



Inside this issue:

Finding the Right Fit	1
Maximizing Your Opportunities	2
Taking Your Business With You	2
Show What You Know: Client-led Seminars	3
Spotlight: Professional Development Fellowship Recipients	3

GLOBAL EMPLOYMENT CONNECTIONS

Summer 2007

“Your Link to Global Workplace Information”

Taking an Innovative Approach

Welcome to Global Employment Connections, the newsletter with a practical focus on job-hunting in the global workplace.

The Global Employment Initiative/SNAP has undergone several exciting changes. In April of this year, Veronique Anderson joined the FLO staff as the new GEI/SNAP Program Assistant. Veronique has experience working in U.S. Missions as well as on the local economy overseas.

Since January, GEI/SNAP has rapidly expanded with new Global Employment Advisors in Kuwait, Bogota, Brasilia & Sao Paulo, Paris and Yerevan. In addition, regional services are now offered in Copenhagen, Dar Es Salaam, Ecuador, Guatemala and Honduras. We

currently have forty participating GEI/SNAP posts.

With a growing team worldwide, GEI/SNAP has been increasing its career services, contact outreach and global synergies. To accommodate the Foreign Service lifestyle and varying local employment situations overseas, family member employment services often require an innovative approach. The GEI/SNAP team is dedicated to thinking creatively to find opportunities that will best utilize your time overseas and fit your needs, whether that be employment, career development, volunteering, or even furthering your education. This edition of GEC focuses on taking advantage of the different types of resources available to family members to advance and inspire yourselves professionally wherever your location!

Finding the Right Fit

An interview with Charles Todd Apple, Panama

Charles Todd Apple has the privilege of being a Staff Sergeant in the Air National Guard in Martinsburg, West Virginia as an Information Manager and a musician with the Chapel section at the 167th Air Wing. In his spare time, Todd has performed and directed community theater for over twenty years with a strong preference for musicals. However, when his wife, Theresa, ac-

cepted the job as Bureau Chief of OSC in Panama, Todd knew he would be facing challenges as far as employment and fulfilling his commitment to the Air Force (ANG).

Upon arriving in Panama, Todd met with the Global Employment Advisor, Aida Sacks. Given his experience in music and theater, they agreed that Todd should start off as a private music instructor in the community while they pursued options on the local economy. Shortly thereafter, Mrs. Sacks was able to arrange a meeting with the Director of the International School of Panama (ISP). Once Todd had met with the Director of ISP and discussed mutual goals, ISP worked with Mrs. Sacks on a contract, Todd was hired as a full-time teacher to develop and run the elementary school music program for nearly three hundred students and as the Director of the school-wide Drama program producing four shows a year, two thirds of them musicals! More-



“Do what you love and love what you do!”

(Continued on page 4)



Maximizing Your Opportunities

By Linsey Crisler

Christine Elsea Mandojana always planned on an international career. After receiving a Bachelor's degree in Accounting from Old Dominion University in Virginia and becoming a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) while working for KPMG, she pursued a Master's of Science in Foreign Service from Georgetown University where she graduated as an international business honors student. In 1999, she accepted a position with Arthur Andersen as her husband simultaneously was accepted into the US Foreign Service. "I chose Arthur Andersen," she says, "because I was hoping to maintain my career while following my husband's career around the world."

Andersen was very supportive of Christine's efforts to pursue

an international career track. When her husband received his first assignment to Manila, Philippines, several Washington, D.C. partners immediately began helping her secure a rewarding position with Andersen's partner firm in Manila. Two years later, Christine was in the process of negotiating a transfer to Lisbon, Portugal (her husband's next assignment), when Andersen collapsed due to the Enron scandal. Christine found herself needing to reassess her career goals and trajectory. Soon after arriving in Lisbon, she and her husband welcomed their first child (they now have two). After adjusting to parenthood, Christine took a part-time job at the Embassy, but found herself wanting a career within her field that was flexible and portable.

After Portugal, her husband's

next assignment took the family back to Washington, D.C. Christine capitalized on their time in D.C. to build her credentials and complete a certificate course in financial planning. She also accepted a flex-time position as Director of Finance with the non-profit organization KaBOOM!. However, she discovered that even without the expectation of a traditional 9 to 5 job, something was missing. In January 2006 she decided to go into business for herself as a tax consultant and financial planner.

That July, the family moved again, this time to Lima, Peru, and Christine devoted herself in earnest to getting her business off the ground. While she is qualified to provide services to a variety of individuals, Christine

(Continued on page 5)

Taking Your Business with You

An Interview with Jim Collins, Kuwait

Dr. Jim Collins and his wife moved to San Salvador from the Middle East in August 2006. From 2000 to 2006, he served as a psychotherapist in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates working with couples in marriage counseling, individuals suffering from depression, anxiety, contemplation of life goals, those seeking a new direction in life and parent-child conflicts. Prior to his work in the Middle East, Jim served as director of a mental health clinic in Denver, Colorado for 26 years. The clinic in Denver was staffed with some 5 psychologists, a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and a Licensed Professional Counselor. In addition to his 33 years of working as a therapist, Jim has also served in five universities as an adjunct professor of Psychology, Corrections, Marriage, Family Counseling and Group Psychotherapy. His passion is to work with so called 'tough cases' that are referred to him, realizing that "as human beings we all have struggles, and often, it is our fear that locks us into our lack of achieving the goals we desire to accomplish."

While attending a GEI/SNAP workshop on 'E-entrepreneurs and Considerations for Running Ones

Own Business' at the Embassy, Jim realized he needed to extend the somewhat innovative internet counseling program he developed unintentionally while in the United Arab Emirates. During his time in the UAE, several of Jim's clients were required to move to countries where they were unable to find a psychologist to assist them with their life struggles. In response to the repeated requests he received, Jim started to correspond with several of these individuals by email. Moreover, with the advent of Skype.com he was able to add 'real time sessions' where he and his clients were able to see one another and speak with confidentiality given the fairly high level encryption of Skype. "A therapist seeks to work not just with the words, but the tone of voice used, the hesitations a client has - and the internet now affords a 'real time' kind of experience for both the client and the therapist."



As a result, Jim now has a global clientele: Kabul, Afghanistan; Sidney, Australia; Bangalore, India; Johan-

(Continued on page 4)



Show What You Know: Client-led Seminars

By Kate Epperson & Christopher Baumgarten

Global Employment Advisors, Lima

The employment options for the “non-assigned” adult family members inside the mission can at times be limiting. However, great opportunities do exist within the mission and many times this is a good match to the individual’s needs and desires. Sometimes though, these opportunities are not in alignment with the individual’s career goals or objectives and so where does that leave the person who wants to stay on track with their career path? Every US Embassy mission is different. Some posts have great local employment opportunities, some posts have interesting “inside” the mission options, and at other postings we are faced with the challenge of find-

ing career enhancing employment.

Today, more and more adult family members are seeking employment and many are turning to themselves to create job satisfaction. In a mission such as Lima, Peru, where work on the local economy is limited, wages are low and foreign language fluency is required, employment “outside” the mission can be challenging, if not daunting!

Many of the GEI/SNAP clients in Lima have turned to portable career options. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways, i.e. consulting, career enhancing volunteer opportunities, continuing education, contract work, and home-based businesses. For the indi-

(Continued on page 5)

Spotlight: Professional Development Fellowship Recipients

The FLO Professional Development Fellowship program, funded by the Una Chapman Cox Foundation, seeks to maintain, enhance and/or develop professional skills for Foreign Service Family Members and Members of Household who are not in a position to pursue their career path overseas. Fellowships of up to \$2,000 are awarded on a reimbursable basis for enrichment activities, such as continuing education, distance-learning, participation in professional conferences, dues for membership in professional organizations, and small business start-up costs. Candidates submit proposals to be considered and a reviewing committee selects a number of winning proposals. This year FLO received 163 applications and was able to fund 66 Professional Development Fellowships.

Congratulations to all of the selectees!



Micah Bennett
Baku, Azerbaijan

second language (ESL). Already a certified and experienced elementary school teacher in Maryland and Virginia, this fellowship will allow Micah not only to keep her teaching certification active while overseas, but also to pursue her professional goal to develop a specialization in teaching ESL and to work towards a Masters of Teaching Degree.

In conjunction with her graduate coursework through the University of Phoenix, Micah has already begun conducting a research project in identifying the key challenges to teaching English in the public elementary schools in Azerbaijan. This research project focuses on three main areas: the key challenges to teaching English in the elementary classrooms of Azerbaijan, the ac-

tions of the education community to address these challenges, and an evaluation of the efficacy of these solutions.

This project is an exciting opportunity for Micah to develop her skills within a cross-cultural setting, interacting with Azerbaijani colleagues who experience different expectations and pressures than teachers in the United States. Furthermore, she will have the opportunity to collaborate with professionals who are making important decisions impacting the future education of their population.

This fellowship will enable Micah to gain expertise in a unique way. The combination of her online graduate courses and her research project will provide valuable depth to her teaching qualifications and establish a distinctive perspective on teaching ESL. Though she is on a leave of absence from teaching, Micah will be deepening her educational knowledge in a way that she could only do with the time and unique opportunities available for her overseas.

(Continued on page 6)



(Continued from page 1)

over, Mrs. Sacks managed to work in an agreement of understanding in Todd's contract regarding his Air Force commitment and quarterly returns to West Virginia - something the school was not legally bound to do. Todd was also able to continue his private music lessons, and even began teaching several of his students from ISP.

As Todd began the 2005 school year, it became apparent that facilities at ISP were inadequate for quality theater productions and he would need a larger theater space in which to present the school musicals. Building on an ongoing relationship between ISP and the local Theater Guild of Ancon, Todd was able to move ISP's theatrical performances to this space.

As he worked at the Theater Guild on the productions of "Into the Woods" (2006) and "Dear Edwina" (2006), Todd decided that it would be a great opportunity to put on a non-ISP production during the Christmas season. Although Todd had already produced two shows at the Theater Guild, this would involve actually directing a Theater Guild show. Todd's wife had written a musical which had been performed in a number of theaters all over the world, and he decided to choose this musical for his first directorship for the Theater Guild of Ancon. The production was a total financial and artistic success. Todd became a member of the Board of Directors at the Guild, as membership was a require-

ment of directing a Theater Guild show! As a member of the Board, Todd was able to coordinate his next two shows, "Jungle Book" and "Honk!" as joint productions between ISP and the Guild.



When asked about GEI/SNAP's role in working through his employment challenges, Todd highlights the assistance he received in his initial contracting, especially as the contract was written in Spanish, and in establishing the details of salary and daily teaching responsibilities while ensuring adequate compensation. In addition, following the departure of the Director of ISP at the end of his first year, Panama's GEA made sure the following year's contract was reviewed and adjustments were made in order to meet the ever-increasing demands placed on Todd as a teacher with growing music and drama programs.

Looking at his experience in Panama, Todd explains that "when we leave Panama, I will have had three years teaching - not ONLY teaching, but teaching what I love. I couldn't have predicted this wonderful experience before coming to Panama. To date, I have produced seven choral concerts with Pre-Kindergarten through 12th Grade and seven musicals/plays with the Drama Department. Combined with what I will have accomplished this coming school-year, my total music/drama productions will be at least twenty. Now THAT'S experience!" ◆

(Continued from page 2)

nesburg, South Africa; Perth, Scotland; Calgary, Canada; Hong Kong; Las Vegas and Denver. Jim explains that his practice is a "rather new and innovative pattern of therapy" given that the internet has literally shrunk the world we live in. Furthermore, he notes many of life issues are the same across the globe, and "when a person is living in a culture different than where they grew up, those issues often create intense distress because we do not have the ability to rely on the networks and or social systems we may have used in the past." For Jim it is truly

rewarding to be able to see clients gain a new hope in life and come to the realization that "they DO have charge of their lives."

If you are interested in Psychotherapy services please contact:

Dr. Jim H. Collins
B.A., M.T.A., Ed. D. (USA)
jiminabudhabi@hotmail.com

Practice limited to English speaking clients ◆



(Continued from page 2)

markets herself specifically to the expatriate community because of her personal experiences with, and specialized knowledge of, the financial issues faced by US expatriate families. In Lima, she worked with GEI/SNAP to grow her business. Christine was encouraged by GEI/SNAP to conduct free seminars on financial planning and tax topics. Both seminars were well attended and they provided her with a platform to demonstrate her professionalism and talent to the Embassy community. Christine says of her relationship with the professionals in GEI/SNAP, "they have been incredibly helpful." GEI/SNAP was enthusiastic about getting Christine exposure through advertising and advocacy. They distributed information about her seminars and sent regular emails about her expertise. GEI/SNAP is even coordinating video teleconferences for Christine to deliver her financial planning and tax presentations to the U.S. Embassy and Consulate in neighboring Ecuador.

With assistance from GEI/SNAP and through her own hard work, Christine has increased her client base from a handful to more than 40 families in less than a year. In addition, through the business contacts and networking provided by GEI/SNAP, Christine has found some additional employment opportunities she was not expecting. She is currently teaching an international accounting seminar at the prestigious Universidad del Pacifico, and facilitating a managerial accounting class for the Thunderbird Global MBA Program in Lima. To further bolster her professional credentials, Christine is

planning to sit for the Certified Financial Planner's exam to become a CFP. She successfully applied to the Family Liaison Office for a Professional Development Fellowship made possible by the Una Chapman Cox Foundation to help her defray the costs of preparing for and taking the exam in the U.S. later this year. Christine is a terrific example of taking an existing skill set and adapting it into a career that transcends geography. Of course she was committed to her own success, but GEI/SNAP has been instrumental as well in helping Christine achieve her personal objectives while providing an invaluable service for the Embassy community at large.



If you are interested in CPA and Financial Planner professional services please contact:

Christine Elsea Mandojana at Cfelsea@aol.com



(Continued from page 3)

individual needing to attract customers, one way to highlight their services is the "client led" seminar. Seminars can be a great medium for those individuals who have an area of expertise to demonstrate their skills and to build a client base.

Recently, in Lima, three GEI/SNAP clients have presented seminars sharing their expertise with mission personnel and fellow family members. Irina Wunder presented "From Passion to Career" where she detailed her work with a NGOs and her success in obtaining the J. Kirby Simon Trust Grant. Her award enabled her to fund the opening of a ballet studio for special needs children at the Anne Sullivan School. Christina Mandojana, a CPA, presented a seminar on "Financial Planning" as it relates to the Expat lifestyle and the special considerations that apply to life in the Foreign Service. And most recently, Sean McKee shared his expertise in a technology seminar titled "Building Your Own Website," where Sean highlighted the various types of websites that

might appeal to fellow entrepreneurs focusing on portable careers or the individual interested in creating a family website. Follow-on seminars are scheduled and other clients are now signing up to deliver presentations.

A seminar can provide the opportunity to showcase not simply your talents and skills but your services as well. GEI/SNAP congratulates these entrepreneurs for pursuing their interests and we wish them success in their endeavors. For all of our other clients who are apprehensive about taking that first step we want to encourage you to take the leap.

Your first step in attaining your career goals might start out with continuing education, or a volunteer opportunity that builds a valuable skill or even stepping out to deliver a seminar in your own area of expertise. Regardless of where you are, GEI/SNAP is here as a resource to help you with your long term career needs.





(Continued from page 3)



**Julie Annis
Cairo, Egypt**

Julie Annis was awarded a Cox Foundation Fellowship in support of her Bachelor of Science in Information Technology and Visual Communications from the University

of Phoenix. Julie had begun a program in visual communications but was unable to finish when she and her husband were transferred overseas with the military. Upon returning the US, Julie earned her certification in computer programming which provided a career for several years. When her husband joined the State Department and they were relocated, Julie left this career and began working in the school system. However, Julie has found that with frequent relocations, her “experience is not as meaningful to employers without a degree to back it up.”

Julie has chosen the University of Phoenix because, as an online program, she will be able to complete her degree regardless of future relocations. Furthermore, her specific Bachelor degree combines all of her previous training in visual communications and computer programming, and expands on her established skill set and experience.

Upon completing her degree, Julie intends to use this training to create portable employment for herself by designing her own web-based business. In addition, a Bachelor degree will provide Julie with one of the necessary qualifications to work as a technology instructor in the American International School system overseas. “I hope to use my new skills to help expat families keep in touch with their families back home and with other expats they have met during their service. I plan to do this using the web development skills I will gain from completing my degree which has been helped along by the Cox Fellowship.”



**Eileen Kelly Burkart
Cairo, Egypt**

Eileen Kelly Burkart was awarded a Cox Foundation Fellowship in support of her University of Phoenix Master of Management program. During

her sixteen years overseas in six different countries, Eileen taught and earned her certification in ESL before transitioning to a career in training. As an interpersonal communication trainer and designer, Eileen has facilitated and designed numerous courses and training materials, and directed training companies in the US, Kenya and Jordan.

Eileen began her Master of Management program upon her arrival in Cairo in order to advance her career. Given the professional difficulties of the mobile lifestyle, Eileen believes earning her Master of Management will increase her employment opportunities and competitiveness for training and management positions overseas and in the US.

As Eileen has had to personally fund her additional training and certification in the past, she thought she would have to do the same for her Masters program. However, the Cox Foundation Fellowship grant “is yet another program to help spouses develop their careers. While the grant does not pay for my entire MM program, it does help offset my loans. It is also an honor that I can mention on my resume! But perhaps more importantly, it is proof that the Family Liaison Office is working on behalf of the Department to promote and support spouses as we work around the world.”

To find out more about the Professional Development Fellowship program, please contact FLO or your Global Employment Advisor at post. ◆

Global Employment Connections

“Your Link to Global Workplace Information”



**GEI/SNAP
Family Liaison Office**



Editor: Veronique Anderson
Phone: (202) 647-1076
Fax: (202) 647-1670
Email: FLOAskEmployment@state.gov
Internet: www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo
Intranet: hrweb.hr.state.gov/flo/index.html