

SUMMER
2008



University of Houston

Language and Culture Center

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Director's Message

By. Joy Tesh

The Language and Culture Center is a member in good standing of the American Association of Intensive English Programs (AAIEP) and University and College Intensive English Programs (UCIEP). The LCC is accredited by the Commission on English Language Program Accreditation by CEA demonstrates that an English language program or institution has met nationally accepted standards of excellence and assures students and their sponsors that the program's English language instruction and related student services will be of the highest quality. This summer, teachers and administrators in the Language and Culture Center entered a new period of self-study, which will lead to continuing accreditation. We have been through this rigorous process before, and we actually look forward to the hard (continued on page 4)



Dominic Park with his friends from the LCC



Wishing Dominic a Speedy Recovery

By Jacqueline Noh, 6B

One year ago, in May 2007, Dominic Park came to the United States from Korea to accomplish his dreams. While he was getting accustomed to being in America, he was smoothly proceeding step by step to reach his ambition. However, due to a terrible unexpected experience, he must now overcome many difficulties.

On the night of July 4, 2008, Dominic Park, 24, was getting out of his car from his trip. Two teenagers followed his car, and they demanded his cash and car keys while they held a gun. Dominic just gave his belongings to them; nevertheless they fired their weapon at Dominic as they ran out. A bullet hit his neck. With his neighbor's help, Dominic was rushed to the Memorial Hermann Hospital in the Medical Center where he has undergone two surgeries. He moved from Shock Trauma Intensive Care Unit to a general ward recently. His head is stabilized with bars, and it is hard for him to move freely, but he is gradually getting better. His friends believe that his fast recovery is from his habitual working out.

Dominic attended classes in the LCC for three semesters, from spring 2007. He was taking a break this summer. While he was studying in the LCC, he worked at the Wellness Center as a lifeguard. Dominic is known for his

cheerful disposition. He is a wonderful friend and an excellent worker. With his bright, outgoing personality, he could get along with just about anyone. We, his friends, are all very concerned about him. Now, Dominic is bearing his suffering very well with a positive mind; thus, he could regain his health faster.

We wish him the strength to heal and be well again. With our love and support, we hope Dominic will be blessed with a full recovery.



Director's Message (continued from cover)

work involved in making sure that our Intensive English Program meets the high standards set forth by this commission.

While we are engaged in the self-study, we will be looking at all aspects of our program from curriculum to student services to make sure that we are in compliance with CEA standards and, therefore, engaged in best practice in the field of teaching English as a second language. We will review our mission statement to make sure that our curriculum and our policies are always related to our mission. We will review our web site and all of our publications to make sure that our information is accurate and up-to-date. We will be busy, and the real beneficiaries of our hard work will be our students.

After we complete the self-study, we will write a report,

send that report to the commission, and invite a review team to visit our program. The review team will interview students, teachers, and administrators and visit our classes and our offices to make sure we are doing what we say we are doing. This will be a long process, but we expect to be re-accredited when the commission meets in April of 2010.

Programs seek accreditation in order to achieve excellence. Students choose accredited programs in order to be sure they are choosing excellent schools. The LCC is seeking re-accreditation through CEA because we believe that this accrediting agency represents the gold standard in Intensive English Programs. We know that the LCC will be a better program after completing the self-study, and we know that you and your fellow students

will continue to meet your goals in an Intensive English Program concerned with the success of its students.

Again, I congratulate you on your decision to study in the Language and Culture Center this summer. You can be sure that you have chosen a dynamic Intensive English Program with an excellent reputation and the highest level of accreditation. You can also be sure that you have chosen a dynamic university, which celebrates and welcomes international students. I wish you the best as you complete the summer term of 2008, and I look forward to seeing many of you again as you return in September for fall in the Language and Culture Center.

Raissa Barbara Clara Simo Kenmognie, Ali Abakar Mouktar, Hector Julian Garcia Neira, and Ngan Thi Kim Nguyen Receive LCC Scholarships

By Sandy Hartmann, Associate Director

The Language and Culture Center awards four scholarships each term to returning students who best combine academic excellence and leadership with international awareness and cross-cultural understanding. Traditionally, one full scholarship honors Joyce Merrill Valdes, the founder and first director of the Language and Culture Center. A second full scholarship honors Joseph O. Davidson, who served as director of the LCC for 22 years before retiring in 2006. These two full scholarships cover the cost of tuition, fees, and medical insurance for one term of study in the Intensive English Program. In addition, the LCC awards merit scholarships of \$1500 each for one term of study in the Intensive English Program. At the spring graduation ceremony on Thursday, April 24, 2008, the LCC awarded the Valdes scholarship to **Raissa Barbara Clara Simo Kenmognie**, the Davidson scholarship to **Ali Abakar Mouktar**, and the two merit scholarships to **Hector Julian Garcia Neira** and **Ngan Thi Kim Nguyen**.

VOICES



Raissa Barbara Clara Simo Kenmognie was awarded the Valdes scholarship. **Ms. Kenmognie**, who is from Cameroon and speaks French, is currently studying in level six. This is her second term at the LCC and she was in level five when she received the scholarship. After she completes her study of English, she plans to begin the master's program in accountancy at UH. **Ms. Kenmognie** said of receiving the scholarship, "I was very happy that I had been given the opportunity to continue my studies in the program. My parents were very proud of me. Thank you to the LCC again."

Ali Abakar Mouktar was awarded the Davidson scholarship. **Mr. Mouktar** hails



from Chad and speaks French. Having been at the LCC for two terms, he is currently in level four. After he finishes his studies at the LCC, he plans to major in computer engineering at UH. When asked about the scholarship, he said, "Receiving this scholarship helped me a lot. It revitalized my ability to study. I want other LCC students to know that they need to persevere and work hard. I thank the faculty and staff, especially my teachers for their patience. Thanks also to Dr. Davidson for serving as director for twenty-two years."



Hector Julian Garcia Neira was a recipient of a merit scholarship. **Mr. Garcia** is from Colombia, speaks Spanish, and has been a student at the LCC for three terms. This term, he is studying in level four and is planning to pursue an MBA at the University of Houston when he completes his work at the LCC. **Mr. Garcia** said, "This scholarship is the best honor that I have ever had." He remarked that his mother was very happy that he got the scholarship and that he wanted

to dedicate this honor to her for her effort.



Ngan Thi Kim Nguyen (Emi) was also a recipient of a merit scholarship. **Ms. Nguyen**, who has been at the LCC for two terms, is currently studying in level six. She is from Vietnam and her language is Vietnamese. After she completes her study of English, she plans to major in Hotel and Restaurant Management. Upon receiving the scholarship **Ms. Nguyen** commented, "I'm so happy to receive the scholarship. It not only helps me to pay the tuition but also encourages me to study better. I have a wonderful time being with many foreign friends and the instructors at the LCC."

We congratulate **Raissa Barbara Clara Simo Kenmognie, Ali Abakar Mouktar, Hector Julian Garcia Neira, and Ngan Thi Kim Nguyen** on their outstanding records in the Intensive English Program at the Language and Culture Center, and we wish them great success as they continue to study in the United States. We all look forward to learning who will be the next LCC scholarship recipients at the summer graduation ceremony.

ABOUT MY HOME

Zambende

By Rachid Sow 2C

In my country Burkina-Faso, one of the biggest events takes place every year and it is called "Zambende." This involves all families with all social groups all together to cherish the love of being alive, together and happy above all. The celebration takes place for two days and children, parents, and grandparents share food, traditions, and play all types of games and throw water at each other. The rich provide food and give most of it to the neighbors, and the kids go from door to door to sing out loud and receive money in compensation. For two days parents do not go to work, and there is no school, so it is declared a holiday and everybody gets to be with one another, and most importantly, we all thank God for his greatness. Every year the same thing takes place and we all get excited because we all will have something in common: Fun is back, and hopefully I'll get to share this experience that only Zambende can create.

Shakshoka

By Abdulrahman Nasser, 3B
Many people in Saudi Arabia love to eat "Shakshoka" in the morning. This dish is made of eggs, onions, green onions, tomatoes, and cheddar cheese. First, we put the eggs in the oil, and after two minutes, we add the onion, green onion, and the

tomato and we mix it together. After two more minutes, the Shakshoka will be ready. Finally, we have to put the last touch to get a delicious morsel. We have to put cheddar cheese, and it will be yummy. This is Shakshoka. It's very easy and fast to cook, and it is delicious.

Festivals in India

By Bhavnaben Desai, 4E

If the whole world is a country of festivals, then India is the capital of this country. With its small, big, local, national, religious, and non-religious festivals, India has the greatest number of festivals in the world. The main reason this country has so many festivals is that the people in India have different religious beliefs. In this small piece of writing, I will just tell you about Hinduism and the important festivals associated with it. Hinduism is perhaps the number one religion in India. Followers of this religion celebrate four main national festivals: *Holi*, *Ganeshotsav*, *Dussehra*, and *Diwali*. *Holi* is associated with the ancient demon king Hiranyakashyap and his own son Prahlad. Prahlad was a devotee of Lord Vishnu. Hiranyakashyap the demon king did not like this. He wanted his son to honor him and not Lord Vishnu as his God. But Prahlad refused to obey his father and so the demon

king made several attempts to kill his own son, but all were unsuccessful. Finally Lord Vishnu took on the form of "Narsimha," meaning half-lion and half-man and killed the demon King. So, this festival is organized every year to celebrate the triumph of good over evil. The second festival, *Ganeshotsav*, is celebrated to honor Lord Ganesh. He is the Elephant God with the head of an elephant and the body of a human. He is the son of God Shiva and Goddess Parvati. He is considered to be the God of all gods and therefore people believe that success is ensured if one asks for his blessings before one starts a business. The third festival, namely *Dussehra*, is celebrated to honor Lord Rama who killed the demon king Ravana and thus freed the earth from his evil hands. *Diwali*, also known as *Deepavali*, is the most important festival and is celebrated to commemorate the happy return of Lord Rama to his native kingdom Ayodhya to reign this country during the historical period known as Ram Rajya, which was the most blissful and prosperous period in the history of India.



Rites of Passage in Burkina Faso

By Farid Tarnanguida, 3B
 There are many ethnic groups in Burkina Faso, and some of them have a specific ceremony for the passage from adolescence to adult status in their culture. This ceremony is the most important thing in the life of a man in the village. At the beginning, all men between 15 – 20 years are put together. The night before the first day, all the village sings and dances the rhythm of traditional instruments. At dawn the second day, the young men are taken into the forest (without food or water) where they have to spend one week before they come back to the village, While they are in the forest, they must take care of themselves. They have to find water and food by hunting and fishing. Other very important preparations are ensured by the elder persons. The night of their return, the young men are put in the same house for their circumcision. The one who cries becomes the shame of this family. After that, a festival takes place in the village. And at the end, each young man goes back to his family and builds a new house for his new life. No man in the village can build a house or take a wife before doing this ceremony. So, the passage from

adolescence to adulthood is very important and obligatory for all men in some ethnic groups in my country, Burkina Faso.

Sichuan Province, China

By Tiening (William) Xu, 4C
 The shocking news on May 12, 2008, made me very sad. An 8 degree earthquake had struck Wenchuan, a small city in Sichuan Province. Day after day, the number of dead people was still increasing. More than seventy thousand people were killed in the earthquake. Since I had been to Sichuan two years ago, I am deeply emotional about this place which is called “the country of heaven” and is famous for its beautiful scenery, delicious food, and the most beautiful girls in China. Ever since I was a child, I had had a strong desire to visit Sichuan. Therefore, in the summer of 2006, I went to Jiuzhaigou, the most beautiful spot in all of Sichuan. This area consists of six scenic spots: Changhai, Jianyan, Nuorilang, Shuzheng, Zharu, and Heihai. The mountains, lakes, primeval forests, and beautiful flowers all make Jiuzhaigou like a fairyland. The very most beautiful spot, I think, is the Wuhua Sea. It’s the pride of Jiuzhaigou. The water of the

lake shows a lot of different colors: yellow, dark green, blue, light red and so on. It’s as beautiful as a painting. When I stood beside the lake, I dreamed that I might settle down there one day. I climbed a small mountain and from there, the lake looked like the feathers of a peacock. Another most beautiful spot is the Shuzheng Waterfall which is 11 meters high and 62 meters wide. While I was there, I saw a rainbow over the waterfall. I cannot forget the beauty of Sichuan or the tragic disaster of the Sichuan earthquake.



Cultural Differences

Learning Cultures

By Abdulaziz Alkhatib, 3A

If someone asked you to choose between studying in a class that has many people from different cultures and a class that has many people from the same culture, I would advise you to choose the class that has people from different cultures because there are many experiences you will learn from it. In this paragraph I will talk about my experience studying with people from other cultures. The first day in the class I couldn't understand anyone and it seemed to me that it would be too hard to complete this class with so many cultures, but after one week I was more comfortable with the classmates. Then I learned good information and heard about things I had never heard about before, such as how the people live in their home country and what their customs are and what the traditional clothes and food are, and how the behaviors look, and what language they speak and what their beliefs are, and more and more. I have friends from almost any place around the world. From what I have pointed out above, I can say that culture is very interesting to learn about, and it helps me know what the world looks like.

Family Meals in Venezuela

By Nereida Moncada, 3A

Family meals in Venezuela are different from those in the U.S. In Venezuela, the big and important meal is around 1 pm.

It is a time to share with family and a time to talk about things that are happening in the family. We try to eat together almost every day. In the U.S. it is a little different because people eat a lot of fast foods and don't eat with the family together like in my country. I think customs are not good or bad, just different. However, I'm trying to keep my customs like in my country even if I am in the U.S.

Courtship and Marriage Customs

By Yoorim Kim, 4A

If your parents are against your marriage, will you give up? Many Koreans do so but Americans do not. As Koreans in their twenties become more westernized, many marriage customs seem similar to those of Americans although differences still exist.

In both Korea and America, the society today is open-minded and accepts the equality of the sexes. In the old times, Koreans preferred sons to daughters, and women did not have the right of choice. Nowadays, boys and girls go to school together and can meet one another at clubs, churches, health centers, and jobs. As young adults, they can date without any problems. People who are 18 and over can choose their own life and be responsible for all their behaviors.

Nevertheless, in Korea, many elders still think that there is no equality between the sexes and that public displays of affection are not proper. In addition,

Koreans need to have their parents' permission for marriage because to Koreans, marriage represents the joining of families not just the joining of individuals as in America. If the parents are against a possible marriage partner, many Koreans give up the idea while Americans do not. Although Korean culture is changing, traditional thinking is still very strong.

Marriage Customs in Taiwan and the Ivory Coast

By Hui-ching Kao (Anna), 4A

The marriage customs in Taiwan and the Ivory Coast have a similarity and one interesting difference. In both countries, girls over the age of 18 are allowed to get birth control pills at the hospital. Girls under 18 must have their parents go with them to the hospital. Also, most dating couples have a birth control plan because they are students who don't want children before marriage. The interesting difference is that the culture in the Ivory Coast requires the permission of parents for dating or marriage. In Taiwan, couples do not have to have parents' permission for dating or marriage. This information is very interesting to me because previously I had only known about differences in food and eating habits. I think this was a culture "bump" for me.



VOICES

Marriage in Saudi Arabia

By Abdulmuhsin Alajmi, 4C

In Saudi Arabia, the man cannot see the woman before the engagement contract is made. After that, you can meet each other and get to know each other. Then you can choose marriage or not do so. By contrast, in the USA, men and women can get to know each other before an engagement and can have sex or live together before an engagement. There are differences between Saudi Arabian and American marriage customs but the point is the same: to find a marriage partner. The difference is in the order of the steps before marriage.

Two Kinds of School Life

By Haoran Xi, 4D

It is manifest that education, as the cornerstone of a nation, plays a substantial role in all aspects of the society. That is why the topic regarding it can never fail to fascinate us. One question is: What are the differences in school life (I mean high-school life) in China, which is my motherland, and the U.S.?

Students in China are divided into classes and students in the same class always stay together during the study time. They have no right to choose which class to attend. That is to say, they have to study the subjects that the school wants them to study. Also, they do not go from one classroom to another. Instead, they just stay in an assigned classroom and wait for the different teachers to come. This is both good and bad for them. It is good for them because they do not have to spend time making their own study plans. But it is

also bad for them because they can not follow their own will to learn what they yearn to learn. The result of this method of education is sad because the students cannot develop their own personality. The special talent of the individual students may be left undeveloped. Most of the time, when they finish high school, they do have some knowledge, but this knowledge is never profound.

In the U.S., things are different. American students could choose the subjects they like and they can focus on them. This method of education is good because it helps build personality, and when their personality develops, their intellect also develops. The result of this is that in many fields of study, there are geniuses. But things are always double-edged, so that many students in America lack the basic knowledge of the world. Once, I heard a professor at Brown University say that 70% of the students in U.S. high schools could not locate Iraq on the map. That is stunning!

It is not an overstatement to say that finding a good education method is an important task for all the nations in the world. From what has been presented above, we may now ask ourselves this perplexing question: so, which education method is better? To tell the truth, none is perfect and maybe a combination of the two education methods shown above will work better than any single one.

Family Relationships in Thailand

By Sunthorn Saengkrajai, 3A

Since I came to the US, I have been confused about American customs, especially family relationships. In Thailand, the elderly and their adult children stay together. Although the adults have their own families, their parents still stay with them. There is a complicated relationship. Everybody has a duty to help each other. The elderly have to teach occupational work to their children, such as repairing the house, sewing clothes, and doing farm work. In addition, their children have to respect and take care of the older family members. Because of this close relationship, there are few nursing homes in Thailand. In contrast, in the United States, the elderly and their adult children have their own families and do not stay together. Then it is difficult to take care of each other. The adult children spend their time on their work, and they do not have time to take care of their own children and their parents too. The adult children need to spend their time with their friends more than with family, so their parents feel lonely and need to stay in nursing homes. Therefore, I feel that there are too many nursing homes in the United States. Now I am trying to understand American culture, but I need to spend more time learning about it.



So Many Differences Between Korea and the U.S.

By Minha Pyo, 4D

Having lived in the U.S. for quite some time now, I have noticed there are so many differences between my country, Korea, and the U.S. I will point out what I think are the biggest differences. The first difference has to do with eating habits. In my country, when people sit down to dinner, they use chopsticks to get the food. In America, they use forks and knives. Also, the main meal is rice in my country, but in the U.S. it is bread. The second difference is about housing. Almost everyone in my country lives in an apartment, while most Americans live in a house. Also, in my country, people never wear shoes inside their homes. When I first came here, I was really uncomfortable when I was told to wear shoes inside the house. The third difference is about the people. The Americans usually act individually, while in my country people usually act as a group. For example, in my country, people play together and eat together. Because of this habit of doing everything together, holding hands with a friend of one's same sex in Korea is regarded as friendship. Yet, acting like that in America would make people misunderstand. The last difference is related to the third difference. In my country, our parents continue to support us even after we have graduated from high school or university. But in American culture, like in the movies, after finishing high school, children are expected to be independent and to do

everything themselves. Of all the differences, I think the last difference is most interesting and I think we should learn to be independent and to do everything ourselves after finishing high school, just like the American children

Taiwanese Parents and Children

By Hsiao-Ting (Tina) Ni, 3A

The relationship of parents and children in Taiwan is different from in America. Taiwanese parents put their whole attention on their children, and, according to tradition, children can't discuss matters with their parents. If parents decide something, children just follow their decision. Parents also give their children a strong suggestion when the children choose a major. Sometimes it is good that parents help their children to make decisions because parents have more life experience, but it also eliminates a lot of possibilities for the children. How about American parents? American parents treat their children like friends. It makes children want to talk with their parents and makes for a peaceful relationship. When American children choose their major, American parents give them a lot of space for making their decision. Their children can choose what they are interested in. American parents give their children many chances to think by themselves. Taiwanese parents supervise every decision their children make, whereas American parents give their children more freedom to decide everything. We should try to find a balance

between parents and children to keep their relationship healthy.

The Significance of a House

By Teruhiko Toda, 4C

Japanese and Americans have different ideas regarding houses: their location, style, and status. First, the house near the train station is much more valuable for Japanese people because of the growth of the train transportation system. In contrast, in America where the car is the main method of transport, the house is more valued the farther it is from the downtown. A second difference is style. Japan has two kinds of houses: old style and modern. The old style is more expensive because of the lack of artisans to build them. By contrast, America has many styles of houses including remodeled older homes. Finally, the status of the house is different. In Japan the house is used as a "place of life". Japanese are more connected to their houses than are Americans and they have a lifestyle of using the floor more. Sitting and lying down on the floor is typical of Japanese lifestyle. Conversely, Americans focus more on using the house for entertainment, and they enjoy having furniture and lighting to express their taste in their spacious houses.



LEARNING ENGLISH

Studying English Outside of My Country

By Nazim Mahesaniya, 3B

English is my second language, but all of the people do not speak English in my country. If I go to the market shopping or anywhere even in a car, I have to use my national language. So it's very difficult to create an environment to speak English, and that's why it's not possible to learn English my home country. But if I go to a country where the first language is English, it must be a better place to learn English language because I must speak English everywhere. I have an environment of English, so I can learn it quickly. Therefore, studying English outside of my country is more effective.

Reasons to study English

By Masa, 3B

One day while I was exercising on the treadmill, I read the word "distant" so I asked my father about the meaning of this word, and he said, "You are an eighteen-year-old and you don't know what "distant" means?" And after this situation I felt so depressed with the meager knowledge I had in English; as a result, I decided to learn English by attending the LCC. Also, English is the world's language, so the more English I know, the better chance of good communication I will have. I remember when I had an interview and the manager rejected me because of my inadequate English. Except for this reason, I would be in a great job, but with a meager amount of English I don't think I could get it. If I want to go toward the summit, I must have an excellent background in my second tongue. Moreover, to be able to speak more than one language may open a lot of opportunities in my path. Therefore,

learning English is one of my priorities for me to accomplish. English is one of the tools to success. Finally, the gist is that English is the candle which can light our life in some way.

Home Sweet Home

By Cherif Alade, 4E

To have a better life, one needs to have a decent job. In Gabon, which is my country, it is easy to find a job and anyone with a B.A. degree can find a decent job. But finding a good job is not so easy in the United States and this is particularly true with people coming here from other countries.

That is exactly what happened to one of my uncles who left Gabon to go to the United States five years ago. Before leaving for the United States, he was working as a pharmacist and therefore he thought it would be simple for him to get a job based on his real skills. But it wasn't. Upon arrival in the United States, he immediately set out to hunt for a job, but no matter how hard he tried, he could not find a job in a pharmacy anywhere. After five or six months, he began to be less optimistic about getting a good job and at last, not having enough money for paying his bills, he had to do jobs he did not like. The first job he did was to cook in a restaurant but he left this job quickly because he thought that he was too qualified academically to work as a cook and to get this small salary. After giving up the job, he started to work as a taxi driver. He worked as a taxi driver for two years but at last he decided to go back to his country. What happened to him in Gabon was different from what had happened to him in the United States: within two weeks in Gabon, he got job offers from three pharmaceutical companies! He has been

working as a pharmacist for quite some time now and has earned enough money to realize most of his dreams.

To sum up, we can say that getting a good job in the United States is not quite easy and the story about my uncle should be a good lesson for all of us. Personally, I believe that after finishing my studies in the United States, I will go back to work in my country. *Home! Sweet Home!*

Studying with people from other cultures

By Chia (Brenda) Lee, 3C

Studying with people from other cultures is a significant experience for me. I have always been interested in all kinds of cultures, but until I came to the United States, I had no chance to study with foreigners. Now, I am studying in the LCC, and that is a pretty good way to communicate with people from other countries. First, I feel strongly that other cultures have more passion than my culture. It influences me in thinking about my culture, which is, in some situations, too shy to express my emotions. Secondly, during the classes, we usually talk to each other to discuss our assignments. It is good for us to get varied opinions. I think there are various viewpoints because of our different background. I can find the advantages and learn from my classmates. Finally, our completely different languages cause us to use English. It pushes me to practice English. We share our stories in English. That is exactly why I decided to study abroad. In conclusion, I have enjoyed studying with people from other cultures and have treasured this opportunity to learn from them.

My Experience Studying With People from Other Cultures

By Chin (Gini) Lee, 3B

Studying with people from other cultures is very important. We all have different

backgrounds, pronunciation, customs, and maybe even age. So respect,

listening, learning, and communication about other people's opinions are a major lesson.

For instance, some people are very shy to talk to other people, so I always keep asking

some questions to spark their interest. And if I can't understand what they are saying, I

may ask them to repeat it again to make sure of the meaning. The young people are very active, but sometimes they are lazy to do some group work, and it is hard to tell them how to do it. Some people can't accept another's opinion; they are very persistent in their opinion. No matter what, I always try to respect others because we are different people from different countries and diverse cultures. On the other hand, I also love to meet new friends from other countries too. And, I can still learn something new from them.

Different Cultures

By Bilal Beduk, 3C

There are many different cultures in the USA. When I decided to come to the USA, I thought there are many different cultures there and I will learn about different cultures. I came to the LCC and I met many people from different countries, and we have been learning many things from each other. Everybody has different languages, different traditions, different cultures, etc. When I talk with friends, I learn a lot of information about other cultures. Before, I knew only a little

information about Chinese, Japanese, Arabian, and Russian people and I didn't know anything at all about African, Venezuelan, or Vietnamese cultures and people. Now, I am learning new things about these cultures. It's very important for me, because I want to become an intellectual person. I want to learn different about cultures. If we learn about different cultures, we can connect with the people from the other cultures. Living in the USA is a very important experience for me. Although, we have different cultures, we are all humans. We have the same basic values: love, honesty, truthfulness. If everybody could learn about different cultures and stay clear of prejudice, I think the world would become a peaceful place.

My Cultural Adjustment Cycle

By Burak Beduk 3B

Everybody experiences living in a different place in different ways, but there are many similarities. The Cultural Adjustment Cycle gives us one of the best examples. If someone goes abroad for the first time, she/he can experience some confusing and difficult times. But if somebody can have extensive information about living in a different country, she/he might not suffer the cultural adjustment cycle quite so profoundly. When I came to Houston, I wasn't very happy because I had to leave my family, relatives, friends and country. But I was excited about learning English and having new experiences. Therefore, my honeymoon period wasn't joyful, but it wasn't desperate either.

Everything began to get easier when I started studying at the LCC at UH. We have had very experienced teachers, and they have taught us many important points about Americans and different cultures. For example, we know we should be careful when we meet and greet somebody for the first time. So, I think, I'm in initial adjustment. I haven't had any major

problems yet. Although I might not speak English perfectly or fluently, it's not big problem now. I think it will be better.

Maybe after a time, I will experience mental isolation because time is passing and my needs are increasing. I am in a hurry to speak fluently, but I need time to speak fluently. However, since I have learned about the cultural adjustment cycle, I will pass this and the other stages with knowledge and understanding.

My First Day in the LCC

By Rasha Almohsin, 3A

The most exciting day of my life was my first day in the LCC. In fact, I can remember every moment I spent on that day. On my first day in the LCC, I came too early before doing the registration, so I stayed outside the LCC building looking at the wonderful fountain in front of the building. One hour later, I turned around and found that there were many students coming to the LCC building, so I followed them. Everything was organized inside, and all the new students were so happy and smiling. While I was waiting to complete my registration, I talked with other new students from different countries. I was so happy to get new international friends from the first day in the LCC. My last thing to complete the registration was the interview. I was thinking about it all the time since it was my first interview in the United States. Also, I thought that the teachers would be tough. I was counting the seconds until the teacher called my name. I was afraid to enter the room for the interview. However after I opened the door and saw the smile on the teachers' faces, I took a breath and relaxed. The interview went fast, and I did not feel the time. After I finished the registration, I walked outside with my new international friends to see our great university and to have lunch. I really enjoyed my first day in the LCC, and it was the most exciting day of my life.

VOICES

FIELD TRIPS

Student Observations of the Houston Museum of Natural Science, July 8

RohinMaknoja, 4C
Visiting the Houston Museum of Natural Science is an opportunity to discover and experience the wonders of science and nature. Exhibits from all over the world offer scientific information from eras before the dinosaurs to the time of space exploration.

Tatiana Dogbo, 4A
This museum trip was an amazing happening in my life. Even if I wasn't in the world a long time ago, I now know a lot that I can discuss with others. I learned about many cultures. We saw a raincoat made from the intestines of a seal and a cape made from colorful feathers of Amazonian birds. What great inventiveness! We also learned about the seven ecosystems of Africa.

Yoorim Kim, 4A
On the First Floor, the most interesting thing is the short movie about how the Earth was formed. There was a big explosion called the Big Bang. After that the geology of the Earth changed several times until the continents were as they are today.

On the Second Floor, I was fascinated by the Gems and Minerals. It was like a jewelry shop and I stayed there for a long time. Each gem and mineral has its own gorgeous color.
The Third Floor exhibits Native American civilizations. Their

clothes were more awesome than I could have imagined. A young girl on a horse was wearing a shirt decorated with elks' teeth. This creativity stunned and surprised me.

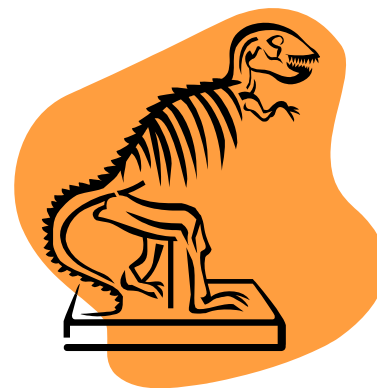
Marjorie Silva, 4A
As I walked through the museum, I met people of all ages speaking in different languages. As I walked past the huge dinosaur fossils, I recalled the movie, "Jurassic Park". The African Wildlife was my favorite exhibit and made me feel like I was on a safari. The fantastic and amazing Gems and Minerals made me feel like I was in a jewelry store. In the Energy Hall, Peter explained different types of energy sources to me. Also a lady who spoke Spanish talked to me about African wildlife. Many exhibits have move presentations which make it easier to understand.

Sani Nazir, 4C
The exhibit halls show a rich and diverse array of natural and scientific marvels. The innumerable benefits of this museum can be enjoyed for FREE on Tuesday afternoons after 2:00 pm. It's not always necessary to pay money to visit this fabulous museum.

Kim Nguyen, 4C
The Houston Museum of Natural Science is the greatest place that I have ever been. It has a lot of things that I never knew about such as archaeological discoveries, fossil remains of dinosaurs, and information about ancient

civilizations. While looking at the dinosaur skeletons, I could imagine a lively primeval era with archaic animals. The Weiss Energy Hall is a sophisticated and comprehensive exhibit beginning with the Big Bang and the eventual formation of life on Earth. The Gems and Minerals collection has a 1,869 carat emerald.

Ali Mouktar, 4C
I was stunned when I went to the HMNS. This museum is wonderful. In all my life, I had never before seen a dinosaur fossil. I had seen dinosaurs in TV and movies but thought they were imaginary. At the museum, I saw for myself that they were 100% real. In fact, I want more dinosaur information than I found there. I also think that the Egypt exhibit was too small for the revolutionary history of Egypt and that this exhibit needed to be in a more prominent place.





THE CULTURE FESTIVAL

By Abdoul Ouedraogo ,3B

The Culture Festival is a manifestation which shows the faces of other cultures to those whom ignore them. And at LCC program, we have many different cultures, so it is important to organize this kind of event for people. In this way they can learn more about each other and also have a good time. I can explain what is going on in my culture, but nobody can describe exactly the way people in my country do things. So, with a Culture Festival, it is your eyes which pick up pictures of what you are seeing. Although you may speak about your culture, people generally don't want to learn more even if they say so. But actual images can change their mind. By seeing something you want to taste it even if you did not think about it before. Several times when we see a food never seen before, it is the vision and the smell that can incite us to eat, so the culture is appreciated. Thus, I will never buy a fish which is not caught from the water, yet I will never ask to taste a cuisine that I just heard about. Eye contact is very important in making a decision. Having a festival concerning culture is the best way for people to learn more about other cultures. It shows values to cultures, and makes people interested in other cultures. When it is just word of mouth, I think people have impressions that their cultures don't have any value for others. For example, on the 18th July 2008 at the Culture Festival, when African people were dancing, I saw everybody moved around to see what we were doing. And I was excited to dance salsa with Spanish people. I just said to myself, "what

a beautiful dance is that!" It was very impressive. Also, I was very glad when people asked me to invite them to dance with us. I find people are interested in my culture, and so I ask to learn about theirs. In conclusion, it is important to keep this activity alive forever. It is a good educational tool that I support one hundred percent.

By LanNguyen, 3B

Last Friday, my school welcomed the culture festival at the University of Houston, The LCC prepared a place for students to take part in a cultural exchange, to taste a lot of foods from other countries, and discuss it together. This is my impression of this culture festival. When we finished our study that day, we went outside the building and found a lot of students, teachers and visitors standing around tables. There was a lot of food on the tables for everybody to taste. My group brought a lot of Vietnamese food. We invited everybody to taste our food from my country and we tried to taste other foods. We ate, talked, and danced together. This was the first culture festival I attended, so everything was novel for me. I not only was amazed about foods, culture, eating and drinking, and dress traditions, but I was also impressed that teachers joined the festival. They did many things carefully and happily. I wanted to help them, but they didn't allow me to do this. I was surprised and very touched by our professors. I think that this is big culture that I learned from Americans. Although they have been teaching us, they don't have reservations about cleaning up and helping out at the culture

festival. Different countries have different cultures, but I won't forget situation with the LCC professors during our festival of summer 2008. I learned many things at the culture festival.

By Xu (Vicky) Jie, 3B

I think the culture festival is a very good way for us to know other country's cultures and meet more people in the LCC. Everyone should come and enjoy it. If you didn't come this time, you'd better come next time. You'll enjoy every minute, and have a good time there. On the day of the festival, in class, we talked a lot about our countries' cultures. I was so surprised to hear so many differences between my country and others and I was happy to recognize the similarities. After class, all the classmates went out of the LCC building. Although it was very hot outside, we enjoyed every minute. I met a lot of friends during the culture festival, and some of them I knew already but some of them I didn't. It's a good chance to make friends with stranger from other countries. We took a lot of pictures which made me so happy. We also asked all Chinese people to get together, and we took a photo. It made me feel warmth just like in my country. We also ate foods from many countries. One of the dishes cooked with rice and fish was so hot that it gave me strong memories. I tried many countries' food, and most of them are delicious. I enjoyed every minute during the culture festival, and I learned a lot on that day. I am already looking forward to the next culture festival.

PERSONAL STORIES

Life before I came to America

By Lam Le 2B

When I completed my high school, my parents wanted me to become an accountant. But I don't like it; I would like to be a programmer; I love to program on computer. I attempted to convince my parents that programmer is right for me. But they didn't accept it. I didn't give up and tried to convince them again. And luckily, they accepted. I decided to go to Ho Chi Minh City and learn at the University of Technology. My parents agreed to let me go to Ho Chi Minh City.

At the university, I learned to make the programs, the websites and I was very fascinated. I began to make a real program at the beginning of the second year. It was the snake game. Now I have lost it because I forgot to store it when I fixed my computer. In that year, I started to learn specific technologies such as .NET, Java, and so on. I needed to choose one of them, so I chose .NET.

When I completed the bachelor, I continued to learn .NET myself. I wanted to learn more and get a

Master's degree. So I planned to go to a foreign university and I chose UH. I prepared documents and expected to get the Visa in the interview. Because in Vietnam the interview is very difficult, maybe they would refuse to give me the Visa, so I was very nervous. Finally, I got the Visa and went to the US. Before I went to US, I didn't remember to make a party with my friends but promised to go back to Vietnam when I finish.

After I registered in UH, they asked me to take a test. First, I need to learn English in UH. After that, I will continue to learn computer science. I think that I prefer to live in the US because it's comfortable to learn. And finally, I hope to get a Master's degree.

Sweat Dream

Irina Sergeeva 5C

You cannot imagine what kind of extraordinary day happened yesterday at U of H. I came to the University to

study like usual and I saw that the fountain across from the LCC building looked different. In the fountain wasn't water, it was coffee, cappuccino, to be precise. The grass wasn't the grass; it was fruit jelly. Caramel flowers and waffle trees were growing around the fountain. On the waffle trees hung waffle cones. Moreover, chocolate swans swam in the coffee. LCC students and teachers were sitting around this wonderful fountain and eating all of those sweet things. Some people were picking the waffle cones, putting inside ice cream that was lying on the benches made of cookies, and were eating it with waffle spoons. Some people were drinking the coffee with the whip cream that floated like clouds in the sky. When my classmates and my teacher saw me, they began to call to me, "Irina! Come here!" I wanted to take a cup of coffee with chocolate, but I couldn't because my alarm woke me up. I had to get up and go to the University, to the LCC to study English. It was only a dream, a sweet dream.



My Last Day at Home

By Elizabeth Tokarenko, 5A

“One more wake-up and at last I will never need this disgusting thorny coat anymore!” – I was thinking to myself one dark and gloomy morning, while lying in bed and looking through the blackened window on the cheerless landscape of the big city. Spring didn’t hurry up and even probably wasn’t going to visit Moscow that year, giving me some even more reason to spleen.

I was so exhausted, not physically, but emotionally, with all my expectations, packing and accommodations of that period. It wasn’t even exciting, leaving the hateful city – as I thought at that moment. The future seemed to be as grey as the wet asphalt of a huge highway and I compared myself to a small unprotected car, ripping down this never-ending road of life, having no right to make a stop or turn back to my customary familiar road.

During the last week I had already said the last “good-bye” to my friends, colleagues and relatives, and, finally, I had nothing to do. My huge suitcases – red and pink, like two brothers of different fathers, were also packed and ready to go, but when I shot a glance at them, some incomprehensible feeling of loss spilled out of me.

I was wandering round the house, chaotically touching objects, opening drawers of the bureau – it was almost unbelievable, that tomorrow I would have a new surrounding and would probably have to

change my habits.

I took a seat on my old, red bed, which had traveled to Moscow with me, and I looked over paper printed photographs, recalling my far friends and dear people, who were no longer part of my life and whom I would never see again. Here they are, on those papers... my dead grandparents from my father’s side holding me, a baby, in their arms. I didn’t even hear their last “farewell,” as I was far from them and too unconcerned, as only youth can be.

I took another picture and saw my own first tiny apartments in the small sea town of my birth; and my adorable old granny, cooking something inimitably tasty; and my dear dog that had long ago passed away, sitting beside her with a foxy expression on his red shaggy muzzle, unlawfully trying to take part in the feast.

My father, whom I felt had betrayed me when he had divorced my mother: I couldn’t stay with you because I was just too ambitious and wished to conquer Moscow.

My friends and boyfriends, close and not really: I leave all of you twice! I move away from you further and further...

By the end of the day I was attacked by the squall of telephone calls and despite that we had had a farewell party two days before, everybody wanted to talk to me up till the end, to give me the last instructions how I should live and behave myself in the unfamiliar country. My old, crippled granny couldn’t not come to my apartments to teach me a few lessons of worldly wisdom.

On the way to airport there were terrible traffic jams; my mom, my brother and I were very scared that we might be late, but fortunately, at hardly the last moment the road became clear and we reached the terminal.

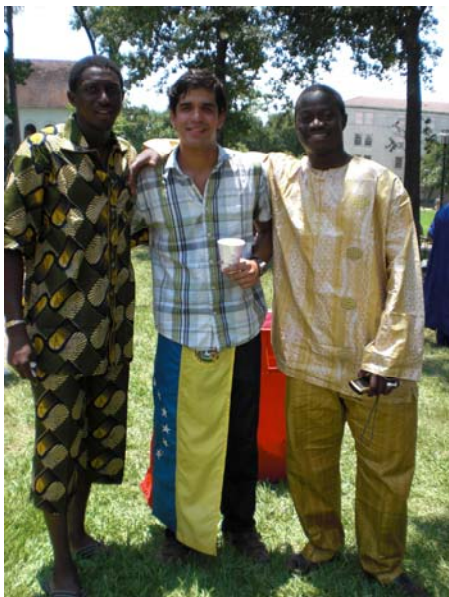
When it was time to board and I was going to switch off my cell, my dad called me: “How are you, daughter? I missed you! Take care and remember that you are MY daughter, I love you very much; you are everything that I have.”





Summer 2008 LCC students and teachers gather together to enjoy the culture festival.





VOICES



TRIPS AND ADVENTURES

My Best Vacation – Bali Island

By Gini Lee, 3B

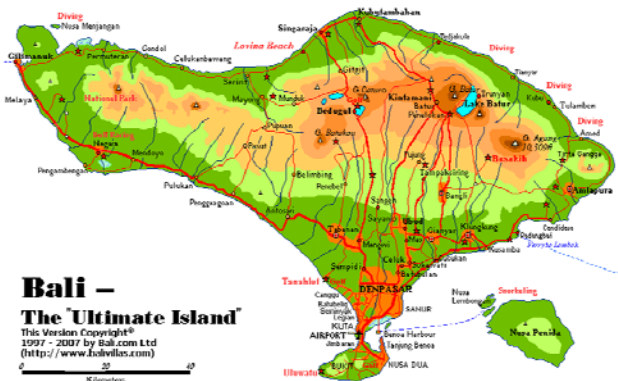
I love to travel in my free time. My best vacation was to Bali Island in Indonesia. I went there with my friends. When we arrived in Bali, we went immediately to the villa. Our room had a swimming pool, kitchen and comfortable bed. It was really a beautiful place to relax and have a good rest. We also had a personal chef who made good meals for us every day, so we all felt like princesses. In the following five days, we visited the famous Besakih Temple on the slopes of Holy Mount Agung, an active volcano,

Kuta, Ubud and the temples of Tanah Lot. In addition, we learned that Bali's cultural heritage is visible everywhere. We visited many colorful festivals and ceremonies. We were so surprised by those new experiences. I have taken several trips as an adult, but the best vacation was to Bali Island. It was really unforgettable.

My Best Vacation

By Lan Ngueyen, 3B

I will never forget the enjoyable trip I took to Nha Trang, VietNam. My parents, my older sister, my two younger sisters, my younger brother and I decided to go there in the summer of 2007. The seven of us went by car from our hometown Long Khanh to Nha Trang. When we arrived in Nha Trang, we went first to our hotel. After dinner, we planned our itinerary for the next five days. The weather was great the whole week, and I had the time of my life! We visited Vinpear Land, went to Sand Hill for gold, swam in the sea, had a mud-bath, went to the market and ate famous food there. I bought some Nha Trang soy sauce and squid for my friends. Although I had taken several trips before that summer of 2007, the best trip in my life was my trip to Nha Trang because it was the last trip I took with my family together in Viet Nam.



A SPECIAL PERSON

The Teacher who Changed my Life

By Maria Torskaya, 6A

There have been a lot of teachers during my life, but one of them was really outstanding. I think it is very important for many of us to have a good mentor, who guides you, who can help you with advantageous and valuable advice, who can encourage you, when you feel that you are not able to get your dream. I am a very lucky person because I met a teacher whom I respected and admired.

It was about 8 years ago. I had just graduated from the University with my Masters degree in chemistry and biology. My first job was in the Laboratory of Food Toxicology in the Research Institute of Nutrition. I did not know what exactly I would do because I had no any experience. My chief introduced me to Dr. Galina Zhukova and said that she would be my mentor. She looked at me very skeptically and said, "We will see, we will see."

She was a 64-year-old woman. She was beautiful, highly educated and eminently qualified. She had a Ph.D. in chemistry and great experience in science. I worked with her for 4 years. It was a remarkable, unforgettable time. She was working like a whirlwind. Galina could handle several problems at the same time. For example, if it concerned chemical experiments, she was able to manage four or five completely different processes at the same

time: centrifugation, purification, electrophoresis, distillation and analysis. I, as a specialist in chemistry, can say that it was amazing. Furthermore, on the same working day she delivered lectures for the students and participated in science seminars. She made an important contribution to science. Suffice it to say that several state analytical methods were developed by Dr. Zhukova; there were not documents of certification or the laws of using, producing, storage and selling food products without her participation. Galina had two wonderful grandchildren and she always found time during the weekends to play with them.

I loved her very much. She was not only a mentor for me, she was a friend and mother at the same time. I worked with her, learned from her and tried to be energetic and optimistic like she was. Remember, she was 64! Galina taught me everything: how to design experiments, how to prepare agents and solutions, how to think and solve problems, how to write research articles and make presentations, even how to find my own mistakes. I need to thank my lucky stars because I met her.

My Brother

By Abdullah Alyabis, 2A

When I was a child, I had a lot friends and brothers. My older brother was my best friend. I liked him more than everyone because he is more than a brother. He was friendly, wonderful and lovely. He gave

me anything I needed. I remember he always tried to give us chocolate or candy every time, without my mother knowing because she always said chocolate is bad for the health. When I graduated from elementary school, he gave me many gifts like a minibox and candy. He liked to play with us and take us to play in the park. My brother liked to help people for anything, and he helped me with my homework. When he was sick I was very sad and worried for him, because I loved him. He likes to travel very much. One time he took me to visit Dubai, and I was very young for travel, but he decided to take me to visit Dubai. Finally, I can say that it is very important to give thanks to the best person in my life.

My Mother

By Mai Linh, 2A

I always remember my great mother. She is a beautiful woman. She is tall and average weight. She has short brown hair. Her face is very clement and beautiful. She looks younger than her real age. She often wears a traditional dress when she goes out with my father. My mother was born in 1954 in a small village in the central eastern part of Viet Nam. Her family had 8 people and they were very poor, so she had to do many things to help her mother take care her younger sisters and younger brothers. In 1975 when my country was independent from the US, she got married with a kind man and moved to southern Viet Nam. They had 2 girls, my sister and me. We have a happy family in a little house there. When I



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was a child, I liked to play beside my mother because I loved to see what she was doing and how she did it. She has always been the person I wanted to see when I woke up in the morning. At that time, the economy of Viet Nam was in its lowest level, so my mother had to work many jobs. She worked really hard every day. She often woke up early in the morning to make breakfast for everyone in our family. She also worked 8 hours in office. She always cooked lunch for us before she went to work. She is a great cook. On weekends, my family had the opportunity to try many special foods made by her. I remember she made cake for my sister and me once every week. She had good way to teach us. When she cooked, she asked me to come and help her, so now I know she wanted me to study how to cook and to interest me when I helped her. She also gave me knowledge about how to live alone, so I could do many things by myself when I was a child. My neighbors really loved her. They often told me about the good things she did and I was proud of my mother. She taught me the ways to have good behavior. She always told us: You must be friendly and love other people, because people need the best from you, and they also will give the best back to you. So she practiced her lesson for us by the way she helped poor people. She gave food to them and helped them if she could. She knew what she did was a good lesson for us.

My Grandmother

By Jaemyeong Shin, 2A

A special person in my childhood is my grandmother. She died in

1983, so I miss her very much, and I want to say I loved her because I never told her I loved her very much. I didn't know how much she loved me and took care of me very well because I was a very young child, so I couldn't say thanks. Today, a long time after her death, I know that now. I remember that she was very generous. I think she was the most generous person I ever met because she always forgave me when I was bad. She raised me to be a strong and intelligent gentleman because she always taught me about kindness and patience and she made me several good foods every day. I miss her very much right now. "I love you so much, Grandma!"

Papito

By Jessica Katty Alarcon Yopez, 2A

When I was 5 years old, Mom died and Pop was sunk in sadness. Days passed and Pop decided that our Mom's parents were the best way to have a good education for my sisters and me, and he could work very hard for us. Soon we went to grandfather's house. "Papaito and Mamaita" were waiting for us with their arms open and as soon as they saw us they were full of kisses for us. Days, months and years passed, and Pop never failed to visit us, but I felt that "Papaito" was more than my grandfather, so I began to call him "Papito". Papito was an old man that looked 10 or 15 years younger. He was responsible, very kind and humorous. A normal morning in his life was to wake up at 6 or 7, do some exercises that his

body permitted and take a cold shower. That was amazing for me because I never saw an old man begin the day in that way! Papito enjoyed reading; he was always reading. He read all the books that he could, including the Bible and dictionary. I remember that when it was difficult for me to find an answer, I quickly sat near him and asked him for answers, but every answer took more time that I thought. Each answer was a beautiful and amazing story that I got to imagine. When he stopped, I knew more than I wanted. That was wonderful because I thought that Papito was a human encyclopedia that I should take advantage of. Sometimes I saw him put in practice his inventions of physics which always surprised me. Something that at the beginning was funny for me was when Papito said "hello," taking off his hat and waving it in the air, but later I understood that it was a form of politeness that he showed. Additionally, Papito always worried for me. If he saw me sad, he used his abilities to make me happy, and if I was crying, he took a seat near me and talked with me. When it was time to go to bed, Papito said good night with sweet words and a kiss on my forehead. If I was the first to say good night, I saw him sit and pray on his bed in the dark bedroom. I know that he loved me as I loved him because he never failed to say that to me. I learned a lot of him. I am proud of my Papito, who was the example of life to me. I will never forget him.

My Grandmother

By Jie Wu, 2A

My grandmother on my mother's side is my favorite person. She was very friendly. She always wore a smile on her face and never spoke loudly. She did everything patiently. She was very kind. She got on well with relatives and neighbors. If you had difficulties, he was always ready to help. When a neighbor had to travel, my grandmother looked after their pet and flowers. It's a little thing but she always did it. My grandmother told me to be honest. She hoped I would be useful to people. I will never forget her. She is my favorite person.

My Teacher

By Laila Al-hadab, 2A

When I studied in high school, the math teacher was a dull woman. She wasn't married. She is very smart; when she was a student, she was the first graduation in university. Usually she was very angry when she taught math. Then we didn't understand very well what she said. She usually said "I'm sorry, students. I'm angry because this is first time to teach math." She couldn't teach us well. For example, one day she did some exercises. After that, when she came to the next class, she said, "I'm sorry, students. I did those exercises wrong". Then, all the students couldn't understand, so they felt nervous and they couldn't ask her. She also gave us a hard test every week, so she wanted us to be like her. However, she was helpful when she gave us many exercises and hard tests. She was friendly and generous. She helped all the students to be smart student. She

loves all of them. She wanted me to become doctor. She loves me more than all the students because she believes me to be a smart student. I'm thankful for my teacher. I'm happy to be with my teacher. I love you, teacher.

My Grandfather

By Jean Luc Liliou, 2A

I remember my grandfather. He was wonderful. He was the best cook that I ever knew. I remember he made rice and fish every Sunday. It was so interesting because every Sunday we have a long discussion about life. He taught me to cook. I don't forget this moment. Since childhood I have remembered that. Also he liked everybody. He was friendly. He talked with everybody, even with my friends too. He had good relations with his neighbors, relatives, partner and his friends. He was wise. He helped me not to be afraid of many things in my life. "A man must be courageous," said my grandfather. He was even helpful. He showed me all the time the best way to live. When I got problems he helped me.

My Mother

By Luisa Hermes, 2A

A special person in my life is my mother. She is friendly, generous and a super mother. My mother is a super mother because she takes care of everybody and she likes to stay with family, friends and neighbors. She likes to play with her grandsons and cook for them, and the most important thing is to give good advice about life. My mother is a generous woman. She likes to help people. One day she brought somebody that we don't know home to live with us. We were very furious about that, but my mother always says I like to help people

who do not have a place to live. I like to be kind with everybody so they will be kind with me. That day we learned that we can't change her, because she has a big heart and we can do everything even though she is not going to change. My mother always says life is not easy but we have to be strong, and work very hard to have everything that we want. Everybody says to her, "You are a wonderful person." When I grow up, I want to be like her. The neighbors always say to her, I want to be like you, a generous woman who likes to help everybody, show the best way to do the right thing, the woman who says if you study hard be kind with everybody and be generous, you will be successful in your life. Everybody says my mother is the best person in the world. My mother always says never say "never" or never say "I can't" if you haven't tried. She is friendly to everyone. When you need her help, she always has time for you. She likes to visit neighbors; also she likes to cook for them and teach things about life. My mother always says to the neighbors that life is never hard. You need to make it easy. You just need to try and think that you can do this. When my mother says things like that, people always say "You are a special person. You are helpful and kind. We love you so much." My mother always shows her love doing these wonderful things, and she has a good and wonderful name: "Mary of the Sky".

My Wonderful Mother

By Palamango Tankoana, 2A

My mother is a special person to me and for our family. She is tall and beautiful with a nice body. She is very wise and kind with everybody and she likes to take care of everyone that she knows. She has a good smile and likes also to talk wonderful and wise things with her children. For example, she told me when I was in Ouagadougou

with her, “Don’t smile with all the boys.” When I call her, she talks to me about these things. I always remember everything that she told me and did for me when I was with her. Also my mother likes to cook and she teaches her children how to cook. She taught me how to cook rice, potatoes and many other foods. Every Christmas and Easter she cooks many foods and gives it to some guests, parents and her neighbors, and, she shows my sister and I how to make it. This woman is very interesting and strong. She is the best and loveliest person that I have ever known.

My Grandfather

By Mohamed Qasqas, 2A

My grandfather is a great man. He was kind with everybody, with children and especially with me. When I was child, he usually took me to the carnival in Damascus with my relatives. The games were wonderful and very nice. The carnival had a car rides, horse rides and many other rides, so it was very fun day. My grandfather showed his love for everybody. He cooked a lot for us. He always smiled and talked with everybody. That’s how he showed his love, and I hope for him to have a nice life.

My Mother

By Mohamed Sougue, 2A

My mother is beautiful and the most generous person that I know. She likes to cook traditional food four days a week from 9am to 12pm. She likes to share food. She often cooks rice on Thursday and goes to the mosque to give some to the poor people in the front of the mosque. She goes to her village every year in August for two weeks to visit her parents. When some-

one isn’t happy, she asks about their problem and tries to give them the solutions. She likes to watch African movies for two hours every afternoon, and she likes to sleep 8 hours. Every year on September 6th, her birthday, she cooks many foods such as *recets*, *allico*, *haricot vert*, *pomme de terre* and macaroni. She invites her friends to the party. She is an excellent mother and I love her a lot.

My Grandfather

By Mahamadou Tembely, 2A

My grandfather was someone who liked fishing. He was 60 years old when I was 12 years old. He was tall and had some white hair. He always told me the best way to live. Generally as all grandfathers, he didn’t like to see children unhappy. He was very kind especially with me because I was his best friend.

One day my grandfather and I planned to go fishing together. As soon as we arrived at the river he told me to prepare the equipment for fishing while he was changing his clothes called “Boubou.” Then he hung his clothes up on the tree. We each prepared our fishing rod and cast a line in the river. A few minutes later my grandfather was tired and I told him to take a rest while I went on fishing. When he was sleeping, if I felt that my fishing rod had caught one big fish, and I cried out to call him because I couldn’t catch this fish alone. He came to help me with that. Then when we returned at home my father wanted to beat me because he always told me not to go in river. For him the river was dangerous for children. However, my grandfather told him to leave me alone, so he saved me again. I really liked my grandfather and with him I felt safe. He was my best friend and I will never forget him.

Father’s Inspiration

By Yerbolat (Eric) Nazarbekov, 6B

I am inspired by my father, who always reminds me to be strong, never to give up, and to achieve success in this difficult life.

Of all the people I respect and admire, my father is the perfect example for me of a successful person. I like going with my father to his work because he knows his job perfectly. As I talk to my father’s friends, it is clear to me how much they enjoy having such a good person near them. He has respect not only among friends, but also among our relatives.

If someone has a problem, my father is always willing to discuss it with them and give his advice about how to solve it. In fact, I have never seen my father ignore someone who asked for his help. I personally benefitted from his wisdom when I had some difficulties in high school. I had problems with friends, and it accordingly affected my lessons. I was in an uncomfortable situation because my loyal friend and I fought with my classmates, and it was really upsetting. My friend was insulted by my classmates; as a result, we were fighting in the class. I wished I had not fought with my classmates. In school my grades got worse. I was nervous because I thought no one could help me, but then my father noticed that and helped guide me through all my difficulties and resolve this problem. After that, I always turned to my father whenever I needed any kind of advice about life.

To conclude, all people are inspired by someone, some from friends, others from teachers. As for myself, I am inspired by my father. I know that he is always ready to teach and inspire me.

My Great-Aunt

By Juliana Cordoba, 6A

There was a person who changed my life completely. Her name was Lilia Medina. She was my great-aunt. I cannot imagine what my life could have been without her as my guide. Everyone in my family was surprised by the close relationship that my great-aunt and I had. The difference of age between us was 70 years.

The relationship between my great-aunt and me started not by coincidence. It was my grandmother, who had a very close relationship with her sister, who brought my great-aunt into my life. I used to go to my great-aunt's house every Friday. I would spend the whole weekend there. When I was on vacations, I stayed at her house the entire time, from the first to the last day. I was so happy staying there. Her house is symbolic for me; it symbolizes happiness, light and peace. It is difficult to remember good moments in my childhood in general, maybe because I did not have a lot of them or just because I forced my mind to forget everything. In the few images I have in my mind, my great-aunt is always there, giving me good advice, giving me love or just doing simple things that for me were very significant. I learned from my great-aunt so many things that if I had to write them I would never end, which is why I am going to refer just to a few of them. I learned from my great-aunt about her attitude towards life, and the meaning of being honest and just. I also learned from her that you have to show yourself to everyone as you are, with no masks, and that no matter how many problems you have in your life, you are strong enough to manage them. She

taught me that the most important thing in life is your family and that there are some strong relationships with certain members of your family that will last for eternity. As I said before, I don't know what would have become of me without her guidance. I am completely sure that I would not be what I am and that I would not have accomplished all the good things I have done in my life. My great-aunt was always there in the moments when my mom and I needed her most; she was the only one who gave us sincere love and support. Even now, 5 years after her death, I can feel that she is still with me. She is still guiding me and making me a better person each day. When my baby was born, I could feel her there. I know that she is always protecting me and the people I love.

What is more special about this relationship is that I remember her every single day of my life. If you read this, you might think that I am exaggerating, but it is true. You will never forget and you will be eternally grateful to someone who changed completely the route of your life. For me it was like changing my life from a route full of darkness to one full of lightness.

My Father

By Omar Al-Hawas, 6A

As a kid growing up under my parent's shadow, I've learned that everyone has his own way of getting through to someone. Everything I know, and everything I am today, I owe it to this man who has changed my life completely. He was and still is my mentor, my guide, and most importantly my dad.

The truth of the matter is I've never liked to work hard for anything, I kind of just waited for everything to work its way out and happen for

me. My dad made me realize that I was wrong. I remember him telling me, "You can sit there, and wait for things to happen, and I promise you when I come back to check on you in 10 or 20 years, nothing will be changed, and you'll still be sitting there." After that, I knew that I needed to make a change in my life, and I did, and ever since then whenever I've wanted to do something, I've gotten up and worked for it.

The only problem was I had some other bad habits that I needed to work on. I was impatient; when I wanted something, it meant that I had to have it right then, not a minute later. I just didn't like to wait. My dad noticed that, and he kept telling me that good things happen to those who wait. I liked the sound of that. It took me a long time to change that habit, but thanks to my dad I eventually did.

Another bad habit was that I used to give up easily. If I couldn't do something right, I just gave up and let it go, but that didn't work out for me. So I turned to my dad for help. He advised me to try harder, and to be consistent, and to never give up. There was also this one thing he said that really got through to me. He said, "you can accomplish anything you want, once you truly set your mind to it." And as always he was right.

My dad also told me to never run away from my problems. I thought if I had a problem it was easier for me to ignore it than to face it, but I soon realized that was never the answer. My dad always said "A true man always faces his problems." In the end, I will always be grateful and thankful to my dad. He has taught me everything I know and made me all that I am today. He has changed my life completely, if it weren't for him, my life would be a total mess by now.



VOICES

My Teacher

By Andrea Chacin, 6B

When people hear the word "teacher" they immediately think of someone highly educated in some field, art or subject. They would certainly not think of a Colombian maid who cleans houses for a living. Well, for me she was and continues to be a teacher.

Many people in my life have influenced me in different aspects. My parents were and are the biggest influence in my life, but the way I see it, it's their job to teach me everything they can about life and luckily, they were and continue to be amazing teachers (my academic learning is something else and of course, I attribute that to my school teachers). But not everybody gets lucky enough to find people who aren't related to them who would take the time and the concern to teach them positive things.

When my home's current cleaning lady, Diana, first came to work with us, I was 10 years old and thinking to myself "Well here's another cleaning lady who will probably not be nice with my sister and me." I didn't have much hope because my mom is very strict about the way our house should be managed and cleaned. What I didn't know was what a special person had come to my parents', my sister's and my life. Diana may come from a poor family and neighborhood, but her soul and heart are rich in love, optimism and good. She has managed to stay with us for almost 9 years now and has earned a big spot in my family's and my own hearts. She's our house-keeper, our nanny and our friend. And to me, she's a teacher. She has taught me about looking

on the positive side of every situation, about hard work, about friendship and love beyond social classes, about beating the odds when it comes to succeeding in life and many other things.

She came here with nothing but a great heart, high moral standards, wisdom and a bright brain (she would've gone to college back in Colombia had her mother not gotten so sick that Diana had to start providing for them). She has now saved enough money to get her own house and car (in Venezuela maids don't make enough money to afford these things) and is happily married and has a baby boy, whom I'm proud to be a godmother to.

Everyday, with every piece of advice she gives me, every comforting word she says, I learn a little more about how great life really is. Just by coming to work every day and by telling me the situations she has to deal with every day in her neighborhood (situations that I most likely won't have to deal with in my whole life), and still being happy for everything good in her life, she teaches me about determination to do the best she can in every situation, about optimism, and about everything I can accomplish having those two in my mind.

Every time she smiles for me, and every time she helps me make my life easier by giving me advice, she teaches me that we're all the same, that I should never underestimate anybody and that I need to appreciate anybody who loves me beyond race, relation and social class. And of course, for this and for so many other things, I try to give back to her everything she has given me in these 9 years she's been in my life.

My Special English Teacher

By Yuyang Liu, 6A

Most Chinese people these days know what it is like to have an "English teacher" since almost all pupils study English from the third year in school. Usually the very first English teacher for most of us is always a young and kind lady in primary school. But my first English teacher was none other than my mother. When I was a little child, she created an English environment by talking with me in English, letting me listen to some English songs, and letting me recognize the English words on the pictures all around my room. That was really a good idea. It made me become interested in English. When my English had a little progress, my mother let me remember some more English words from an English weekly or dictionary. Just imagine, I started to remember some words gradually and was able to express myself more and more in English. Mother liked to have me recite, dictate and finally write the words from memory. When I made any mistakes, she would have me write the wrong words about 40 times. I could not understand how a mother could be so strict with her little son, but the English word did stay in my memory from then on. Time flies. I eventually came to love English. My mother has always been there helping me as much as possible. I am sure that my English would never have come so far without her support, and that's why I believe my mother is not only my English teacher but also my life-long teacher. She is the one who awoke my interest, who gave me confidence and who offered me much-needed help. She, my mother, really is my good teacher.

HOLIDAYS

Holidays in Kazakhstan

By Vladimir Kartashov, 4D

When sitting in class at the university or working at a job, every one of us dreams about holidays. Do you know in which country there are the most holidays, more than in the others? I don't know exactly, but I can tell you about Kazakhstan's holidays.

In Kazakhstan, we have a lot of different holidays, big or small, funny or not. For example, the greatest holiday in the winter is Happy New Year. We begin to celebrate it on December 28, and this party time ends on January 5. You might say that it's too much for only one holiday, I but don't think so. In Russia, for example, people celebrate Happy New Year until the 10th or even the 14th of January. So it's a good time for vacation and for revitalizing your life energy. After celebrating this holiday, the people of Kazakhstan begin to think about other holidays in the spring.

In the middle of April we have a spring holiday called *Nauryz*. This is the holiday to celebrate the beginning of spring. As this holiday lasts for about three days, we have a lot of time for parties. After *Nauryz*, on March 8, we have another holiday, which is the International Women's Day. This holiday is a big holiday and usually lasts for three or four days, depending on which day of the week it falls on. While enjoying March 8, we will already be looking forward to April 1 when we will celebrate the *Day of Laugh*. It's not an official holiday,

but it's a good excuse for having some good mood and some partying with friends.

With May coming, there is another holiday, Victory Day. We celebrate this holiday on May 9. This is a very big holiday in all ex-Soviet countries. On that day we watch military parades and think about the people who died during the Second World War. Besides those holidays I have pointed out above, the people in Kazakhstan also have many other holidays such as Independence Day and some Muslim or Christian holidays. So maybe in each month we can celebrate something.

Some countries may have more holidays and some countries may have fewer holidays, but every country must have some holidays and this is good because everybody has to have time for relaxation and rest from their work.

New Year in Vietnam

 By Dung (Johnny) Nguyen,
2C

At the beginning of February annually, Vietnamese become busy and excited to welcome the New Year. The New Year holiday falls in February because we use the lunar calendar. In these days, people try to get out of the workplace as soon as possible in order to clean up their house. Housework is done by fixing broken places, repainting walls and doors, replacing the old furniture, and decorating flowers around the house. In addition, people start

to shop for additional items: candles, incense, lamps, candies, cakes, fruits, coffee, tea, gifts, meat, seafood, and vegetables. They have to buy as many things as possible and put them into the refrigerator because all markets commonly close at least five days after the New Year Eve; as a result, they can have enough materials to cook and have parties. Beside that, people can shop for new clothes to wear in the New Year days to get luck. Until everything is ready, people wake up at 5 am, dress up informally, and go to the church or temple. Then, they go back home to celebrate the family reunion. Traditionally, members of the family greet each other by saying "Happy New Year in Vietnamese" and giving small money envelopes to each other. Afterward, other activities like gambling are played and have to be held at home: people believe that staying at home on the first day of New Year will bring the good luck; otherwise, they can get many troubles by themselves or annoy others. In the coming days, people are allowed to get out of house to visit their relatives, teachers, and friends. Also, they can plan short trips or travel tours to get far away the crowd of the urban area. People who work for the government can enjoy the New Year for about 6 days. In contrast, it could be less than that for other people. Therefore, people become rushed and motivated to do everything in the holy day after a chain of stressful days last year.

VOICES

New Year

By Wan Ling (Gina) Lai, 2C

New Year is a special holiday in Taiwan. It is important for people because everybody comes back to their city and meets their family and cleans the house together. At night on New Year's Eve the family eats dinner together, and old people give red bags to children or young people. Everybody buys new clothes before New Year, and they cook a lot of food.

Everybody wakes up early in the New Year morning because we visit friend and family who give gifts. The children have more red bags when old people give them.

At New Year we usually have a week of free time. More people play outside but some people don't go outside because there are a lot of people, so they just relax at home.

At the New Year's Eve family dinner, we need to eat fish and sweet cakes because it means we don't finish the year and we do can do anything so easily. So New Year is a special holiday in Taiwan and China.

Ramadan in Mali

Nene Coulibaly, 2B

In my country Mali, many people celebrate Ramadan every year. Ramadan is a special day for my family. This day everybody dresses up nicely. Early in the morning from 9 a.m. to 10a.m. men, women and children go to the mosque. But many women stay at home. After that when they come back home they visit the neighbors and friends to wish them good

luck. For example they wish each other a long life, good luck for business or job, and many children for the future. Then the women cook many different kinds of food, for example sheep, beef, chicken and rice with soup; people serve themselves. In the evening, everybody dresses in the "Basin," which is traditional clothing in my country. "Basin" is very common for young and old people. The symbol of basin is greatness. We often celebrate Ramadan in September. On this day my family takes some pictures and listens to music. After all that we sit and talk for a long time. My mother gives us some advice and she gives some food to the homeless. Sometimes I like to visit my friends. I send post cards to all my friends. I often go to help my older sister to cook, because she lives alone with her husband. I like Ramadan because I have many memories every year. Children have a lot of money this day because old people give it to them. They go to buy ice cream and many things in the street. In my country everybody celebrates Ramadan. Even though Ramadan is a Muslim Holiday, Christians celebrate too.



Nene's sister wearing Basin

Christmas in Burkina Faso

By Stephane Djindere, 2C

In my country Burkina-Faso, we always celebrate Christmas Day. It's on December 25. Christmas is the Christians' special day in my country. On this day, all people don't work because a large majority of people in Burkina-Faso are Christians. In fact, people in my country usually like to make lunch with all their family in their house and they often go to visit friends or parents on this special day. The lunch is usually made in the older brother's house, where each brother's wife and some young daughters cook together for this special event. They usually cook African food such as meat, fish, paste of yam and corn flour, plantains, potatoes, and so on. They usually talk together, while they are putting some drinks in the cooler. Children play and joke. Christmas day is a beautiful day. Everybody is very happy on this day, because for us Christians, Christmas is Jesus Christ's birthday. On Christmas day, I always go to the church with my family. At noon, we usually start to eat. I like this moment because we often talk and joke. At night, the young people sometimes go to parties. In conclusion, I like Christmas day very much, because it's a day for people all around the world to show their love and their humanism.

HOLIDAYS (CONTINUED)

Chinese New Year

By Hung-Yi Hsieh, Class 4E

Chinese New Year is the most important holiday in my country. Every year, when Chinese New Year comes around, everyone prepares for it. During Chinese New Year, we have a lot of interesting cultural and historical traditions. I will introduce some of these customs to you.

The first custom related to the New Year is that on the Eve of the New Year, the Chinese always have firecrackers and a fireworks display that lasts until midnight. The reason for this could be found in an old story. A long time ago, there was a monster which liked to eat human flesh. This monster would sleep during the whole year

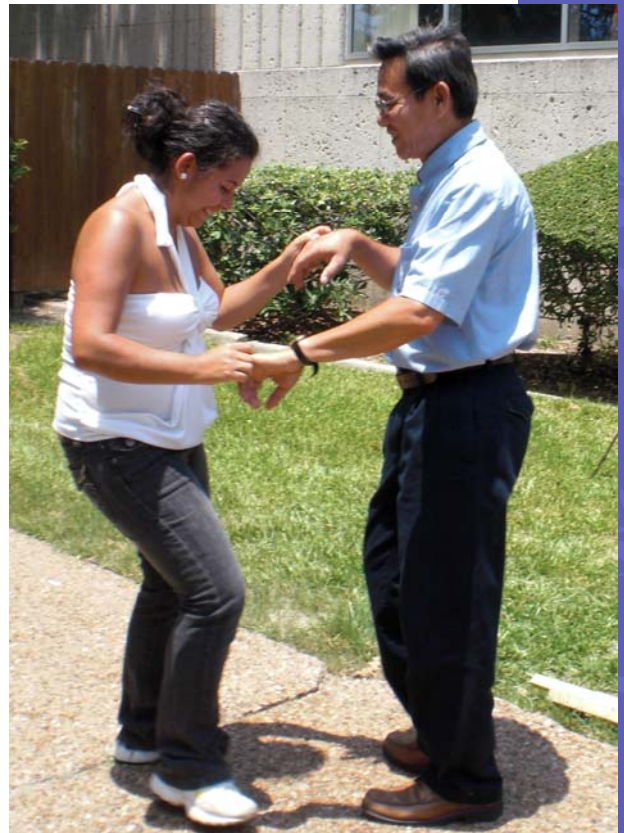
and would only wake up on the last day of the year to hunt for humans. A lot of people had been eaten by the monster and no one was strong enough to kill it.

Luckily, some people unexpectedly discovered that the monster was afraid of noise and whenever it heard noise, it would run away. Because at that time the only noise that was loud enough to frighten away the monster was the noise made by firecrackers, people started to use firecrackers and also fireworks to drive away the monster. This tradition of setting off firecrackers and fireworks has remained until the present day. The second tradition that is also related to New Year's Eve is the *hot pot* tradition. In Chinese, *hot*

pot means "be together." No matter where you work or where you are living, on the last day of the year, you must go back to your parents' house to meet your family and relatives and together have a dinner or *hot pot*. After the *hot pot* dinner, the adults in the family would give money in red envelopes to the children. This money is called *lucky money*.

Chinese New Year means a lot to the Chinese people. Although I am in America now, I still love this holiday. I think the customs and legends surrounding Chinese New Year are interesting, and I hope that everybody around the world will like Chinese New Year, too.





DAVE'S PAGE

**NOTES FROM THE
STUDENT ADVISOR**

By Dave Burns

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

New students from summer and continuing students from spring went on the first trip of the semester during registration week. The Rothko Chapel and the Menil Collection, an interesting art museum, were the first stop. Next we went to the Galleria, where students and teachers shopped and had lunch. The trip ended with the Waterwall and then home to UH.

The next event was the LCC class photo and sports tournament. Everyone had a good time playing table tennis, billiards, and bowling. Winners in the games were as follows: **Bowling:** 1st–Augustin Malpica; 2nd – Linh Pham; and 3d –Teruhiko Toda; **Billiards:** 1st –Hung-Yi (Eason) Hsieh; and 2nd – Rachid Mohamed Sow; **Table Tennis:** 1st– Hsu-Wan (Peter) Kao ; and 2nd – Yen-Kuang (Mark) Chuang.

At mid-term we welcomed new students who registered for the summer II session. It was good to have these students join us in our program.

The next event was the LCC Culture Festival where we got to share each other's cultures as we tasted dishes from around the world prepared by our own students and staff. We had so much good food. Students looked wonderful in traditional clothing from their countries. We also enjoyed dancing from different

cultures. Thanks to everyone for helping make the Culture Festival a big success.

As this is being written, we are getting ready for our final filed trip of the term. We are planning to go to Six Flags Fiesta Texas in San Antonio! This will be our first time to Fiesta Texas and it will be a great trip. There are many rides and attractions including shows and swimming. I'm sure some students will want to escape from the heat with fun in the water. This is a day when we can relax with classmates and teachers and just have a good time.

The day after the trip, the summer term comes to an end with the graduation ceremony and a reception. We wish good luck to those students who will be leaving us. For those who will be returning, start planning for the fall and for welcoming the new students who will be joining us.

**LCC SOCCER TEAM WINS
CHAMPIONSHIP!**

The LCC Eagles represented us very well in the UH Intramural Soccer Tournament. In fact, they won the tournament! The final game was very exciting. The score was tied with only seconds remaining on the clock when the Eagles made a goal to win the game. We are very proud of them. The team was lead by Roberto Paulin who works in the LCC office and is a UH student. The team members are Bruno Togo, Aboubacar Traore, Mohamed

Sangare, Lionel Mabounda, Augustin Malpica, Ahmed Traore, Asamy Kabore, Nazirou Sani, and Roberto Paulin.

IMMIGRATION

Students in F-1 status need to make sure they maintain their immigration status. If you are planning to take a vacation during the break, see Dave Burns or Sam Long first. If you are travelling outside of the U.S., you will need to either have your current I-20 signed on the back or get a new one.

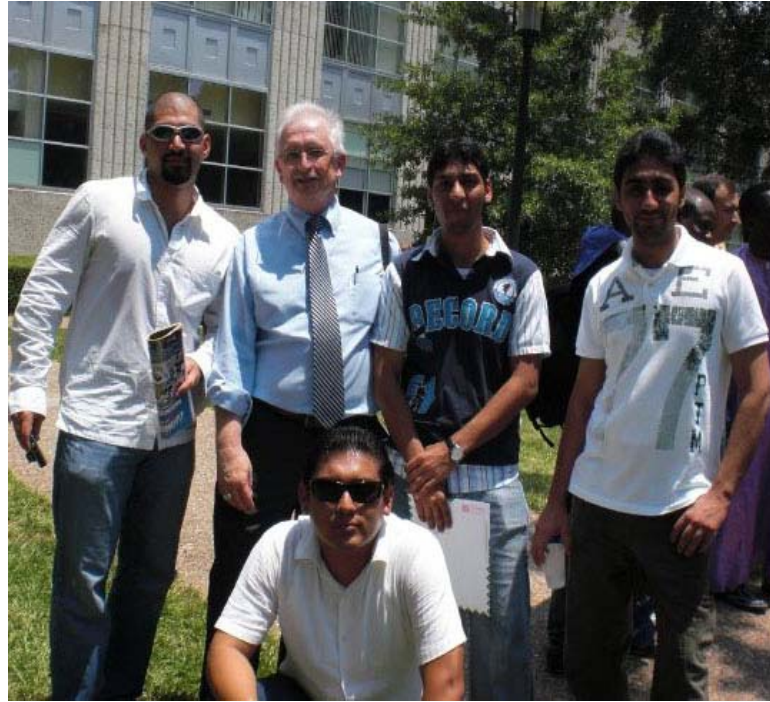
If you are planning on transferring to a new school for fall semester or on taking a fall vacation, please see Dave or Sam to make sure you are following the immigration rules. If you have any doubts or questions about immigration, be sure and ask. It is very important that you maintain you F-1 status. It is very difficult to get your student status back if you lose it.

**THE LCC STUDENT
COUNSELOR'S OFFICE:**

The student counselor's office is here to help you with your problems, to help you find information you need, and to advise you about your concerns, ranging from immigration to academic to personal.

In addition to Dave Burns, there is Sam Long who is also a student at UH.

Come see us if you have a question, need information or advice, or just want to talk!



VOICES

This summer LCC students studying in level six had the opportunity to participate in the production of the Voices newsletter. The following students participated:

Content Editors: Bruno Togo, Trinh (Tricia) Thai, Barbara Kenmognie, Ngan (Emi) Nguyen

Grammar/Language Editors: Reem Alduwaisi and Andrea Chacin

Photography and Photo Editing: Natalia Sarmiento, Xiobo Wang, Barry Woo, Hieu Truong, Linh Pham

Page Layout and Design: Alimzhan Shalbayev, Jiang (Michael) Hao, Yen-Kuang (Mark) Chuang, Jacqueline Noh, Alba Perez

Cover Design by Jacqueline Noh

The Voices Production Team would like to thank all those who contributed articles and photographs. Thanks especially to Sandra Carretin-Mulvany, Thong Dang, Douglas Jones, Carole Franklin, Velva Fallin, Susan Wilson, Sam Long, and Xu (Vicky) Jie.



THE VOICES PRODUCTION TEAM HARD AT WORK



Voices

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