

## Program Spotlight: Professional Liason Program

by Karin Meiswinkel

Many may not be aware of this somewhat hidden gem in the CCIS organization offered to International Spouses. The Professional Liaison Program (PLP) is intended only for spouses who cannot work in the U.S., either due to visa status or the need to provide child care.

Henry Lum, a board member of CCIS, is at the helm of this excellent program. Henry is a Palo Alto resident, businessman, husband and father to three beautiful daughters and five grandchildren. In addition, he finds time to conduct this exceptional program which

provides a plethora of opportunities and guidance to such International spouses. PLP consists of two parts:

### Part One:

- To provide leadership and guidance to international spouses seeking an opportunity to discuss their profession.
- Arranging introductions for PLP participants to have a one-on-one discussion with a local professional in their field of interest.
- To identify volunteer opportunities of interest and arrange like outside speakers.

Many CCIS PLP members also participate

in the Bechtel International Center English Discussion Group.

### Part Two:

The Bechtel International Center PLP English Discussion Group provides an

opportunity for mothers with children to participate and select topics of interest for discussion. Previous PLP participants can serve as "teaching assistants" if desired. The list goes on in an impressive range of offerings and opportunities:

- Understanding U.S. culture, idioms,

gestures, places to visit. Providing a forum to discuss and exchange career opportunities with other career PLP participants and invited speakers.

- Practicing presentation and leadership skills, as well as exploring long-range vision and goals in concert with possible career changes. To top these all this off, there is the exposure and enjoyment of ethnic dishes and snacks from a myriad of different countries. In addition, every week there is a different handout of publications offering pertinent topics ranging from travel points of interest, movies, career changes etc.

What a fabulous contribution Henry Lum has made in this program to further enrich the acclaim and representation of CCIS. His engaging ways, calm demeanor, experience, and business acumen make this another jewel in the treasure chest of CCIS. Henry states that his biggest joy and reward is seeing the participants progress and advance in their careers!

*Footnote: A total of 39 members participated in one or both of the PLP programs during the 2016 Fall quarter. Participants were from South America, Europe, Asia, and the Mideast.*

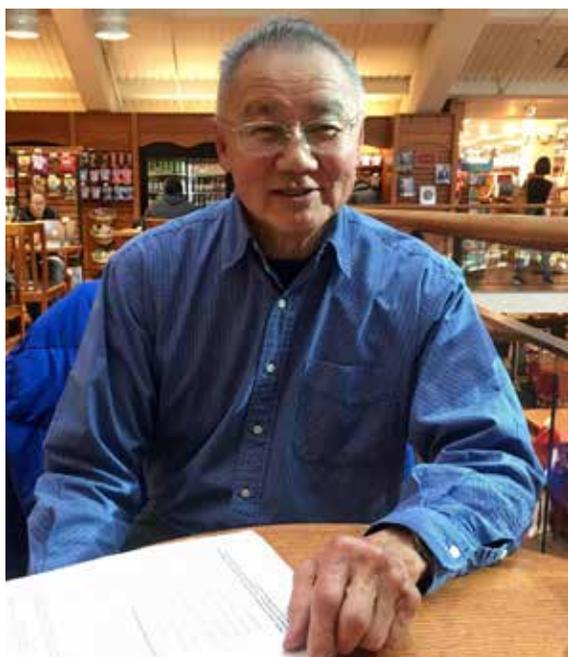
## A Heartwarming Homestay Reunion

by Donna Shoemaker

Every holiday brings special opportunities for CCIS volunteers to connect with the international students we have hosted, both this year and in the past. It doesn't surprise me that almost a third of CCIS members have been part of this organization for over ten years. It is one of our favorite addictions, right after chocolate and reading.

This past holiday we realized that all the students we had hosted in 2011 in the Homestay program were on campus at the same time. That was the year we hosted four students at the same time. Just before they all arrived, we asked ourselves if we could handle it, but they were so different and so much fun, that we never looked back with a moment of regret.

Two of the students are still at Stanford as PhD candidates. Gonzalo Valdez from Rancagua, Chile arrived in our home one day before the others. He had married only one month before and his wife, Tania Sandoval from Santiago, Chile arrived in January  
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Henry Lum, Program Chair

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2012. Tania was accepted into the Stanford PhD Chemical Engineering program a few months after her arrival. Now they are a two-PhD's couple.

Simon Olivestam arrived next. He is from Gothenburg, Sweden and got a Master's Degree in MS&E. Simon quickly connected with Gonzalo and our 2010 student who also loved surfing, skiing and anything "sports." He has since returned to Sweden and this past holiday he visited us with Sara Dahlberg, also from Gothenburg, where she is a physician. An extra treat for us was that Simon and Sara went on a hike to Mount Tamalpais and when they returned they were engaged. It was such an honor to be the first people they told. Sara told us how much she appreciated a story Simon had told her: when he was in our home, we told him that he had to make his bed every day. He still makes his bed every day and told Sara that she has us to thank for that!

Chen Ran from China is here at Stanford, and is a PhD student in neurobiology. He immediately became a member of the "family" and is now married to a PhD student at Indiana University. Thankfully, she visits often. He is the photographer,

musician, and cook in the group.

Lotte Goos arrived at in 2011 from Netherlands, although her family home is Heidelberg, Germany. She is positive and has made a difference in the work, as so many students do, living in Lagos, Nigeria and helping with the difficult task of improving the economy through skills training. Lotte's sister, Caro, is currently here too as the spouse of a visiting scholar at Stanford, so now we have two more to add to the group.

Chen decided that we should all get together for a photo shoot on campus. We spent an hour having so much fun. The Homestay program has been very rewarding for us for the past seven years. We certainly get more than we give! Our own adult children live back east and we appreciate and know young people come here with varied viewpoints and such positive energy. It has enriched our lives and brightened our home. Both of our daughters had holiday dinners hosting international students from nearby college campuses. We love that international connecting and outreach is now part of our holiday family traditions.



## CCIS Valentine's Day Cookie Decorating Event

*by Karin Meiswinkel*

On Feb. 13th, just a day prior to this popular and renowned celebration of love, romance, hearts and flowers known as Valentine's Day, the CCIS Events committee held a Valentine Cookie Decorating event in the assembly room @ Bechtel International Center from 3:30 to 5:00pm. Valentine decorations were in abundance creating an air of hearts aflutter and love in the air. This event was well attended by CCIS members, international grad students, post-docs, and visiting scholars along with their children and families. There was a count of about 30-40 all said, throughout the event.

An evident atmosphere of competitive and creative spirit was apparent in the decorating of valentine heart cookies at well-appointed tables supplied with packets of icing, palate knives, decorative sprinkles and candy hearts. Parents with children and adults alike, partook in creating their masterpiece cookies adorned with Valentine delight. Creativity flowed upon intent renderings of the heart for this special holiday.

A special main prize was given for the most beautiful and creative design. In addition, there were packets of Valentine Sweetheart candies given to all entries as the judges narrowed it down to their favorite choices.

This was such a fun event and tribute to a festive day that has become a huge favorite in the USA.



*Simon and Sara from Gothenburg, Sweden, recently got engaged while on a hike at Mount Tamalpais.*



## 2016 Spouse Education Fund honours 37 new recipients

by *Dolly Verplank*

The presentation of the 2016 Spouse Education Fund (SEF) awards was held December 6th in the Assembly Room at the Bechtel International Center. Approximately 70 family members and friends gathered to recognize and honor the 37 recipients from 18 countries. This is a time when spouses are acknowledged for their own accomplishments and are given financial aid to support their personal and professional goals.

The SEF Committee meets in November to

review applications and interview eligible candidates. It is fascinating to learn about these exceptional individuals, their education, and their professional and personal experiences.

The majority of the funds for the SEF grants comes from the generous donations of CCIS members. This year we supported 19 grants from the memorial funds of Marianne Dieckmann, Betty Ogawa, Jane Reber, and Josh Alper. In addition, two grants were given by Joyn and two

from the newly formed fund in honor of John Pearson's retirement. Stanford Continuing Studies provided scholarships for 9 grantees to take courses in their programs.

We were happy to have CCIS board members in attendance and especially grateful for Carolyn Gannon's photos documenting the event.

Courses have begun, and when complete, reports will be submitted with details of the value of the recipients' experiences.

## Holiday Luncheon a Savory Success

by *Karin Meiswinkel*

The 2016 Holiday Luncheon for CCIS Volunteers took place on December 1st at Michaels at Shoreline in Mountain View once again. In spite of the plethora of rainy days and storms this winter, we were afforded a clement, sunny day by the weather gods, much to everyone's relief and enjoyment. The attendance was very good as a result, with over 60 all total, delighting all in the festive decorations and the ambience of good cheer and the spirit of the holiday season.

After the initial period of socializing and mingling, upon everyone being seated at their chosen tables, Karen McNay, the CCIS president gave a cordial and warm welcoming address. Elsa Gontrum, the Associate Director at Bechtel, then gave a lovely speech conveying her feelings about CCIS and all the wonderful work the organization does for the International community. Given the vast array of programs offered, this caring represents the fundamental mission of Bechtel Elsa stated. Aine Tyrrel, a vocalist trained in both classical and Opera was scheduled to perform. Unfortunately

Aine was ill and could not attend.

The luncheon was then served and enjoyed by all. The program then followed with an address by the Program Emcee and CCIS Vice-President, Carole Hessler. Shalini Bhutani, the Director of Bechtel International Center, was listed next on the program, but was not able to attend due to a conflict with another booking. At this point, Mariel deHaan, originally from Holland, who has dual citizenship in Switzerland and Holland, spoke about the Homestay Program and her gratitude and appreciation for it. The audience then heard from SEF recipient Maria Elisa Piza, from Brazil, who gave a lovely talk. There is a video of it posted on the CCIS website. The final speaker was San Woo Hong, an Electrical Engineer from China, who lauded the benefits reaped from the English classes at Bechtel.

This was the conclusion of another successful CCIS Volunteer Luncheon. Wishes were expressed for a wonderful holiday season and all the best in the transition into the new year of 2017.



### Upcoming Events

**Mar 25 - 31:** - Stanford Spring Break

**April 10:** CCIS Board Meeting

**May 8:** CCIS Annual Meeting

**June 7:** Second annual Picnic on the Oval

# CCIS Leadership

## President's column

**Karen McNay**



The close of 2016 and the dawn of 2017 has been a very busy, exciting and challenging time for all of us at CCIS and Bechtel.

The Spouse Education Fund had 37 extremely qualified applicants from 17 countries requesting grants this year. On December 6th a very diversified and deserving group of spouses received their awards at a reception with friends and families in attendance.

In January we experienced many new challenges for our students. Recently there has been an intensified awareness and media focus on international students and their legal status. The immediate outpouring of support from our volunteers to extend hospitality and open their homes is deeply appreci-

ated. What we did not anticipate is the sudden rise in membership since January. Usually, our new membership drive is in the fall when most of our program activities begin and students arrive. But recently our numbers suddenly grew by forty-seven in the first quarter of 2017. Why? Many new members have openly expressed a keen awareness and compassion for international students. One new volunteer said, "I am upset about the political climate, and CCIS is a positive way I can put my concerns to good use for the people who seek and need our American hospitality the most."

We have been through many challenging times in our country and those whom we touch with friendship. We know that it always comes down to one-on-one relationships, understanding, and caring communication. The values we hold have created lifelong connections that span borders, languages and religious beliefs. Your commitment to our mission and to connecting the people of the world has always been important but never more so than now. Thank you.

**Plan Ahead:** our Annual Meeting will be held in the Assembly Room at Bechtel from 4 -6 on Monday, May 8th (parking will be available after 4 p.m.) Following the election of our 2017-18 officers followed by a guest speaker and reception. I look forward to welcoming you and thanking you then. CCIS couldn't enjoy the success it does without you and we, along with the students, are most grateful!

Bechtel has been presenting a very diversified and interesting group of noon time guest speakers with lunch provided. Check the Bechtel calendar for dates.

## Editor's column

**Karin Meiswinkel & Amanda Preece**



The Communiqué, being a quarterly and thus seasonal newsletter, lends attention to the beauty and quality of the four seasons of the year. The most incredible, globally acclaimed climate, which we enjoy and experience at Stanford University, is yet another gem in the treasure trove of life, as we know it, in the environs of this revered academic institution. We choose to address winter, as the often

not so popular season of the year. Winter, in its clear stages is a purifying engine that runs unhindered over city and country, alerting the stars to sparkle brightly and shower their silver light into the arms of bare up-reaching trees. If we had no winter, the spring would not be so pleasant. If we did not sometimes taste of adversity, prosperity would not be so welcome.

In addition to the introspective interpretation of this season, let us be aware and remain optimistic in light of current political change and potential challenges, that spring is a constant after winter. It unflinchingly holds promise of new life, growth and progress. The faith and strength of this shall prevail in nature and in life. May we all hold strong in unity and trust for today and the future beyond overcoming any and all uncertainties.

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# INTERNATIONAL CENTER *Staff*

## **Director's column *Shalini Bhutani***



Dear Friends,

It is not unreasonable to expect that every new presidential administration will bring a new message and tone to the White house and the country, but these are particularly troubling times for us, especially for members of our cherished international community. On January 27th, 2017, just a few weeks after President Trump was inaugurated as our new President, he signed an executive order restricting entry into the United States of both immigrants and non-immigrants from seven countries in the Middle East and Africa. The seven countries included Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen. The Executive Order suspended nonimmigrant visa entry for 90 days for those on F, J and H visas, among others, and provisionally revoked valid visas issued to nationals of those countries.

Although (at the time of this writing) the enforcement of the entry ban is currently put on hold by a court order, the executive order continues to impact people worldwide. At Bechtel, we hear every day from our students, scholars and family members who are unsure how this development will affect their ability to study and work in the U.S. We also know there are many more who we have not heard from

yet, who are also deeply worried and distressed by these new policies.

As an academic institution and as part of a global community, Stanford welcomes and embraces students and scholars from around the world. Stanford's new President, Marc Tessier Levine and Provost Persis Drell have pledged unwavering commitment to do everything in their power to support and protect all members of the community. The Bechtel team continues to serve as a first point of contact for all international students and scholars who have questions about immigration issues. We encourage anyone who has questions and concerns about how they may be impacted by these changes to get in touch with us.

Many things are uncertain at the present time, and information may continue to change as new immigration policies unfold, but one thing is clear. We stand with our international community, unwavering in our support and commitment to keeping them safe.

My regards,

Shalini