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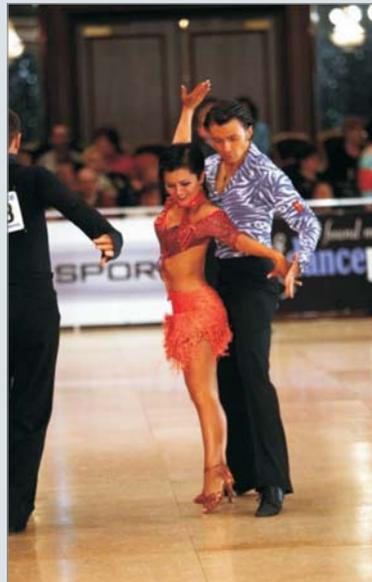
SPOTLIGHT

Tutoring Refugees Continues to be A Rewarding Experience for Ukrainian Teacher

Since October 2007, Oksana Zakharchenko (Muskie 2007) has been volunteering for the Refugee and Immigration Services in Columbia, Missouri. Ms. Zakharchenko describes her experience: "One of my volunteer responsibilities is tutoring English at the Adult Learning Center in Douglas High School. Now I am doing it as a part of my internship. My class consists mostly of students who are learning their first steps in English. They are all refugees and some of them are totally illiterate even in their native languages. It is really a big challenge for me to teach English to people who do not even know how to hold a pen. This kind of work requires a lot of patience and love. I never thought I would be able to do that, but as it is said: you cannot know for sure unless you try. I tried and I was successful. One Somalian student who came to our center totally illiterate can write his name now, fill in an application form, count and do a lot of other tasks. I am so proud him. When I come to my class and see this burning desire to learn something new in the eyes of my students I feel happy: I managed to light a tiny sparkle which turned into a big quest for knowledge in their hearts. This is a rewarding experience indeed."



Oksana Zakharchenko (far right) with some of her students.



Volodymyr Syrovitsky and His Partner Strut Their Stuff on the Dance Floor.

Fellow Puts on His Dancing Shoes Again, Places Fourth at National Competition

When **Volodymyr Syrovitsky** (Muskie 2007) was a young man in Ukraine, he was involved with ballroom dancing. Then he "quit dancing because it was difficult to combine both studying and dancing at a decent level; studying was more important. Arriving in Charlotte, I planned to go to a gym, just as I did in Ukraine, for exercise, but during a student organization fair I saw there was a dancing society at the University of North Carolina–Charlotte. I made up my mind to switch from the gym to dancing; again, just for doing some exercises. However, because I had pretty good experience and my partner was a very industrious person we decided to take part in several regional competitions and one national competition. We did really well: first in all regional competitions and fourth at the national competition."

These are the results: http://dancesportinfo.net/Couple/Vladimir_Sirovitskiy_and_Linara_Axanova_87594/Results.aspx

Uzbek Fellow Joins Sandbagging Effort to Save Mark Twain's Hometown

Flooding in towns near the Mississippi River was prominent news in June 2008. The University of Missouri–Columbia, where **Alisher Sattarhanov** (Muskie 2007) studies, is located less than two hours from the Mississippi. Mr. Sattarhanov heard about the flooding and joined a group from Columbia that formed a part of the relief efforts. Along with the group, he filled and laid sandbags near the river to hold back the rising waters. A journalist from the town of Hannibal, Missouri, the boyhood home of Mark Twain, interviewed Mr. Sattarhanov and other volunteers for an article in the local newspaper.

The article and video can be found here: <http://www.hannibal.net/news/x1743978237/Sandbagging-volunteers-come-from-afar>

CURRENT MUSKIE UPDATES

Fellow Joins Modern Dance Troupe in St. Louis

Maria Pryamkova (Muskie 2007), a fellow from Russia studying business at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, has been performing contemporary and modern dance with a student dance troupe. The troupe includes students from the U.S. as well as international students from Korea, Mexico, and now Russia. Some are professional dancers studying at the UMSL Department of Dance, Theatre, and Media Studies, and some, like Maria, are amateur dancers. Maria and the group have performed at the annual Fall Dance Concert at UMSL as well as at other events on campus and in the St. Louis area.

The group's biggest accomplishment was performing at the American College Dance Festival in Wichita, Kansas in March, 2008. The festival is an annual event that gathers dance students and professors from the entire region for a weekend of master-classes and daily performances. One of the dance pieces presented at the festival, called "Shake It: A Serious Social Commentary," is a combination of choreography and theatre, danced to live music and performed on stage. The other piece was a modern dance rendition of a Greek tragedy performed to an avant-garde opera song "Terma" by Stella Markou (<http://www.stellamarkou.com/music.html>).



Maria Pryamkova performs as part of the modern dance troupe "Jete".

Maria explains her involvement with the group. "Being a part of the group gave me a great opportunity to meet students with 'creative' majors, such as dance, vocals and theater, to learn what their goals and aspirations are, and to see their lifestyle. I was impressed by the level of self-motivation and self-discipline of the students, as well as by their professionalism. Costumes, sets, stage lighting during the concert; everything was done by students, rather than support personnel, with little or no direction. Dancing seems to have little connection to business, but in fact I learned a few important lessons about teamwork, quality management, and problem solving. As a group we had to deal with interpersonal conflict, low motivation, distractions, and a rapidly-changing environment. We had to work under stress and urgently develop a solution when the group lost a key performer the night before we had to leave for the American College Dance Festival. Finally, it was interesting to see what methods were used to ensure that each person performs each element of the dance with the highest possible quality."

Fellow from Belarus Elected Head of Russian-Speaking Student Association in Oklahoma

Maxim Moskalkov (Muskie 2007) was recently elected president of the Russian-Speaking Student Association (RuSSA) at the University of Oklahoma. The organization was founded in the fall of 2005 to promote Russian-speaking cultures at the University of Oklahoma and in Norman, OK and to unite Russian-speaking OU students, faculty and staff. Currently, there are more than 140 members in the association, which makes it one of the biggest Russian-speaking student organizations in the U.S. The members of the association are not only those who are from the former Soviet Union, but also those who are interested in learning more about Russian-speaking cultures and their way of life. During the academic year, RuSSA members hold cultural and sport events such as Russian game nights, Russian movie nights, an international bazaar and many others. The biggest event for RuSSA is RuSSA Cultural Night. Last year more than 200 people attended the event, enjoying national dancing, musical performances, funny and entertaining skits, and the RuSSA anthem. The Russian Speaking Student Association also offered authentic cuisine from Russian-speaking countries during RuSSA Cultural Night III.



Maxim Moskalkov (far left) and other members of the Russian-Speaking Student Association.

CURRENT MUSKIE UPDATES

Fellow Represents University and Country at Judo Competitions

Maria Kabalyk (Muskie 2007) hails from Vladivostok, Russia. In September 2007, she started practicing judo at Oregon State University. Maria describes her experience: "I found this sport both a great physical and mental activity and an effective complimentary component for my studies. As a result of my interest and commitment to this sport I decided to become a member of Oregon State University Judo Club. I took part in the first judo competition in my life after just two months of practice and still being in the white belt division. Our university team won this competition and I got first place among women in my division. This was a great success for me mostly because I could contribute to the success of my university team. I kept working hard after my first victory and was promoted by my teachers to receive an orange belt. In May 2008 I again represented my university at the state-level competition, where I got a silver medal in my class. I also became a member of United States Judo Association (USJA)."

"When I was taking part in my tournaments I felt a lot of pressure because not only I was representing myself, but also my university and my native country as well. I was always thinking about the tournament not in terms of competition but in terms of a great opportunity to learn more."



Maria Kabalyk (on left) spars with and eventually takes down an opponent during a judo match.

"Techniques and strategies in judo are no less important than your physical characteristics. In fact, one of the basic principles of judo is: Maximum efficiency, minimum effort. Success in judo has far more to do with being better tactically than your opponent and applying the right technique at the right time. The ability to think clearly and rationally under pressure is very important not only in judo, but in many aspects of our life. Judo helped me to develop self-confidence, concentration, and leadership skills, as well as physical coordination, power, and flexibility. And moreover, it's a fun sport, an art, a recreational and social activity where you have a great chance to meet interesting people that can teach you a lot."

Fellow Organizes First-Ever Peace Conference in Mankato, Minnesota

Nargiz Hajiyeva (Muskie 2007) helped organize a peace conference in April 2008 at Minnesota State University-Mankato as a part of her community service. Nargiz is the president of the Global Health and Peace Club at the university. The peace conference organized by the club was the first ever at the university. The participants of the conference were Mankato community members and university faculty and students. The purpose of the conference was to present the negative impact of conflicts and the importance of establishing peace. The conference began with opening words about conflict resolution theories by Dr. Jacqueline Vieceli. Following this introduction, international students from regions with conflicts made presentations about the violent disputes in their countries. The students talked about conflicts in Azerbaijan, Africa, Bosnia, Serbia, and Pakistan. The students' presentations were followed by an open discussion that involved the audience.

As President of the Global Health and Peace Club, Ms. Hajiyeva has also been closely involved with planning other activities in the community. She helped organize fundraising for the "Relay for Life," a charity walk at Minnesota State University – Mankato that intended to raise cancer awareness and raise funds for the American Cancer Society.



Nargiz Hajiyeva and other organizers of the Peace Conference at the University of Minnesota – Mankato.

CURRENT MUSKIE UPDATES

Summer Internship an Opportunity to Refine Research Skills and Experience a New Culture

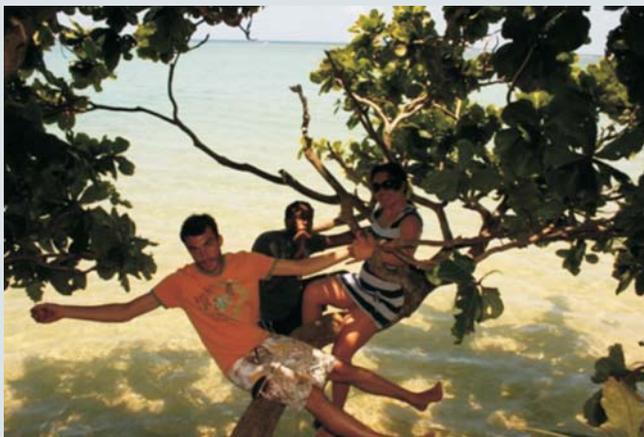
Mayagul Satlygylyjova (Muskie 2007) is from Turkmenistan and is majoring in Education at Kent State University in Ohio. This summer she is conducting her internship at the East-West Center's AsiaPacificEd Program in Honolulu, Hawai'i.

Mayagul says "the breathtaking and natural beauty of the Hawaiian Islands inspired me not only to work on my research but also to participate in many extracurricular activities during my internship. In my understanding, in order to learn about a new culture and new traditions, it is necessary to start by being part of the new culture and new traditions. Since I have arrived to the Hawaiian Islands I have been taking classes on the hula dance where I learn about the ancient Hawaiian mentality, history and even nature. The hula dance is a complex art form, and there are many hand motions used to signify aspects of nature. Many years ago, the hula began as the primary expression of the heart of the Hawaiian people because the Hawaiian people did not have a written language. The hula and chants accompanying them formed their oral history and poetry."

When she is not learning the hula dance, Mayagul spends time enjoying the natural habitats found in Hawai'i. "On one of my weekends, I arranged a trip to Kaua'i Island with my new friends whom I met in Honolulu. They were from all around the globe, such as, France, the Maldives Islands, Russia, Canada and Thailand. On the trip, we had no shower other than the ocean and we didn't have enough food, so we had to climb to trees and pick mangoes, mountain apples and plums. We experienced the most uncomfortable nights ever, being worried that the tent might fly away from the strong wind and waking up with half of our sleeping bags soaked from last night's rain and being distracted by the wild chickens and hens yelling in our ears."

"However, despite all these difficulties we stayed together and helped each other. It was very challenging but we learned from this trip the value of friendship and the importance of having each other; plus, we had an unforgettable experience."

"In the Hawaiian Islands there are so many opportunities to meet people with different backgrounds from around the globe. I live in the dormitory for graduate students of University of Hawai'i at Manoa and there is a big diversity in the dormitory. Despite the differences (color, race, gender, language and religion) between all of us we make a United Nations together, and I am proud to know that I have an opportunity to experience such diversity."



CURRENT MUSKIE UPDATES

Tajik Fellow's Conferences Focused on International Economic Development

Zulfira Pulatova (Muskie 2007) volunteered at the International Economic Summit held at Boise State University on April 25, 2008. The goal of the event was to teach students about globalization, international economics and the importance of working together with other countries. Ninety-four teams each comprised of five students competed against each other in a day-long contest, with each team representing a different country. The goal was to win the contest by improving the standard of living for their country. The top ten proposals were chosen for a debate in front of the other teams. Proposals tackled global topics like climate change, pollution and illegal drug and human trafficking. Teams also participated in a trade alliance activity, a global trading session and an international banking session. As a volunteer, Ms. Pulatova played the role of a banker during simulated financial transactions for the countries represented by students. The amount of finance the students were able to secure was one of the main factors in selecting the winning team. (<http://www.econsummit.org/>)

Ms. Pulatova also attended the third annual Athgo Global Forum from July 9-11, 2008. Over two hundred young professionals, entrepreneurs, and students from various national and international universities assembled at the World Bank's headquarters in Washington, DC for the three-day event which focused on the core theme of "Miracles of Development: Good Governance and Capacity Building." Throughout the event, guest speakers and panelists from the World Bank and other key institutions united around the forum's theme, focusing their attention on corruption and mismanagement within both the international and corporate communities.



Ms. Pulatova with other participants in the Athgo Global Forum.

Fellows Keep Busy During Summer With Internships, Conferences and More

Galina Nam (Muskie 2007) has taken advantage of several opportunities to enhance her internship experience. On June 16, 2008, she attended the event "Pakistan and the Western Media: Fair or Foul?" which was an open discussion with nine representatives of Pakistani newspapers and other media who were visiting the U.S. as part of the IIE West Coast Center's International Visitors Leadership Program (IVLP). The representatives of

the Pakistani media answered questions about their country and its political situation. At the end of June 2008, Ms. Nam also attended a presentation organized by the Path Foundation, an organization in San Francisco dedicated to implementing strategies for the improvement of health and the environment in the Philippines. Ms. Nam next attended the seminar "Communicating the American Way" held on July 2, 2008. The seminar was conducted by Elisabetta Ghisini, a professor of Stanford University. Dr. Ghisini explained the most effective ways for business and personal communication with Americans, cultural attributes considered important by Americans and frequently emphasized by most of the academic and popular literature in the U.S., and communication challenges faced by foreign people living and working in the U.S. Finally, on July 9, 2008, Ms. Nam helped to organize the International Visitor Leadership Program Reception, organized by the Institute of International Education, West Coast Center.

Nana Sajaia (Muskie 2007) recently published a story in the Tbilisi English-language newspaper Georgia Today about President Mikheil Saakashvili's Facebook page. President Saakashvili recently joined the company of other notable politicians who have Facebook pages. Ms. Sajaia interviewed people who posted on the president's wall, including some Muskie fellows. (http://www.georgiatoday.ge/article_details.php?id=4557)

Irakli Ushveridze (Muskie 2007) recently participated in a World Bank soccer tournament and was part of the second-place team.

Natig Hajiyev recently completed community service work for the Conflict Transformation Across Cultures Summer Peacebuilding Program of the School of International Training (SIT) Graduate Institute in Brattleboro, Vermont from May to June 2008. Mr. Hajiyev was one of 52 people representing 24 countries that gathered to build a network seeking to make positive changes in the world. According to Mr. Hajiyev, "It was an excellent experience for me, due to its direct relation to my studies at SIT Graduate Institute for Masters Program in Conflict Transformation. The program gave the opportunity for people to practice their skills and learn new techniques using participatory and experiential learning methods." The program covered areas such as conflict analysis and intervention, negotiation and mediation, nonviolent communication, inter-communal dialogue and peacebuilding and development.



Irakli Ushveridze with Executive Vice-President of World Bank Group and CEO of the IFC Lars Thunell.



Natig Hajiyev and other participants at the Conflict Transformation program.

Muskie Messenger

ALUMNI UPDATES

Cross-Sector Cooperation the Focus of Recent Conference Organized by Alumna

Ms. Svitlana Batsyukova (Muskie 2005) works for the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Mission in Ukraine, and was recently in charge of organizing a conference entitled "Private Sector – NGO Cooperation to Combat Human Trafficking in Ukraine." The conference was held on June 18, 2008, and provided a platform for representatives of national and international private entities to meet and discuss their interest and expectations regarding cooperation with the public sector. Representatives of Ukrainian NGOs shared their successful experiences in implementing counter-trafficking projects in cooperation with the business sector and discussed their problems and expectations during a brainstorming session.

Key speakers at the conference included representatives of Ukrainian and international companies who have demonstrated commitment to corporate social responsibility. Among them were Microsoft Ukraine, Kyivstar, Western Union and Concern Galnaftogaz.



Svitlana Batsyukova (left) at the IOM conference.

ALUMNI SHORTS

Ravshan Sobirzoda (Muskie 2006) joined the United Nations Development Program's Communities Program in Dushanbe, Tajikistan as a Senior Program Officer on June 1, 2008.

On July 1, 2008 **Behruz Himo** (Muskie 2005) was promoted to the position of Senior Audit Consultant at Price Waterhouse Coopers in

Moscow. Mr. Himo's responsibilities include performing overall analysis of financial statements, supervising audit engagement teams, and communicating with client representatives.

After her return from the Monterey Institute of Policy Studies, **Nataliya Borkovska** (Muskie

2006) continued to work as an EFL instructor at the Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology. She also presented the findings of her master's research project at a TESL conference in Moncton, Canada in May 2008. The research project and presentation focused on ways of presenting specialized vocabulary to non-native speakers of English.

The 2008 Muskie fellows have arrived!

On August 2nd, 3rd, and 4th, 143 new Muskie fellows arrived in Washington, DC, for their Orientation Event to formally kick off their graduate fellowship program. The 2008 fellows had the immediate opportunity to demonstrate their exceptional personal qualities, including flexibility, communication skills, and good humor, as they dealt with overwhelming difficulties and inconveniences caused by a Lufthansa strike during their travel weekend.

The 2008 Muskie Orientation event began with a welcome plenary session featuring Department of State/Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Senior Program Officer Micaela S. Iovine. Fellows then attended two days of sessions designed to prepare them for the components of their fellowship program, including adjusting to academic life, managing personal affairs, identifying internships, and participating in rewarding community service activities. The new fellows had the opportunity to get a snapshot view of Washington, DC, through a bus tour on Tuesday night.

The Orientation concluded with a Luncheon Reception attended by new fellows, representatives from Embassies, and Department of State/ECA staff; speakers included Damaris Kirchhofer, Chief of the Europe and Eurasian Branch in the Office of Academic Exchange Programs at the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs; Joyce Warner, Education Programs Division Director, IREX; and Altnai Moldoeva, 2008 fellow from Kyrgyzstan.

IREX and ECA staff and guests were very impressed with the group of 2008 fellows; it is clear that the new fellows will continue the strong tradition of Muskie fellows through exceptional academic performance and innovative and active contributions to their host communities in the United States over the next two years, as well as to their home countries in the future.

The Muskie Messenger Editorial Committee:

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(IREX)

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(IREX)

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(IREX)

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Submission guidelines:

If you are interested in making a submission to the Messenger, please send all text and pictures to <muskiemessenger@irex.org> by September 30, 2008.

ECA and IREX reserve the right to edit submission content. Not every submission will be printed.



Bureau of Educational
and Cultural Affairs

www.exchanges.state.gov



ALUMNI OPPORTUNITIES

US Government sponsored exchange alumni are eligible to take part in various Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) supported conference and training activities. In addition to events that support large audiences, individual alumni may apply for small grants that fund the organization of community service activities, conferences, publications, Internet-related activities, research trips, training programs, the creation of associations and other activities.

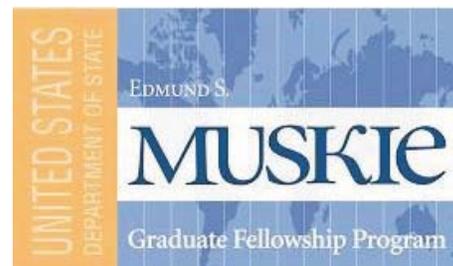
ECA Alumni Programming for Edmund S. Muskie Graduate Fellowship Program Alumni

State Alumni Website: The State Alumni website is an online community by and for alumni of US Government sponsored exchange and training programs. As of May 2004, the website has over 8,500 registered users. The content of the site is updated every day and alumni are encouraged to submit information to the website for posting. Features of the website include: calendar of upcoming alumni events, job listings and career development information, searchable database of alumni and US host families who have registered at the site, grant opportunity listings, live online discussions, discussion forum, alumni news, alumni resume database, articles written by alumni, feedback form/online survey, live online guest speakers, photo gallery, and the Alumni ListServ. <<https://alumni.state.gov/>>

The ECA Alumni Small Grants Program (ASGP): Alumni may apply for a grant of up to \$3,000 to conduct a community development or professional development project. Fundable project ideas include coordinating a community service project, launching a pilot program at an NGO or organizing a training program for professional colleagues and/or other alumni. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis. <<http://www.irex.org/programs/asgp/index.asp>>

Project Smile: Project Smile is a community development program aimed at helping youth, the elderly and the disabled in Eurasia. Each grantee will receive up to \$250 to perform public service in their home city. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis. <<http://www.irex.org/programs/smile/index.asp>>

Alumni Events: IREX and the US Embassy organize monthly alumni events in all 12 countries of Eurasia. These events include workshops, conferences, trainings, roundtable discussions, happy hours, movie nights, seminars and lectures. Larger scale events include job fairs that allow alumni to have their resumes reviewed, learn about the current job market in their home country, and meet with potential employers. IREX local offices and the Embassies encourage alumni to actively participate in the development and implementation of such events.



Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs