



CCIS volunteers continue to serve international graduate students, visiting scholars and their families at Stanford University. Read about some of our programs and events!



December 13 Friday Morning Coffee

**“Notes at the top”
from
President
Annette
Isaacson**



Entranced little faces watched intently as their parents and siblings decorated holiday cookies and ornaments during the December 13 Friday Morning Coffee. A table was set up for each endeavor and were filled with excited and creative participants. Guidance from two volunteer experts in calligraphy from Poland and Belarus helped the artists create their ornaments.

As we start a new year and a new decade, it's fun to look back to the beginning of CCIS in 1953, when a small group of community members started the Homestay Program so international students at Stanford could experience a warm, welcoming home for a few days before the dorms opened.

The meeting room was decorated in a holiday theme, with the room draped with little white lights and holiday music playing in the background. Both lights and music were on loan from CCIS volunteer Anne Galli.

From these humble beginnings, the CCIS we know and love has evolved through the hard work and leadership of Board Members, in conjunction with Bechtel International Center, and the warmth and generosity of thousands of CCIS members through the years.

To celebrate the holiday season those attending were encouraged to wear red. In some parts of Kerala (a state in India where there is a large Christian population) it is traditional to wear red and white for the week before Christmas. About 80 adults and 20 children attended the last coffee of 2019. Special holiday food was brought by those attending.

Each of us has our favorite program, whether it is EIA, Hospitality, Homestay, Loan Closet, Windows on the West, Community Advisors, Professional Liaison Program, English Classes, Professional Development Program, Friday Morning Coffee or Spouse Education Program. These are all popular programs and, as President, I am grateful to the board chairs and other volunteers who make these programs possible.

Nadia Belkind, who is from Israel, set up a table top display about Chanukah and spoke with people about the traditions around this celebration. The group later sang holiday songs, led by Asuka, and accompanied by her husband on the guitar.

The Friday Morning Coffee program creates a sense of community among international families and local volunteers. The Friday Coffee is held from 10:00 am to 12:00 noon every week that Stanford is in session.

The program provides an opportunity for spouses to make new friends and to learn about how they can pursue their interests or education in the Stanford area.



Calendar of Events & Programs

Windows on the West film series (Fridays)

6:00pm: Dinner for first 40 students.
6:30pm: Film starts-Bechtel Intl Center
[Windows on the West information](#)
[Windows on the West film schedule](#)

English Classes

[English classes schedule](#)

Friday Morning Coffee

10:00am to 12:00 noon every week that Stanford is in session.
[Friday Coffee Information](#)

March 20 - Last day of finals for Winter quarter.
March 30 - First day of classes for Spring quarter
April 5 - All Volunteer Appreciation event.
4 to 6:30 pm at Bechtel Intl Center

CCIS Volunteer Holiday Luncheon

Over seventy people attended the annual Holiday Luncheon held December 9, 2019 at Michael's Restaurant in Mountain View. After about sixty minutes of socializing and eating, CCIS President Annette Isaacson conducted the meeting and introduced the speakers. CCIS is celebrating its 66th anniversary. A special recognition was given to Joan Lane, one of the original founding members, who attended the luncheon.

Elsa Gontrum, Associate Director and Associate Dean of the Bechtel I-Center, gave an update on the latest immigration regulations. She thanked the volunteers for their time and the impact the various programs have on students and their families. Elsa also read a wonderful quote from Henry James, "Three things in human life are important: The first is to be kind. The second is to be kind. The third is to be kind." She feels that CCIS and its programs embody this ideal.

Speaking next was Nadia Belkind, a spouse Education Fund Grant recipient, who told the group of her feelings of losing her identity as an independent and competent person and being identified solely as a "spouse" and a "dependent." She credits the personal interaction by volunteers to help her reaffirm her strengths and abilities.

The last speaker was James Burgess, a master's graduate student from Australia, who participated in the Homestay program. He credits his host family with putting him in touch with other students outside his field. He is thankful that his circle of friends has been widened through his contacts provided by Homestay.

The annual Holiday luncheon provides CCIS volunteers and members the chance to meet other volunteers, get updates on the various programs and enjoy good cheer and camaraderie.



44 Grants Awarded by the Spouse Education Fund

The Spouse Education Fund (SEF) awarded 44 grants this year (2019-2020) to spouses and partners of graduate students, post docs and scholars. Twenty-three countries were represented by the grant earners, all of whom have put their lives on hold to accompany their partners.

An award ceremony was held December 5, 2019. Dolly Verplank and Gwyn Duker (assisted by Sande Stuart) took turns in announcing the recipients and their class or program chosen. Many courses from the Continuing Studies series were selected.

This year classes or courses in the areas of leadership, personal development and strength and mindfulness were selected. Some recipients will attend professional conferences while others will take technical classes in computer design and user interface.

The capable and motivated applicants were interviewed by the SEF Committee and expressed gratitude for the support offered. All appreciated being acknowledged for their abilities and goals. Expressing their support and pride, many children, partners and spouses of the recipients also attended the event.

Founded in 1985, the Spouse Education Fund (SEF) awards grants of \$100 to \$500 in order to enable international spouses or partners with financial need to take advantage of local academic and professional development opportunities.

The SEF is the only CCIS program that invites specific funding from the community. Each summer the SEF program solicits donations from CCIS members and the community. These funds (except those earmarked for the SEF Endowment) are distributed as grants late in the Fall Term to international spouses who have applied to and been interviewed by the Spouse Education Fund Committee.



A new look for our newsletter

As the newsletter editor, I hope you will enjoy learning more about what's happening at CCIS. Your feedback is welcome--send an email to notes@ccisstanfordu.org.

Pamela Baird

JOIN THE CCIS BOARD!

The Board is soliciting new members for openings starting in June.

Contact Annette Isaacson at president@ccisstanfordu.org if you want to know more about the open Board positions.

CCIS is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.
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