



SUMMER - FALL 2009

U.S. EMBASSY IN ASHGABAT - QUATERLY NEWSLETTER

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## “EUROTRIP” CAMP - ACT SUMMER PROJECT

*Camp “Eurotrip” consisted of several parts: preparation, student interviews, actual camp, a Scavenger Hunt game, and the awards ceremony.*



Campers after the award ceremony. July 2, 2009

Preparing for the camp was hard work for me and Kristina Puzarina, FLEX’05. We both had to spend a great deal of time reading books, searching the Internet and creating lectures and presentations. We wanted to make the camp not only informative, but also fun. In this way, we combined lecture time with lively games and creative activities.

Even harder was conducting interviews in order to select only 16 participants – since more than 25 students applied! We tried to choose different participants, focusing on their willingness to learn about Europe,

time availability (we wanted responsible campers), English fluency level, age and previous experience in participation in similar projects; we combined experienced participants with inexperienced players. Our parameters sought to find individuals who would open up and enjoy our camp, and also interact with those helping them to assimilate into the American Corner community.

From 10 AM till 1 PM our camp was devoted to one European country. At the beginning of the day we played games with campers, so they had a chance to get to know each other better, become friends; in short, to start their day with a smile. Then dividing the lecture time between the two of us, Kristina or I presented a short video clip about the country we were planning to explore that day. Additionally, we entered the room in T-shirts, specially decorated with the country’s main symbols. This helped our participants to easily guess the country in question. After that, we showed the country on the map of Europe and drew the route, pointing out trip highlights. Then, after reviewing with the students what they already knew about the country, the lecturer gave a PowerPoint presentation. We studied main facts, geographical location, and cultural peculiarities, focused on national traditions, holidays and lifestyles. By doing this, we were trying to show the campers that all countries are unique. We wanted to send the

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## THE WORK OF ALUMNI AT TURKMENABAT AMERICAN CORNER

*Alumni involvement includes different community services, projects, and clubs. This all contributes to the prosperity and development for realizing new ideas and being helpful at the American Corner in Turkmenabat (ACT).*

After experiencing a FLEX year in the USA, alumni comprehended the importance of volunteerism. They returned home with fresh ideas; our alumni begin to organize clubs, educational projects, and different types of camps for ACT members. Our alumni demonstrated indispensable skills as



Labor Day, clean-up event

initiative, responsibility, and creativity.

Every month some new clubs are born, or boosts are given to

previous ones run by alumni at ACT. With returning FLEX alumni ’09, ACT now has more

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# ALUMNI REUNION 2009



*The U.S. Embassy in Turkmenistan held its annual Exchange Alumni Reunion in Ashgabat on August 8-9, 2009.*

Over 60 alumni from various U.S. Government exchange programs gathered together to discuss education development in rural parts of Turkmenistan. The reunion, entitled "Remember Who You Are – Make a Change in Your Community", explored ways to use alumni knowledge, skills, and attributes to improve education in rural communities. The goals of the project were to help alumni to discover opportunities for making a change in Turkmen community in two spheres which are: community and education development.

In her opening remarks, Deputy Chief of Mission Sylvia Curran emphasized how the unique skills and cross-cultural experiences gained during their exchange programs should help alumni become community leaders. She also emphasized that leaders should use their knowledge to work to strengthen their communities and the rural communities of Turkmenistan. According to the program of alumni reunion, the most active and experienced

alumni were invited to present a speech on the specific topics. After that, all participants were divided into two groups and circulated for the sessions.

First sessions were dedicated to the education development in rural areas. Humphrey alumna Bibi Hudaykuliyeva presented topic on "Alumni input in the development of education in rural areas" in order to share her knowledge in this sphere gained during her program in the United States as well as to prove the possibilities to make a change by taking even small steps.

To continue her thoughts, Sergey Atliyev, alumnus of FLEX'01/TASP'07 programs together with Kristina Razahova, alumna of FLEX'04/UGRAD'09 and current TASP fellow, prepared a motivational speech for guest alumni. Presenters demonstrated on examples of previous successful projects and their knowledge of the role of alumni in community development. In addition, during the second part of the presentation, participants were proposed to work in groups of five to brainstorm on ideas for the actual projects in each region of Turkmenistan focusing on community and

education development in rural areas. As the result, each group shared potential project plans which could be realized in future by those alumni in each region of Turkmenistan involving more local people and local agencies.

As the resource for alumni work, Guncha Komekova has presented grant opportunities for alumni to implement their ideas and realize projects. She explained the main structure of grant writing process and she provided instructions for putting together grant proposal and procedures. The reunion was attended by new alumni; they were introduced to grant writing skills so they can use this information in the future. The next session community development in rural areas was lead by Muskie alumnus Oleg Gunch-

reach the level of development that is seen in urban areas.

In addition to these main sessions, there were several related presentations. One included a presentation on all USG exchange programs. Jahan Allaberdiyeva, Alumni Coordinator in the Public Affairs Section, gave a short description of all USG exchange programs in Turkmenistan. She urged alumni not to stop achieving, but rather to move forward and strive for more educational training. Another presentation was led by Muhommet Hommayev (UNICEF), TASP'07 alumnus on "Education development in Turkmenistan – the concept of friendly school to children" – he explained how new system of school integrated into existing schools across Turkmenistan and



**Deputy Chief of Mission Sylvia Curran emphasizes importance of alumni in their communities**

geldyyev, who currently works for ecological project under the UN in Turkmenistan. From his point of view, there is a lot to do in rural areas of Turkmenistan, starting from re-introduction of traditional structures of governance to the implementation of social empowerment projects, and also from community mobilization to social and environmental improvement of livelihood. Consequently, Oleg Gunchgeldyyev opened discussion for alumni who also shared their thoughts to these specific issues in rural areas being the actual residents of those places. He gave an effective and productive talk which made other people who do not directly see and experience the life in rural areas to think and unite together with the rest in order to make a change and help each other to

how are they friendly to children and how this system helps to development of children.

Our alumni belonging to TEA, JFDP, and Fulbright realized the importance of extracurricular activities in bringing up young potential leaders after class or school sessions. On this note, one of the international visitors and Fulbright alumna, Shasenem Jorayeva, presented her report from her studies on this topic. As the result, many education professionals gained new ideas and methodology for improving their learning environment for students at schools and higher education.

Also, in today's world technology grow really fast and a lot of work depends on Internet as the research source for people.



**Alumni discuss community projects in small groups**



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That is why we have invited another representative from PAS, Azat Myradov. He provided all participants with the general information about Internet research programs that can help them to conduct projects, and contribute into community and education development in Turkmenistan, especially in rural areas since they are not technologically well developed yet.

The final session of the program was roundtable for all alumni to take part in order to learn about the most successful projects that were organized within the country by alumni. Alumni assistants from regional American Corners and the most active alumni presented a short re-

port as the result of which others gained new ideas and thoughts about the projects that could be realized in their own regions.

As the outcome of conference, we believe that it was important for alumni to meet together and share already gained experiences being back in Turkmenistan and at the same time to share their thoughts and concerns about community and education development in Turkmenistan especially in rural areas. At the end of Alumni Reunion, the organizers held an informal evening a la Hawaiian style for all participants. Pool, music, and performances took place, helping them to become closer to each other and feel rewarded for all their



Alumni Coordinator conducts presentation on U.S. Government exchange programs

work that they have been doing during this year. The participants built friendships with each other in order to cooperate in the future. They hope to create more projects together in all five regions of Turkmenistan. The long term plans include reaching as many people as possible throughout each re-

gion through active alumni. These people, after participating in alumni reunions, received additional training and guidelines to assist them in implementing their experiences for the sake of development of the effective community in Turkmenistan.

Kristina Razahova  
FLEX'04/Ugrad'09

## THE WORK OF ALUMNI AT TURKMENABAT AMERICAN CORNER



An award ceremony of "Model University project"

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energy and inspiration. Having the eagerness and stimulus to share their American experiences with other fellow students, alumni continue to persevere to volunteer at ACT, organizing clubs about American culture, history and simply describing their feelings about the USA.

Currently alumni '09 hold clubs such as Debate Club, Around the World Club, TOEFL Test, Fast Thinking and Fast Writing Club, Drama Club, English Grammar and many others. After living in New Mexico State, Ali Hamrayev

'09 made a PowerPoint presentation about his US life and his state, host family and school. This helped other ACT members understand the diversity of the American lifestyle and system of education. Moreover, Ali teaches students about the TOEFL test to help enlarge their knowledge of lexicon, and to learn English grammar.

Volunteering in Drama Club in the USA with great desire, Lachin Italmazova '09 organizes her own drama club at ACT, where she can share her acquired skills about Drama with other visitors. Lachin make up her own

plays and she already has her own group of students who take part in the club. At present they are working on a play for Halloween.

Other alumni, such as Gozel Ilmuradova '09, Sabina Saburova '09, Kachara Beshimova '09, Bahar Altıyeva '09, have also organized clubs in order to be helpful to the American Corner. Besides all the activities and clubs at ACT, alumni note all American holidays and memorial days. On September 6 a clean-up event was held at the Amudarya River; it was devoted to US Labor Day. Everybody enjoyed it a lot, and at the same time ACT

members learnt about the American holiday and how to volunteer.

On Memorial Day, September 11 - when big calamity happened in the USA in 2001 - alumni organized a presentation about it. Then they designed a tree, putting were many 'leaves of sympathy' from every ACT visitor. With the upcoming FLEX programs taking place once a week, alumni are now preparing presentations about the program. This is meant to offer advice and useful information for other FLEX preparations.

Lachin Italmazova  
FLEX '09



## “EUROTRIP” CAMP - ACT SUMMER PROJECT

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message that all of us should be open to explore other cultures and learn from each other in order to live peacefully on the planet.

Over five camp days, we learned about 5 European countries – Great Britain, France, Holland, Germany and Greece. Not only had the young people learned a lot of new things, but also they gained practical knowledge and information, thanks to this project.

On the last day of the actual camp we organized a Scavenger Hunt game – where 5 teams (with the names of 5 countries we studied) had to collect 6 letters and make up a word: E\_U\_R\_O\_P\_E.

Finally, Kristina and I organized an awards ceremony on a boat that floated on the Amudarya River. We created special certificates for everyone, including the logos of TYCVF and TASP, and containing the ACCELS stamp. Also, we bought prizes for the winning Scavenger Hunt, and for outstanding and the active participants. All the remaining campers received decorated T-shirts as well. After the awards ceremony, everyone – including the volunteers who helped during the camp and Scavenger Hunt game – ate pizzas and took pictures.

Afterwards I distributed short evaluation sheets, so campers could anonymously give their opinions. These evaluations allowed the stu-



Campers on their first day are playing the game with a focus on learning each others' names.

dents to choose from 1-5 regarding the instructors. We found that everyone enjoyed their camp experience; they wrote that they would love to

participate in similar projects in the future, and, of course, they thanked the sponsors.

Madina Aliyeva  
FLEX '06

## CAMP ON WHEELS II: Expanding knowledge and skills



**Summer 2009. One might wonder, what was so different about this summer?**

For most people in the Mary region, and not only there, this summer did not differ from previous summers in the sense that it was accepted as another period to relax and rest from 10 months of intensive work and studies. However, for 11 motivated high school students from the Mary region, summer started with a great experience that brought unforgettable and valuable memories and knowledge. All of them united at the Camp on Wheels II.

Camp on Wheels II (COWII) is a 14-day project that was organized by Diana Gurbanmyradova, FLEX'08, and Sheker Myradova, BFTF'06 from June 26 – July 10, 2009. COW II was unique by its ultimate goals: to find 11 motivated high school students; assist them in developing professional and personal skills, including public speaking, leadership, team-working, and organizing skills; encourage them to make a difference in the community.

This project cheered them toward holding professional development workshops in educational centers; mak-

ing presentations on US life, Turkmen life, Community service, Health, US and Turkmen cultures and history, American sports in local secondary schools; organizing clean ups. It enhanced their awareness of their own homeland by visiting different cities of Turkmenistan: Turkmenabad (Lebap), Ashgabat (Ahal), and Yoloten, Bairamaly, Gres, Mary (Mary). People spent time sharing their experiences and ideas with peers. Using different types of transportation (minibuses, cars, and trains), COWs had a chance to interact with each other, discuss pluses and minuses of done work, and develop critical thinking skills through games and discussions prepared by alumni.

To help students to succeed in holding events, alumni, before departing to various cities, held a two-day Training of Trainees (TOT), where participants were taught to public speaking, leadership, team-working, and management skills. Afterwards, they were divided into teams, and had a chance to enhance their Internet research skills by making online search on the issues and topics, planned to teach. As a

result, all upcoming presentations, workshops, and activities in local schools, educational and health centers were conducted by COWs.

However, except the serious schedule, COWs also took part in extracurricular activities, such as Frisbee, soccer, visits to amusement parks and museums, and picnics; all of these maintained their enthusiasm, health and energy.

When the camp ended the young talented leaders weren't exhausted: They were inspired. They gave performances to their parents during a Recognition Day, organized by camp leaders. Parents had the chance to observe their children's work via movies, poems, and speeches.

### STATISTICS OF COW II:

1500 km. were crossed; 6 cities were visited; hosted by 3 schools, 2 educational centers, and 1 medical unit; around 16 presentations and 5 workshops were held; approximately 100 people took a part in presentations and workshops; 50 hours and 6 evaluation sessions on wheels.

Sheker Muradova,  
AUGB freshman, 2009





## “Once upon a Halloween Night” Concert Ashgabat

On October 31st over 20 FLEX alumni organized a concert dedicated to Halloween at the Turkish Cultural Center, which was provided by Turkish Embassy.

At the beginning of the concert, two guest speakers, Public Affairs Officer, William Stevens and Alumni Coordinator, Jahan Allaberdiyeva from Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy welcomed all visitors and congratulated with this holiday. In his opening remarks, William Stevens talked about Halloween, how it is celebrated in the USA and the role of alumni in Turkmen community. Jahan Allaberdiyeva talked about alumni and congratulated them in such achievement as organizing Halloween concert. Over 200 visi-

tors came to the concert, which was called “Once upon a Halloween night.” The event included 2 dances: Surprise Dance at the very beginning and “Vampire Dance” during the play. The play was called “Twilight Mix,” which was based on the movie “Twilight” but in a funny version with lots of musical accompany of different popular songs. After each dance and performance, there were little breaks with raffle and some games with the audience. The best prize for the raffles was a mug with FLEX logo on it. At the very end FLEX alumni showed a movie about Halloween, which was made by them. The main goal of this event was to introduce and explain Halloween to the general public: to promote understanding of how Halloween is celebrated in the USA and how FLEX alumni brought this celebration to Turkmenistan. Before this event, the alumni held a pumpkin car-



ving contest where they chose the best jack-o-lanterns and the winners were shown at the performance. The Public Affairs Section of the US Embassy assisted in printing brochures about Halloween, which were handed out at the entrance; moreover, candies were given as one of the symbols of Halloween for “trick or treat». During the event, a donation box was passed around where money was collected

from the general public to go to the blind children school in the city of Ashgabat and by the end of the event, a total of \$ 100 USD was raised. This activity was significant as general public received information on Halloween; FLEX alumni had a chance to express themselves by performing; money was collected to go to the blind school demonstrating the spirit of charity.

## Fright Festival and Halloween Celebration at Mary American Corner:

On October 30, 2009 five FLEX alumni: Bahar Nokerova'07, Rozalina Akopyan'09, Aleksey Koval'09, Kerim Berdimuradov'09, Mamed Habibov'09, in addition Maya Kelova, TASP student and Irina Gera, OSI- organized and developed the idea of Fright Festival and Halloween Celebration in Mary American Corner. Three teams were created that had to accomplish the show with various skits, games, dances and presentations. A week before the holiday a ticket lottery was drawn for the lucky ones, who would be able to celebrate Halloween at American Corner, thus, 35 attendants were invited. Coming in to the Hell-way door a witch-photographer was welcoming students dressed up in interesting outfits. Through the sections of black curtains teenagers could feel the white snow pouring on their heads, arms grabbing parts of the body from nowhere and meet old male gypsy, who could retell past and future.

On the front door of American Corner everybody had to come



along with angel and devil, taste Halloween treats, put hands into bloody material hole of human “finger pile”, “intestines”, and “eyes”.

Next step was the main room, decorated with spider web, pumpkins and various skit props. As the show started, one of the alumni prepared a presentation on Halloween origins, answering the questions of how did the holiday start, how is it celebrated in different countries, what do people wear on this day and the purpose of passing this daunting holiday in the course of many generations. Students were watching two plays written by volunteers and alumni: “Finger

Death” and “Co-operate with Killer”; two dancing scenes “Thriller” and “Zombie Stack”; and tried themselves in four interactive games: “Detective Search”, “Donkey Hole”, “Apple Bite” and dance battle. By the end of the performances, winners of pumpkin carve and best frightening outfit were announced as well as those who won in games.

In conclusion, ten pumpkins were cut out and six participants received presents. Visitors had a chance to experience celebration of Halloween and participants to improve teamwork, creative writing, decorating, and organizing skills.

## Halloween Celebration – Turkmenabat American Corner.

Halloween is a strangely excited and magic festival which is celebrated in many countries every year. Thus, on October 31 at Turkmenabat American Corner FLEX alumni'09 Ali Hamrayev, Gozel Ilmuradova, Lachin Italmazova, Kachara Beshimova and American Corner volunteers continued the Halloween tradition organizing a big celebration which included different “ghosts” and “witches.” More than sixty visitors came on the celebration. The theme of the Halloween was Hijos de La Luna (“Children of the Moon” from Spanish) which was in a way of musical. Holding the Drama club Lachin Italmazova '09 made a spectacle in the old style where drama actors were as dolls of the theatre having own character as musician, ballerina, artist, and soldier. Before starting the show, every participant had received brochure with full description of Halloween celebration. Then, alumni gave presentation on Hallow-

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een's origins and alumni divided members into four teams for playing games as pumpkin head, brainstorm, spider hunt, music fan. The last activity was tick-tack in that includes choosing one person from every team and creating zombie from toilet paper. Then the best team won a present and one member from each team was chosen for the best costume and was given a gift.

## Halloween Celebration – Dashoguz American Corner

On October 30, Dashoguz American Corner Team (staff members, FLEX Alumni, Peace Corps Volunteers, Leadership Development Team, Dashoguz American Corner active visitors) organized Halloween Celebration 2009 at the Dashoguz American Corner. 55 daily visitors and 10 new visitors attended this big event. The

main goals of the foreign holiday celebration were:

- 1) To introduce a new holiday to the visitors of Dashoguz American Corner.
- 2) To explain the reasons of the Halloween celebration in the U.S.
- 3) Tell a history background of the holiday
- 4) Share and play most popular Halloween games

In addition, volunteers from the visitors participated in



popular Halloween games such as bobbing for apples and candies, and contests such as Best mummy, Scariest Laugh and Loudest Scream.

# THANKSGIVING IN TURKMENISTAN

## Celebrating Thanksgiving – Gathering for Potluck

On November 27th, FLEX alumni organized a Thanksgiving Day potluck at Information Resource Center, inside the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy. The event was geared toward the general public. This event introduced the American Thanksgiving holiday into the Turkmen community; to create a Thanksgiving spirit; to talk about Thanksgiving traditions. Activities included making thank you cards and watching a movie. As a potluck, all attendees brought a dish with them.

The event started with a presentation about Thanksgiving, the origins and how people celebrate it in the USA. Then, FLEX alumni, Community Connections, TASP, Cochran and other program alumni, all spoke about their experiences when celebrating Thanksgiving in the USA while they were making thank you cards. These card represent the American tradition of showing appreciation to family and friends. Afterwards, everyone watched a movie and tried the delicious food brought by participants.

## Mary Thanksgiving Celebration:



Last leaves are falling to the ground; this means Thanksgiving Day is visiting our Mary American Corner. On November 25, Rozalina Akopyan '09 and Mamed Habibov '09 welcomed 16 high school students in order to show appreciation. The main idea of the event was to welcome visitors and explain what the Thanksgiving Holiday stands for, where it comes from, and how to celebrate it. Through the presentation called "Thanksgiving Origins", one alumni gave details about the holiday: decorations, meal served, and clothing to wear. Other alumni also shared their experiences of celebrating Thanksgiving during their FLEX year by showing pictures and telling stories.

Furthermore, the session was accompanied by an activity - creating plate mats. Attendants were provided with colored paper, a turkey outline, and everything they needed; they supplied their ideas and creativity.

To show appreciation of people outside the American Corner local secondary school #5, along with the alumni, donated clothing to Senior House residents for a week. Students prepared dances, songs, poems, and organized a 'Clothing and Sweets Drive'.

Mary American Corner visitors learnt about Thanksgiving Holiday, gave thanks to each other and to the people from Senior House. 6 handmade laminated plate mats, 8 bags with clothing and 3 packets of sweets were donated to the seniors.

## Turkmenabat - Thanksgiving Day Celebration:

On November 28, the American Corner of Turkmenabat visitors enjoyed participating in the American holiday "Thanksgiving Day." At this time, guests became more acquainted with its origins and with the "First Thanksgiving Feast." Lachin Italmazova '09, Ali Hamrayev '09, Gozel Ilmuradova '09, Madina Aliyeva '06, Maksat Orazov '06 took part in preparation of the event for twenty members at American Corner in Turkmenabat. First, Lachin Italmazova '09 presented a PowerPoint presentation including the history of Thanksgiving, about the pilgrims, traditional food, and the purpose of celebrating the holiday. After that, Ali Hamrayev '09 made a fun and educational game - Jeopardy - to confirm if the visitors had truly received helpful information of the American holiday and its traditions.



FLEX Alumni playing games with children at the orphanage house of deaf-mutes

Comprehending all this then visitors knew another American tradition know as the Potluck. Everybody brought a dish to share with others. The guests enjoyed the party by playing several games and dancing. At the end everybody stood in the circle expressing gratitude toward each other for something good that they've done.

## Dashoguz - celebrating Thanksgiving



Making Thanksgiving Cards at the Dashoguz American Corner:

On November 26, Anahan Seytmedova, FLEX'08 and Alisa Ilyasova '07 organized greeting card writing dedicated to the Thanksgiving holiday at the Dashoguz American Corner. The main purposes of the card writing were to teach attendees how to make Thanksgiving cards and to show our appreciation to our nearest.

Thanksgiving Potluck at the Dashoguz American Corner:

On November 26, Anahan Seytmedova, FLEX'08 and Leadership Development Team organized Thanksgiving Potluck at the Dashoguz American Corner. The main purpose of the Thanksgiving Potluck was to introduce American Thanksgiving holiday to Dashoguz community. Local Secondary School English language teachers and high school students were invited and during the potluck, visitors were introduced to the origins of holiday, why this holiday is important in the U.S. and how we can show our appreciation to the near ones on this special day.



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**Turkmenbashi - Make a Child Smile:**

Iyera Askerova '04, Kristina Razahova '04, Aygul Geldiyeva '09 and Sevil Bayramova '06 organized a special day for 30 children at the local orphanage. Make a Child Smile was dedicated to several important days. First of all the theme of alumni visit to the orphanage was Thanksgiving; children learned about this holiday, its history and traditions. They were motivated to make special cards for people close to their hearts. Children used their artistic

skills and creativity to make cards and express their appreciation to their teachers, friends and people who constantly think about them. The day this project was conducted also landed on a Turkmen holiday - Kurban Bayram - so alumni prepared special treats for children and made them feel pleased with gifts and sweets. The art session with children from the orphanage was successful because children enjoyed drawing, and actually identifying people who they should thanks for the time that they have been dedicating to them.



Group picture at the end of the project; children demonstrated great art skills and motivation to be involved in the actions with alumni

**DASHOGUZ ALUMNI ACTIVITIES**

**FLEX Presentation:**

Anahan Seytmedova '08 organized presentation about Future Leaders Exchange Program for 20 Dashoguz American Corner visitors. The main purposes of the presentation were to introduce the FLEX Program to the high school students and involve them to participate in this year's testing. In addition, topics such as "Why to apply for FLEX?" and "How to prepare for FLEX" were discussed.

Visiting Kindergarten Children:

Anahan Seytmedova and four Leadership development club attendees visited 16 pre-school group children from local kindergarten of Dashoguz city. The main purpose of the

visit was to show the attention to younger generation by conducting games and activities. In addition, Anahan organized a conversation on topic: "Who do you want to become in future?" Kindergarten children actively answered the question, even Leadership development club members were interested to answer question.



Atabek Atayev teaching Essay writing class

**Essay writing:**

During September, Atabek Atayev (TASP student) organized Essay writing class for 25 high school students at the Dashoguz American Corner. The main purpose of the class was to teach students the basics of essay writing. Students gained English writing skills, they learned the styles of essay writing. In addition, class participants held conversations.

**Alumni visit the infants' and childrens' houses**

On October 20, Anahan Seytmedova and Ogulbagt Amannazarova '09 went to visit children of the Infants' and Children's houses of Dashoguz velayat. During September and



Dashoguz American Corner Volunteers putting donation in Box

October, Dashoguz American visitors who wanted to give charity for children from the houses, brought charity to put in donation box which was placed at the Dashoguz American Corner. The main goal of the donation box and alumni visit to the houses was to show community's awareness of the children and to show our attention and love to the youngest generation.

**MEETING WITH G. KROL**



Alumni of U.S. Exchange Programs Discuss Turkmen-American relations with the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Central Asia.

On November 17th, 2009 – Deputy Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asian Affairs, Ambassador George A. Krol met with alumni of various exchange programs at the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy to discuss the role of alumni in the community development in Turkmenistan. Alumni shared their experiences in the United States, spoke on US-Turkmenistan foreign relations, and educational opportunities in Turkmenistan. In return, alumni asked Mr. Krol on his views and impressions on Turkmen-American relations and cooperation. Alumni considered the meeting a unique opportunity to get an inside view of bilateral relations between Turkmenistan and the United States.

**CELEBRATION OF INTERNATIONAL ELDERLY PEOPLE**

On October 1st, 2009 Irina Adamova IVLP'04, conducted a roundtable for elderly people of Ashgabat city.

The goal of Elderly People's Day is to draw the attention of the community to the problems of older citizens, raise community awareness about the demographics of an aging society, emphasize individual and social needs of the elderly, and highlight their contribution to community development.

There were 30 participants; some of the attendees are members of community groups such as "Arma", "Women economists", "Handicraftsmen of Turkmenistan", "Biocheshme" and local authorities that recognized the hard work of elderly people. At this



roundtable, activists – community workers who work with elderly people and deal with problems of the family – gathered to share their successes, experiences, and challenges.

Moreover, at this roundtable, there were local authorities who discussed legal issues affecting the elderly, changes in the laws regarding pensions, and legal consultant who answered participant's questions. There was also a presentation was presented by Garahanjar Narlyev, Fulbright on the topic of nutrition and exercise and medical care in Turkmenistan. The attendees were provided with handouts that will help them better understand laws and the social welfare system in Turkmenistan.





# INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION WEEK, NOVEMBER 16-20, 2009

## International Education Week in Ashgabat

*1. Every year, the world celebrates International Education week and this year is no exception.*

On November 16th, 2009, FLEX alumni held a photo exhibition entitled "Memories that last..." at ACCELS; this exhibition opened the



Aygul Ovezliyeva '09 and Yelena Chamanova '09 holding the IEW Poster made by them for the library

week of education. To bring more people to the opening, Mikhail Chariyev '08 and Emir Ilyasov '08 went outside with an IEW sign advertising the opening. He urged people to come and join, and his efforts truly helped to attract more participants. The idea of a FLEX Alumni Photo Exhibition was to collect pictures that showed the most outstanding and amazing experiences our FLEX alumni had in the USA. Regional American Corners alumni also sent their pictures to Ashgabat in order to have a chance to participate in the exhibition; our alumni gathered a total of 35 pictures for the exhibition. Attendees were asked to vote for the best picture. On November 20th, we held an Awards Ceremony; two winners were announced. The first place winner was Tatiana Romanchenko '09; the second place was given to Dunyagozel Murrikova '09. The first prize picture by Tatiana depicted her lolling on Hawaii Beach with waves gaily splashing all around. The second picture showed Dunya at a workshop in Washington DC, and visiting the Washington Memorial with her colleagues: Carter Johnson, the Director of the American Councils; Tatiana Minayeva, the

FLEX Program Coordinator; and Kristina Kalinka, a '07 FLEX Alumni. The American Council gave away mugs with the FLEX logo as prizes and thanked them for their participation in the FLEX Alumni Photo Exhibition.

(visit <http://steturkmenistan.ning.com/profiles/blogs/international-education-week> for more information)

## 2. Alumni Panel Discussion at the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy.

On November 16th, 2009, alumni of various exchange programs gathered at the Informa-



Aygul Ovezliyeva '09 gives her presentation about her US Experience

tion Resource Center of the Public Affairs Section in order to share their educational experience with the general public. Alumni from FLEX, Fulbright, and American University - Central Asia graduates all discussed opportunities they gained after participating in their exchange programs. FLEX alumni,

Aygul Ovezliyeva '09 and Maral Rahimova '09 brought out their yearbooks and albums, displaying different pictures of their life in the USA. People asked questions about their host families, the US high school system, and education in the USA. The participants spoke about the role of community service in their lives and their plans for the future. Fulbright alumni, Shasenem Jorayeva, had a chance to share her experiences gained in the USA. AUCA graduate Gulnara Karayeva, shared her experiences studying at university, talking at length about her academic life and community service.

## 3. Jeopardy Game with FLEX Alumni on American Culture:

On November 20 at 4:30 pm FLEX Alumni Mikhail Chariyev '08, Emir Ilyasov '08 and Aygul Ovezliyeva '09 together with 15 school students participated in Jeopardy game organized by Yelena Chamanova '09. Jeopardy game was made as a Power Point Presentation and made participants feel like they were in a real TV show with the real tasks. They were answering questions regarding the U.S. culture and American lifestyle. The questions were divided by levels and by categories: food, nature,

famous people, history, holidays, and traditions.

All participants were divided into two teams and competed between each other. During the game they refreshed their memories about the United States and learned a lot of new facts and details. Participants really

enjoyed the game and teams were really competing for the winning.

The team that won received 600 points, the other team received 500 points.

## International Education Week in Turkmenabat

International Education Week is recognized in many countries which contains lots of useful and interesting educational presentations. American Corner in Turkmenabat staff also had prepared for the celebration which was going for five days. The first day was devoted to the ceremony of opening the Education Week with the national anthem song of the USA by ACT manager Nina Afanasyeva and Lachin Italmazova '09 announcing the upcoming presentations, an essay contest on the theme "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world" and the talent show. In addition there was a debate on topic "Why study in the USA" by Ali Hamrayev '09. On other days there were different varieties of presentations as "Why study at community college," "Resume writing," "FLEX program," "Essay Writing," etc. On Tuesday Sabina Saburova '09, Ali Hamrayev '09, Lachin Italmazova '09, Kachara Beshimova '09, Gozel Ilmuradova '09 made up American High School festival sharing their experience of the U.S. high school with lots of feelings, different funny stories, including tons of pictures for fifteen visitors at American Corner of Turkmenabat. Students were very excited about American high schools and their methodology. Also there was a presentation by IREX staff about web-resources and "Technology Age Girls" project. On Wednesday was a musical concert by Lachin Italmazova '09 and American Corner volunteers. The show was in Hawaiian style with bright colors including the songs like "Fairytale," "La Isla Bonita," "Wonderful life." Visitors had much fun on remembering the old songs. On Thursday ACT guest speaker Aleksey Grehov presented several programs as JFDP, fields of

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programs' studying. Detailed information was helpful for ACT members and they became very interested in the programs. The last day of Education Week concluded with the awarding ceremony of essay winners and a talent show. About twenty members participated for the closing ceremony including Ali Hamrayev '09, Lachin Italmazova '09, Sabina Saburova '09 and Madina Aliyeva '06. From six ap-



Musical Day by Lachin Italmazova '09

plicants Aleksey Puzarin took the first place and he was truthfully glad for it. Other students who took the 2nd and 3rd places were excited as well. Winners received certificates and souvenirs. In addition Madina Aliyeva '06 organized several American games that students could demonstrate their knowledge about U.S. history, government, world economy and many other spheres. Visitors were divided into three teams and then the winners were awarded with brochures and maps of the USA. Afterward everybody who wished to participate in the Talent performance showed their talent with dances, singing songs and reading rap.

During all five days ACT visitors became introduced with the importance of Education Week and with help of presentations, they widened their outlook toward the knowledge of the youth and at same token it was a good way to attract more visitors to American Corner of Turkmenabat. "I am grateful for people who organize such kind of presentations, it does help me. There are so many stuff that I've learned..."

## International Educational Week in Turkmenbashi

**What is FLEX?** : Kristina Razahova '04 and Ayyul Gelgiyeva '09 have been providing interested English learning students about FLEX program. Alumni explained the application procedure and gave students the hints to start preparing for the program. During the talks students asked questions with regard to personal experiences and expectations. Therefore, Kristina Razahova '04

and Ayyul Geldiyeva '09 shared their US experiences and encouraged students to test their knowledge and strive for the best and exciting experience in the United States High Schools.

## International Educational Week in Mary

**Distinguishing Keys to the American Education and World Wonders:**

During the International Education Week 2009, in Mary American Corner, 10 alumni: Bahar Nokerova '06, Maya Kelova, TASP student, Irina Gera, OSI student, Marina Ibragimova, UGRAD '08, Nazar Agajanov '09, Aleksey Koval '09, Kerim Berdymuradov '09, Mamed Habibov '09 and Rozalina Akopyan '09- have accomplished the idea of the event in various aspects of education and entertainment for approximately 180 high school students and teachers. Alumni separated in five teams and gathered several American Corner visitors to incorporate projects on different continents with the purpose of improving awareness of international exchange and study abroad opportunities, and intercultural communication.

November 16, International Education Week was introduced by American team. For the opening remarks Albina Burashnikova, American Corner Regional Representative led a presentation on the goals and purposes of IEW, opportunities of studying abroad and suggested assistantship in American Corner. A guest speaker, Janet Adams, English Language Fellow informed attendees about university structure in America and prospects for future international students. Alumni made a presentation on FLEX program experience with the intention to introduce Turkmen community to the advantages of being an exchange student, how is the high school system and American lifestyle formed. Participants acted a mock play on FLEX student arrival to USA to dramatize what is it like to be a stranger in a new culture and how to cope with environmental issues.

November 17, Asia and Culture of XIX Century took their lead. The goal of the program is to acquaint people with culture and art of Asian continent on the basis of a few countries such as

and broad species of animals. As it followed, students could view presentations on animals integrated in Red Book, travel and discover new people on Barque Endeavor ship, learn the rhyme and movements of aborigine dance.

November 19, Africa "invasion" day participants demonstrated presentation on African languages, history, transport, sightings and investment of money from foreign countries. The hallway, the main room were decorated as a tribal house in African jungle. AC visitors were welcomed with African greeting and the beat of drums.

November 20, Europe "traveling" day. Guests were welcomed by Julius Cesar, who guided a group from ancient Italy, passing Germany in the past century, and to the modern France. Participants could walk through historical architecture building in Bulgaria and remains of old Italy; learn the spices and clue of French cheese success, and denotation of Berlin wall. Information escorted by presentations, Bulgarian national dance, and short skits.



All participants and visitors in multicultural costumes gathered together for group picture during International Talent Show (Mary)

China, India, United Arab Emirates, Japan and Mongolia. Show consisted of general information about Asia, its geographical and cultural sub regions, countries, and most significant features of the continent: famous Chinese places, plays, Indian music on life instruments, etiquette, marriage, and Arab dances, traditional Japanese dance of geisha and cult dance of Mongolian shamans.

November 18, Australia and New Zealand continent acknowledged visitors with its identical, but astonishing nature

International Talent Festival concluded the IEW. The show was held outside of the American Corner where participants had a chance to demonstrate groups as well as individuals' talents. The awarding ceremony expressed appreciation of alumni work and student participation. The subsequent performances were presented: American Indian Dance, International Fashion Show,

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Dunyagozel Murrikova '09 holding her picture and the prize as a Winner of the Contest (Ashgabat)

Turkmen National Dance-Kusht Depdi, African Battle, European Style Dance-electro, techno, enigma, Turkmen National Classic music played on dutar, and Cowboy line dance. Visitors could take part in dress up and games. By the end of the event everybody gathered together in circle and listened to a song in national language.

## International Educational Week in Dashoguz

### Opening Ceremony:

On November 16, International Education Week had started at the Dashoguz American Corner. Dashoguz American Corner staff members Nargiza Orunbaeva and Anahan Seytmedova '08 opened the Ceremony for 75 Dashoguz American visitors. Flyers and Schedules of the International Education Week were distributed to the visitors. The main purposes of conducting the International Education Week were to widen the awareness of the Dashoguz community about US Education Opportunities, different grant programs, and to share the experiences from academic exchange years with all attendees.

### AUBG Presentation:

On November 16, Diana Haitjanova (TASP/CAEF Program Coordinator), presented information about American University in Bulgaria for 70 attendees of the International Education Week at the Dashoguz American Corner. The main purpose of the presentation was to encourage potential students to apply 2010 Academic year to American University in Bulgaria. In addition, Diana Haitjanova showed video presentations about the University. University booklets and flyers were distributed as well.

### FLEX Program Presentation:

On November 17, Tatiana Minayeva presented information about FLEX Program for 45 high school students at the Dashoguz American Corner. The main purposes of the presentation were to widen the awareness about

FLEX Program among Dashoguz youth and to encourage eligible high school students to apply. Moreover, Tatiana Minayeva presented additional information on Application and Testing Processes, and shared some photos of FLEX Alumni.

### High School in USA Presentation:

On November 17, Anahan Seytmedova '08 organized presentation about High School in USA for 48 local high school students and five English Language teachers at the Dashoguz American Corner. The main purpose of the presentation was to introduce the U.S. education system and the U.S. high schools to Dashoguz Community. In addition, attendees discussed the differences and similarities between Turkmenistan Secondary Schools and U.S. high schools.

## Personal Success Story



*My name is Gulya Kolakova, and I am FLEX 94/95 alumna. Being a FLEX alumna has helped me a lot in my life and achievements. The program has opened all the doors for me: be it academic or career. I would like to share my few recent achievements with other alumni and those reading this newsletter.*

After my studies in US, where I've received my Master's Degree in Public Policy (Edmund Muskie Program 02/04), I decided to study more and got enrolled at OSCE Academy in Bishkek, where I've received my second Master's Degree, this time in Political Science. It was great environment of 30 students from Central Asian countries, and professors, scholars and international experts. After graduating from this institution I stayed in Kyrgyzstan for

another three years, gained good experience working for Elections Project of UNDP, and later, for World Bank country office. Last year OSCE Academy published its first Annual Magazine, and my success story on achievements was placed on the first page. I was so happy to know that all my efforts I've put into books and studies has shown results.

For the last two years I was working in a government agency - Afghanistan Investment Support Agency, as a Manager of Policy and Research Unit. I always wanted to visit Afghanistan, knowing that enormous funding is granted to the country from other countries, and wanted to see how money is spent to improve lives of Afghans. I've learned so much on politics and governance, private sector development, women in business, donor coordination, traveled to many regions of the country, visited villages, schools, talked to locals about their life and traditions - overall it was a great experience. I always shared with Afghans my stories on life I spent in the US, and many of them had inspiration to go see or study in the US some day.

Another present granted to me, again because I am FLEX alumna, was Global Village 2008 for future Leaders in Business and Industry (Lehigh University, USA). The US

Department of State provided scholarships to outstanding FLEX, and I was one of them! There were 100 young professionals from 50 countries in the world, and it was one of the best programs I've ever participated that really gives you lots of food for thought.

Just recently, in order to change my environment and learn new things, I've applied for another job, this time in Kazakhstan. I am now working at Central Asia AIDS Con-



Gulya in Afghanistan

trol Project (Almaty, Kazakhstan) funded by the World Bank and hold position of Communications and Strategy Coordinator. The peculiarity of this project is that it is regional and covers four Central Asian countries. Central Asia borders with Afghanistan, which is main supplier of opium in the world. The key factors of HIV transmission in Central Asia is injecting

drug using non-sterile syringes, labor migrants and sex workers. Just to note, at present, Central Asia is considered to be a region with the highest rate of HIV spread in the world. As I belong to this part of the world, such fact sounds devastating. Therefore, the project focuses on regional activities as it believes that only with joint cooperation of governments, NGOs and private companies it will be possible to slow down spread of HIV in Central Asia.

I really enjoy working for this project as I am faced with completely different sphere than in my past experiences. Overall, it is a donor funded development project, and that's one of the main areas where I see myself working.

To finish my story, I would like to thank the US Department of State for giving me such a great opportunity in life and, I can definitely say, literally change my life. For all other young FLEX alumni I want to wish never stop achieving your dreams: FLEX program just gives you a start, the rest depends on your efforts and ambitions! And since you were one of thousands of chosen for the Program, you need to give back by contributing to your society / community development!

Gulya Kolakova  
FLEX '94

# How proud I am to be an Alumni



# TECH AGE GIRLS' ACTIVITIES

## Rural children gains knowledge from TAG'09 finalist

From the August 3, 2009 till the 15th September, TAG'09 finalist Anna Kostryakova from Turkmenabat city implemented her development project in her respective community by organizing IT trainings for rural children from low-income population.

Four children were invited to local IATP center in Turkmenabat to attend month duration trainings which will help them on their computer classes at school. Firstly, Anna explained participants necessities of computer knowledge, especially for rural population where there is no possibility to learn computer. Participants have had trainings on computer basics held by Anna where children got to know what is computer, how to use it, what is the benefits of working on computer as well as learnt troubleshooting tips. One of the participants Novruz Rejepov's responds to the question how you find trainings holding



Rural children learn computer basics on TAG'09 Alumni trainings

by Anna were: "I am so glad to attend computer trainings organized by Anna. I find it really useful and helpful for my and my mates' future. I am proud of being a part of Anna's community project because after completion of these trainings I can follow her and help my peers at school during computer classes. Now, I will not feel any shame of lack of education in front of my classmates". As a result, Anna says she will continue train rural children with the help of these trained children, particularly involve as many children as possible afterwards more than hundred people from poor educated families could learn IT skills.

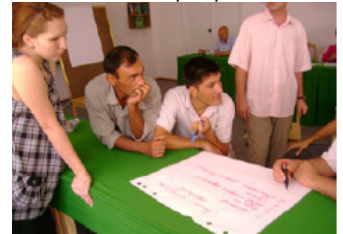
## "Against drug addiction" seminar

TAG 2009 Finalist's Extra Curricular Activities

On July 30-31, 2009 medical specialists from local hospital and 20 drug addicted people from Turkmenabat city had an opportunity to discuss a pressing problem of nowadays with the representatives of UN Office for Drugs and Crime Annatach Mammedova, Viktoria Nobatova and Tech Age Girls Contest's 2009 finalist Jahan Balyshova on two-day seminar called "Against drug addiction", "Be aware of HIV/AIDS".

This event aimed at encouraging drug abused people to live healthy life-style and refuse to use drugs. During seminars participants were separated into two groups, so medical specialists could have been informed about new methods of treatment, how to prevent a drug addiction, while drug substance abusers could have a talk with the TAG finalist Jahan and Annatach from UNODC on such questions like reasons of using drugs and when did they start using it; do

they know about consequences; etc. Seminar diversified by using games, presentations on HIV/AIDS held by Jahan Balyshova where all participants together could communicate and share ideas on seminar topic. Some people didn't even hear about venereal disease, so TAG Jahan Balyshova using her knowledge gained during TAG Conference explained them basic rules of HIV/AIDS awareness and give some statistics on how many people dying because of infective disease. In the end, participants promised to organizers to distribute information and material given in this seminar to local people.



Participants brainstorming on main reasons of drug addiction

# CHARITABLE FUNDRAISING ACT - SIGNIFICANT INTERACTION TO FOLLOW

*More than hundred mental defective children from Orphanage were honored to participate on charitable act called "Children our future" organized by TAG'09 Alumna Lala Babayeva in the Abadan city of Ahal region with the fundraising efforts supported by international companies, such as Petronas, Coca Cola Inc., Samsung, Iran Khodro and some private entrepreneurs' donations: Seyed Muhammed Karim, Amir Karamuz Huseyn and Mustafa Saket.*

This unforgettable event gave children pool of positive emotions and stimulated to further cooperation with TAG finalists on IT trainings.

Opening ceremony started with greetings where Lala gave key notes about event goals addressed to all disabled children and Orphanage staff, including the head of school who remarked that these kind activities

are stimulating our children to start new life with new technology opportunities. Event continued with playing frees be on school yard together with Lala and her peers who came here



Disabled children enjoying frisbee with TAG Lala Babayeva

to assist her in this momentous time at Orphanage. Participants were surprised when Lala announced

a time to have a tea party after long time spending outside and playing sports. During sharing a meal with event participants, Lala together with her peers explained the impor-

tance of contribution of disabled children to our community by substantiating some facts about

great jobs done by them in the world. As some of those children from Orphanage are being victims of domestic violence, organizers decided to talk to them separately about their feelings and future plans after tea-party end. Organizers were impressed by their enthusiasm to learn and create a new world of Information Technology and showed interest in participating on Lala's future community project aimed at teaching IT.

As we know, the similar event was conducted by TAG'09 semi-finalist Ekaterina Chernova in April, 2009. Consequently, Ekaterina and Lala's activities are a good example of following them as well as contributing to common society. In general, this event had a greater impact on children's mind to continue co-work with TAG Lala Babayeva on IT trainings which starts on October 5, 2009 where participants dedicated to learn computer basics and develop their potential talents on drawing.

## DANCE CLUB

During the month of November, Iyera Askero-va, FLEX'04/TASP, continued to lead dancing sessions with the local high school students at the local school # 7, located at the Maycroyon region of Turkmenbashi City. There are up to 10 active students who regularly attend the sessions and looking for the opportunities to explore new skills and demonstrate them better at the municipal level. This month, club met every other day during the week and for about 2-3 hours. Students enjoy learning patterns of the dance and in a more interactive way develop their creative and leadership characteristics. Emotions and feelings are also the main aspects that are being used while dancing, therefore, students learn how to control the emotions and pass them to the audience without talking but using moves and music.

## VISITING THE WORLD WAR II VETERANS



Anahan Seytmedova '08 giving a framed photo to Kakysh Klychev

On November 28, Anahan Seytmedova FLEX'08, and Leadership Development Team visited Rahim Abdullayev and Kakysh Klychev (World War II veterans) at the veterans' house. The visit was dedicated to the Veterans Day that is celebrated in the USA in No-

vember. The main purpose of the visit was to show the respect and gratitude towards the veterans' bravery during World War II. Anahan Seytmedova '08 and Leadership Development Team gave presents their framed photos, where in Anahan Seytmedova '08 and Leadership Development Team were together with veterans, taken in May during their first visit, to the veterans.

- Kakysh Klychev World War II veteran, right after graduation from the military specialized school was sent to the front at the end of World War II.

- Rahim Abdullayev fought against fascism in Mozhaysk town, Moscow region, and reached the point of Kenigsberg city (pres. Kaliningrad).

## INTERVIEW WITH PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER OF THE U.S. EMBASSY IN TURKMENISTAN, WILLIAM STEVENS.

*Mr. Stevens was born in one of the most famous and beautiful cities of the United States, Washington DC – the capital named after the first American President George Washington.*

He was the youngest child in his family. His first ancestors were originally from England.

Mr. Stevens speaks Russian – he began to study Russian when he was a 14 year old student. He also is an alumnus of 2 weeks exchange program to Russia. His wife, and one of his sons, also speaks Russian well. His family has come with him to Turkmenistan; children are learning Russian and Turkmen.

Before the interview, I would like comment as an exchange student for the "Alumni Boom" newsletter. I am glad that I had a chance to hold interview with Mr. Stevens. He seems to be a very nice and open person; it was a pleasure talking to him and receiving his opinion on several issues that are interesting for alumni. "Alumni Boom" is a very important part of alumni work. And I am very happy that our coordinators have given us a chance to print this newsletter. Everyone does a great job releasing each "Alumni Boom".

*- Mr. Stevens, how did you begin to work in this sphere?*

- I studied Finance and International Relations. Then worked in the House of Representatives in the State Department, later I studied Russian in Saint Petersburg, Russia.

*- When you were young who did you want to become? Was it close to your current job?*

-(smiling) I wanted to be James Bond.

*- Actually, it is pretty close to your current job because you also have to travel a lot. In how many countries did you work and how many did you visit as a tourist?*

- Oh, I used to work in Israel, Belorussia, Russia and the United States. And I visited nearly 25 countries as a tourist. Now I can speak Russian, and Belarusian, plus a little bit Arabic and Turkmen.

*- What are going to do after your term finishes in Turkmenistan, do you have any plans?*

- Yes, I would like to go back to Washington D.C. to live, and work for the State Department. I am interested working with the media and I want my children to live in the USA too. Later, I can think about working overseas again.

*- Have you been in Turkmenistan before?*

- No, but I've heard a lot about Turkmenistan. Two years before I came here I learned a lot about this country; its history, culture and traditions. I was really excited to come here and learn about this country.

*- What can you say about Turkmenistan as young developing country?*

- It was really changed. It has great history, Imperial Russia and Soviet Union took great part in its history, but Turkmenistan managed to create its own govern-

ment and became neutral and independent country. It has great history, culture and people are nice.

*- Now I would like to ask you a little bit about alumni and their work. First of all about "Alumni Boom". Did you have a chance to read it?*

- No, but I am waiting with great interest for the one that is going to have my interview.

*- Do you think it is a good idea to have alumni newsletter?*

- Yes, of course it is a really good. Because it gives an opportunity to share information about alumni work from all over the country. Here you can see alumni's work of different exchange programs. And sure it is a great opportunity for new alumni. They can see that they can do the same. As you know "Two minds are better than one".

*- How many alumni are you already meet here in Turkmenistan?*

- Nearly 50. I was in alumni reunion 2009 and in some other events and talked to them.

*- What can you say about alumni work?*

- I like it, it is great. I am very proud that the exchange programs help to gain the goals. That it helps to understand their responsibility in their community, democracy in future. People in each country and especially in the developing country need responsible people. When I was in Russia in early 1990's, I visited a lot of houses; outside they were just terrible, dirty. But inside was just wonderful. People thought just about their own, they didn't



have responsibility. It somewhat people say in Belorussia "Моя хата с краю, я ничего не знаю". But in Turkmenistan people live in community and in responsibility. They built their government together.

*- What can you say about exchange programs in common and will be there any new exchange programs that will be conducted/opened in Turkmenistan?*

- The programs are great. They are helping students to prepare for the universities. Each participant plays a role of an ambassador of their country and culture in another country. Because people abroad do not know a lot about Central Asian countries. And about new exchange programs. They are thinking about some kind of summer camps for the students.

*- Your wishing to the present and future alumni? (exactly as he said).*

- Recognize the power you have. Use the talents and skills that you have to help people around you. Stay active and support of one another.

Karina Fateyeva  
BFTF'08



# Easy and Affordable Web-Design

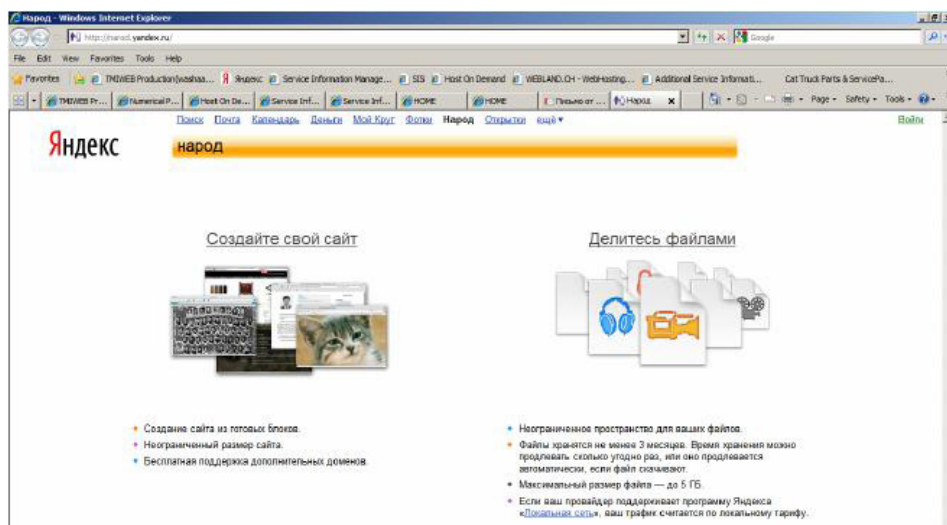
At the last Alumni Reunion 2009 event, some alumni expressed interest in creating web-sites. Certainly, many people have a desire to express themselves and share their thoughts about opening their own web-sites. At the same time there is a widespread perception that the process of creating a web-site (or simply doing web-design) is very difficult and requires much technical knowledge.

I used to agree, until I went to an IT training course, called "Dreamweaver Web-Design" during my JFDP Fellowship at the North Carolina State University. I am interested in this subject. Geek guys from the Department of Instruction Technology taught me - in just in 2 hours - how to create a basic web-site and how to upload it to the University server. I created my own local web-site in the following 2 weeks. This site (<http://www4.ncsu.edu/~bovezmu>) is about Textile Technology – the area of my instruction and research. Let me try to explain, without giving too many technical details, how to implement very simple web-design for beginners, affordable for all.

Easy and affordable web-design? Sounds dubious! When searching the Internet one can find brassy ads announcing something like "Make a web-site in 15 minutes!" or "Free web-hosting." They resemble the promise of "English language proficiency in one month" – an attractive but false statement. Professional web-designers will tell you that mastering an advanced program for web-design such as Dreamweaver can take many days, not to mention mastering tools for web-programming like HTML, JAVA, PHP, MySQL, takes many months. On the other hand, finding truly free web-hosting (the place for placing personal a web-site) which offers unlimited high-quality service seems almost impossible. Plenty of web-sites will advertise so-called "free web-hosting". But when you start using them it quickly turns out that they are temporary, they impose too many restrictions, and may easily close down or actually charge for services somehow. Though web-hosting has become very cheap in recent years, the majority of local users cannot afford to benefit from them. Because paying just a few dollars a month for a long time is too much. Also, transferring the money abroad to hosting service providers may prove to be problematic.

The fact is that basic skills in web-design can be acquired not in 15 minutes or 15 days, but in one day, provided that someone experienced guides you.

Most popular and probably the best



Narod.ru – free web-hosting from YANDEX.

program for web-design in the world is Dreamweaver. Another popular application is Microsoft Front Page. It is not as powerful as Dreamweaver, but the principles are the same. The software can be found in any local specialized store, or for hire. Most of us can boast that we know MS OFFICE programs while actually knowing no more than 10% of their functions. That doesn't prevent us from using them quite effectively in everyday work. Dreamweaver is the same. You don't have to know how to code HTML or how to apply dynamic web-content to create a nice looking web-site. As many professionals say, it is not technical knowledge that is most important in design, but rather creativity and imagination.

The first step is to create LOCAL WEB-SITE – a folder in your computer which contains all the elements of your web-site: web-pages, images, sounds, videos etc. You should arrange all the same files in the separate folders, so they easy to access. For example: web-pages about your hobby in one folder, mp3 music in another etc. If you have a lot of your text in WORD or EXCEL is easier to save them first as Web-page, and then put them into your local folder, as I have done with my lectures. Then you open the first and the main HTML page of your site, which should be called INDEX or HOME. The names of other pages in your local folder should be typed in the main page. Referring links must be assigned to each of them (the address of the link can be entered in the special bar below or by dragging the target symbol on the right of the bar to the icon of the referring file). You can put link on any piece of text or image referring not only to local web-pages and files, but also to any page on the Internet. You can test how your web-site looks anytime by giving a special command in the menu or directly opening your INDEX (HOME) web-page from the local folder.

The second step is to upload files from your local folder to a SERVER (remote folder). Usually this is FTP-host server. FTP provider will give you all the information how to connect (name, password etc.). Then in the sites management menu choose FTP, enter the information from the provider, and start uploading chosen files to your remote FTP folder. The problem with local providers is that the con-

nection speed is so slow that it may take hours to upload a middle-sized web-site. I uploaded my web-site on textiles which "weighs" only 100 Mb gradually (file by file) for several days. I still couldn't upload some big files (such as video), so my web-site still has some non-functioning links to pages and files which I failed to upload. So you should try to keep your files (especially video and audio and graphics) as small as possible using compression utilities and lower resolutions.

It was not hard to fill the content of my first web-site because I took my own ready text and images from my textbooks I wrote from my home university. All I had to do was to put the information into separate pieces of text, distribute them among several web-pages, and link them all with hyperlinks. Finally I uploaded the files to a web-space that normal US universities provide for all faculty and students. Of course, if the raw content (my text and other files) was not already prepared long before, the process would have taken much longer.

Also I put in some personal details, pictures as well as some cultural and exchange program information. In the future I plan on starting my own blog in the web-site. A personal web-site can serve as a great tool of self-promotion and self-realization! That web-site was probably the first of its kind in the Turkmen language. I felt deeply satisfied when I finished the job, realizing that Turkmen students and researchers could now find online info on textiles in their native language. Really, plenty of educational materials can be found in English and Russian, in any field, but not in Turkmen. We all (alumni and others) should aspire to fill the gap by adding to the areas we are proficient in to the web. This will help our society advance in the Information

# Easy and Affordable Web-Design

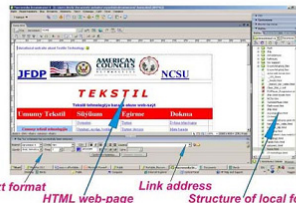
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Age. As alumni we have access to free web-spaces provided by our hosts in the US, or local organizations and projects (like the IREX project, which provided opportunities for dozens of young people to express themselves using web-design).

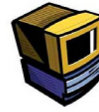
But what should others do who were not involved in any project of this kind? Here is my advice: After a year of fruitless search finally I found an absolutely free web-hosting site; it gives almost unlimited web-space. It is called narod.ru, and is provided by Yandex – the most famous Russian email provider. You can open your web-site directly under your email account. For example, my email account is bola-bola@yandex.ru, and my web-site is bola-bola.narod.ru. I uploaded my web-site on textiles there, since the first one I opened at NC State was not accessible from many local com-



First step: Create a LOCAL WEB-SITE



Text format  
HTML web-page  
Link address  
Structure of local folder



Second step: upload your site to remote server (FTP)



Simple web-design process with Dreamweaver.

puters. You can open a site with any name, as many as you want, just like with ordinary email accounts! Please don't consider the paragraph as an advertisement. Narod.ru really has many advantages: if anybody (including you) visit the web-site at least once in 3 month it won't close down; no annoying ads - only a little Yandex sign on the corner; Dreamweaver support (wow!);

impressive storage size – able to accommodate all your files. Yandex also offers incredibly easy web-site creation using ready templates – without any special software. You should just go to narod.ru and it will guide you through the series of simple steps of online web-design. Of course, the resulting web-sites, based on templates, would look much simpler than those creat-

ed with Dreamweaver. Detailed instructions on Dreamweaver FTP services can be taken from FAQ section of narod.ru.

Finally, some readers may say: "Hey! I understood nothing from your Dreamweaver instructions though you claim that it is easy." OK – I explained only the basic theory of the software. But if you are an experienced PC-user you will learn by doing, using the trial-error method since Dreamweaver has a nice, intuitive design. If you are just beginner you may take special courses (locally available, for example, in the OZEN training center). Even better is to find someone proficient in web-design. Because all you may need is little guidance and then you will continue on your own. Truly, one can learn web-design in just one day - the only prerequisite is desire and patience.

Berdimurad Ovezmuradov –  
JFDP'08



## STATE ALUMNI - YOUR GLOBAL COMMUNITY

Dear Alumni,

State Alumni offers an exciting opportunity to continue your exchange program after you have returned home. Please consider registering yourself!

**Benefits to register at the  
[www.alumni.state.gov](http://www.alumni.state.gov)**

- The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) carries out international exchanges that include more than 40,000 individuals on an annual basis.
- There are more than 1,000,000 alumni worldwide.
- These alumni are extraordinary people including more than 330 heads of state, 47 Nobel Laureates, CEO's, leading academics, and citizens committed to improving their local communities.

**What is State Alumni?**

- Interactive, dynamic and password-protected, [alumni.state.gov](http://alumni.state.gov) provides a central place for members to meet, share, learn, and collaborate.

**What does State Alumni offer?**

State Alumni is a global community with more than 55,000 members.

All members are verified. Once members, alumni can:

- Network with alumni from other exchange programs

- Find grant and job opportunities
- Access free periodicals, newspapers and more
- Find the latest research in their field, plus career enhancing information
- Participate in Q&A Livediscussions with experts
- Share their experience with a global audience
- Read alumni success stories, perspectives and ideas
- Stay involved through a local alumni association

**Benefits of being member of  
State Alumni Community:**

- Connect with others in their hometown or country.
- Network and engage with other alumni from around the world.
- Share photos.
- Free access to more than 20,000 periodicals, newspapers and journals—including abstracts, full-text articles and multimedia.
- New job and grant opportunities around the world are posted daily!
- Free access to more than \$33 billion in grants and funding opportunities.
- Join top officials and experts to discuss a variety of topics in Q&A LiveWeb chats
- Suggest a guest or a topic for a Q&A Live discussion
- State Alumni hosts more than 40 communities. These communities function as websites within a website under the larger umbrella of State Alumni.
- Alumni can join an alumni association and actively participate in events, volunteer activities and projects!

TURKMEN ALUMNI



COMMUNITY FACEBOOK PAGE

*There is great opportunity to get updates on Turkmen alumni activities through the newly developed Turkmen Alumni Community Facebook page.*

*All alumni related news, articles, announcements, pictures are posted on this page*

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Ashgabat-Turkmenistan-Turkmen-Alumni-Community/123167028470>

