representatives.

Thank You Letters: Thirteen alumni gathered on November 8 to express their gratitude to those who make the FLEX program and alumni community possible. A total of 15 letters were composed and sent out to the U.S. officials, including Senator Bill Bradley, Diana Aronson (ECA), Lisa Choate (American Councils), and Secretary of State Colin L. Powell. The alumni also thanked you to their host families, neighbors, teachers, and pastors in the U.S.

International Education Week: Fifteen alumni including Margarita Kuleshova '03, Evgenia Sadovnikova '04, Anastassiiia Tarassiouk '03, Evgenia Sadovnikova '03, Mariya Grakhovskaya '04, Nadezda Morar, Anna Tretiakova '01 and Yulia Gladikova '04 planned and hosted events at various schools throughout Belarus during International Education Week. The alumni introduced students to international education with an emphasis on America. In addition to sharing their own U.S. experience, alumni also made presentations on the FLEX program and held question-and-answer sessions. The visits reached over 180 high school students in Minsk, Borisov, Lepel, Maryina Gorka and Orsha and encouraged them to learn English while also establishing contact with schools in non-hub cities.

CV Training Session: On November 22, Elena Biryukova '04 and Aleksandr Seletsky '04 attended a CV training session held in Gomel by American Councils staff. The training contributed to the alumni's professional development by covering important issues such as CV writing and appropriate behavior during an interview.

Movie Night: Twenty-three alumni gathered to watch the movie *Secondhand Lions* in the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy on November 23. The director of the movie, Tim McCanlies, happened to be in Minsk for an annual movie festival and was the special guest at movie night. The alumni enjoyed having the opportunity to meet with a representative from Hollywood, and asked questions about the movie and filmmaking in general.

Potluck Dinner: On November 27, 12 alumni joined in celebrating Thanksgiving with a potluck dinner followed by a gift exchange. The alumni also took part in team building and leadership exercises.

Upcoming Events:

- **Annual Father Frost project** is planned for December 22.
- **Christmas movie night** will be on December 15.
- **Grant writing seminar** and **Christmas celebration** will be held on December 19.

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Georgia

Tbilisi

Mock U.S. Presidential Elections: Alumni had the opportunity to cast their own ballot in a mock U.S. presidential election and also to predict who they thought would win the election. Alumni from all programs participated and it was a very close contest. At the end of polling, the race was tied until the two last voters tipped the balance in Kerry's favor. Alumni also predicted who would win the U.S. presidential election and by what margin; alumni predicted Bush would win and Muskie alumnus Zaza Sanadashvili came the closest to predicting the total number of electoral votes that Bush received. A second winner, Ketii Botchorishvili '98, accurately predicted that George Bush would receive 51% of the popular vote.

U.S. Game Day: On November 15 in celebration of International Education Week, alumni were invited to play card and board games popular in the U.S. such as Uno, Monopoly, and Scrabble at the Alumni Resource Center.

Spelling Bee: Fifteen alumni tested their skills during the spelling bee game, which was held at the Alumni Resource Center on November 17. American Councils staff ran the competition, and offered the winning prize of free lunch at a popular restaurant with the American Councils staff member of the winner's choice. The winner was Darejan Tsurtsunia '04, who spelled all her 17 words correctly.

Georgia, One Year after the Revolution: Education Reform: FLEX and other program alumni attended a roundtable discussion on educational reform on November 18. Deputy Minister of Education and Science Bella Tsipuria, a Junior Faculty Development Program alumna, made a brief presentation about secondary and higher education reform, and then engaged in a discussion with the audience.

“What? Where? When?” Tournament: The FLEX alumni team of Nino Matiashvili '04, Natia Berianidze '04, Megi Gogishvili '03 and Giorgi Datiashvili '03 took second place to their Undergraduate alumni team competitors in the “What? Where? When?” tournament held on November 24. Ketii Botchorishvili '98, game moderator, welcomed participants, explained the rules and gave the questions on American history and culture which had been prepared by FLEX and Undergraduate program alumnus Sergi Kapanadze '97. Other teams included the U.S. Embassy, American Councils staff, Undergraduate alumni (the winners) and the Center of American Studies.

Upcoming Event:

- **Shardeni street charity action** will be held on December 19.
- **Christmas ball** will be held on December 25.

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Kazakhstan

Almaty

Alumni Planning Meeting: On November 7, 25 FLEX alumni gathered to plan the Job Fair and Thanksgiving for the orphanage children.

Resume Writing Workshop and Interview Skills Seminar: American Councils regional director for Central Asia and Afghanistan conducted a resume writing workshop and interview skills seminar for alumni of U.S. Government programs on November 11. Twenty-eight FLEX and two Eurasian Undergraduate program alumni

learned more about how to avoid common mistakes made during the job search process as well as tips on having a successful job interview, which were demonstrated through skits. New alumni were particularly excited about this opportunity and planned to submit their improved resumes at the upcoming Job Fair. Attendees included Aslan Abzhakov '02, Aliya Amanzholova '04, Dina Astayeva '04, Dias Baimagulov '04, Assel Baltabayeva '04, Yulia Demurova '04, Bogdana Gavrilenko '04, Vyacheslava Goncharova '03, Malika Kaparova '04, Dina Karibayeva '04, Svetlana Kashtanova '04, Madina Kosbergenova '04, Diana Kudaibergenova '04, Damir Kukanov '02, Ainur Kuttumuratova '02, Vadim Laptev '04, Aliya Moldakhanova '04, Galina Nevernaya '03, Lena Norakidze '99, Alexander Parfyonov '04, Zhadyra Sarmanova '04, Yekaterina Serebryanaya '04, Marzhan Serekova '04, Maria Shafigova '03, Aigerim Sharipova '04, Yegor Syo '04, Dinara Urazova '04, and Gulnur Yessenbayeva '04.

Movie Trip for the Orphanage Children: Twenty-five Almaty alumni took the children from the Oblast Orphanage #1 to the movies on November 14. Alumni chose this event because they wanted to do something out of the ordinary for the children. The children are often visited by alumni and recently by politicians during the parliamentary election season, and while alumni felt that these visits were certainly positive, the fact remained that the children rarely venture *outside* of the orphanage. Aslan Abzhakov '02 and Lena Norakidze '99 successfully negotiated with the manager of a local movie theatre to provide tickets to *Shark Tales* at a 66 % discount which enabled them to rent one of the theatres for 70 orphans plus the 25 organizing alumni. A local transportation company also agreed to provide two busses at great discount, and alumni purchased soft drinks and candies for the children to enjoy. FLEX alumni who participated were Alfiya Abdrakhmanova '04, Aslan Abzhakov '02, Aliya Amanzholova '04, Dina Astayeva '04, Diana Azhikova '04, Assel Baltabayeva '04, Adiya Bitanova '01, Vyacheslava Goncharova '03, Zhibek Karamanova '03, Dina Karibayeva '04, Gaukhar Kenzhegaliyeva '99, Madina Kosbergenova '04, Damir Kukanov '02, Anastasia Litvinova '03, Aliya Moldakhanova '04, Anel Moldakhmetova '01, Elena Norakidze '99, Nariman Rakhmetkaliyev '04, Zhadyra Sarmanova '04, Yekaterina Serebryanaya '04, Marzhan Serekova '04, Maria Shafigova '03, Yegor Syo '04, Gulnur Yessenbayeva '04, and Dinara Urazova '04.

Job Fair: On November 20, the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy in Kazakhstan together with American Councils and IREX conducted a Job Fair aimed at helping alumni of U.S. Government-sponsored programs in their job searches. The Fair was also open to the general public. Eighteen multinational and local companies and organizations set up booths and gave presentations about opportunities at their organizations and collected CVs from attendees including 21 FLEX alumni. FLEX alumni also helped with booth set-up and provided assistance during lunch. Participating alumni included Aslan Abzhakov '02, Assel Baltabayeva '04, Dias Baimagulov '04, Yulia Demurova '04, Dina Karibayeva '04, Amir Kenchebayev '02, Damir Kukanov '02, Ainur Kuttumuratova '02, Vadim Laptev '04, Tynyshtyk Maylibayeva '02, Aizhan Mendygarina '03, Elena Norakidze '99, Alexander Parfyonov '04, Shakhida Sadyrova '02, Marzhan Serekova '04, Maria Shafigova '03, Lena Sotnikova '04, Urazova Dinara '04, Yekaterina Serebryanaya '04, Gulnaz Ukasova '03, and Marat Yelemessov '03.

Upcoming Events:

- **Christmas celebration** planning meeting is scheduled for December 12.
- **Christmas event** will be held on December 25.

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Kyrgyzstan

Bishkek

Meeting with Assistant Secretary of State Laura Kennedy: Sergey Firsov '00, Yulia Tsoi '02, and Maksat Tynaev '01 had a meeting with Assistant Secretary of State Laura Kennedy on November 15. The alumni talked about their activities and successes, and also discussed upcoming projects such as the Central Asian Training of Teachers seminar. Ms. Kennedy was particularly interested in the alumni's education and was impressed by their hard work and enthusiasm. She thanked the alumni for their efforts and contributions to the community in Kyrgyzstan and promised them her support.

International Café: FLEX alumni participated in an International Café they organized with Eurasia Undergraduate alumni as part of International Education Week on November 17. Ksenia Tsoy '04 and Diana

FLEX November 2004 Report

Mamotova '04 presented Kyrgyzstan, Kamilla Gaiazova '04 and Diana Babaeva '04 presented Tajikistan '04, and Selbi Hanova '02 and Sergey Atliev '01 presented Turkmenistan. The alumni briefly introduced the countries, cooked national dishes, and performed a traditional song, art, or game.

Trip to Meerim Children's Center: Marlis Esenakulov '02, Sasha Sidorenko '04 and Nargiza Sultanova '04 went to Meerim Children's Center on November 19 to discuss the FLEX program, their personal experiences with American families, funny and awkward situations that they went through with cultural customs, their time in a U.S. high school, and to encourage children to learn English and participate in exchange programs.

Thanksgiving Celebration: Sergey Firsov '00, Vladislav Kulamov '03, Karina Madulova '03, Shamamed Seitmuradov '03, Elena Sharomova '04, and Aliya Suranova '04 went to the Bishkek Rehabilitation Center for Children (a center for children from troubled families) on November 27 to celebrate Thanksgiving. The alumni told the children about the history of Thanksgiving, ate sweets, and held an art activity on how to draw dream flowers and animals with water-colors. The alumni also brought clothes for the children which were collected during their clothing drive earlier in November.

Upcoming Events:

- **HIV/AIDS Day** will be on December 1.
- **Monthly alumni meeting** will be held on December 5.
- **Christmas and New Year celebration** is planned for December 24.

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Moldova

Chisinau

Grant Writing and Fundraising Training: American Councils organized a training session for FLEX alumni on grant writing and fundraising on November 13. Eurasia Undergraduate alumna Veronica Cacean '03 made a PowerPoint presentation with useful tips for organizing a fundraising activity, and Igor Garabajiv '03 followed up with a review of the FLEX Alumni Grant application and possible difficulties.

Bridges Between Us and Soroca Interns Project: Ana Ceban '04, Alina Graur '04, and Cristina Gutu '04 organized and held an event at the Soroca orphanage on November 14. The children enjoyed an apple-bobbing contest, pin the tail on the donkey, a balloon-drawing contest, and a hanging apple game.

Essay Contest: Valentina Brega '04 and Igor Garabajiv '03 announced an essay contest at Gaudeamus High School in Chisinau on November 15. The theme was "Education: the Goal of My Life." Fifteen students volunteered to participate. The three best essays will be published in the *Welcome* magazine, the *Alumni Bulletin*, and on the IATP website. The alumni then made a short presentation about International Education Week, with a focus on educational reform in Moldova. Contest winners received certificates and were invited to alumni movie night.

IEW Panel Discussion: Elena Caciurnenco '04, Zoia Chirca '04, Vadim Dubceac '04, Xenia Gleadcenco '04, Corina Nour '04 organized a panel discussion on International Education Week at the IATP center on November 15. Vadim Dubceac '04 spoke briefly about democracy and education in the 21st century, which was followed by a geography and world history quiz by the IATP Director.

Leadership Seminar: Ana Ciudnaia '01 presented a seminar entitled "Leadership: A Way through Life" to tenth-grade students at Spiru Haret High School on November 16. The students discussed working in a group with a nominated leader, which leadership style is best, and what to do to become a leader. The seminar was composed of three sections, and the last one was a group activity involving a small presentation.

Movie Night: On November 17, Elena Caciurnenco '04, Zoia Chirca '04, Vadim Dubceac '04, Xenia Gleadcenco '04, and Corina Nour '04 watched the movie *Dead Poet's Society* at the IATP center. The alumni closed the event by discussing the movie, which stressed the significance of education in a person's life.

FLEX November 2004 Report

IEW Presentation: Vadim Dubceac '04 and Xenia Gleadcenco '04 held an event on November 18 at D. Cantemir High School in Balti. The alumni gave the students a quiz, conducted an informative session about International Education Week, held a discussion panel on "how I see myself in future," and spoke with the students about what their generation can do in building the future of the nation.

Chisinau Movie Night: Valentina Brega '04 and three winners of the essay contest attended the movie night at the Alumni Resource Center on November 19.

Balti Regional Representative Meeting: Ten alumni attended a planning meeting with American Councils staff and two Peace Corps volunteers on November 19.

Computer Training: Vadim Dubceac '04 held a training session at the IATP center on November 22. Vadim introduced the theory and main aspects of web design. Elena Caciurnenco '04, Zoia Chirca '04, Vadim Dubceac '04, Xenia Gleadcenco '04, and Corina Nour '04 participated in the event, and will have developed their own web page by the end of the first week of December.

Balti Interns Project: Ludmila Ceban '03, Natalia Ionel '04, and Eurasia Undergraduate alumnus Sergiu Pirau '03 gave their first regional presentation on the prevention of human trafficking at Falesti High School on November 23. Ludmila introduced the topic and presented the agenda for the event. Natalia spoke about the main goals and reasons for the human trafficking problem in Moldova. Natalia and Sergiu conducted an interactive activity on identifying potential victims. The students were very receptive and participated actively in the discussion. Peace Corps Volunteer Stasia Savasuk compared human trafficking in Moldova and the U.S.

Information Fair for Peace Corps Volunteers: American Language Center staff and FLEX alumnus Igor Garabajiv '03 took part in an information fair for new Peace Corps volunteers on November 26. The volunteers learned about FLEX and American Councils and expressed interest in participating in alumni activities.

Youth Integration between Moldova and Transdnistr Seminar: This seminar was held on November 27 as part of the FLEX Alumni Grant project and designed to raise awareness among youth in Dniestr and to facilitate cooperation between Moldovan and Transdnistran nongovernmental organizations. Students from Moldova State University and the Academy of Economic Studies organized the event, which was attended by 25 people. The participants discussed the current relations between organizations in Moldova and Transdnistr, and Vadim Dubceac '04 and Elena Caciurnenco '04 shared their personal views of the situation.

Thanksgiving Celebration: Valentina Brega '04, Lilia Fusa '04, Igor Garabajiv '03, Anastasia Leanca '04, Nadejda Mustea '02, Maxim Semionov '04, and Elena Ursu '04 participated in a Thanksgiving celebration at Scoala Internat #1 on November 28. The children watched a Thanksgiving skit performed by Valentina and Lilia and then went to the Licurici puppet theater, where they assisted in a talent show and watched a puppet show. The children also enjoyed a Tom & Jerry cartoon upon their return from the theater.

Upcoming Events:

- **International AIDS Day** will be held on December 1.
- **First Planning Meeting** for Christmas and New Year is planned for December 1.
- **Clothing Fundraiser** for orphanage children will take place on December 1.
- **Bridges Between Us monthly training** on interview preparation is scheduled for December 11 and 18.
- **Planning meeting** in Balti will be held on December 11.
- **"Youth Integration between Moldova and Transdnistra" seminar** in Chisinau is scheduled for December 11.
- **Decorations and Christmas cards** will be made for orphanage children on December 13.
- **Christmas and New Year celebration** at Chisinau Orphanage #1 is planned for December 23.

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Russia

Kirov

Job Shadowing Day: Fifty tenth-graders participated in the Job Shadowing Day which was organized by Vladimir Gordeev '98 in cooperation with Vyatka Humanitarian Gymnasia during November. Vladimir participated in a similar program as a FLEX student in the U.S., and the experience turned out to be decisive in his choice of a medical career. He recruited both senior and younger alumni to find Kirov professionals who would host students at their work places with the goal of helping them choose a career path and stimulate their interest in higher education. Hosts included Elena Bakulina '98, Natalya Nagaeva '02, and Ekaterina Skopina '96.

"Discover America" Presentation: Elena Bakulina '98 conducted the "Discover America" presentation in English classes at Vyatka State University on November 22 as an International Education Week activity.

Internet Class: Vladimir Gordeev '98 conducted a class in using the Internet for nursing students at Kirov State Medical Academy on November 23.

Creative Writing Workshop: Vladimir Gordeev '98 and Anna Milyutina '01 conducted a creative writing workshop for ninth-grade students from school #10 on November 25.

"Raduga Tvorchestva" (Rainbow of Creativity) Project: With funding from a FLEX Alumni Grant, Anna Milyutina '01 conducted the "Raduga Tvorchestva" project on November 27-28. She recruited over 20 volunteers to work with the orphans and help them explore their personal qualities and talents during workshops and leadership activities. Anna's goal in designing the project was to help the children build their self-confidence and learn more about the U.S., the world and other cultures, and about different countries' political systems. Vladimir Gordeev '98 and Sonya Kaplan '04 also participated in the project.

Nizhny Novgorod

Orphanage English Lessons: Kseniya Gorshenina '04 and Kseniya Pozdeyeva '00 conducted four English lessons in an orphanage for hearing-impaired and blind children. FLEX alumni also gave a presentation about Thanksgiving.

Cheboksary

Alumni Meeting and Movie Night: Twelve alumni attended the movie night and alumni meeting conducted by Ksenia Semyonova '02 in Cheboksary on November 20.

Upcoming Events:

- **Clothing Drive** will be held in Kirov, Nizhny Novgorod, Cheboksary, and Kazan.
- **Kirov City Representatives training conference** is planned for December 18.
- **AIDS prevention workshops** will be held for schoolchildren in Kirov on December 8 and 9.

Moscow

Monthly Meeting: On November 3, Nikita Aleksandrov '03, Evgenia Bourilova '01, Ekaterina Isinova '03, Anastasiya Makeyeva '04, Polina Makova '03, Yulia Tell '02 and Evgeny Yankovoy '01 met to discuss upcoming events and the results of the joint Moscow-St. Petersburg alumni conference.

Alumni Meetings: On November 10, 11, 19, 20 and 24 FLEX alumni gathered to discuss and plan events. Up to 12 alumni participated in each meeting. Alumni discussed changes to be made in unofficial FLEX web site, and formed two teams that will run the web site: a technical team, and a team in charge of creating materials for the web site.

Tolerance Theatre: On November 5, Igor Alekseev '99, Ekaterina Isinova '03, Polina Makova '03 and Aleksandra Markova '03 attended the Tolerance Theatre's premiere presentation "The Laramie Project," which was staged by Undergraduate alumni and included performances by FLEX alumni Mikhail Sukhov '98 and Ivan

Sorokin '99. Different exercises and role-plays are done during the presentation to develop tolerance towards each other.

English Language Classes for Beslan Children and Parents: On November 15, FLEX alumni Takhmina Acheldieva '97, Olga Krylova '02, Polina Makova '03 and American Councils staff went to a children's psychiatric hospital to visit six children from Beslan and their mothers. Alumni delivered presents and letters sent by American students and volunteered to give English lessons to the children during the coming weeks.

International Education Week Presentation: FLEX alumni, American students, a Vietnamese student and Russian university students gathered to discuss different educational systems on November 17. FLEX alumni shared their experiences in American high schools and their extra-curricular activities. American students who were studying at the Russian State Humanities University talked about their experience of studying under the Russian and American systems of education and compared approaches, highlighting the advantages and opportunities each gives its students. The FLEX alumni were asked many questions about their exchange experiences. Participating alumni were Ulyana Lazovich '03, Tatyana Maksatova '03, Tatyana Mendikovskaya '03, Yulia Tell '02 and Lidiya Vetrova '03 (Korolev).

Fundraising Seminar: Yulia Molodtsova '98 led a fundraising skills seminar on November 21. Yulia told about the fundraising cycle, methods and principles and how to plan a fundraising project and needed resources. Participants took part in a role-play game in which they had to persuade a businessman to donate money for a charity project. Yulia talked about how to successfully negotiate with a difficult person and stressed the importance of self-confidence. Participating alumni were Aleksey Erushkin '96, Ekaterina Isinova '03, Tatyana Maksatova '03, Yulia Molodtsova '98, Olga Pryanichnikova '03, and Yulia Tell '02.

Thanksgiving Orphanage Visit: On November 27, Ekaterina Isinova '03, Polina Makova '03, Tatyana Mendikovskaya '03, Yulia Tell '02, and Lidiya Vetrova '03 organized a Thanksgiving celebration for the children at the orphanage #50. Yulia told the story of Thanksgiving and how it became a holiday in the U.S. Lidiya Vetrova and Polina Makova told about different traditions of the holiday. Then children had a quiz about what they had just learned and received prizes for correct answers. Alumni involved the children in playing games that required good teamwork and coordination, as well as trust in each other.



Moscow Open Parliamentary Debate Tournament: On November 27-29, four FLEX alumni participated in the international parliamentary *Moscow Open* debate tournament. Teams from Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Uzbekistan, Germany, Latvia and Ireland participated. The topics of different rounds were the following: "This house would pay compensations for slavery," "This house would create an independent state of Kurdistan," "This house would fine obscenities." Ekaterina Stolyarova '99, Diora Ziyaeva '00 (Tashkent) and Yulia Tell '02 competed in the tournament. Alexey Rummyantsev '95 served as a judge of this tournament. Ekaterina Stolyarova '99 and Diora Ziyaeva '00 reached the semi-finals of this tournament.

Orel

International Education Week Celebration: On November 17, Anna Buzmakova '04, volunteer city representative Darya Dobrova '03, and Anna Emelyanova '04 organized a conference on international education and educational systems in America and Russia. Students from several universities, schools and citizens of Orel with an interest in international education and relations joined the event. There was a discussion on the role of exchange programs and how participation in them affects people's lives.

Art and Education in the US Press Conference: Anna Emelyanova '04 conducted a press conference at the Orel Art College on November 17. The topic was "Art schools, colleges and universities in the US." The students of the college asked questions about the differences in the educational systems and the way of teaching art in America. Anna showed pictures of the school where she studied in the U.S. and described a typical day in an American art school. Students and teachers greatly enjoyed the presentation and invited Anna to come to their college again.

Thanksgiving Celebration: Anna Emelyanova '04 and Darya Dobrova '03, together with Orel State University student Rita Svidchenko organized a Thanksgiving event at the Orel Public Library on November 25. The FLEX alumni told their audience the history of the holiday, described how Americans traditionally celebrate it, prepared a Thanksgiving dinner of turkey, vegetables and Coca-Cola and showed photos of their Thanksgiving celebrations in the U.S.

Upcoming Events:

- **“Time to live” concert** will be attended by alumni on International AIDS day, December 1.
- **Team-building training** to be led by Nataliya Yeremeyeva '95 is scheduled for December 5.
- **Orel orphanage visit** will take place December 7.
- **Monthly alumni meeting** will be held on December 8
- **Presentation** in Orel school of foreign languages will take place on December 10
- **Online forum “Elections 2004”** planning meeting for Russia, Ukraine and Belarus alumni will be held on December 14.
- **Christmas celebration** will be held December 17 in Orel’s kindergarten.
- **Christmas fundraising project** for orphanage #50 to be held during Charity Week, December 16-23.
- **FLEX alumni web site presentation** is planned for December 20.
- **Christmas presentation** will be held in Orel Public Library on December 23.
- **Christmas celebration** in orphanage #50 is planned for December 24.
- **Christmas celebration** at the Orel orphanage for children with disabilities will take place in late December.

Contact: Moscow Alumni Assistant Yulia Tell '02, fsaalumni@actr.ru, 7(095)230-4544.

Novosibirsk

Monthly Meeting: Eighteen alumni attended the meeting held on November 9. They discussed their plans for the month and received advertisements for the FLEX program to distribute among schools in the city. Many pupils who tested for FLEX said that they found out about the program from posters in their schools.

2004 Recruitment: Darya Afonasyova '01, Igor Babichev '01, Anna Demichik '01, Irina Gagarina '04, Natalya Gashko '04, Elena Khruleva '01, Maksim Lobaty '03, Alexandra Mironova '00, Alexandr Nozdrin '01, Anastasia Parfenova '04, Alexey Poleschuk '02, Tatyana Popova '03, and Bella Struminski '02 aided in recruitment for the FLEX program on November 13-14. This year around 400 children participated in the FLEX contest in Novosibirsk, so a lot of help was needed. Alumni helped with crowd control and answered questions from students and parents. Alumni also attended a post-recruitment meeting with recruiters.

Distance Learning Seminar: Anna Demichik '01 and Tatyana Popova '03 attended the Distance Learning Seminar held by the IATP center on November 17.

English Song Contest: Darya Afonasyova '01, Irina Gagarina '04, Alexandr Nozdrin '01, and students from the Novosibirsk State Technical University organized an English song contest as part of International Education Week. The alumni were invited to act as judges at the contest. Selection tours were held on November 11 and 15, and the concert took place on November 19.

Thank You Letters: Darya Afonasyova '01, Anna Demichik '01, Elena Khruleva '01, Maksim Lobaty '03, and Alexandr Nozdrin '01 met on November 22 to write thank-you letters to their host organizations and representatives.

Upcoming Events:

- **Christmas movie night** will take place on December 25.
- **Christmas and New Year celebration** will be held for orphanage children and children in the oncology hospital in December.
- **"Make a Toy for the New Year’s Tree" project** is tentatively planned for December.
- **New Year celebration** for orphanage children will take place in non-hub cities.
- **Distance learning seminar** will be held at the IATP center.

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St. Petersburg

Halloween Celebration for Children at Nikolsky Orphanage: On November 3, FLEX alumni Yulia Diundikova '03, Yekaterina Gavrilenko '03, Maria Mishina '03, Varvara Miroshnichenko '03, Anatoly Naidionov '04, together with Undergraduate alumni held a Halloween celebration for the children at the Nikolskiy orphanage. The alumni held a contest for the best pumpkin face drawing for the children and then carved out the winner's design. Alumni played several Halloween games and gave out candy and toys, which had been collected during a previous toy-drive. This was the first time the alumni visited Nikolskiy orphanage and both the alumni and the orphans are looking forward to further meetings.

Time Management Seminar: On November 13, FLEX alumni had the chance to acquire new useful skills at the time management seminar that was held at the IATP Center. The seminar was designed and presented by Lina Ochirova of ARConsulting. The seminar topics included systematic time management, successful interview, and successful "exam" passing. Anna Churkina '98, Pavel Fyodorov '01, Anna Mayorova '02, Irina Sergeeva '98, Mikhail Stukolkin '96, Evelina Sukhovskaia '96, Yekaterina Vodopyan '94 took part in the training.

Roundtable Discussion on the Value of Higher Education in the US: On November 15, alumni participated in a roundtable discussion on the value of higher education in the U.S. and Russia. FLEX alumni, Vladimir Anaimovich '99, Tatiana Belousova '03, Yulia Cherniadeva '04 and Irina Gorelova '03 as well as American exchange students currently studying in St. Petersburg shared their views on the value of higher education in the two different societies, how important it is to one's professional growth and how they saw this value reflected in the society based on their exchange experience. American Education Advising center visitors were also invited to participate in the discussion.

Thanksgiving Celebration for Orphans: Petrozavodsk FLEX alumni visited boarding school #20 to tell the children about Thanksgiving, play some games and let them try traditional dishes on November 20. The alumni also prepared cookies and held a tea party for the children. Darya Amosova '04, Lyudmila Chistiakova '01, Natalia Gomankova '02, Ekaterina Ivankina '04, Elena Lavrentieva '03, Ekaterina Martuyukova '03, Anastasia Nerovnaya '03, Alena Romashkina '04, Nikita Vorobyov '03 organized the celebration.

Petrozavodsk Alumni Thanksgiving celebration: On the last Thursday of November, five FLEX alumni from St. Petersburg including Yulia Diundikova '03, Yekaterina Gavrilenko '03, Natalia Makarova '99, Anatoly Naidionov '04, Maria Zolotokrylina '02, together with American Councils staff and Alumni Assistant Igor Gots held a Thanksgiving celebration together with the Petrozavodsk alumni in Karelia. Alumni met at the IATP Center in Petrozavodsk and got a phone card so that each got a chance to call his or her host family and thank them for their hospitality after which 15 alumni went to Nikita Vorobyov's '03 house to cook turkey and other traditional Thanksgiving dishes.

American Studies Competitions for High School Students: St. Petersburg and Petrozavodsk alumni launched a series of American Studies contests for high school students on November 25-27. On November 25, alumni held a competition between the St. Petersburg team and the Petrozavodsk team at the local IATP Center. The alumni had to answer questions on American history, geography and culture. This activity served as a "training of trainers," as the alumni would later run similar competitions at local schools. The alumni then prepared questions and tasks themselves and ran these competitions three schools from November 26-27. The students on the winning teams were awarded certificates.

Upcoming Events:

- **American Studies competitions in St. Petersburg** planning meeting and first events will be held in December.
- **Christmas presents drive for orphans** will continue throughout December.
- **Christmas celebration for alumni** will be held in late December.

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Samara

Monthly Alumni Meeting: Ilya Brezhnev '02, Ekaterina Gafarova '03, Elena Pastukhova '00, Anastasia Pechkurova '03, Anna Shegurova '04, Maria Smetannikova '98, and Sasha Visloguzova '04 gathered to discuss International Education Week and visit an orphanage on November 6.

Resume and Job Hunting Tips Seminars: Two seminars were held as part of International Education Week. The first seminar on interviewing and resume writing was led by Maria Smetannikova '98 on November 13 and was attended by Ilya Brezhnev '02, Valya Dolgikh '02, Ekaterina Gafarova '03, Timur Kurmaev '02, Tatyana Lebakina '03, Elena Pastukhova '00, Anastasia Pechkurova '03, Anna Shegurova '04, and Sasha Visloguzova '04. The second seminar was headed by Elena Pastukhova on November 15 and was attended by 18 alumni.

“Bridges of Understanding” Seminar: Valentina Dolgikh '02, Timur Kurmaev '02, and Elizaveta Spiridonova '03 organized the “Bridges of Understanding” seminar at Samara school #72 as part of International Education Week on November 24. They led a discussion with ninth grade students about the value of international exchange programs and shared their U.S. experiences. The alumni convinced the students to apply to the FLEX program next year. Their teacher Irina Korelyakova expressed interest in FLEX and promised to prepare her students for the 2005 competition.

Thanksgiving Celebration: Valeria Baburina '99, Timur Kurmaev '02, Irina Malakhovskaya '98, Anastasia Pechkurova '03, and the Samara American Alumni Club celebrated Thanksgiving together at the American Corner on November 25. U.S. representatives and Population Services International volunteers were invited to the feast and participated in the entertainment part of the show, which helped them feel at home and remember the traditions of their country.

Upcoming Events:

- **Annual orphanage visit** is scheduled for the beginning of December.
- **Christmas celebration** will be held at “Malyutka” with the Samara American Alumni Club.

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

Vladivostok

U.S. Presidential Election Discussion: Anastasia Aleshkina '04, Olga Bukach '04, Marina Kaurova '99, Zoya Nabatova '97, Anna Ustugova '99, Valentina Yurenok '98, and Polina Zavyalova '00 met on November 12 to discuss the recent U.S. presidential elections. The alumni talked about future collaboration between our countries, the problem of polarization in U.S. society, and possible changes in U.S. foreign and domestic policies. Alumni also discussed the U.S. electoral system and compared it with the Russian system. Alumni came to the conclusion that political opinions vary greatly among different countries and even within in the U.S., and that U.S. policy affects not only the U.S. but other countries as well, including Russia.

International Education Week Forum: Twelve FLEX alumni attended a three-day forum organized by American Councils on November 17-19 as part of International Education Week. The forum, entitled “International Education as a Way to Intercultural and Interethnic Tolerance,” was attended by a total of 40 people each day, including representatives from the public and alumni from other U.S. exchange programs. U.S. Consulate General Representative Ludmila Kurzenko spoke about U.S. government sponsored programs. FLEX Alumni Assistant Polina Zavyalova and Eurasia Undergraduate Alumni Fellow Ivan Pechorin then presented U.S.-based funding, scholarship, and fellowship opportunities. Representatives from various universities and international organizations such as Project Harmony and the Educational Advising Center were also present to provide information about exchange programs and educational opportunities. Ivan Pechorin presented on “Interethnic Tolerance” and Polina Zavyalova presented on “Tolerance towards Homosexuals.” The remainder of the day was devoted to the “Conflict Resolution Training Session; Mediation and Negotiation Process” conducted by Anna Bodunkova, Natalia Koreneva, and Aleksander Shvets from the nongovernmental organization “Leadership Tomorrow.” At the end of the forum, the alumni shared their opinions in regard to cooperation, communication, and tolerance of people different from themselves.

American Councils Presentation in Khabarovsk: Natasha Burkalova '03 and Artem Shkumat '03 gave a presentation at the IATP center about the FLEX program on November 18. The alumni discussed the program,

alumni activities, and their U.S. experiences with students from different schools. Brochures and pictures were passed around, and the alumni fielded many questions from the audience, which ultimately resulted in great interest on the part of the students in participating in the FLEX program.

International Education Week in Buryatiya: Anna Nikolaeva '98 and Yana Zabanova '99 helped organize an event in Ulan-Ude as part of International Education Week on November 22-26. Various workshops, roundtables, and panel discussions were held as part of the event, including a presentation entitled "What does FLEX mean?" The event, which was intended to spread awareness of U.S. exchange programs and their benefits, was open to the public and was well received.

"Youth Against Gender Violence" Seminar: The educational project "Youth Against Gender Violence" was held on November 24 and attended by Anastasia Aleshkina '04, Veronika Azarova '04, Olga Bukach '04, Nvard Khachaturyan '00, Zoya Nabatova '97, Anastasia Prokonich '02, Julia Prokonich '00, Valentina Yurenok '98, and Polina Zavyalova '00. "Far Eastern Center" Director Svetlana Bazhenova was the guest speaker and discussed the issue of human trafficking with alumni. Following the presentation the alumni discussed this problem's existence in the Primorskiy Krai and ways of protecting people from being deceived.

HIV and AIDS Prevention Seminars: On November 30 Anastasia Aleshkina '04, Veronika Azarova '04, Olga Bukach '04, and Polina Zavyalova '00 spoke with 10th and 11th grade students about AIDS Prevention Day, which is recognized on December 1. Different facts about HIV/AIDS and tolerance towards those infected with the virus were presented. The seminar helped high school students think about their future and ways to protect themselves while still being tolerant of those who are HIV positive.

Upcoming Events:

- **Movie Night** will be held on December 1 as part of AIDS Prevention Day.
- **Canned food, clothing, and toys drive** to benefit an orphanage is planned for December 15..
- **"Role of market research in organizing your company" seminar** will take place on December 17.

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Volgograd

Meeting with FLEX Recruiters: Anna Bakumova '02, Ekaterina Chernishova '99, Daria Karpenko '01, Olga Kornienko '03 and Olga Melnikova '03 attended the November 19 meeting with the FLEX recruiters. The alumni watched the movie *Super Size Me* and afterwards shared their opinions about it and discussed the impact of the fast food on people's health.

Seminar on Freelance Jobs: Marina Karpushko '04 and Olga Melnikova '03 attended the November 21 freelance jobs seminar, led by FLEX alumni assistant Nelli Khachaturian '03. The alumni learned about freelancing, what types of jobs are suitable for it and its advantages and disadvantages

Thanksgiving Celebration: Marina Karpushko '04 and Oksana Panfilova '04 made a November 27 presentation about the Thanksgiving holiday for the children of the school # 3 of Gorodische near Volgograd. The alumni told the children about the history of the holiday, how it is usually celebrated, what the traditional foods are, and what Americans prefer to do on this day. The children enjoyed the presentation very much and their English teacher thanked the alumni for the opportunity to learn about the American holiday.

Krasnodar Alumni Activity: New Krasnodar city representative Kirill Skakov '03 organized several alumni events during November. He invited fellow alumni to a monthly meeting, which was attended by Elizaveta Pivnyuk '04, Elena Smychkova '03, Irina Sevastyanova '04 and Ruzanna Putneva '04. The group discussed their plans for the following year. Kirill also met Elena Dunkina, a city official who works with orphans and homeless children to discuss some possible activities at local orphanages. The alumni decided that they would hold their meetings at Kuban State University (KubSU) and create a United Club there.

Rostov-on-Don Tolerance Awareness Activity: FLEX recruiters conducted a one-hour training activity for a group of seven FLEX and Eurasian Undergraduate alumni at Rostov School #36 on November 18. This training was based on Jane Elliott's "Blue Eyes – Brown Eyes" diversity training activity. During the activity alumni were divided into two groups according to their ear shapes and were treated unequally, giving them the chance

to experience discrimination first-hand. After the activity the alumni discussed what is the best way work with Rostov schools to conduct similar trainings. They also did a trust-building exercise, which they may also use in their tolerance training for high school students. Participating alumni were Irina Avetisova '01 (Taganrog), Elena Dorofeyeva '04, Marina Radchenko '02, Elena Silchenko '02, Anna Stoyeva '04 and Undergraduate alumnae Oksana Gorbunkova and Yuliya Manukyan.

Upcoming Events:

- **Meeting with FLEX recruiters** will be held on December 17
- **Christmas party** is planned for December 25.

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Yekaterinburg

Reception at the U.S. Consulate General: Ilya Korobeinikov '04, Lyuobov Okulova '04, Nataliya Shipulina '03, and Mariya Trofimova '03 had the opportunity to be present at an official reception held on November 3 at the U.S. Consulate General in honor of the presidential elections. Alumni had the chance to speak with Consul General Scott M. Rauland about the results of the elections.

Education Roundtable Discussion: A roundtable discussion regarding the differences between Russian and American education systems was held on November 17 at the American Information Center as part of International Education Week. American Center Education and American Councils Office organized the event which was attended by approximately 20 local students. The students were shown a video about the FLEX program, and Nataliya Shipulina '03, Mariya Trofimova '03, and Dariya Ustyugova '03 talked about their U.S. experience. A discussion of the American education system was then held, and the winners of an essay contest about the advantages and disadvantages of their schools were announced by Vice Consul Bradley Hearst.

English Club Meeting: Many alumni have expressed interest in an English Club and plans are underway for organizing this on a regular basis. The first English Club meeting was held spontaneously on November 22 and attended by Antonina Ivanova '04 and Mariya Trofimova '03.

“What Do You Know about America” Contest: The “What Do You Know about America” contest for high school students was started as part of International Education Week on November 23. Vera Aminova '03 came up with the idea and prepared all the materials. The contest provides high school students with the chance to learn more about the U.S. by referring to school library materials, encyclopedias, and other materials.

Thanksgiving Celebration: The U.S. Consulate General, American Councils, and the American Information Center organized a Thanksgiving celebration on November 25. Vera Aminova '03, Antonina Ivanova '04, Ilya Korobeinikov '04, Yekaterina Noskova '04, Lyubov Okulova '04, Nataliya Shipulina '03, and Mariya Trofimova '03 attended the event and discussed upcoming plans for December. Consul General Scott Rauland, American Councils staff, and other friends of the American Information Center were also in attendance. The guests watched the movie *Back to the Future* and enjoyed pumpkin pie. Consul General Scott Rauland then officially opened operation “Santa Claus” (which provides various products for children in orphanages) by donating a toy.

American Center 10th Anniversary Celebration: Ilya Korobeinikov '04, Lyubov Okulova '04, Natalya Shipulina '03, and Mariya Trofimova '03 were invited to attend the American Information Center's 10-year anniversary celebration on November 29. U.S. Consul General Scott Rauland opened the ceremony and gave a speech. Alumni agreed to participate with American Information Center staff in Christmas events.

Upcoming Events:

- **Operation Santa Claus** is planned for December.
- **English club meeting** will be held throughout December.
- **AIDS prevention activity** will take place in December at a high school in Yekaterinburg.

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Tajikistan

Dushanbe

International Education Week: Public visitors, FLEX alumni and staff of the U.S. Embassy, American Councils, Relief International, Schools Online, and IREX gathered on November 22 to celebrate International Education Week. Miskola Abdulloeva '02, Javohir Homidov '04, Sekhrangez Isomidinova '99, and Nigina Kudratova '03 distributed brochures about International Education Week and the FLEX program to visitors before U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Officer Jennifer Washeleski welcomed participants and encouraged them to work hard on their education. A panel of representatives gave short presentations about their organizations and programs and was followed by the awards ceremony for the "What Education Means in my Life" essay contest. The contest had been advertised in newspapers around Tajikistan and attracted over 30 participants. Winners were selected by Relief International and Schools Online staff. Twelve contestants received Russian-Tajik-English Dictionaries provided by the U.S. Embassy and CD cases from American Councils. The first, second, and third place winners also received hats with the U.S. Embassy logo and DVDs and CDs from American Councils. Afterwards a local radio station interviewed alumni about their U.S. experiences.

Brain Ring Competition: Tenth and twelfth-grade students from three schools were invited to take part in the Brain Ring competition held in Tursun-zade on November 26. The theme was "English Speaking Countries." Miskola Abdulloeva '01, Sehrangez Isomidinova '99, Daler Khakimov '04, and Malika Khakimova '04 prepared questions for the contest and acted as judges. American Councils staff welcomed everyone and began the competition, which had five rounds and was won after fierce competition by the "Sugdiyon" school.

Resume Writing and Interviewing Seminar: Ten alumni attended a seminar led by Enterprise Development Center Manager. Beau Taylor from the PRAGMA Corporation in Dushanbe on November 27. Mr. Taylor spoke about resume format and content, highlighted common errors applicants often make in their resumes and gave the alumni advice on having a successful interview.

Movie Night at Khorog Orphanage School: Firuza Azizmamadova '04, Dilrabo Jonbekova '00, Khirad Kargasov '99, and Sabzina Oshikova '04 held a movie night at Khorog Orphanage School on November 29. The school is for children ages six to 17 whose parents have passed away or are unemployed. The alumni showed the children the movie *Shrek* and treated them to chocolate bars and juice before taking a group photo at the end of the event.

FLEX Program Presentation: Khurshed Isamov '04 and Kamina Shamsieva '04 gave a presentation on the FLEX program at school #9 for over 15 ninth-grade students on November 19. Kamina familiarized the students with the program rules, eligibility status, testing process, and American Councils, while Khurshed used a PowerPoint presentation to talk about FLEX alumni and the benefits of being one. The students received FLEX brochures and expressed excitement about applying for the program next year.

Upcoming Events:

- **Russian keyboarding training** for Eurasia Undergraduate alumni will be held on December 11.
- **Computer and keyboarding training** for high school students is planned for December 13.
- **AIDS awareness workshop** will take place in Varzob on December 16.
- **Youth career development workshop** will be held in Khujand on December 20.
- **"Understanding Your Own Region" seminar** is planned to be held in Takob on December 24.
- **New Year celebration** at an orphanage is planned for December 29.

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Turkmenistan

Ashgabat

Photo Exhibition "Vote for Me:" On November 1, Lyudmila Mansurova '00, Bahar Nuriyeva '02, and Mariya Papina '04 joined Public Affairs Section at the Turkmen National Library to help with a photo exhibition dedicated to the 2004 U.S. elections. Mariya Papina '04 shared her exchange experience, talked about the

election process and how people in U.S. were voting for different parties. Bahar Nuriyeva '02 and Mariya Papina'04 assisted in conducting mock elections among the citizens of Turkmenistan.

Direct Broadcast of U.S. Elections: On November 3, Bahar Agayeva '02, Begench Atayev '94, Bahar Nuriyeva '02, Mariya Papina '04, Alina Penjjeva '04, and Enesh Sahatmamedova '99 were invited to attend a direct broadcast of the U.S elections organized by the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy. Alina had participated in the National Republican Convention in 2004 and prepared a poster about her experience which she presented to the audience.

FLEX Alumni Meeting: Myahri Gurbanniyazova '04, Akmaya Kakajanova '97, Nadejda Lee '04, Bahar Nuriyeva '02, and Mariya Papina '04, met on November 9 and 12 to plan for International Education Week.

Future Leaders Exchange (FLEX) Program Presentation at Ashgabat Schools: Myahri Gurbanniyazova '04, Akmaya Kakajanova '97, Nadejda Lee '04, Bahar Nuriyeva '02, and Mariya Papina '04 made presentations about the FLEX program at two schools in Ashgabat as part of International Education Week. Alumni explained the program, selection process, eligibility, and their exchange experiences using posters and photos they had prepared. Students asked many questions and were encouraged to apply for the program in 2005.

“USA Quiz” for High School Students: As a part of International Education Week, on November 17, Nadejda Lee '04, Bahar Nuriyeva '02, and Maria Papina '04 hosted the intellectual game “USA Quiz” for high school students. Two teams representing Schools # 27, 64, 7 and 54 competed by answering questions about U.S. history and culture.

College Essay Writing Workshop: Serdar Karliyev '04 conducted a college essay writing workshop for visitors of the Educational Advising Center on November 16. Serdar covered a variety of popular essay topics to spark the creativity of his audience of 20 to help them discover which ideas work and which don't. He stressed the importance of the admission essay and gave his listeners tips on content, theme, style and format.

Grant Writing Workshop: On November 20, 2004 alumni from different cities in Turkmenistan were invited to attend a grant writing workshop. American Councils staff discussed the process of seeking grants, researching and identifying the right funding agencies, ensuring your proposal success and resources for grant writers in Turkmenistan. Alumni were encouraged to apply for the FLEX Grants Program. At the end of the workshop, Sabina Huseynova '03 talked about the grant she received last year to organize a Summer Camp. Other 2004 alumni included Myahri Gurbanniyazova from Ashgabat; Iyera Askerova, Kristina Razahova and Alina Penjjeva from Turkmenbashi; Jahan Memeyeva and Ahmed Tagiyev from Mary; and Yuliana Kuzyayeva and Roman Kurbanov from Turkmenabat.

Movie Nights: Visitors enjoyed watching *Shrek*, *The Princess Dairies*, and *Chicago* with hosts Vasilina Haritonova '03, Serdar Karliev '04 and Bahar Nuriyeva '02.

Upcoming Events:

- **Conversation classes** will be held every Monday by Nadejda Lee '04 for 20 selected visitors.
- **Movie nights** will take place every Friday at the Educational Advising Center.
- **Pre TOEFL classes** will be led by Mariya Papina '04 every Tuesday and Thursday.
- **“The Longest Night”** will take place on December 22 at the IATP center. Alumni will gather to chat with alumni from other Central Asian countries.
- **Christmas** will be celebrated with visually impaired children on November 25.

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Dashoguz

Alumni Meeting: Mehrijemal Altybayeva '04, Jalal Bekchanov '02, Ahmed Hojajev '03, Laziz Hudaybergenov '02, Leila Ischanova '03, Maral Ilyasova '04, Irina Kletchuk '04, Dariko Mkrtumyan '04, Viktoriya Orazova '04, Anastasia Saparaliyeva '02, and Alexander Li-Mi-Yan '96 met on November 1, 11, 22, and 26 at the Dashoguz American Corner to discuss community activities.

Teen Club: Anastasia Saparaliyeva '02 organized a teen club for high school students and youth. Every Tuesday in November, she met with a group of more than 20 people at the Dashoguz American Corner. Her goal for the club is to help students understand U.S. culture by encouraging them to read books by American authors and making presentations about them

Halloween Celebration: On November 1, Jalal Bekchanov '02, Ahmed Hojaye'v '03, Laziz Hudaybergenov '02, Leila Ischanova '03, Maral Ilyasova '04, Irina Kletchuk '04, Dariko Mkrumyan '04, Viktoriya Orazova '04, and Anastasia Saparaliyeva '02 organized a Halloween celebration for 250 people at the movie theatre in Dashoguz to show the Dashoguz community a bit of American culture by presenting the favorite holiday and its traditions. Alumni organized several contests with prizes and a short play about the history of Halloween.

Thanksgiving Day Celebration: Ahmed Hojaye'v '03, Laziz Hudaybergenov '02, Irina Kletchuk '04, Dariko Mkrumyan '04, Viktoriya Orazova '04, and Anastasia Saparaliyeva '02 visited a home for seniors to introduce the 60 residents to the American holiday of Thanksgiving on November 25. Alumni donated food and after the lunch gave a small concert.

International Education Week: On November 15, Irina Kletchuk '04 and Anastasia Saparaliyeva '02 organized a contest at the American Corner of Dashoguz. Eight people took part in the quiz "What do you know about the world?" The main goal of the activity was to develop listening and critical thinking skills. On November 16, Viktoriya Orazova '04 cooperated with members of the IKAR (Intellectual club) to organize a "Brain Ring" competition for 45 high school students at the Dashoguz American Corner. The following day, Anastasia Saparaliyeva '02 organized a presentation about how to write a good resume for a group of eight people, and Irina Kletchuk '04 and Dariko Mkrumyan '04 organized a presentation for seven people on how to write a research paper at the American Corner in Dashoguz. On November 19, nine visitors of the Dashoguz American Corner listened to Jalal Bekchanov '02 and Laziz Hudaybergenov '02 make a presentation on presentations skills.

Roundtable with the U.S. Embassy Representative: On November 19, U.S. Embassy representative Nafisa Yoldasheva, Small Grants Program administrator, organized a round table with FLEX alumni and Dashoguz American Corner visitors. Laziz Hudaybergenov '02, Irina Kletchuk '04, Dariko Mkrumyan '04, Viktoriya Orazova '04, Anastasia Saparaliyeva '02, and Alexander Li-Mi-Yan '96 attended the event. Alumni and other interested applicants learned about grant opportunities and the application process.

Upcoming Events:

- **Computer courses** will be held every Thursday of December.
- **Christmas celebration** will be held on December 24.
- **Debate club** will be held every Monday, Wednesday and Friday of December.
- **Drama club** will be held every Monday of December.
- **Ecology club** will be held every Thursday of December.
- **Junior group** will be held every Monday of December.
- **Movie nights** will take place every Friday of December.
- **New Year celebration** will take place on December 30.
- **Senior group** will be held every Tuesday of December.

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Turkmenabat

Discovering and Understanding America through Its History: On November 10, Guncha Jumakuliyeva '04 initiated American History classes at the American Corner in Turkmenabat. Seven high school students and two American Corner volunteers attend these classes. The purpose of these activities is to expand knowledge about historical background and underline the cultural, psychological and material foundations that took root during the development of the US. The classes were structured to provide basic information about the specific historical period, discussion of points of that period, completion of class assignments and essay writing and group project design.

Conversation Skills Development: On November 11, Yuliana Kuzyayeva '03 and Sabina Huseyinova '03 conducted a "Conversation Club" at the American Corner in Turkmenabat. Eight high school students, two

visitors and two FLEX alumni attended. Club leaders introduced the main goals and importance of the activity, and played a game to develop the participants' self-confidence as English speakers. The alumni also distributed handouts of the work plan, reviewed the rules and requirements of the club, and discussed their expectations with the group.

Poetry Evening: On November 17, Junior Faculty Development Program alumna Nina Afanasyeva '04 together with '03 and '04 FLEX alumni conducted a Poetry Evening at the American Corner. A group of 10 high school students, 10 alumni, two teachers and two volunteers of the American Corner attended the event. Nina and Yuliana Kuzayeva '03 discussed the origins of poetry, emphasized its meaning in certain periods of time and read selections from some of Shakespeare's and Esenin's famous works. Alumni presented different topics of poetry such as nature, freedom, love, philosophy, and history. Roman Kurbanov '04 played the guitar and performed a Victor Tsoy song about nature. Finally the presenters and audience engaged in a discussion about the importance of poetry to a person's intellectual development.

Thanksgiving Celebration: Twenty high school students, two English teachers, ten alumni and two American Corner volunteers attended the Thanksgiving Day celebration organized by '03 and '04 alumni at the American Corner on November 25. Farhad Yagmurov '04 presented the historical background of this holiday and displayed relevant pictures. Participants had the chance to express their creativity in "the best Thanksgiving card" contest, which was followed by a traditional Thanksgiving dinner.

Regional Debates Preparation: On November 22, Mehry Karyagdyeva '01 and two Peace Corps volunteers met attended a debate preparation course at the American Corner. Kurbanova Mubarrak, Fulbright '04, Ahkalinskaya Allevtina, TEA '04 and seven English teachers also attended the event. The meeting identified the importance of debate contests and its goals and benefits. This year regional debates will be conducted according to the debate format established by the International Debate Education Association. Participants learned about how judges and coaches will be trained. The group discussed the place, time, target age of participants and selection process. Preparation courses will be held twice a week and the debate tournament will begin in January.

Upcoming Events:

- **American history club** will be held once a week.
- **World study club** will be held once a week.
- **"Effective Presentation Basics"** workshop will be held at the beginning of December.
- **TOEFL class** will be held twice a day, once a week.
- **Literary class** will be held every Thursday.
- **Video class** will be held every Friday.
- **Conversation club** will be held once a week.
- **Christmas celebration** will be held in the end of the month.

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Turkmenbashy

Book of the Month Club: Yuliya Hayrutdinova '04, Minara Ismailova '04, Kristina Razahova '04, and Alina Penjiyeva '04 continued their participation in the Book Club held at the American Corner in Turkmenbashy as did Gulruh Niyazova '03 in Balkanabat. There are 12 advanced students from the city of Turkmenbashy, and seven teachers and 10 students in Balkanabat who regularly attend the class. All participants follow a syllabus and discuss questions and new vocabulary. This class is aimed at preparing advanced English students for university-level work and preparing English teachers for advanced reading, writing, and critical thinking skills. The clubs meet twice weekly to discuss the stories and how they fit into our world. Turkmenbashy participants finished the book of *Lord of the Flies* while Balkanabat participants continued reading *Circuit* and *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing*.

Elections 2004: On November 3, 2004 Alina Penjiyeva took part in the Election 2004 program organized by the U. S. Embassy. The goal of the event was to introduce Turkmen citizens to the presidential election process in the U.S. Attendees followed news via direct TV and computer feeds and tracked results using a poster of the US and Republican and Democratic stickers. Meanwhile Iyera Askerova '04, Yuliya Hayrutdinova '04, Minara Ismailova '04, Kristina Razahova '04, Peace Corps volunteers and American Corner visitors followed the

election by listening to the BBC. The group had lively discussions about the future of a U.S. led by George W. Bush or by John Kerry.

Women's Club: On November 5, 12 and 26 Iyera Askerova '04, Yuliya Harudinova '04, Minara Ismailova '04, and Kristina Razahova '04, attended the women's club led by a Peace Corps volunteer. The club gave local women the opportunity to share thoughts about women's rights, possibilities and education. Participants examined cross cultural women's issues. Attendees gained useful experience about their rights and how to get out of difficult situations. Participants also benefit by getting to know one another.

Music Club: On November 5, Kristina Razahova '04 helped a Peace Corps volunteer to organize a Music Club. Minara Ismailova '04, Yuliya Hayrutdinova '04 and volunteers together with 15 student visitors enjoyed listening to American music, and an American volunteer helpfully explained unknown words to the participants. The alumni introduced visitors to famous types of American music. The children increased their vocabulary, improved their comprehension and listening skills, and learned modern American songs.

Team Building Presentation: On November 8, Minara Ismailova '04 and Alina Penjiyeva '04 conducted a team building presentation for eight attendees at the American Corner. The attendees were provided with theoretical ideas of building a team and were given chance to practice what they had learned. Participants completed a test that showed how fast they are and how well they can follow directions, followed by teamwork during which the alumni explained to students what teamwork is, how to be a good team player and how important it is to have teamwork skills when they enter the workforce.

Ecology Planning Meeting: Minara Ismailova '04 held a meeting for those interested in taking part in the "Pollution of the Caspian Sea and its Coast" project, sponsored by the U.S. Embassy's Public Affairs Section, on November 10. Eight people attended and discussed ways to reach out to others to protect the coastal environment. Ideas include Poster Day, Art Show, the Best Caspian Sea, essay writing, Poetry Day and a beach clean-up. Participants learned that the Caspian, on whose coast they live, is one of the cleanest bodies of water in the world but in great need of protection. Minara's presentation of the repercussions of water pollution galvanized the group to want to take action.

The U.S. Club: On November 11, 17 and 25 Alina Penjiyeva '04 continued the U.S. Club for young visitors of the American Corner to learn about the American history, culture, traditions, games, songs and dances. Kristina Razahova '04 and Iyera Askerova '04 helped to organize the club, which is regularly attended by 15 students. This time participants learned about the Jefferson Memorial and Lincoln Memorial, the first six U.S. Presidents' lives and the first six states of America. Alina talked about traveling around the U.S. and showed pictures. The club helps participants learn about American culture and how to communicate with Americans.

Organization Seminar: On November 13 Minara Ismailova '04 and Arzu Talapova '04 held a seminar on organization at the American Corner. Alina Penjiyeva '04 and Kristina Razahova '04 also assisted with the event. The purpose of the project was to help the 15 students in attendance to learn and evaluate how to be more organized and successful in life. The seminar provided students with constructive suggestions of setting personal goals and achieving them. Participants learned about study strategies, time management at school and on days off, and long-range planning. At the end of the seminar, participants were invited to write a short essay about why it is important to be organized, who the most organized person in the world is, and how to become more organized.

FLEX Year in the U.S. Presentation: On November 15 Iyera Askerova '04, Minara Ismailova '04, Kristina Razahova '04 and Alina Penjiyeva '04 gathered together at the American Corner to share their U.S. experiences with 12 students from local schools. Alumni talked about their first impressions, their host families and high schools and showed pictures of their brightest and most enjoyable moments in the U.S. The experiences of the alumni differed from each other so the attendees had a chance to compare various ways of life in the U.S.

Women's Education in the U.S. Presentation: On November 16, Minara Ismailova '04, Yuliya Hayrutdinova '04, Kristina Razahova '04 and Alina Penjiyeva '04 attended a presentation about the history of women's education in the U.S. conducted by a Peace Corps volunteer. Ten girls ages 15-20 participated and learned about the development of women's education in the U.S. from the country's inception up to present, with a focus on colleges and universities specialized for women and comparing the difference in percentage of male students and

the increasing number of female students. The general rights and opportunities that women have in their choice of education and career development as well as their duties were analytically discussed.

Education Abroad Presentation: On November 16, Minara Ismailova '04, Yuliya Hayrutdinova '04, Kristina Razahova '04, Alina Penjiyeva '04, Arzu Talapova '04 and Oksana Yesherkina '03 along with 14 students attended the presentation held by Gulyalek Soltanova, guest speaker from the U.S. Embassy's Public Affair Section. Gulyalek introduced the alumni and students to various opportunities at educational institutions overseas which are available to Turkmenistan citizens. The group was encouraged to seek scholarships and apply knowledge obtained overseas in Turkmenistan. Attendees learned about the different types of scholarships, the application process and the basic requirements and received handouts on studying in the U.S.

Interview Skills Presentation: On November 17, Kristina Razahova '04 and Peace Corps Volunteer Alex Miner organized an interview skills presentation which was attended by 15 students. The presentation was aimed at analyzing the most important and useful interview tips such as how to dress, act and speak. Participants received an interview guide and had a chance to apply their newly learned skills during a mock interview.

High School Education System in the U.S.: On November 17, Kristina Razahova '02 headed a discussion for 12 students about the educational system in the US with a focus on high schools. The group learned about school years, academic integrity, grading system, attendance, driver's education, extracurricular activities and post-high school planning.

"Big Apple in the United States" Discussion: On November 19, Iyera Askerova '04, Minara Ismailova '04, and Kristina Razahova '04 led a presentation on three different cultures in the U.S. for six attendees. Each presenter talked about a different community, its foundation and history, cultures and lifestyles, and leaders. Iyera spoke about Native Americans; Minara presented about the Amish; and Kristina spoke about Mexican-Americans. Alumni used pictures, souvenirs, handouts and other visual aids to vividly convey all three societies.

Monthly Alumni Meeting: On November 22, Yulia Hayrutdinova '04, Minara Ismailova '04, Alina Penjiyeva '04, Kristina Razahova '04 and Arzu Talapova '04 met at the American Corner to discuss upcoming events and opportunities to receive FLEX grants and conduct various kinds of community service, professional development and English language promotion projects. Alumni were encouraged to take part in the "Faces of FLEX" contest.

FLEX Program Presentation: On November 23, Kristina Razahova '04 presented the FLEX program to nine high school students. Kristina talked about program goals, the application process and the privilege of being an exchange student, which was followed by a Q&A session.

Poster Day Contest: On November 26 the "Poster Day" contest took place at the American Corner organized by Minara Ismailova '04. The "jury" consisted of Kristina Razahova '04 Alina Penjiyeva '04, Oksana Yeshyorkina '03 and two Peace Corps volunteers. The goal of the contest was to raise awareness of the "Pollution of the Caspian Sea and its Coast" project. About 15 people attended the event during which time they were divided into three teams. Each team made a poster about the pollution of the Caspian Sea, then representatives of each team presented their posters, and reporters wrote a report about the work. The best reporter, presenter and the team with the best poster received various awards, and all other participants received certificates and appreciation gifts.

Thanksgiving Celebration: On November 27, Iyera Askerova '04, Yuliya Hayrutdinova '04, Minara Ismailova '04, Kristina Razahova '04, Alina Penjiyeva '04 and Arzu Talapova '04 took part in the Thanksgiving celebration at the American Corner with Peace Corps volunteers and students of the ACCESS program. Twenty people participated in the event. Students learned about the history of Thanksgiving and made crafts.

Orphanage Visit: On November 29, 30 volunteers including Iyera Akerova '04, Yulia Hayrutdinova '04, Minara Ismailova '04, Kristina Razahova '04, Alina Penjiyeva '04, local teachers, Peace Corps volunteers and American Corner staff visited a local orphanage to distribute gifts for the children's recreation room in connection with Global Youth Service Day 2004. Alumni have been conducting outreach to underprivileged youth to develop the spirit of volunteerism in the Balkan region. A group of girls from the orphanage performed the national dance as a thank for the gifts.

Upcoming Events:

- **The U.S. Club** will meet weekly led by Alina Penjiyeva '04 for visitors of the American Corner.
- **ECO meeting** will be held on December 1 and led by Minara Ismailova '04.
- **Book of the Month club** will continue to meet on a biweekly basis.
- **Women's Club** will meet on December 3 led by Peace Corps volunteer Elynn Walter.
- **Internet classes** for local teachers will be held on December 3, 10, 17 at the American Corner.
- **"Volunteerism in our Community" training** will be held on December 4 and led by Mered Arazmamedov.
- **Computer classes** for handicapped children will be held weekly by Alina Penjiyeva '04 and Minara Ismailova '04.
- **"Education in the U.S." presentation** will be given on December 7 by Kristina Razahova.
- **"Hanukkah in America" presentation** will be given by Peace Corp volunteers and alumni.
- **Music Club will meet on** December 10 led by Kristina Razahova '04 and a Peace Corp volunteer.
- **Trip to Serdar** will take place on December 11.
- **Debate skills presentation** by Peace Corps volunteer and Kristina Razahova '04 will be given on December 13 and 20.
- **Successful teaching training** will be held by Arzu Talapova '04 on December 14.
- **Global warming discussion** will be led by Iyera Askerova '04 and Minara Ismailova '04 on December 15.
- **Art and crafts with Peace Corps volunteers** will take place on December 16.
- **How to write a statement of purpose presentation** will take place on December 17.
- **Christmas celebration** will take place in December for ACCESS students and children in a local orphanage.
- **American press discussion** will be held on December 21.
- **Alumni and PCV s monthly meeting** will take place on December 22.
- **Christmas Stories** will be told by FLEX alumni on December 24 for visitors of the American Corner.
- **Movie night** is scheduled for December 24.
- **Essay contest** will be announced by Kristina Razahova '04 on December 29.

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Mary

Debate Club: Gulya Dukenova '03 continued debate club for approximately 15 high school students on every Tuesday. Students improve their English and critical thinking skills through talking on different topics. Magtymguly Geldyyev '04, Jahan Memmeyeva '04 and Ahmed Tagiyev '04 helped Gulya one Tuesday. The debate topic was "travel is the best education."

Computer Class: Rejep Abdyev '04 conducted a computer skills class every Monday and Thursday for six students from schools for children from low income families. The students learned about computer parts, some elements of Microsoft Office programs and how to save documents.

Leadership Class: On November 4, Jahan Memmeyeva '04 conducted a leadership class for 10 students selected by an interview process based on their English, communication, creativity and organization skills were observed. The students began with an icebreaker, participated in interactive discussions and completed exercises and reading. This active class promotes skills that will increase confidence and success both in and outside of school and gives the students the opportunity to share their views on current leaders.

Post-Election Roundtable: On November 3, Gulya Dukenova '03, Magtymguly Geldiyev '04, Jahan Memeyeva '04, Ahmed Tagiev '04, Govher Yazmuhammedova '03, and six Peace Corp volunteers met in American Corner for roundtable on the 2004 U.S. election. The group discussed the debates and the students gained deeper understanding of the U.S. election system.

English Club: Rejep Abdyev '04 and Magtymguly Geldyyev '04 conducted the weekly "English Fun Club" for 10 students. Students increased their knowledge of English through music, culture, entertainment events, and playing games. The first class was devoted to funny songs, where students had to complete the phrases to make a song that rhymed.

U.S. Education Presentation: On November 16, Ahmed Tagiyev '04, made a video presentation on the U.S. educational system with a focus on his host school in Arkansas as part of International Educational Week. The presentation introduced FLEX to an audience of approximately 20 program applicants and was followed by a Q&A session. In addition Ahmed led an interactive exercise in which attendees compared their school to those in the presentation.

American Culture Quiz: On November 18, Jahan Memmeyeva '04 and Gulya Dukenova '03 organized an American culture quiz called "Do You Know the US?" Two groups of students from a local school demonstrated their knowledge of American culture. The quiz included six categories: states and cities, famous people, sightseeing, education, literature and music and others and was complemented with music, jokes, and games.

"How Study in the USA Changed My Life:" On November 18-19, Gulya Dukenova '03, Magtymguly Geldyyev '04, Jahan Memmeyeva '04 and Ahmed Tagiyev '04 gave a presentation to high school students of two local schools who are interested in applying for FLEX. Alumni shared their U.S. experiences and talked about U.S. culture, the new things they had learned and about their friends and host families, followed by a Q&A session

Thanksgiving Presentation: On November 24, Bahar Aidogdyeva '04, Gulya Dukenova '03, Ahmed Tagiyev '04 and RSEP alumnus Gaygysyz Charyyev '00 made a presentation to 12 participants on the traditional American holiday of Thanksgiving. Gaygysyz gave explained the holiday and the group then played some games.

FLEX Alumni Meeting: On November 29, FLEX alumni meeting took a place at American Corner. Rejep Abdyev '04, Gulya Dukenova '03, Magtym Geldyyev '04, Jahan Memmeyeva '04, Ahmed Tagiyev '04 and Govher Yazmuhammedova '03 gathered to decide on events for the next month. Everybody agreed that the Alumni Book Club would be run by Peace Corps volunteer Ben Graham.

Upcoming Events:

- **Computer class** will be held on every Monday and Thursday by Bahar Aidogdyeva '04 and Rejep Abdyev '04.
- **Debate club** will be held on every Tuesday by Gulya Dukenova '03.
- **Leadership class** will be held every Thursday by Jahan Memmeyeva '04.
- **Visit to Yoloten House for handicapped children** will be on December 20.
- **Clean-up in the Children's House** is scheduled for December 23.
- **Christmas party** will be on December 24.

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Ukraine

Kharkiv

Alumni Meeting: Anton Borisov '02, Ksenya Iasyenko '01, Natalya Kasyanenko '04, Oleksandra Lytvynova '04, Ihor Murashko '04, Kyrylo Orach '04, Oleksandr Peshykov '04, Roman Shatov '04, Iryna Shpak '04, Serhiy Smirnov '04, and Oleksandra Tsymbal '04 met on November 7 to discuss upcoming events.

Thanksgiving Celebration at Orphanage: Yevhen Bobyk '03, Iryna Gorb '04, Natalya Kasyanenko '04, Ihor Murashko '04, Kyrylo Orach '04, Viktoria Vasylyeva '03, Peace Corp volunteers, and active members of the local community participated in the Thanksgiving celebration held on November 27 at Orphanage # 4. The alumni and friends played games with the children at the orphanage, gave out prizes, and introduced them to the tradition of celebrating Thanksgiving.

Multimedia Seminar: Oleksandra Skrypnyk held a seminar on using multimedia in foreign language teaching on November 19 at the American Center. The lecture covered issues such as the use of multimedia in teaching English, popular types of multimedia and ways to use it effectively in the classroom, how to create a motivational language environment using the Internet, unusual ways of using of MS Office programs for fun language-learning, and educational software. Yevhen Bobyk '03, Anton Borisov '02, Iryna Horb '04, Natalya

Kosyanenko '04, Oleksandra Lytvynova '04, Kyrylo Orach '04, Anna Smirnova '03, Vyktoria Vasylyeva '03 Eurasia Undergraduate, and members of the local community attended the seminar.

English Club: The English Club was held every Tuesday in November for 20 participants. The club helps people develop communication and public speaking skills and provides an opportunity for alumni, students, and members of the local community to practice English and discuss current affairs.

Upcoming Events:

- **International HIV/AIDS awareness day** will be held on December 1.
- **Christmas celebration** will be held on December 25.
- **English club** in Kharkiv will be held on December 7, 14, 21 and 28.

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Kyiv

Alumni Meeting: Anton Antonenko '04, Nataliya Balyuk '04, Tetyana Babenko '00, Tetyna Bohdanova '01, Maryna Haydak '04, Ihor Mulyarchuk '04, Yuliya Semenchuk '00, Mariya Shevchuk '00, Iryna Tokatly '04, Maryna Yaroshchuk '02 (FLEX alumni assistant) and two non-alumni members of Junior Chamber-Ukraine NGO met for the monthly alumni meeting November 4. The group discussed what they can do to positively influence presidential elections and divided responsibilities for organizing International Education Week events.

“People Won’t be Overpowered” Demonstration: On November 6 approximately 20 FLEX alumni including Anna Opanasyuk '99, Marta Pryimak '00, Mariya Shevchuk '00, Iryna Tokatly '01 and Maryna Yaroshchuk '02 took part in the “People Won’t be Overpowered” demonstration organized by the People’s Force coalition.

Seminar on U.S. and Ukrainian Election Systems: As part of International Education Week, Marko Serbynskiy '95, political analyst at the US-Ukraine Foundation, presented an election seminar to 15 FLEX alumni and 5 other students on November 15. Marko explained the differences between U.S. and Ukrainian election systems with a focus on the electoral college, provisional and absentee ballots, and swing states. Alumni discussed the results of both countries recent elections and U.S.-Ukraine relations. Following the seminar alumni watched Ukraine’s first televised debate between Viktor Yushchenko and Viktor Yanukovich.

FLEX on the Radio: On November 19 FLEX alumni with the help of Tetyana Garbul '01 organized a 45-minute program about FLEX on Radio Ukraine International as part of International Education Week. Tetyana is the author, producer and a narrator of a radio program with an international audience that focuses on topics related to the development of Ukrainian society. Tetyana and Maryna Yaroshchuk '02 interviewed Lisa Heller, Cultural Affairs Officer at the U.S. Embassy in Ukraine, who talked about the development and importance of the FLEX program. American Councils regional and country directors described the impact that FLEX alumni make in society, and Maksym Akulenko '98, Ilya Dyadyk '01 (Zhytomyr regional representative), Andriy Mykytiv '95, Vasyl Miroshnychenko '97, Anna Opanasyuk '99, Marta Pryimak '00, and Maryna Yaroshchuk '02 shared how the FLEX program influenced their life and career choices.

International Education Fair: Eurasian Undergraduate and FLEX alumni organized a second International Education Fair on November 20 in honor of International Education Week. Fourteen organizations including American Councils represented their programs and distributed program materials. About 60 visitors including FLEX and Eurasian Undergraduate alumni attended the event including Zhytomyr regional representative Lyubov Blin '02 and Serhiy Topachevskiy '01.

Alumni Participation in the “Orange Revolution:” FLEX alumni supported the peaceful movement of Ukrainian people by striking on Independence Square, taking night shifts, and serving at the tent city during the 17 days of the “Orange Revolution.”

Upcoming events:

- **Movie night** will recognize International HIV/AIDS Awareness Day and will be held on December 1.
- **Global Village presentation** will be made by Karina Makarenko '98 on December 16.

- **The Benefit Evening organizing committee** will meet each Thursday throughout December.
- **Discussion on Ukrainian economics will be held on** on December 18 and led by Andriy Mykytiv '95.
- **Christmas and New Year celebration** will be held at Orphanage #12 on December 24.

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Lviv

HeartLink Project: From November 7-13, a group of Ukrainian FLEX alumni acted as interpreters and guides for a visiting team of doctors, nurses, and technicians from the Minneapolis based Children's HeartLink. The team performed critical pediatric cardiac surgeries in Lviv throughout the week as a part of an ongoing mission to help Ukraine and other developing countries prevent and treat pediatric heart disease. The two FLEX interpreters, Olga Tsar '02, and Stanislav Kuleskyi '02, both medical students, were commended for their work during the week. HeartLink representatives felt that the alumni's medical experience and enthusiasm made their invaluable assistance. The FLEX alumni drew from their experiences in the United States not only to effectively interpret, but also to help avoid any cultural misunderstandings. For more information go to: http://www.childrensheartlink.org/news/popup_releases.asp?news_ID=47

Alumni Meeting: The monthly alumni meeting was held on November 12. Twelve alumni met to discuss the upcoming second round of presidential elections and ways alumni could get involved in this decisive event.

Thanksgiving Party: On November 26, Ternopil alumni held a Thanksgiving party with 15 ÅÑÀ alumni and an American who is volunteering in Ternopil. The history of Thanksgiving was told by Iryna Pukhalska FLEX '00, Eurasian Undergraduate '04. Afterwards everyone shared something that he or she is grateful for.

International Education Week: On November 17, Inna Viller ÒÅÀ '99, Iryna Pukhalska FLEX '00, Eurasian Undergraduate '04, Iryna Temchenko Eurasian Undergraduate '03, and Yana Smakula FLEX '03 visited a school in Losova and told students and teachers about the FLEX and TEA programs. They also shared their exchange experiences and showed pictures.

Upcoming Events:

- **Alumni Meeting with Congressmen** will take place on December 20.
- **Monthly Alumni Meeting** will be held on December 28.

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Odesa

International Scholar Lecture: On November 19, Barrie B.F. Hebb of OSI conducted a lecture on *Liberal Arts Education and Adjusting your Major* for FLEX alumni and others. FLEX alumni learned more about higher education in the U.S. and specifically about the advantages of liberal arts institutions. After Barrie's speech Mariya Beshpalova '04, Mariya Hontar '04, Nataliya Kovylnina '04, Yuliya Malikova '04, Alina Mukan '04, and Gennadiy Starostin '02 shared their views on the American educational system with other audience members.

Eighth Annual Thanksgiving Dinner: On November 26, FLEX alumni held their annual Thanksgiving dinner for the parents of current FLEX program participants. Fourteen parents and nine FLEX alumni including Tea Beshpalova '04, Mariya Beshpalova '04, Mariya Hontar '04, Kateryna Komarova '02, Nataliya Kovylnina '04, Yulia Malikova '04, Alina Mukan '04, Kateryna Zhyrova '01, and Vitaliy Shmeriga '94 were present at the event. The parents were introduced to all the traditional Thanksgiving dishes such as turkey and gravy, cranberry sauce, and stuffing. FLEX alumni made a presentation on the history of Thanksgiving and answered questions.

Upcoming Events:

- **Meeting with Embassy representatives** will take place on December 9.
- **Third annual Christmas celebration** will be held at Odesa Orphanage # 4 on December 25.

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

Uzbekistan

Tashkent

Alumni Assist Youth Friendly Services: On November 1, Mastura Maradjapova '04 and Nikolay Melnikov '04 assisted with the coordination of a Youth Friendly Services (YFS) conference organized by UNICEF. This meeting was attended by UN agencies, media representatives, international organizations, government agencies, and NGOs, all of which are interested in young people's well being. There were several presentations on why Uzbekistan needs YFS and how UNICEF plans to introduce this initiative in Uzbekistan.



FLEX Alumni Mark US Elections: On November 3, the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy held a reception to mark the U.S. Presidential elections. Emiliya Asadova '02, Rasisa Bogdanova '04, Elena Timchenko '04, Dilyara Yusupova '04, Ilya Kruchinin '99, Olesya Luzinova '02, Sukhrob Hayriev '04, Guzal Sulthonhodjaeva '04, Kamoliddin Narbaev '04, Jasur Rakhmanov '02, Usmon Kuchimov (SSEP), and Diora Ziyaeva '00 helped with event decorations. At the reception they had the opportunity to watch a live broadcast of the ongoing vote and engage in a mock vote after which no hanging chads were reported. Alumni also represented candidates and parties, distributing the literature and posters of the sides they represented. FLEX alumni also gave numerous interviews to the media and had a chance to talk with U.S. Ambassador Jon Purnell about their future plans. "This election is not only a historic moment for the American nation, it's important for the world," said Ilya Kruchinin '98. "This reception was a way for us to be part of this important event."

FLEX Community Service Noted in Press: Two Tashkent newspapers published articles entitled "Kind Action for Children," which described the charity event conducted by FLEX alumni at a local hospital for children with polio. FLEX alumni visited 105 children at the hospital, many of whom have no family other than the hospital staff. The newspapers noted how happy this made the children, and encouraged readers to take part in similar acts of kindness.



Writing Classes at EAC: On November 15, Nikolay Melnikov '04, Mastura Maradjapova '04, Dilara Yusupova '04, and Raisa Bogdanova '04 held a workshop on essay writing during which the 38 participants learned how to use the Internet for research and note-taking tips for preparing to write essays. Attendees then took part in a critical writing exercise in which they had to describe a serious world problem and propose a solution. Several students read their essays aloud, and alumni gave constructive feedback.

Tashkent International Education Fair: On November 19, representatives of different exchange programs and alumni celebrated the last day of International Education Week by participating in an International Education Fair. The Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy organized the Fair at which various organizations which administer exchange programs set up booths. The FLEX booth was covered with pictures of FLEX alumni in their American communities and staffed by Emiliya Asadova '02, Raisa Bogdanova '04, Shehroz Narzikulov '00, Saidnumon Mansurov '04, Mastura Maradjapova '04, and Guzal Sulthonhodjaeva '04.

Lecture on Professionalism: On November 24, FLEX alumni Raisa Bogdanova '04, Guzal Sulthonhodjaeva '04, Dilyara Yusupova '04 and Elena Yan '04 attended a lecture entitled "Professionalism: You, Today and Tomorrow" by visiting communications producer Bruce McLeod. Attendees had to answer questions such as

who are you now? What values and priorities are important to you? The lecture gave alumni the opportunity to think about and develop their future career paths.

“Cross Cultural Differences and Their Implications” Lecture: On November 4, 25 alumni attended a lecture entitled “Cross Cultural Differences and Their Implications” led by guest speaker Professor Stuart Umpleby of the School of Business at George Washington University. Professor Umpleby discussed relations between people, motivational orientation, attitudes toward time and how all this is seen in different nations of the world, and a list of Western and Eastern values was presented for discussion.

Urgench

Urgench Clean-Up at Amur Timur Park: FLEX alumni decided to clean up Urgench’s only park, Amur Timur, which had fallen into disrepair and is littered with drug users’ needles. On November 4, Hurshida Abdullaeva '04, Umurbek Allakulov '04, Sherzod Atabaev '97, Anastasia Logay '00, Irina Ogay '04, Maria Pak '04, and Yusufjan Sadikov '98 armed themselves with gloves and trash bags and worked for three partly rainy hours, collecting 22 bags of trash including over 20 used needles. "We feel that getting rid of this kind of stuff is important," said Maria Pak '04. "Kids should be able to come to a park without seeing that."

International Education Week: On November 17, Maria Pak '04, Shahnoza Kurbaniyazova '04, and Umrbek Allakulov '04 presented about their U.S. experiences at the IATP center. Shahnoza spoke about her trip to Washington D.C., Maria about her family trip to Seattle, and Umrbek about American food. As always alumni were very creative and used the pictures they took in the United States to make their presentation livelier. Alumni also described the merits of participating in community service.

Nukus

FLEX Presentation in Nukus: On November 12, Dilshoda Saparniyazova '04 and Tumaris Matekova '04 met with English teachers who had traveled from Karakalpakstan to talk about the FLEX program, its requirements, and procedures. They also shared pictures and stories about their year in America in an effort to encourage more students to participate in the FLEX program, particularly from the rural regions of Karakalpakstan.

Nukus Alumni Promote Education during International Education Week: On November 16, six teams of volunteers including Raihan Izimbetova '98, Jenya Kan '04, Nadira Djemuratova '04, Nabira Djemuratova '04, and Zulfiya Matsalaeva '02 went to 12 schools around Nukus to hold seminars on the importance of continued education which reached 323 ninth-grade students. Alumni addressed the issue the students will face when school ends, and they must decide whether to go on to a general school for three more years, go to a specialized school for two years, or to stop schooling altogether. In order to help students make the right educational choices, Nukus alumni emphasized the importance of education for each student’s future by showing that educational choices made now have economical, social, and political ramifications in the future. The students were very active in the seminars, asked a lot of questions and felt that the seminars made them think seriously about their future. Several also expressed interest in becoming volunteers themselves.

Bukhara

FLEX Seminar: On November 16 Sukhrob Kudratov '03 held a seminar for school students at the Bukhara IATP Center. Sukhrob presented information about FLEX recruitment and gave practical advice how to improve English proficiency. One student thanked Sukhrob, saying “You have motivated me to study the English language and try to participate in exchange programs.”

International Education Week: Sukhrob Kudratov '03 held a seminar at the Bukhara IATP center on November 17. Sukhrob coordinates a project called English Community Club that has received support from the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy, and he explained to the participants how to correspond via email with American high school students.

Samarkand

International Education Week: On November 17 Eurasian Undergraduate and FLEX alumni visited Orphanage #11 to speak about educational opportunities. The orphanage houses 70 children of varying ages, most of whom have the impression that they have no chance of achieving a successful future. Alumni came armed with a powerful message: that there are always opportunities for dedicated and devoted students. Alumni played critical-thinking games with the 7-12 year olds and spoke with the 13-17 year olds about various educational opportunities in Uzbekistan and abroad. They shared their U.S. experiences and emphasized that all of the children, regardless of race, religion, gender or social status, have a chance to study abroad. Afterwards the children played games to give them an introduction to conversational English and winners received prizes, followed by a group dinner. "I have always thought that if you are from an orphanage, the most you can achieve is to be an army soldier," said a 14 year-old boy, "Now I will do my very best to become a well-educated professional and pursue my goals anywhere in the world. I want to thank the alumni for giving us hope for our future!" The orphanage director of was also appreciative of the alumni's initiative, saying "During these hard times, it's great to see such people and organizations caring about our orphans. I have been deeply touched by your efforts. Unfortunately it's very rare to see our kids smiling and hopeful. Today you gave them happiness and confidence."

Ferghana

American Lifestyle Seminar: On November 17 and 18, Sardor Nuritdinov '02, Shamshod Yunusov '04, and Nadejda Nikulina Eurasian Undergraduate '03 organized a seminar entitled, "American Lifestyle through the Eyes of Our Teenagers" at the Ferghana IATP center. Alumni talked about American schools, teenagers, and host families, and introduced the students to FLEX and other international programs. On the second day students got a chance to chat online with teenagers from an American high-school. Javlon Turdiev, a FLEX student from Ferghana currently living in New Hampshire, helped organize a similar seminar for students at his host school and gathered them to participate in the online chat.

Andijan

International Education Week: On November 19, Qobiljon Yunusov Eurasian Undergraduate, Dilovar Abdullayeva '03, and Sanjar Madazimov '04 organized an event for 50 students of the Andijan Institute of Languages. Alumni explained the meaning of IEW, the importance of international education, cultural understanding in their pedagogical experience, and educational opportunities.

Upcoming Events:

- **A trip to the theatre** for children from the Poliomyelitis Hospital will be held on December 8 to commemorate the International Day of Disabled People.
- **HIV/AIDS seminar** will be held on December 9 at a local orphanage and several Tashkent schools.
- **Resume and CV writing seminar** for FLEX and Eurasian Undergraduate alumni will be held on December 12.
- **Monthly alumni meeting** will be held on December 17.
- **"Alumni spirit" project** will be held on December 24.

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

ALUMNI SUCCESSES

Armenia

Gevorg Avetikyan '04 is working at "Hi Tech Gateway" LLC as a RSS marketing sales representative.

Arpine Avetisyan '97 presently works as the director of career placement at the counseling center of the Yerevan State Agricultural Academy.

David Aznavuryan '97 now works as an assistant to the general director at Armenian Potable Water & Sewage Company, the national water utility.

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

Maga Markosyan '02 has been elected as the president of the student council of the finance and economics department at Yerevan State University.

Stella Matevosyan '00 has been promoted and is presently employed by American Councils as the FLEX Program Coordinator.

Anush Palyan '02 is currently employed by Matit Graphic Design Studio as a correspondence assistant dealing with translation, editing, and website update.

Zara Sargsyan '98 graduated from the American University of Armenia with a Masters Degree in political science after successfully defending her M.A. thesis on work-related attitudes.

Sona Simonyan '04 entered the French University in Armenia and is presently studying law.

Hovhannes Stepanyan '97 presently works at the Ministry of Transportation and Communication of Armenia as foreign relations expert.

Lida Ter – Khachatryan '04 entered the French University in Armenia and is presently studying law.

Azerbaijan

Gunar Aliyeva '03 is an intern at United Nations Development Project.

Ramila Aslanova '99 is employed as an international assistant at the Helsinki Citizens' Assembly.

Aynur Gojayeva '02 studies biology/pre-med at Idaho State University and was elected as arts and sciences senator.

Lala Huseynli '00 is employed as dean's office assistant of the School of Law and Social Sciences at Khazar University.

Fariz Ismailzade '96 has conducted several workshops on door-to-door campaigning for political party representatives in preparation for the upcoming municipal elections.

Sevda Ismaylova '01 and *Tohida Kazimova '01* received certificates for attending a seminar hosted by International Republican Institute (IRI) on NGOs and youth activism on November 19-21 in Lenkoran.

Dilara Jafarova '99 won a scholarship to attend a management course conducted jointly by the University of Turin and the International Labor Organization in Italy.

Samir Mammadov '99 is conducting research at Lancaster University in the UK on the linguistic features of the multiple ethnicities living in the Caucasus, Middle East, Central Asia, the Balkans and Northern Russia as well as Turkic language speakers.

Narmina Sadigova '00 has been promoted to the position of financial supervisor at Tyco/Engineering Services/Wormald Thorn.

Belarus

Tatiana Bykova '03 was accepted to the international student organization AIESEC and became a member of the Lithuania Christian College Business Organization. She is also teaching English at Klaipeda Vocational School.

Olga Kapylova '03 won the English language olympiada at her school. *Mariya Parada ;03* received third place.

Aliaksei Kudzin '04 took first place in Olympiads in physics, mathematics, chemistry, and English at his school and will go on to compete at the regional level.

Evgenia Kurbat '01 received an internship at the European College of Liberal Arts.

Evgeniya Sadovnikova '04 took first place in the English Language Olympiad at her school.

Evgeniya Sadovnikova '04, *Ekaterina Skacheck '04*, and *Anastassia Tarassiouk '03* were invited to attend the November 9 UNO conference on “The Problems of Refugees and Methods of Teaching Tolerance in Educational Establishments throughout Belarus.”

Aleksandra Savurko'03 participated in the state chess tournament.

Polina Smykovskaya '03 joined the YMCA organization “Center of Equal Education” and assisted in holding a number of seminars related to the “Youth for a Healthy Way of Life” program which is aimed at teaching young people throughout Belarus about HIV/AIDS prevention and the harmful effects of drug abuse.

Dmitriy Starodubets '01 participated in soccer competitions in Minsk State Linguistic University.

Georgia

Lasha Chkhartishvili '01 and *Nino Kemoklidze' 00* started internships at the P.A. Consulting Company.

George Guliashvili '99 started working at Amec Spie Petrofac as an assistant of the hydro-testing manager of the Baku-Tbilisi-Jeikhan pipeline.

Nino Matiashvili '04 is doing an internship at the foreign tourist company “Explore Georgia.”

Mariam Mrevlishvili '99 is an intern for U.S. Congressional Representative John Hostettler.

Salome Svanadze '04 was selected to participate in training program in marketing at the Association of Young Economists of Georgia.

Manana Tevzadze '97 graduated with a Master of Arts degree in World Heritage Studies from Brandenburg University of Technology in Cottbus, Germany.

Keti Vardigoreli '00 has started to work at the United Energy Distribution Company of Georgia as a commercial cycle monitoring specialist.

Kazakhstan

Ekaterina Garkavets '99 works as a senior tax consultant at PriceWaterhouse Coopers.

Olga Gushchina '97 works as the head of the inspection department at Moody International.

Zhandos Shaikhy '00 joined the transaction advisory services team at Ernst & Young.

Marat Yelemessov '03 successfully passed several rounds of the selection process and is competing for a scholarship to West Point Military Academy.

Kyrgyzstan

Asel Akmatova '02 works as administrative assistant at the NGO Alpine Fund.

Sergey Firsov '00 made a short film on drug abuse which was broadcast on BBC on December 4.

Bekzat Madanbekov '03 works as editor and designer for the Kyrgyz business magazine *Investments Now*.

Moldova

Valentina Brega '04 won first place in the German Language Contest at Gaudeamus High School.

Elena Caciurnenco '04 made her own website after attending web design courses organized by Vadim Dubceac '04 at the IATP center.

Vadim Dubceac '04 organized a web-design training course for alumni on November 22-26.

Tatiana Echim '98 worked as a project assistant and interpreter at a three-week international training session on "Solid Waste Management in Southeastern Europe and Central Asia" in Stockholm, Sweden from October 25-November 15.

Violina Eremciuc '04 made a presentation at Mihai Eminescu High School about her U.S. experience.

Igor Garabajiv '03 was invited to attend a TV program on November 26 to represent his university and meet with local entrepreneurs who have succeeded in business.

Xenia Gleadcenco '04 began attending language courses at the Linguata language study school.

Diana Gonta '04 took the SAT in Bucharest, Romania.

Anastasia Leanca '04 participated in an English language contest organized by DEC Moldova Company and Study Group Moldova.

Nadejda Mustea '02 took part in the "What? Where? When?" Moldovan competition on November 29.

Russia

Kirov

Alsu Fattakhova '97 (Kazan) graduated from the University of Arkansas Information Technology Department with a Bachelor of Science degree. She currently works in the information service department at Baldor Electric Company as a systems analyst/programmer.

Vladimir Gordeev '98 was certified as a "PC Operator" after completing a course and successfully conducted the "Job Shadowing Day" project in cooperation with Vyatka Humanitarian Gymnasia.

Ksenia Gorshkova '00 (Nizhny Novgorod) won a study-trip to Grenoble, France for March-May 2005.

Sonya Kaplan '04 was one of the winners at the English Language Olympiad at the Vyatka Humanitarian Gymnasia.

Aleksandra Lyamova '96 (Nizhny Novgorod) works as a personnel manager for the expedition company "Logoprom."

Anna Milyutina successfully conducted the "Discovering Personality" project with funding from the FLEX Alumni Grants program.

Natalya Sankova '98 (Nizhny Novgorod) works for the Tuborg brewery company.

Ekaterina Savrasova '96 (Nizhny Novgorod) was accepted to Heidelberg University, Germany.

Ekaterina Skopina '96 was named "Manager of the Month" in November and was "Employee of Month" in October at travel agency "Sakvoyage."

Ekaterina Smayeva '99 (Nizhny Novgorod) works as an interpreter for several business firms.

Moscow

Galina Agafonova '03 participated in Model UN this summer and helped with FLEX recruiting during the fall.

Ilya Brovin '97 studies at Harvard Business School.

Oleg Koninin '99 started to work at International SOS Moscow as a business development manager for the Russian market.

Ekaterina Kolerova '95 works as a business development advisor at VID Entertainment Group.

Olga Krylova '02 volunteered at the Downside Up charity bazaar to raise money for children with Downs syndrome in October and helped representatives of the European Union Open Mission to sell Christmas cards in November.

Irina Rodionova '98 (Tula) is a teacher in the Department of Linguistics and Translation at Tula State University.

Alexey Rumyantsev '95 worked as an Open World facilitator in November. He also carried gifts from students in the U.S. to Russia for delivery to Beslan children.

Mikhail Sukhov '98 began a new job as assistant to a multinational account manager at SAP C.I.S. and Baltic States, LLC.

Yulia Tell '02 was one of the judges at the first tournament of *Moscow League of Champions* debate championship, which is run throughout the year.

Anton Zhukov '99 is now the head of the tax and legal department in Advocacy Bureau #1 in Moscow.

St. Petersburg

Lyudmila Chistiakova '01 made the major KVN leagues as a member of Petrozavodsk State University team and participated in the KVN tournament held in St.Petersburg. Lyuda is an administrator, singer, and actress on her team.

Viktoria Mun '03 was one of only 20 high school graduates from St. Petersburg who received the governor's certificate of academic excellence. Viktoria is now a first-year student at St. Petersburg State University's Department of Sociology. She started singing professionally during her FLEX year and now has participated in concerts at the State University Auditorium, as well as part of the entertainment program for an academic conference.

Rifat Muratov '01 got a position of a software developer/engineer at Fort-Ross, a RUSS-Soft Association company.

Roza Vasilyeva '04 traveled to Donetsk, Ukraine to volunteer as a foreign observer during the Ukrainian presidential elections.

Samara

Pavel Alasheev '01 was hired to work for the American company I-Documents while in the U.S. on the Work and Travel program this summer. He was a junior developer at this company and upon arriving home continued to work in this position remotely.

Ilya Brezhnev '02 got a night administrator position at Samara's Renaissance Hotel. Ilya, a student at the Samara State Academy of Economics, is now putting his theoretical knowledge into practice.

Anna Shegurova '04 and *Alexandra Visloguzova '04* participated in the district English Olympiad on November 15. Both of them took the top places in the contest with Anna winning first place and Alexandra second. They are now preparing for the city-wide English Olympiad.

Maria Smetannikova '98 held the “Resume Writing and Job Hunting Hints” seminar for alumni after being inspired by getting a new job as a marketing and advertising expert with the Samara government’s tourism department.

Vladivostok

Anastasia Aleshkina '04 is a member of the school council where she works on creating the school newspaper.

Veronika Azarova '04 started working as a makeup artist for “Rain,” the most popular gothic group in Vladivostok.

Anna Koneva '99 works as an English teacher at the Far Eastern State Technical University.

Danil Melnikov '04 took third place at the English Language Olympiad for Khabarovsk high school students.

Dmitriy Olennikov '03 (Korsakov, Sakhalin Oblast) entered the Plehanovskaya Academy affiliate campus in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, where he studies finances and economic problems.

Julia Prokonich '00 is head of the incoming tourism department in “Dalintourist,” one of Vladivostok’s best travel agencies.

Nadezhda Savchenko '03 (Chita) attended the Second Russian Students Forum held on November 16-19 in Tomsk.. The goal of this forum was to discuss global youth problems and ways to cope with them. Students from different parts of Russia worked together to write more than 37 pages of resolutions.

Elena Sidelnikova '03 (Blagoveshensk) is a member of the main “KVN” team in her city and recently played in a semi-final game in Krasnoyarsk where they took one of the top places.

Daria Urchenko '04 works as a piano teacher.

Polina Zavyalova '00 will be holding a three-day “Tolerance in our Society” training session for International Tourism and Hospitality Institute student council members.

Volgograd

Oksana Panfilova '04 made several presentations in School #3 about her exchange year in the U.S. and about American culture.

Yekaterinburg

Daria Dergacheva '95 works at the National Democratic Institute as regional program officer. She is going to work as a facilitator for “Open Russia” as well.

Nadezhda Kazantseva '00 is a junior at the Ural State Technical University in the Economy and Management Department.

Ilya Korobeinikov '04 won first prize in history, English and biology at the regional Olympiad.

Lyubov Okulova '04 won second prize in English at the regional Olympiad and also received third prize at the Russian language Olympiad.

Anastasya Sychina '99 works as a project manager for “Echo Mosky” radio station in Yekaterinburg.

Tajikistan

Firuz Oyeov '02 and *Timur Rakhimov '02* were hired by IREX as program assistants for the Civic Advocacy/Election Initiative Program.

Muhiba Rabejanova '01 was accepted as a transfer graduate student to Eastern Oregon University and won a scholarship.

Ukraine

Kharkiv

Oleksandr Pyeshykov '04 was selected as a member of the Law Academy basketball team and became its captain.

Kyiv

Nataliya Balyuk '04 *Maryna Haydak '04* participated in the Project Design and Management workshop organized by the NGO Youth Can.

Andriy Drobot '98 plays in the rock band “Loki” and helps with managing another rock band, “Teneta.” Andriy is also a producer of Loki, which will release its debut album in February.

Olha Golichenko '00, a student of Central European University, participated in the peaceful demonstration near the Embassy of Ukraine in Budapest, which was organized by Hungarian students. Around 250 people came to the Embassy and signed a petition in favour of fair elections and democracy in Ukraine. The copy of the petition was sent to Kyiv. The petition was handed to the Embassy. Georgian and Azeri students of CEU community have issued official letters of support of Ukrainian students, who are supporting fair elections in Ukraine.

Kateryna Golitsyna '02 went to Germany on the Au Pair program. She will spend a month in Koln and 10 months in Berlin.

Olha Kessarchuk '98 studies at University of Toronto, Canada, at the Centre for Russian and East European Studies. Olha joined the members of Ukrainian community from Toronto and went to Ottawa to protest the falsified results of Ukrainian elections.

Tetyana Mulesa '02 was employed by the ARD First Independent German Television in the capacity of news producer for the period of peaceful revolution in Ukraine. Tetyana gathered news from different sources, translated them into English and then reported them.

Anna Opanasyuk '99 and *Maryna Yaroshchuk '02* escorted and interpreted for U.S. Congressmen who came as international observers for the second round of presidential elections in Ukraine.

Oksana Potapenko '97 translated news websites www.pora.org.ua and www.hotline.net.ua into English, organized meetings for international mass media and coordinated people that were eager to help at the tent city in Kyiv. Oksana went to Sweden, where she held a press conference in Stockholm and co-organized a demonstration in Stockholm in support of a democratic Ukraine.

Yuliya Semenchenko '00 works as an HR Assistant at MaltEurope Ukraine Company.

Nataliya Shtukhetska '03 participated in a London demonstration in support of Ukrainian nation's struggle for democracy. Over 2,000 people who gathered at the embassy in London and signed a petition that was delivered to British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

Lviv

Natalya Salo '01, *Olya Halyabar '99* and *Ira Rak '01* successfully finished the Canada Ukraine Parliamentary Program.

Ivan Senyk '01 took part in a two-week diplomacy course in the Ukrainian embassies in Hungary, Poland and Slovakia.

Oksana Arkhynchuk '01 worked with *Pora* throughout the “Orange Revolution.” She also worked as an election observer in all rounds of the election.

Polina Verbytska '02, Olha Halyabar '99, Ivan Senyk '01, Mykola Pekh '00, Natalya Salo '01, Alla Ivanova '03, Iryna Rak '03, Iryna Odrehivska '01, Tanya Keyvan '03, Stepan Shakhno '01, Valeriy Kashkarov '94, Valeriy Prokhorov '01 and Roman Khokhla '02 all participated in the “Orange Revolution.”

Olya Halyabar '01 worked as a doctor in Zhovtnevyi Palats in Kyiv during the “Orange Revolution.”

Valeriy Kashkarov '94 is working at the Interconsulting company.

Valeriy Prokhorov '01 took part in the Work and Travel Program, and also took part in the “Orange Revolution” and gave housing to seven other demonstrators.

Stepan Shakhno '01 conducted trainings for 450 official elections observers in Poltava, Kremenchuk, Cherkassy, Vinnytsya, Zhytomyr, Chernihiv and Bila Tserkva.

Solomiya Rozhko '95 is now working in the Agency for Regional Development and European Integration in Lviv.

Iryna Odrehivska '01 was one of the organizers of the conference "The Strategy of Ukraine - Between East and West" and delivered a report on the role of mass media in the process of democratization in Ukraine. The conference was organized through on the Committee of International Politics of the Young Diplomats' Centre.

Pavlo Demchuk '97 is now finishing the EERC Masters program in Economics.

Maryana Khokhla '04 worked as an interpreter during elections for international observers.

Odesa

Yuliya Nikolayenko '02 was chosen to participate in annual conference on *tourism management* held in Florence, Italy.

Kateryna Komarova '02 was selected to participate in “Businesswoman Challenge” program, a two-day seminar organized by Procter & Gamble.

Olena Zubareva '01 organized a student Olympiad in mathematics and programming at Odesa National Polytechnic University.

Uzbekistan

Arslonbek Teshaboev '03 is currently doing internship program in hospitality management with Marriott Hotels and Resorts and is taking classes at the University of North Carolina.

Shohruh Yulchiev '02 is a second year student at Richmond International University in London. He is studying BA Finance and won an \$11,000 scholarship.

Stanislav Kim '02 represented Uzbekistan by participating in the Central Asian Youth Network conflict prevention conference organized by OSCE from November 1-6 at Charvak resort.

Abduvakkos Abdurahmanov '98 is working at the OSCE as program manager and was an election observer at the first round of presidential elections in Ukraine.

Firuz Akbarova '97 is working at the Pakistani Embassy.

Baurjan Berdibekov '03 recently started working as Site Administrator in Chirchik for IATP.

Doniyor Berdibekov '98 works as a Training Manager at Uzbek-British American Tobacco.

Dilyaron Djambaeva '04 began working at the Sheraton Hotel in Tashkent in the food and beverage division.

FLEX November 2004 Report

Zarina Izmailova '98 was appointed Program Assistant for the Edmund S. Muskie Graduate Program at IREX.

Saidnumon Mansurov '04 participated in a training on political parties and organizing campaigns held by the National Democratic Institute where Saidnumon works as an interpreter. Similar training will be held in rural regions of Uzbekistan in order to prepare political parties for the upcoming parliamentary elections on December 26.

Shehroz Narzikulov '00 works as an interpreter for Human Rights Watch in Uzbekistan.

Dilshoda Saparniyazova '04 wrote an article about the importance of the coming elections in Uzbekistan, her participation in FLEX and her studies at the lyceum. The article was published in the magazine *Barkamol Avlod* which also interviewed Dilshoda.

Aleksandr Solohin '04 was accepted to the Credit and Finance Department of Karakalpak State University and was chosen as the “Best Counselor” of a week-long “American Camp” organized in Nukus by Peace Corps volunteers.