

CCIS Communiqué

Community Committee for International Students

Volunteers serving
Stanford's Internationals
Volume 14 #1
Fall 2009



Gwyn Dukes receiving a scrapbook of notes of appreciation given her by students and spouses at her retirement party.

Gwyn Dukes Retires

Born in Columbus, Ohio, Gwyn Dukes grew up in Washington D.C.—the perfect setting for a future Poli Sci major. After undergraduate education in a small liberal arts college, she earned a graduate degree at Columbia. She also began her life-long commitment to international students by living in the nation's first International House and acting as the Program Coordinator. While interning in counseling in higher education, Gwyn was introduced to NAFSA, the National Association of Foreign Student Advisors.

Her first trip to the west, a trip to Pasadena to attend a NAFSA conference, brought her into contact with some friends who convinced her that California was not on the fringe of the universe. An extension of the trip to northern California included a visit to the enticing Stanford campus. At the time she applied for a Stanford position there were no openings at the I-Center, but she could be the Director of Residence at the Old Union, which at that time was still a dorm. Waiting patiently paid off. A year later a position at the Front Desk of the I-

Center opened. It meant starting at the bottom again. She wanted to be an organizer of student programs, and did get to start a few that year. It was the beginning of a very satisfying career.

She vividly remembers involving students in the creation of current events discussions. They also took theater trips to the City where they enjoyed dinner before the play and would meet for a discussion with cast members afterwards. The I-Center also sponsored a film series which included discussion of each movie with members of the Stanford's communications department. At social as well as intellectual activities students met others from around the world. Some dated, fell in love, married. Out of gratitude, the Riddle Fund, which contributes to the programs at the I-Center, was created by two students who met in the program and wanted to leave a gift that they had created. Although the Riddles settled in Boulder, Colorado, the friendship lasted.

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Members' Luncheon

**Tuesday
December 15
Noon to 2 P.M.
Faculty Club**

**All members
welcome**

\$20

RSVP

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Martha Enthoven's Letter

Volunteerism

Occasionally I am asked by an international student about the culture of volunteerism in America. Why is it that Americans volunteer? This is an interesting question—one that I am intrigued with and one that visitors to this country have been asking for some time. Indeed, as far back as the 1830's, a visiting Frenchman named Alexis de Tocqueville noted Americans' interest in forming voluntary associations and the relative importance of volunteerism in the American culture and society compared with Europe at that time.

"Americans of all ages, conditions and all dispositions constantly unite together," de Tocqueville wrote, to "hold fêtes, found seminaries, build inns, construct churches, distribute books, dispatch missionaries to the antipodes. They establish hospitals, prisons, schools by the same method. Finally, if they wish to highlight a truth or develop an opinion by the encouragement of a great example, they form an association. Where you see in France the government and in England a noble lord at the head of a great new initiative, in the United States you can count on finding an association of citizens."

As de Tocqueville noted, our country was founded on the principles of smaller government and equality. These principles have both enabled and obliged Americans to step up and work together as citizens to solve problems and address needs in their communities. Furthering this trend, we have developed a tax code that actively supports contributions to nonprofit groups and volunteer associations. These groups, in turn, carry out a wide array of missions, from helping to feed the homeless and tutor at-risk school children to -- in the case of CCIS -- welcoming international students and their families and assisting in their transition into American life.

I think that those who give their time to CCIS are at first drawn to our group because they love to learn about other countries and cultures. However, after just a little bit of time spent helping our international students, CCIS volunteers, like so many other volunteers across this country, discover the truth in the old saying that "it is even better to give than to receive". Our hearts are touched and our lives are immeasurably enriched by so many of the international students that we have the privilege to spend time with.

Martha Enthoven, President

Editor's Letter

Changes in the Communiqué

With the advances in computer technology many organizations have been asking how best to continue their newsletter. Some members are comfortable reading a newsletter online while other folks don't even have a computer—and may never have one, thank you very much. Besides the accessibility arguments there are other advantages to both. A newsletter printed on paper, unless it hits the trashcan with other junk mail, can lie on the coffee table or on a pile of magazines to remind you of the organization's activities. It can be given to a friend who may be interested in joining the organization. It has a calendar that you can fasten to the refrigerator. Editors may even dream that their work is so valuable that members will save the newsletter in a folder somewhere. Dream on, you say?

Electronic versions are more flexible. They can be changed on the website with updated information. Their photos can be in color without increasing the expense of publication. They don't require a committee to fold, stamp, and mail. Expense is probably the biggest argument. If an

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Community Committee for International Students at Stanford

In order to reduce spam we have separated the email addresses into two parts. Please add the officer's prefix to the general address as follows:
example@CCISstanfordU.org

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John Pearson's Letter

A New Year

As we begin another academic year, I wanted to provide some updates to CCIS members.

First, even with the economic downturn, the number of international students and scholars remains high. While we may have seen a few less new international graduate students arriving this fall, we did see a small increase in international undergraduate students. Our numbers of visiting scholars remains quite constant and among the highest in the U.S. Orientation went very well, and thanks to all the CCIS volunteers who, once again, provided an excellent welcome to new students. Bechtel's orientation for new international undergraduate students now includes both a reception and a question and answer session for parents who accompany their students. This year we had approximately 70 parents attending.

This fall we are offering two lunch time programs focusing on how Stanford is influencing international students and their future goals. For graduate students we are offering lunches with faculty who facilitate these discussions; we offer the same for undergraduate international students but there we also include U.S. students. The lunches have proved to be very popular with students and faculty and are supported by the Vice-Provost for Graduate Education and the Riddle Family Program Fund. Our goal is to offer such lunches throughout the year and we also want to consider how we can incorporate CCIS members into similar programs.

I always seem to be writing about the following. But it finally looks as if we will begin the renovation of the large kitchen. We have appreciated the input of CCIS member and cooking class teacher, Dolly Sacks, and perhaps my next update will be able to report that the renovation is finished!!!

Elsewhere I know there is a story on the retirement of Gwyn Dukes. We continue to offer numerous programs to spouses and are resolved to continue to do so. On a personal note I want to end by saying how much I enjoyed working with Gwyn. She had, indeed has, a special touch and reminds us of the importance of one on one interactions; especially in an era when electronic communication is the norm.

With very best wishes,

John Pearson, Director

Editor's Letter continued from p. 2

organization already has a website, putting up a newsletter costs nothing. And as for history, well, as long as the webmaster keeps the copies on the website you can read any past issue that you want.

Everybody has an opinion, but we don't know yours. So, over the next few months, using a variety of approaches, we will be asking you. When you are asked, please help us by telling us what you like. In the meantime, we will continue to print and mail the Communiqué as well as put it on the website. You can expect the Board to make a decision by the end of this school year.

Finally, you may notice an old name on the masthead, for I have become editor again. While the appearance may change, the Communiqué will continue to contain much of the same information as our members have expected in the past. What I hope to accomplish is to share the work among a committee interested in photography and writing. We may recruit from among the talented spouses who benefit from our programs. Most importantly, others will be able to suggest stories without feeling that they need to do the writing. We will be in contact with many of you who may remain an anonymous source. If you are interested in serving on the Communiqué committee, please contact me.

John Heron, Editor

CCIS *Volunteer Activities*

Hospitality Program

Jan Henrotin responded to a CCIS newspaper story in the Palo Alto Weekly about ten years ago, and her life has been richer ever since. Having raised four sons, she gives her spare time to volunteering. The Palo Alto Police Department and TheatreWorks count on her.

For seven years she has shared the tour guide responsibilities for the September Bay Area bus



tour with Fran Erickson. Her EIA partners have been from Korea, Switzerland, and Brazil, and she has hosted students in the Hospitality program from Afghanistan, Japan, Nigeria, and Iran.

She volunteers to develop friendships and to find out what she has in common with people from other countries. She finds the students and spouses to be dependable, responsible, and just plain nice. "It's cheaper than traveling."

Many personal experiences make it memorable. Jan recalls looking through her family photo album with a Japanese partner who enjoyed seeing large families with multiple children. Inspired by the joy found in the album, on returning to Japan the wife and her husband talked about it. She became pregnant, and they brought a second child to their family.

Jan listened long and hard to a partner from Afghanistan who wanted to stay in the U.S. but returned home to help his parents who had already lost two sons by war: one to the Russians and one to the Taliban. These are real people—not images on your TV. It was a painful parting for both Jan and her partner. "They want your friendship; they don't care about your degree."

In closing she said, "You find it to be one of the most rewarding experiences that you can imagine. It's addictive. You really care about these partner's lives and worry about what will happen to them." Gender is not an issue. As the mother of four boys, she feels comfortable with men, but she likes talking about women's things too.

English in Action Program

We can be proud of our accomplishment. Last year 265 internationals met once weekly with their American partner. Just a few years ago the annual numbers were more like 180. At present 160 students, scholars and spouses have requested English in Action. Marianne Dieckmann, Co-Chair of EIA, reports that the fluency, particularly of in-coming Asians, has improved. The new ones are looking for help with idioms, conversation, and understanding of American culture.

A training session conducted at several different times will be held in November. All new EIA volunteers should come. They will be contacted by email regarding time, date, and location.

The EIA committee is trying to improve the matching process by converting to an electronic database system.

In early October our current EIA volunteers were emailed a request to update their information directly on the database. Many have responded to the request which is a big help in matching. The committee thanks you. If you haven't done so yet and can't find that email, please contact Dave Gustavson to request another one. The job is easy and only takes a couple of minutes.

Finally, some ideas for working with your partner could include reviewing lyrics from Country and Western music. Since the word play is wonderful, the fun of exploring metaphor and cliché phrases enlivens our conversation.

- I'm biting my fingernails and thinking of you.
- If today was a fish, I'd throw it back in.
- A wedding ring ago
- How come your dog don't bite nobody but me?
- I've cried the blue right out of my eyes.
- I can't have your body if your heart isn't in it
- I've got a one owner heart.
- He's a heart ache looking for a place to happen.
- She's out doing what he's doing without.
- Your 'Nobody' called today. She hung up when I asked her name.
- If I say you have a beautiful body, will you hold it against me?
- If the phone doesn't ring, it's me.
- It takes a little rain to make love grow.

Members' Luncheon

Joining together to share stories, questions, and experiences is the idea behind the All-Member Luncheon to be held in the Faculty Club on Tuesday, December 15, 12 – 2 P.M. In our volunteer work with Stanford's internationals we don't often have the opportunity to compare our thoughts about what we do with other volunteers.

The hope is that this luncheon will be celebratory. Meeting with others without having to prepare food or decorate a facility or clean up afterwards, serves as a pleasant beginning to the Holiday Season, and we invite all volunteers to come together for the occasion.

The Faculty Club, next to the I-Center, is a special place that usually requires an invitation from a member of the faculty. The food is good. The atmosphere relaxing. We will be served a three course meal including the proverbial luncheon chicken.

Reservations are important. Please contact president Martha Enthoven for additional information: president@ccisstanfordu.org.

Potluck/Music Night

Three or four times a year the I-Center is opened on a Sunday night for CCIS volunteers and international students and families to come together for a meal and entertainment. In the great American tradition everyone brings a dish (a salad, an entree, or a dessert) to share with others. Not only the expected tuna-noodle casserole, we are also offered comfort food from other countries.

Afterwards, there is entertainment by the talented people who are in our extended family—musicians, singers, and dancers. Invite your EIA or Hospitality partner.

Sunday, November 15, 6 P.M.

The CCIS Desk

The Desk, in the lobby of the I-Center, is staffed by CCIS volunteers on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 10:00 to 1:00. Open every weekday in past, we cut back on the hours due to a lack of qualified volunteers.

CCIS volunteers perform daily administrative tasks like answering the phone, interviewing applying EIA students and spouses, and directing people to the right office. Training is provided. If you can give a day or two a month contact Dick Hanavan at 650/948-7312.

International **Partner Activities**

Spouse Education Fund

Angela Ow – SEF grant recipient

Angela Ow from Singapore is a delightful example of the students who apply for grants from the Spouse Education Fund. She wrote a beautiful summary of her reasons for wanting this grant and it is worth quoting here. “I am passionate about music. I believe that music is an international language that touches the hearts of people. When I was in Singapore, I tried to use music to touch the hearts of the congregation when I played in church....I believe that music has the power to heal and to bring joy to people.”

At the age of three, Angela learned to love music by listening to the radio with her mother. At 5, on the tiny piano her parents bought for her, she began trying to compose little pieces and she is now working on similar but much larger endeavors.

Here at Stanford, she has joined a group called Music4all. They play for homeless people at the Samaritan House in South San Francisco.

Angela’s grant pays for music theory class at the Community School of Music and Arts and piano lessons at the Gorin School of Music. It is expected that our grant and Angela’s talent will bring great rewards.

Each year the Spouse Education Fund awards grants through a competitive process. Angela was one of the 22 grant recipients in the 2008-2009 academic year. The SEF is now accepting applications, available at the Center, for this academic year. We look forward to meeting the new applicants.

CCIS & I-Center Calendar

All activities are at the I-Center unless marked otherwise.

November 15, 6 P.M. Potluck Music Night

November 16, 10 A.M. Board Meeting

November 25, 7 P.M. I-Center Thanksgiving dessert. All members welcome.

December 15, 12 – 2 P.M. Members’ Luncheon at the Faculty Club

January 11, 10 A.M. Board Meeting

February 7, 6 P.M. Potluck Music Night

May 16, 6 P.M., Potluck Music Night

Friday Morning Coffee

Chula and Gwyn working together

When there is a hole some folks will take the responsibility to fill it. Chula Morel-Seytoux is one of those people. She is the kind of lady who can say “yes” when there is a need. So, when she noticed that the Friday Morning Coffee didn’t have a CCIS program chair, she volunteered to take the job again. That means that every Friday morning from before 10:00 until after

12:00 she will be at the I-Center greeting international spouses and facilitating the Coffee. Chula will be joined this year by another person passionate about helping internationals new to campus, GwynDukes! The Friday Morning Coffee couldn’t be in better hands.

We thought you might like to see what the Friday Morning Coffee looks like.





Continued from Gwyn Dukes, p. 1



What Gwyn discovered in those early years was that students didn't need to have someone tell them what to do. "We don't have to make up ways to entertain them. They are creative, intelligent, and energetic," she says in a way that tells much about how she views the world. The

key, as always, is to learn enough about someone that you discover their passion. Then you can encourage them, telling them "yes, you can set up the program". One of the most long-lived programs was the International Women's Circles, which attracted about forty spouses each year. The women would come to the I-Center in early October to be divided into groups of ten who would meet every other week in the home of one of the group's members. They compared life in their various cultures and discussed world affairs. Anita Kolackowska led the International Women's Circle program which lasted for twenty-five years. Then it ended.

And that is the other lesson Gwyn learned. Every year is different. Not everyone has the same passion. There are new people with different talents and interests, and times change too. Women today are working. What is effective one year may not be five years later. A facilitator needs to keep in mind that it is the connection with the pulse of the students or spouses, rather than a specific activity that matters and must continue seeking people's passions. And sometimes old ideas come around again. Another women's circle was recently created.

Its participants found that evenings out might be fun, but with life so busy today they would rather spend their evenings with their own family. They decided to meet on weekday mornings while their children are in school.

In setting up small groups women are empowered to speak and to act. You begin by asking, "Would you like to volunteer? What is satisfying for you?" In the last few years there has been an explosion of classes taught by talented international spouses: languages, photography, marketing, public speaking, gardening for beginners, cooking, for the children an International Play Group in the Park.

Asked what advice she would offer to new volunteers to CCIS, she thought that they should get an overview of the many ways in which they can be involved. Learn about the I-Center and CCIS programs and the university itself.

What will retirement be like for Gwyn Dukes? She isn't walking out and closing the door behind her. No, she understands her own passion and will continue to participate in the programs she cares about such as the Friday Morning Coffee, and she will be a member of the CCIS Board.