



Servas International NEWS

Vol. 3 No. 2
November/December 2013



SERVAS PHILIPPINES 5
How you can help the relief effort



SERVAS AT THE U.N. 6
Danielle, Jeanne & Magus tell their stories



SERVAS ON THE WEB 8
The latest about ServasOnline & more



SERVAS YOUTH 10
Connection through collaboration

...AND MUCH, MUCH MORE!



*We All
Smile in
the Same
Language*



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Editor's Corner

By Terry Squire Stone
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“Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts. Broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things cannot be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one's lifetime.”

- Mark Twain

What a glorious organization Servas is!!! Hubby and I just got back from two months in Northern Europe staying with Servas hosts all the way. What wonderful people, great adventures, fabulous experiences, and don't even mention the food!!! After being a host for many years, this is the first time we experienced the “other side” of Servas: that of being a traveler. I am so thankful to all those who shared their lives with us. We look forward to doing it again next Summer (it's just too hot for me in my home town in Greece: 40C plus).

And what an honor it is now to come home and be the Servas International Newsletter Editor for all of you. We have a wonderful, packed issue for you, filled with laughter and information, progress and changes, old friends and new.

The next issue, I hope, won't be as long coming as this one was. So send in your stories, articles, ideas and letters now. As soon as we have critical mass we will put it all together and send it out. And please remember to review submission tips and suggestions on the last page of this issue.

Enjoy this issue and please stay in touch.

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Having fun at the Servas Berlin Summer Meeting August, 2013

(see pg. 12 for photos)



Upcoming Servas Meetings & Events

DECEMBER 22-29, 2013

Christmas in Israel

Servas Israel invites all Servas friends around the world to spend Christmas 2013 in Israel with Servas.

We will find Servas Israel friends to host and join the guided tours in Haifa, Akko, Nazareth, the Sea of Galilee and Jerusalem.

Take the opportunity and tour Israel with us, meet and spend time with us.

Contact us for details - israel@servas.org

MARCH 27-30, 2014

Servas International Executive Committee (SI EXCO) meet for a face-to-face meeting in Cesserois, south western France.

The minutes from the SI EXCO meeting will be available as usual on <http://servas.org/siexco>.

MAY OR JUNE

Possible months for eventual East European meeting in Latvia or Georgia.

JUNE 7-9, 2014

Servas France National General Assembly (NGA)

Location: will take place in the north of France

Contact for more information: Secretariat Servas France secretariatservasfrance@gmail.com

JUNE 16-23, 2014

Where next for Servas?

Location: Dalesbridge Centre in the Yorkshire Dales, UK

This is a joint venture between Servas International and Servas Britain and will be a chance for Servas friends, old and new, to enjoy time together whilst also thinking about where we go next as an organisation.

In the year before the next international GA it will be an informal meeting with no motions, votes or decisions. Instead there will be time and space to explore and debate important issues about the future of Servas:

- What makes Servas special?

- What projects would promote Servas as having 'added value' as an organisation?
- How are SOL and the new website looking following their expected launch in 2014?
- What still needs to be done?
- What issues would benefit from imaginative and workable proposals at the next GA?

The event program includes workshops and social and cultural events and an on-site internet link is planned in order to include a wider group in our discussions.

The Dalesbridge Centre offers a range of comfortable low-cost accommodation, including camping and the Yorkshire Dales offers easy access to beautiful walking and outdoor activities at all levels. Later in the week a series of more challenging walks is planned in the nearby Lake District National Park.

Following the meeting Servas hosts will welcome travellers wanting to explore more of the North of England. An extended walk for a small group along one of the region's long distance paths may also be available.

Those interested in attend should contact us so we can decide on the scale of the meeting.

Email to Ann Greenhough at vicepresident@servas.org.

Booking forms will be available from December 2013.

SEPTEMBER 2015

Servas International General Assembly 2015 (SIGA2015)

Date & Place to be determined.

At the 2012 GA in Poland New Zealand, Colombia and Hungary indicated they would like be considered as venues for the 2015 GA.

Exco has during the fall 2013 reviewed two proposals in September 2013. If a suitable venue is not selected we will extend the selection process.

Email your questions about SIGA to:

Jonny Sägänger - president@servas.org

Ann Greenhough - vicepresident@servas.org

Email meeting & events announcements in .txt or .doc format to: newsletter@servas.org

Wanted: A More Defined Servas Identity

By Jonny Sägänger
President, Servas International
president@servas.org



Since Servas is not very well-known internationally I quite often get questioned by my friends, colleagues and acquaintances on what the organisation is about. I tell them Servas is a global peace organisation based on national groups that offer a hospitality program for the promotion of increased understanding of people from other cultures, religions and ethnical backgrounds. I also tell them that our hospitality program is a foundation for them to have fun with and interact with people they haven't or have met before. I explain that they could find themselves developing a continued and – occasionally – an in-depth friendship that lasts for the rest of their lives. Usually my speaking partners are satisfied with those answers and they turn to more practical questions. "In what way do I communicate with other travellers and hosts?", they ask. "Do I have to stay over night? How long time are you allowed to ask to stay over night? Is it ok just to meet me for a cup of coffee?"

All that is easy to explain, because Servas has procedures, rules and customs that have evolved on a country level and internationally since Servas was started in the 1940s (under the name Peace Builders).

It gets trickier if the person is really curious and wants to know more about Servas. What do we, the members of Servas, and Servas as an organisation, actually DO to promote peace?

I tell them that just opening up your home to a person that you don't know, or to stay and socialise in a home of a person or family that you don't know, is a bold, as well, as brave action that promotes the idea of peaceful communication and other aspects of peaceful coexistence between human beings. This is taking one step towards a more peaceful world.

Members of Servas, including myself, who have been part of this movement for decades – or even just even a year or less – tend to forget what a big and important step it is for most people to open up your home to persons you're not familiar with and, who on top of that, have an unfamiliar background. For many people who are neither familiar with the thought of this way of being hospitable, nor are used to the practice of showing hospitality with openness and generosity to "strangers", it constitutes a mental threshold that they will never be able to climb over. Many will never even consider taking this step which I personally think

is a shame because this sign of fear restrains them from getting unexpected experiences and new perspectives on their fellow men and women. Please don't get me wrong, I'm not judging others. Everybody has the right to draw their own limits for their personal comfort zones.

In order to make it easier for me and all of you to describe what Servas is about I have, since the beginning of 2012, been working on a loose plan for a Servas Future Project. So far I've been working on this plan mainly together with Michael Silbert of Servas Canada, SI Vice President, Ann Greenhough, the rest of SI Exco and other members of Servas around the world. The basis for the plan are two motions from Servas in Sweden and Canada that were integrated and adopted by Servas International General Assembly in Poland 2012 (SIGA2012).

One of the goals for this project is to create a Servas identity that is better defined than the one we have today. We're aiming at keeping what is good in today's image of Serve, and what is well functioning. But we're determined to modernise the internal and external image of Servas, the actions and to old fashioned ways of working.

As part of the creation of a better defined Servas Identity I, and the rest of Servas International Executive Committee (SI Exco), adopted a draft for a slogan/vision, values and a mission during our face-to-face meeting in Burley in Wharfedale in Great Britain on the 20th to the 22nd of September this autumn.

We came up with the following drafted proposals:

• **Slogan/vision:**

Open doors – building peace and understanding across cultures'

• **Core Values:**

Trust, Tolerance, Open Mindedness, Respect.

• **Mission:**

Servas promotes trust, tolerance, open-mindedness and respect, so that people can live in peaceful coexistence. Our members value understanding of different cultures, gender equality and diversity in ethnicity, ideology, sexuality and nationality.

PRESIDENT - continued on page 12



Servas Philippines Recommends Channels For Support

Jonny Sägänger
president@servas.org

No Servas NS Currently In The Philippines

Jonny Sägänger
president@servas.org

Available information points out that there is no Servas activity in Servas Philippines since Catherine Calderon, NS for many years, left the country in 2011.

The Typhoon Haiyan has left a path of destruction in its wake around the Philippines. Servas members around the world who would like to show their support for the philippino inhabitants should turn to well known organisations, for exemple the Red Cross. That is the recommendation of Sharon Cortez, a Servas member who lives in the northern part of the Philippines..

“Most of the help I think are in financial form, and the concerned agencies just purchase the needs. Personally, I’d suggest you send help through established organisations such as red cross. Thank you for remembering our country in this time of need,” says Sharon Cortez in a written comment to SI News.

The concentration of the disaster is in the Visayas area, particularly in Tacloban, according to Sharon Cortez.

“I am not sure if we have an SI member in that area though. The rest of the country is barely affected, like us in the northern part. No particular damages, But please keep in mind that there are still many areas that are not receiving any aid as of present.” says Sharon Cortez.

This is one website that Sharon Cortez recommends Servas members to use

in case they would like to give support and if they would like to make sure their money will be used in a serious manner: <http://www.redcross.org.ph/donate>

Aside from the Red Cross, donations can also be sent in a trustworthy way through Unicef: <http://donate.unicef.ph/campaign/24/typhoon-yolanda-emergency-appeal>

This is to inform local government units (LGUs), non-government offices (NGOs), & government offices & relief organizations. List is based on reports from users and followers’ requests for aid.

While the immediate relief efforts are barely under way to the Philippines, the country is dealing with another tropical storm, as well as the aftershocks of a recent earthquake. The country is just too familiar with natural disasters. According to the Washington Post, as much as 10 percent of GDP is lost to typhoons, earthquakes and other natural disasters each year. For more information, please turn to this website:

www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2013/11/12/politics-and-disaster-aid-in-the-philippines/



Report From The United Nations

A Unique Learning
and Sharing Experience

By Jeanne Devine, Servas UN Observer

As a new representative of Servas International at the UN in New York, I want to learn more about the UN. So, when I heard from the United Nations Association (UNA) about the annual Model UN Conference in Phoenix, Arizona, I asked Dr. Albert Celozza, Model UN Advisor at Phoenix College, for time to tell students about Servas as a non-government organization (NGO) at the UN.

Phoenix College provides an opportunity for model UN students to acquire and practice skills in public speaking, writing and parliamentary procedure and assume the role of a UN ambassador at this annual conference. The experience gives them a sense of global awareness and willingness to solve problems through diplomacy. The conference is free to students, and UNA members and the public are welcome to attend.

Dr. Celozza introduced me as a guest speaker, then asked me to choose a country and one of two topics; "Torture and Other Cruel, Inhumane, and Degrading Treatments" or "Rights of the Child" and to participate along with the students! I was not prepared for this experience but could hardly turn it down! I chose "Rights of the Child". The 4 hour session was moderated by Representative Juan Mendez, a dedicated and committed Arizona state legislator. (Rep. Mendez had participated in this conference when he was a student at Phoenix College and is a strong proponent of the UN.) So, along with the students I learned how to present a topic,



Magnus, Danielle, Lorette, Tatjana et Mauricette devant l'ONU Genève - 9 Sept 2013

SERVAS AT THE UN ON INTERNATIONAL PEACE DAY

By Jonny Sägänger, President, Servas International

Catherine Burer and Hilda Burer assisted the celebration of the International Peace Day at Palais des Nations on Friday 20 September 2013. Numerous persons addressed the assembly telling their experience, their life and their job related to peace. The peace talks told about various backgrounds and stressed different aspects of how people proceed when they search the peace process. It is the proof that endeavours to achieve peace are omnipresent and that it is most of the time hard work to achieve the goal.

speak concisely, advocate positively for "my" represented country and work as a team to present a cogent proposal to the "UN General Assembly".

During one of the breaks, I addressed the students explaining that Servas is one of 1300 NGOs that have consultative status at the UN; that it's our goal to build understanding, tolerance, and world peace through a cooperative network of hosts and travelers; that we were founded to build a network of peacemakers to prevent future wars and build the foundation of justice that could lead to a peaceful world. I noted that Servas operates in 126 nations, has 15,000 members worldwide, and I shared a few of my experiences as a Servas traveler (most recently, in South Africa where I saw the unique biology of Cape Town and learned about the challenges of the new Rainbow nation) and as a Servas host (visitors from Europe, Asia, Middle East, U.S. and Canada).

Finally, I challenged participants to travel to other countries and learn about customs and cultures, to join UNA and become informed about UN decisions affecting women, children, sustainability, health care, poverty, and peace, and to get involved with Servas and plan activities for peace and the International Day of Peace.

I strongly encourage Servas members to seek out Model UN conferences in your area and participate or volunteer. You will be proud of young students who aspire to learn the skills to become more informed and involved in our world. And you will learn about the intricacies of peace-making at the UN!

I am forever grateful to those who created Servas and who diligently work to continue our mission.

– September 10, 2013 –

News From The United Nations

By Magnus Adams,
Servas International Peace Secretary
Assistant
Magnus.Adams@servas.org



My name is Magnus, I was born in 1985 and have been a member of Servas Germany since 2007. During the last three months, I have been working as a Servas International Peace Secretary Assistant for Danielle Serres and SI EXCO. My tasks were to support SI by networking on the ground, by attending and organizing statements for the 24th session of the Human Rights Council (HRC) as well as fulfilling urgent tasks like the questions of the current legal status of SI, and which rights are granted to NGOs with consultative status at the UN. For me, with a legal study background, it was a very interesting task. It was a great pleasure to find many solutions for different questions.



presenting the solution of SI. I prepared and organized a visiting group to the opening ceremony of the HRC session and prepared a written statement with our Peace Secretary, and with Jonny Sägänger, SI President.

When I came to the UNO in Geneva, I found out that SI is not very well known. But without a doubt this situation has changed a little. States like Israel, Togo, Eritrea and Zimbabwe were interested in our concept of mutual understanding. Furthermore the “Network for international exchanges”, a Chinese NGO, is willing to open their door to us so that we may become more present in Asia. Members of the Mexican and French delegation even came to congratulate me after the HRC session. This allows me to say that Servas International has benefited from the achievements that were made.

In my personal opinion, the timing is right to give more people the opportunity to benefit from our hospitality program. Like for example, people who cannot afford to travel abroad, people who have the same interests in peace and tolerance, and people who come from disadvantaged regions.

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, Distinguished Representatives, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to address you during this session.



Danielle Serres and Magnus Adams

Servas International is a NGO founded in 1949, serving tolerance and mutual understanding in more than 100 countries of the world.

We support the exchange of people of all ages, genders and origins to fight prejudices and to establish friendships. The essential tool for promoting peace is the Servas program for hospitality and hospitality exchange. In particular, our youth programs empower children forming the next generation.

We want to encourage you to support the civil society groups that are connecting people from all continents of the world, as we are convinced that only a global teamwork can lead to enduring peace, as the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon recently said it in his video message on the occasion of World Humanitarian day.

There are too many armed conflicts in the world. We want to express our hope, that all parties come to the result that violence cannot lead to peace. In particular we would like to remember the situation in Egypt and Syria. It is our wish to express our deep sympathy with all those who strive for peace in regions that are facing violence. In particular protection of children rights is critical. We strongly regret that our exchange programs decreased in those regions. We urge you all to help to reestablish the possibility to host and to travel safely to every region of your countries.

Formal and informal education on Human Rights is the key to mutual understanding. We all know that there will be no peace without respect for human rights. For this reason and thanks to our experiences in the field of peace building, we encourage you, Excellencies, Distinguished Representatives, to do your best to support the implementation of Human Rights in your field of responsibility and to assist others on their way to rule of law.

Thank you very much for your attention.

Jonny Sägänger *Danielle Serres* *Magnus Adams*
SI President SI Peace Secretary SI Peace Secretary Assistant



Global Interest To Build Servas' New Website

By Jonny Sägänger
Servas International President
& ServasOnline Project Sponsor

Servas International, SI, needs a modern website. The current one is based on an outdated technology platform and doesn't serve its purpose anymore.

The good news is that there's been a rapid and promising development during the last six months in the so called ServasOnline (SOL) project with the determined aim to provide for an up to date Internet based communication system for Servas members.

As part of this project the Servas web site will be redesigned and updated to conform to new technologies that will better serve the needs of the members. The look, feel, quality and capabilities of the Servas website will be radically

changed and modernized, even though the Internet domain address – or so called URL – will still be www.servas.org.

The main objectives of the SOL project are to develop a new Servas International website and to create a social networking platform with – for example – an efficient search system for travelers to find hosts as one feature.

The project has since June this year been regained momentum after a major setback for different reasons during the period November 2012 until May 2013.

With the SOL project back on track there have been major developments.

A SOL Steering Committee (SOL SC) was formed during the summer and a management team was to crystallized

with Matthew Pashkovskiy, as project manager, together with Frederic Morizot and Bernard Andrieu, both from France. and myself as project sponsor in my capacity of SI President and acting as communication bridge between the project and SI Exco. Matthew, Frederic, Bernard and I have connected with a pool of Servas volunteers who are willing to take on specific tasks, for example to test early versions of the new website and to give expert and layman opinions about functionalities of the new website.

SI Exco, the international Servas board, decided in September that the main priority for the SOL project at this point is to create a website that will attract

NEW WEBSITE - continued on page 9



Jonny Sägänger, President of Servas International and ServasOnline Project Sponsor (Sweden)



Matthew Pashkovskiy, manager ServasOnline Project (Russia)



Bernard Andrieu, management member of the ServasOnline Steering Committee (France)



Frederic Morizot, management member of the ServasOnline Steering Committee (France)

NEW WEBSITE*continued from page 8*

both new and current members with both exciting and valuable contents.

All Servas National Secretaries (NS) around the world have during the autumn received a document called Request for information (RFI). The RFI has been forwarded to web development companies and individual freelance consultants that the NS's and their fellow Servas collaborators consider serious. The companies and individual consultants that receive the RFI are considered to be able to guarantee solid professional standard in their work and to be positioned in a price range that gives us in Servas, as a non profit organization, maximum value for the money that SI will invest in this important development project.

So far it is known that there is interest for the SOL project among companies in the following countries: France (five companies!), India, Great Britain, Cameroon, USA, Russia, Israel and Sweden.

The dissemination and the publishing of the RFI is part of an overall plan for a public bidding process to attract proposals from professional web development teams. Once there is a list of interesting web development companies and individual consultants, SOL SC will make a selection of the most interesting companies and consultants to put on a "short list".

The companies and consultants on the "short list" will compete with their combination of price, performance, quality and project management skills based on a Request for Proposal, RFP.*

A contract will be signed between SI Exco and the company that SOL SC and SI Exco single out as the best choice.

The investment in the new servas.org website will at least partly be financed with the so called ServasOnline levy, which is money that has been collected from Servas member groups according to a decision that

NEW FACES**New Webmaster
for Servas.org**

Starting 16th of November Renee Genedron will start tutoring her successor Aron Bharatula as webmaster for the Servas website. Aron is "fascinated by Servas" and willing to take up the mantle and responsibilities as a volunteer webmaster. He is a student approaching the 3rd year of his degree.

Among Aron Bharatula experiences it's notable that he maintained the Computing and Information Systems Student Society web presence for the University of Melbourne when he was Secretary for the group in 2011.

Aron speaks, reads, understands and write in English alone. Servas International is now searching for one or more persons fluent in spanish who could be suitable for co-web-mastership together with Arun. It would be valuable for SI also to get in touch with volunteers interested in co-web-mastership, and who have knowledge in french, german, italian, portugese, german, japanese, chinese, hindu and other languages that have a large representation among Servas members.

Interested?

Please send an email to president@servas.org



was made at the Servas International General Assembly in Argentina in the year 2009 (SIGA2009). Alternative economic resources for SOL has been allocated in the SI budget for the three year period until 2015, when the next SI General Assembly will take place.

The SIGA2015 is EXCO's formal deadline to have completed the high priority SOL project, according to the SIGA2012 decisions. EXCO is convinced that the new website actually needs to be finished sooner, in order to prevent loss of existing members and to keep recruitment of new members on an acceptable level. But it's our responsibility as SI's international board to be both visionary and realistic.

NEW WEBSITE - continued on page 20

Thank you Servas

I became a volunteer webmaster for Servas in December 2007. The Executive Director noted that the website was an underdeveloped tool. I began soliciting Servas members for content and received terrific stories, photos and updates of events. The first picture I posted on the new main page was of Servas South Korea and it can still be viewed here.

Over the course of one year, an events calendar was created. The idea was enthusiastically received and many events started dotting the calendar. Members throughout the Servas world could see how active they were and could now better plan their trips to coincide with other Servas related activities. Special events also gained prominence and were showcased. For example, Claudia proudly sent me information on Servas Israel's visit to the Negev and Sercan eagerly sent me information on Servas Turkey's Live With Us Share With Us initiative. Gurdev from Servas India generously sent me videos he had made of visits from different Servas hostings for posting on the website.

I have been inspired by Pablo's enthusiastic efforts to organise and develop Servas Youth. I have admired Rita's willingness to mentor new Servas members, volunteer with the Information Communications Technology (ICT) team and coordinate activities of Servas Belgium.

I was deeply humbled to post information indicating the good hearted and multi-member efforts to extend support to victims of the 2004 Tsunami, the spontaneous collaborations to help those affected by the 2010 monsoons in Pakistan, and the dedicated efforts by Servas Congo Brazzaville members to bring relief and support to those who were affected by the armory explosion. Their efforts and humanity are heroic.

I was amazed at the amount of work involved in organizing and implementing General Assemblies. The logistics of dozens of people travelling from all areas of the world to meet in common cause, to celebrate diversity and friendship, and to hold a productive meeting, is to say the least daunting. So many reports need to be generated and reviewed. The sheer scale of work done by dedicated volunteers the world over, only minimally represented in the Kits for Success, is nothing short of impressive.

I was overwhelmed by the amount of work done by the secretaries and the significant number of reports they must keep track of, synthesize, analyse, and disseminate. When it's report season, Penny and then Jaime, would send me batches of emails containing dozens of annual report reports to be uploaded. Their efforts are impressive.

Reading and posting the reports from Servas' contributions at the United Nations forwarded by Danielle, underline the importance and need for the peace community to remain active and to remind the world that peace for the sake of peace is a laudable goal.

It has been a privilege to have been part of this organisation and to get to know its dynamic and dedicated members.

Regards,
Renée Genedron

“When you engage with people,
you build your own insight into what’s being discussed.
Someone else’s understanding complements yours,
and together you start to weave an informed interpretation.
You tinker until you can move on.”

- Marcia Conner,

The New Social Learning: A Guide to Transforming Organizations Through Social Media

Suzanne In Youth Collaboration With The President

By Suzanne Stirling, Youth Collaborator, Canada



Suzanne Stirling, Youth Collaborator, Canada, and Jonny Sägänger, SI President, Sweden got to know each other at the SIGA2012. Photo: Stefan Fagerström

The role of youth in Servas was a popular topic at the 2012 GA in Poland, and one of the results was a movement that the members of Servas International Executive Committee were to try to find a youth assistant. Each member would provide mentorship to their assistant while giving them a larger understanding of the workings of EXCO, while their assistants would get a chance to share their youthful point of view about current Servas projects. Jonny Saganger, Servas International’s president, asked me if I would be interested in filling that role and I was honoured to accept.

I am a third generation Servas member from Canada. My first experience of Servas was with my parent’s when I was twelve years old. My parents sold their house, enabling them to realize their dream of traveling across Europe for 5 months. We traveled with Servas in part so that I would get a chance to meet other twelve year olds and take a break from the adult world. What a life-changing experience! I left Europe with a whole bunch of new friends and pen pals, some of whom I didn’t even share a language with. We had shared funny, made-up games, laughed till we cried, and some of them took me to school with them. These early experiences gave me a deep and continued appreciation for the importance of Servas Youth. It is great to get a chance to work with Jonny in Servas International!

Being a youth assistant has been a rewarding experience. At first it took some time to figure out how

and when we would meet due to time zone differences and the myriad of communication options available. We settled on skype meetings and got to work. As this is a new position, we took some time to lay out a framework of what it meant to be a “youth assistant”. We decided that “youth collaborator” was a more accurate title. We decided that it would be good for Jonny to share about the current projects EXCO is working on, and their gatherings. This way I get to learn about the sharing of responsibility in EXCO and what keeps Servas alive and well. In return I get to provide a youth perspective and share any pertinent skills or knowledge I may have, such as translation and social media.

Some of our collaborations have included my sitting in on meetings and providing translation and transcription of notes. I have also benefited from Jonny’s knowledge of where to find poster’s and other information tools to share locally. We have been able to brainstorm a bit about Servas’ web presence on a national and international level. One of my projects in Canada has been to survey Servas Youth and ask for their input which I have gotten to share with Jonny. I have enjoyed the experience that being a youth collaborator has afforded me and I have learned more about EXCO and Servas International in the process. I look forward to participating in Servas International in the future and I would encourage other youth and EXCO members to set up a youth collaboration as well!

“We all do better when we work together.
Our differences do matter,
but our common humanity matters more.”

- Bill Clinton

How A Youth Collaborator Connects To The Servas “Reality”

By Jonny Sägänger, SI President

In my position as world president of Servas International I run the risk of losing contact with some of the day to day workings and headaches of our organisation. This can happen to anybody with a viewpoint like mine, since many of the matters my colleagues in SI Exco and I are dealing with on our monthly Internet based meetings are all-embracing globally and of comprehensive nature.

At my age, being born 1958, I run another risk: to become rigid, complacent, a bit cynical and in the end lose one of the most valuable assets; to try to be young at heart and to keep an open mind to opportunities and possibilities.

All these “threats” make me cherish a lot to have been given the opportunity to establish a working relationship between the youth collaborator Suzanne Stirling and me. On the 11th of June this year we had our first Internet live meeting and we’ve been hooking up with each other quite frequently ever since. The ambition is to have an Internet based meeting once every month.

During this period I have gotten invaluable insights into how a person Suzanne’s age can perceive Servas as an organisation in the eyes of someone who is almost half my age. One of the most striking revelations Suzanne has shared with me was how extremely complicated it can be for a person who would like to join our organisation. After hearing Suzanne’s story it’s evident to me that Servas must become much more welcoming and hassle-free to prospective members. I

think this is especially true if the “prospects” are young and born and bred in the Internet era where information flow seam-lessly and where information is readily accessible, irrespectively of where you happen to spend time, or with what kind of electronic device you use to access the Internet and, let’s say, a hostlist and a social networking site.

Suzanne asks me: is it for example really necessary to demand two letters of reference from a person who would like to get approved as a traveller. Being efficient and welcoming is much more important for Servas as a provider of a service called hospitality than for example fancy paper stationery with Servas logo etc.

It’s great to be able to get Suzanne’s perspective on what is important for a person her age to stress, when it comes to the design of the look and feel of the new website.

Suzanne’s stories about she got introduced at an early age in Servas and how that widened her perspective on people and the world in general strengthens me in my conviction that Servas will be very well positioned as a peace and hospitality organisation if we stick to the ambition to keep Servas open and welcoming to people of all ages, so that we can help them/us meet and socialize when we all travel and activate ourselves in let’s say human rights, gender issues, refugees rights, gender perspective and/or environmental matters.

Last but not least, it’s always to share a good laugh with Suzanne on the wire across the Atlantic Ocean.

Servas Summer Meeting In Berlin

August 2013

Photos Submitted by Rita Dessauvage, Servas Belgium

“Be genuinely interested in everyone you meet and everyone you meet will be genuinely interested in you”

- Rasheed Ogunlaru, Author

PRESIDENT

continued from page 4

In times of increased movement of people and globalisation, there is a growing need to promote understanding across borders and cultures.

Hospitality and cultural interaction are the essential tools for achieving conditions for people to live in peace // unity // concordance' (so far it's an open question whether the drafted mission should contain the word "peace", "unity" and/or "concordance").

Keep in mind that a well phrased definition of the word "peace" is a cornerstone in this project. At this point Servas has four useful definitions (see President's Message on page 4, SI News VOL 3 / NO. 1 • APRIL /MAY 2013).

Now I urge you to please let me and the rest of SI Exco know what you think about our draft for slogan/vision, core values and mission! We need to know in order to further the process, for example as a preparation for the upcoming event "Where next for Servas?" from 16th to 23rd June 2014 at the Dalesbridge Centre in the Yorkshire Dales in Great Britain.

Please do some hard thinking about our draft and what you think makes Servas special and unique. Reflect, write down your ideas and suggestions in an email and it send to president@servas.org.

Your input is of great value for this important project which - I'm sure - will determine what Servas will be and look like, let's say after the next SIGA which will take place in the year 2015.



Before the Fall of the wall.



Guided tour in Berlin.



Friendship in Servas



Exploring Berlin by bike.



Winners of the quiz about 'Catalunya'.



80 people... 18 nationalities!



Thank you for organizing this meeting.



Good company and good food!



Terry sings a Greek song.



Young people enjoying a pizza!



Participants of Asia with the organisation team.

The Utopia Of Embracing The World

Live with Us, Share with Us

By Mehmet Ate
mehmettates@yahoo.com



Ozlem, one of the villagers is telling her friend, Cemile on the street, "A young woman, Maya, from Canada is living with us currently. We eat together in the backyard of our home under the grapes tree, talk about our traditions, weddings, dishes and songs. Hey wait! We also learn the nicest words in our mother tongues. We come together at the same place every night when the evening breeze cools the weather down. The lovely conversation goes on all night. Why don't you join us tonight?" Ozlem is not the only local person who is having special time in the summer time. There are lots of other local families enjoying the same experience in the village called Ekinci (Aydiy former name in Arabic) in Antakya, Turkey. How does it happen? Servas volunteers from different countries and our country come to stay in the village with the families for a while within the Live with Us Share with Us Children programme. They teach kids different subjects such as dancing, drama, pantomime, music, languages, maths, and recycling, environmental issues and children rights during the cool hours of the day. Servas has completed the programme the fourth time this summer.

Following Servas founder's utopia of



world brotherhood and world without borders we came to the end of Servas Live with us Share with Us Children Programme the fourth time which has turned to be traditional and been widely accepted by local people in a village 45 km far from the border of Syria. The weird thing was that we were trying to raise peace feelings in kids while the war planes flying over our heads. Anyway, we came together with the kids every day, played exciting games and dances which are quite new for us when the weather is cool enough under the berry and grape trees. The volunteers, who are peace lovers, talked to 50 kids more or less and their families about peace, living together peacefully and loving all living things on earth as much as we love ourselves. We also agreed with the idea that every person could develop friendship with people in Syria or any people throughout the world with no race, language, religion and gender discrimination. Kids were very surprised to

hear the ideas; "the borders were drawn by pencils and can be easily erased with an eraser". We shared our homes, stories, songs, jokes and clothes with the volunteer people coming from Russia, Canada and Switzerland in our village that became a festival area for 12 days. Maya, with her Arabic roots and background, told kids about their rights of playing games, having healthy environment, food, education and love using her favourite Arabic and English words. Then, kids drew pictures with the images of these values and displayed them on the walls. The parents watched the pictures wearing lovely smiles on their faces and got the message. A-64 -year old young woman, Martine taught kids how to express themselves using their bodies with no words; Pantomime and making masks. The gardens and streets turned to be like a stage for a while. And the kids were the players.

UTOPIA - continued on page 21

Kids Will Be Kids

5th year of "Live with us, share with us" in Hatay, Turkey

By Christina Buynova,
Youth Coordinator of SERVAS Russia



This July the project in Turkey, dedicated to the summer activities with kids in Ekinci, Hatay, celebrated the fifth year of its existence. The team of the volunteers was formed by people from Turkey, Russia, Portugal and Iran. More than 50 kids participated, at least 30 - daily. Within the activities there were such as playing games, dancing, singing, theatre, English and Arabic classes, environment, drawing and more.

...To be honest, I find this way of telling what we were actually doing dull and dumb. It's hard for me to judge if the numbers and facts about this initiative can be inspiring enough, as this is the fourth time when I spend two weeks of summer with the kids of Ekinci, fifth time visiting the village and sixth - in Turkey. This is my home away from home, my second family, my shelter. The little girls that I first took to sing and dance in a ring four years ago are now trying themselves in the job of translators, helping me to communicate with their small brothers and sisters. The young couple that invited me to their marriage three years ago is now growing a baby. The olive tree that we planted with the kids two years ago gave its first fruits this summer. I'm sure that the new fruits are coming, we laid a good foundation.

This year had its difficulties, but as always, it was a good experience. Some preparation is always recommended when you work with kids, but the flexibility and inspiration are crucial. Suddenly we found ourselves surrounded by a lot of really small kids eager to participate. Later on, after a while trying to understand what else is different, and why is it so loud and messy, it appeared that the number of boys is without precedent. There was also a lot of "movement" in the groups of kids, once I prepared to draw on the window surface with the elder girls and in the end found myself playing hide-and-seek with the smallest boys. Every day was a challenge, in addition to the surprises from the kids we could always expect an initiative from their parents. I could never promise to come back for lunch 'cos many times on my way back home I was "kidnapped" by some other family. However we could overcome all the difficulties. Thanks to invisible guidance and inexhaustible inspiration of our organizer (or should I say soul?..), Mehmet Ates, we always felt united and enjoy every moment of stay.

I guess that the kids, for their turn, appreciated our surprises. For example, now they have an idea about Portugal and Iran. Carla Kristensen and Nasim

Chareh told them about their countries, and some of our pupils now have a new destination for when they grow up. Nur Karaalp from Istanbul revealed us a new and amazing world of sign language. Imagine how hard it is for children not to speak! - but during Nur's classes they were delighted to keep silence. On the other hand, the old national games from Turkey and Russia were always accompanied by screaming and laughing; and the concert of self-made musical instruments will for sure remain in the memory of all the neighborhood for a long time...

The village passed a difficult moment when we were there, it lost its son, a young man, in the protests. Locals and foreigners, we kept together in our grief. I cannot express how touched and proud I am to have the love of these children and the trust of their parents.

...These days the situation around Hatay's closest neighbor, Syria, is growing worse every day. SERVAS is trying not to be silent, an oral statement against the war was made at the 24th Session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva on the 10th of September. I believe that still there is a chance for these kids to grow in peace.

Volunteering With Servas In Turkey

or how to “Live with us,
share with us” (July 2013)

By Carla Kristensen,
Servas Portugal
crsckris@gmail.com



The first time I read about “Live with us, share with us” volunteer Servas program in Turkey, it was some years ago, on a message from the Servas Turkish Peace secretary, Mehmet Ates, that was published on the Servas Portugal blog. I had never been to Turkey before that and I had the idea of an exotic country and complicated in what concerns women’s rights.

But a couple of years ago I started visiting Turkey, invited by a very good Servas friend who lives in Izmir, and I got the chance to discover a beautiful country, with breathtaking nature sights and extremely nice people. I had the opportunity to visit places and meet Turkish Servas members who made me want to know and learn more.

One day I met Mehmet and his wife, Zuleiha, and we had a nice talk about this volunteer program. I was very curious, specially about what kind of village this was. Mehmet was very enthusiastic about the program and he convinced me to come. So this last summer, 2013, I bought



my ticket and made my way to Ekinci, in Hatay region, near the frontier with Syria (no signs of war). The volunteer week ran from the 5th to the 16th July, but unfortunately I could only come on the last week.

Ekinci is a village some 16 kms from Hatay, easily reached by taxi (remember to discuss the ride price first!). In this village you meet many people, many children, and after a while you discover that they all have family bonds with each other. Everyone has a cousin, a sister, a brother in law, living nearby, and the kids can play safely out in the street. Mehmet’s family is from Ekinci, and that is why you find so many Servas members there. Many of them are Mehmet’s brothers and sisters, nephews or cousins.

During the Summer, which lasts 3 months, the kids have not much to do, so Mehmet thought that he could start this program in order to bring Servas members from all over the world to live for a couple of weeks with Turkish families and at the same time provide an intensive and fun course of English for the children and their families, also making the connection between the cultures and curiosities between the different

countries of origin of the participants. It works perfectly!

I stayed with the Cengiz family, they didn’t speak much English, but we managed to understand each other. They were so nice to me! And the food...OMG, what a delight !!!When I arrived I had a big poster above my bed, that the girls had beautifully painted, saying “Welcome Carla” and that was a great start to break the ice. Every morning we woke up and got ready for the activities. After breakfast we walked together to the meeting site. There were several volunteers from Turkey like Ferdus and Nur, and from abroad came Christina (Russia), Naseem (Iran) and me, from Portugal. The activities were varied: sign language song, Persian alphabet, story telling, painting, dancing, pantomime and a lot of playing. Whenever necessary, Selen, a very nice girl, was there to help with the translation. All the week went on perfectly, I think that there is a special atmosphere in Ekinci, you can only feel it once you’re there. The smile on the kids’ faces is the best expression of this feeling. And Mehmet’s imagination and the cooperation and understanding between everybody made this week an

VOLUNTEERING - continued on page 23

A RUSSIAN SYLE FOR LANGUAGE & CULTURE

By Eloisa Capezzuto, Servas Italy

Alexey T., Valentina, Yury, Alexey K., Elena, Nikolay, Kirill, Olga, Daria, Ekaterina T., Artem, Alexey S., Ekaterina F., Igor, Daria, Anna, Ekaterina E., Matteo, Mikhail, Dmitri, Daniil, Mark, Galina, Natalia, Maria, Alina, Arina, Anna K., Alexandra, Alyonka... those are some of the new friends I made in Russia during my SYLE (Aug. 14th-Sept.9th 2013).

Everything started one year ago during the Youth and Family meeting



Eloisa (bottom, left) with her Russian hosts.

My father and I — with whom I spent my first week in Russia — met a united and cheerful team, who welcomed and shared their time with us. In Moscow, for example, we had the privilege of having historians as guides throughout the city, which allowed us to have a deeper insight of the places we came across. We never felt alone, but were always surrounded by people who did their utmost to be helpful.

It wasn't only the friendliness and the organization of the group that moved me, but even how culturally stimulating conversations and people were.

In what concerns my father, he realised how, although XXth century's history had parted us, our own people and cultures are much closer than what books and ideologies taught us. I too —

RUSSIAN SYLE - continued on page 19



“With every true friendship,
we build more firmly the
Foundation on which the Peace
of the whole world rests”

- Mahatma Gandhi

in Poland, where I met a group of very active and enthusiastic Russian Servas members. From their invitation to go and visit them and my interest in Russian language and culture, the idea of a SYLE project took shape. What then it became, involved me emotionally far beyond my expectations!

IN THE LAND OF THE CZARS

By Susant Pal, Servas India

I visited Russia in mid-September 2013. My tour was made memorable by two wonderful Russian ladies Ms. Alexandra (Alex) Shcherbacheva and Ms. Marina Kalmykova who day-hosted me on different days during my 9-day stay in the land of the Czars.

Alex and I met on 15th Sept, the very day I entered Russia. The concern I noticed in her for her visitor was outstanding. From the time of my arrival at the airport she made sure that I, as a first timer was not inconvenienced in this city where language and custom was so unfamiliar. Alex and I met on quite a few occasions thereafter. It was because of her that I could visit many real places of interest in Moscow which no new comer could get to see in that short span of time. Being a deputy Principal of an educational Institution her deep acquaintance with historical events in Russia was quite enriching for me.



Alex & Susant in Red Square

The knowledge she cherished about her country and the pride she took in the city she grew-up in is worth appreciating. I love people who have a good sense of humor as Alex.

On 18th Sept Marina met me at Goshtini Dvor in the afternoon. We visited



Susant (right) with hosts, Alex & Victor

the Moscow State University -where Marina did her Master's degree and now pursuing PhD. Marina is also the head of department of a chef training institute and specializes in Italian cuisine. I too am fond of cooking Indian vegetarian variety with 'masala', herbs and cereal. Having met Marina I gathered quite a few Russian as well as Italian culinary tips from her while we stopped on our way at the wayside eateries. I greatly appreciate her contribution and value the time she spared for the cause of this humble visitor from a far away land.

I wish to make special mention of Mr. Victor who was introduced by Alex subsequently. Victor and I became good friends. We drove for miles to distant places in Moscow. Victor was as good in English as I am in Russian (level zero) but our conversation would never stop, neither would our interest in listening to each other.

Surprisingly my Servas experience in St. Petersburg was quite in contrast.

LAND OF THE CZARS - continued on page 19

Explore The World With A Smile

Welcome to Belarus!

By Victoria Mrochko
Key Person of Servas Belarus,
v-francheska@mail.ru

“Sometimes your joy
is the source of your
smile, but sometimes
your smile can be the
source of your joy.”

- Thích Nhất Hạnh

One year ago I became a member of Servas. And everything has started with the International Youth Meeting in Poland. When I met all the Servas people who came to the meeting I really fell in love with all of them! And since that time I became crazy about Servas!

Servas changed my outlook, my life became colourful and dynamic, it was enriched with the enchanting smell of different countries and the flavor of their national dishes. And moreover, Servas makes all my dreams come true!

After every Servas meeting, all the people become good friends. And it's fantastic! Every meeting is the great opportunity to meet the old friends and to make the new ones.

This time we organized the 3rd Eastern European Meeting in Baranovichi (Belarus).

We spent 3 wonderful days together. We've visited the residential castles of the Radziwiłł family in Mir and Neswizh, we've explored Minsk, the capital of Belarus. And we've got involved in Servas a guy from Japan whom we met in Minsk. He spent with us the whole day but only by the evening he understood who we were, what we did and why we were together in Minsk.

The meeting was not only for Servas people, but also for those Belorussians that were not in Servas.

I want to show my gratitude to all the people from Poland, Ukraine and Russia who managed to come for the meeting, who shared with us their experience in Servas and inspired our people to travel and to enjoy the life with Servas!

Jonny Sägänger asked us to remember the words of Mother Teresa in Calcutta:

“La paix commence par un sourire! (Peace begins with a smile!)”

Well, let's explore our unique world with a smile!

Welcome everyone to Belarus! We are young Servas-member, but we are ready to show you the beauty and hospitality of our country!

H O O R A Y !!!!!

Servas meeting has been held in Belarus for the first time! Many thanks to Mrochko Victoria for organizing and thanks to everyone who went to Belarus! I sincerely hope that u enjoyed everything here!

Time passed very quickly, but every day was filled with bright emotions. It was great! We are waiting for you in Belarus again and again!

- Tatiana Tokareva, Servas Belarus

IMPRESSIONS OF THE MEETING:

What I like most about the local meetings is that no decisions have to be made in the process. No headache resolving fundamental problems, no nerves, no misunderstandings; but pure enjoying the company of your friends and having fun together.

And it's amazing we did it in Belarus this year. Those from Poland had to make a visa for a three days visit, most of the group had to change several trains to get there, the touristic infrastructure is pretty basic and the only option we had about the accommodation was to rent an apartment. The organisation of the event lay on the shoulders of Viktoria Mrochko and some of her friends, and she was with us, always smiling, all the time from the moment to pick us up early in the morning on Friday till see us off at the station again three days after. So the Poles got the visas after receiving the invitations, the apartment was very nice and cozy, some of us passed the nights at their hosts'; we had three days in beautiful Belarus, enjoying placid Baranovichi, two majestic castles, Nesvizh and Mir; and spacious Minsk. For a day our Belorussian-Russian-Polish-Ukrainian company joined a tourist from Japan, who happened to find our help in the moment of trouble in Minsk:-)

It looks like this meeting was a good incitement for SERVAS in Belarus during preparing it, as well as during the meeting itself. It was very inspiring to see those girls that we met in Kiev in May, as well as a lot of new people, willing to host, to travel, to share! (By the way, there were some families between them, thinking about family exchange. It would be fantastic if they could find somebody interested!) Belarus has its problems considering traveling; neither it is easy for visitors because of the visas, but it's a challenge worth to accept. For me, as Russian, that was not the first visit, but I was happy to go again, and enjoyed every, every moment of staying in beautiful Belarus with my friends.

Christina Buynova
Youth Coordinator of Servas Russia

This weekend (25-27 October 2013) I have visited one new country - Belarus. For me, it was special trip. First, it was the reunion with my friends from Servas Belarus, Russia and Poland. Second I was able to see the wonderful Belarus palaces and castles. Last but not least, I found out the life style in our closest neighbours country, I was able to feel it.

Belarus has not many tourists from other countries. There are no famous advertised places, but only here you will be able to find out real Soviet style of life, very naive and unsophisticated, but so lovely and cosy!

All time in Belarus, I was thinking that Belarus is like our Russian "Germany". Kindness of people, perfectness, clean streets, strict moral rules gave me the right to say it. Sometimes it was cold outside houses, but heart warm of Belarus Servas people was so strong, that I was happy all the time!

It is not possible to describe Belarus. I must come here one day. And even if you need to cross some barriers in order to arrive to this lovely land, to these charming Servas people, it worth it, believe me!

Eugene Gvozdetsky,
Youth Contact of Servas Ukraine and Local Coordinator

Argentina & Uruguay Meet

Each Day Should Be "The Day For Peace".

By Ana Manghi, Argentina NS and Dinorah Sanz, Uruguay NS

On the weekend of September 21 and 22 a group of 10 members of Servas Uruguay met with more than 25 Argentinian members in Buenos Aires.

On Saturday, our activities were guided by Delta Terra, an institution that works for the appreciation and preservation of natural resources of the ecosystem in the Tigre river's delta.

In one of the islands of the delta, we had lunch and took a guided walk to appreciate the biodiversity of species in that territory.

Around the fireplace of the institutional Center, one of our members oriented to thinking and recognizing with mind, body and heart, the inmensity of the meaning and the need to build peace in and around us.

At the end, some members highlighted some top Servas experiences.

Sunday 22, we met in Parque Lezama for picnic. In the afternoon we took a guided tour in the Ethnographic Museum. Based on the native cultures of the Argentinian territory, this tour helped us to



understand habits, needs, resources and evolution of pre-Columbian populations.

Spontaneous initiatives motivated by the wish of Hosts and Visitors to share every minute, were a Tango night, a visit to San Telmo's street market, a visit to the Russian Orthodox Church, and more.

Farewell phrases like "we have to do this again" or "next time it should be in Uruguay" are a good sample of the spirit prevailing in the meeting.

Servas Argentina and Uruguay have set the goal to meet regularly. Our aim is not only to strengthen relations at a personal level but most important, to reinforce Servas.



Bi-National Meeting Of Servas Peru-Chile

OCTOBER 5-8, 2013



By Pedro Puente, News Reporter of Servas Peru
p-puente@hotmail.com

Servas Puente, Peru, visited Santiago invited by Servas Chile, to develop a program of cultural and social activities. This meeting served to strengthen the bonds of friendship, and to coordinate future activities that would be for the growth and development of our two national groups.



SERVAS - Because Peace Makes Us Stronger

By Yamellyss Sánchez Morales, Servas Venezuela
yamellyss@hotmail.com

(Translated from Spanish by Magiarí Díaz Díaz)

Time has made me understand that we, human beings, in spite of our many differences have the same need to grow, love, create, express and be nurtured.

Servas has allowed me to live wonderful experiences with people from around the world, nurturing beautiful bonds of friendship, brotherhood, solidarity and respect. In my early Servas days I was single, now I am married with a child, and the three of us enjoy exchanging ideas, feelings, culture and willpower to be better people every day.

Everytime a new Servas members arrive in our home, they leave something of themselves in us. It teaches us something, even if only a simple lesson which changes, transforms and encourages us to give more, to look around and ask ourselves: How can I be of help? What can I do? There is a world in pain out there, there are people that need our support. There are many stretching out their hands in need and few that dare to reach out.

May we keep brainstorming ideas and making proposals about topics such as Ecology, Human Rights and Education. Let us do our bit to help, let us add goodwill and strength.



"It is the greatest of all mistakes to do nothing because you can only do little."

- Sydney Smith

Peace Projects In Brazil

By Alvany Santiago

Servas members in Petrolina, Pernambuco State, in northern Brazil, were involved in the Campaign "Women and Men United for Peace!"

The campaign was released in March 2013 as an activity for Women's International Day. Two of its activities were:

1. Course: Educating for Humans Rights and Peace

From August 20th to November 8th, 2013.

Participants: College students, teachers, police officers and health agents (known as Health Community Agents).



*Servas members involved in photo exhibit, from left: Marcelo Ribeiro, Alvany Santiago (Job Description and Statutes Committee); Angelita Maria dos Santos (Women's Association); Eliane Ferreira (Youth development program); not shown is Tereza Roberta Rodrigues.
Photo by George de Castro.*

Partners: Federal University of the São Francisco Valley (www.univasf.edu.br) Women's Association (www.rendeirasbrazil.blogspot.com.br).

2. Photo exhibition "Importa pra você?" (Do you care?)

From September 16th to October 24th

Partners: Photo Journey of the Sao Francisco Valley (www.jornadasfotograficas.com.br), Federal University of the São Francisco Valley (www.univasf.edu.br).



*"Do you care?" exhibition.
Photo by George de Castro.*

LAND OF THE CZARS

continued from page 19

I received not a single response mail or phone call (even on my local Moscow number) during and prior to arriving Russia. This was unpleasant and surely unexpected from members of our fraternity. Servas does not preach us to avoid but to accommodate. It is therefore expected of a host country member be courteous enough to convey to a visitor about ones inability to be available. I wish the city coordinators are more sensitive to this issue.

Nonetheless I was very happy being in Russia and wish to thank Alex, Marina and Victor. I am obligated to Sri. Pramod Kumar, National Secretary of Servas India and Alexey Tereshchenko (Leshya) for their guidance and putting me in contact with Russian members. For my friends whom I met and those whom I missed I would love to re-visit Russia. Next time I would love to visit Servas homes in distant areas far from the ostentatious cities. I also sincerely wished to have a get-together one day with many of our fraternity members in Russia but unfortunately that did not materialize as my request mails and Leshya's persuasion could not generate any enthusiasm amongst my Russian friends. Nonetheless the friends I met spared no effort to make my stay memorable forever.

Above all I thank the Servas community for providing such a wonderful platform of a world communion that has enabled me to make friends the world over. I feel indebted to all and seek to reciprocate every bit that I have been bestowed with. But I also realize that I am too small and meager to be as befitting.

RUSSIAN SYLE

continued from page 19

even if I had no direct experience of this ideological contraposition because of my age —found among my peers a vague mistrust and suspicion about Russia due to our ignorance of the nearby world. That's why, after coming home, I was so happy to debunk these prejudices and to bridge the gap.

On my last day there, chatting with a Russian friend, I came to wonder — half surprised, half joking — how it could be that in the month I spent there, between Moscow and Saint Petersburg, I hadn't seen a bear, nor drunk vodka, nor eaten caviar. And the only, glaring and beautiful answer we managed to find was because I had spent a month not as a tourist among foreigners, but as Servas among friends! This was the biggest achievement of my experience and, I think, one of the points of being part of this association: travelling and familiarize with unknown universes — as Russia was for me before my SYLE project —leaving stereotypes and common places behind.

"Peace cannot be kept by force; it can only be achieved by understanding."

- Albert Einstein

NEW WEBSITE*continued from pg. 9*

If the new website will be finished and launched earlier than 2015, it is to be considered an unexpected but very, very happy and longed for happening.

The RFI to be filled in is available on this weblink: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1Mw0OfH3lym5Yz7QZ4qsWJkeAnHbjll6iilmAGPORPhc>

If you have questions about the RFI and other things related to the SOL project feel free to contact Matthew Pashkovskiy, ServasOnline project manager, by sending an email to mathew.pashkovskiy@gmail.com

*For a popular explanation of the term Request for Proposal , RFP, please surf in on this website:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Request_for_proposal

Hash-tag Servas SERVAS AND TWITTER

By Tim Phillips (Great Britain)

"Facebook" may be the on-line social media most used by members of Servas but it is by no means the only one; another is Twitter - a social networking and micro-blogging service that enables its users to send and read text-based messages of up to 140 characters known as "tweets".

As of April 2013 Twitter has 200 million active users - including over 100 who are interested in, or actually members of, Servas. Three of them actively promote Servas International, Servas Spain and Servas Russia respectively.

It's free to sign up for and use Twitter. Anyone who is not signed up can still read tweets by browsing to www.twitter.com/#Servas

The explanation of this web address (and of the headline of this article) is that Twitter users can group posts together by topic or type by the use of "hash-tags", i.e. words or phrases prefixed with a "#" sign. If you cannot type that symbol you can browse instead to www.twitter.com/ServasI

Face-to-face meetings between people of different nationalities, cultures, etc. will continue to be the essence of Servas - but Twitter is being used to spread awareness and understanding of the organization to an increasingly wider audience.

Servas Grows Strong On The World Wide Web

Below is a current listing of Servas-related web and social networking sites. If we've missed your country's web site, social networking site or other online link please send an email to "newsletter@servas.org" and we'll be sure to add it next time.

Please note that there are two "official" Facebook discussion groups: "Servas International", a members-only group, and "SERVAS", an open discussion group.

SERVAS SOCIAL NETWORKS AND WEB SITES

- **SERVAS INTERNATIONAL**
FB (page): www.facebook.com/ServasInternational
International
FB (members): www.facebook.com/groups/2519241851
FB (open): www.facebook.com/groups/servas
Web: www.servas.org
- **SERVAS DENMARK**
FB: www.facebook.com/groups/servasdenmark
Web: www.servas.dk
- **SERVAS ESTONIA**
Web: www.emmk.ee/janc/servas
- **SERVAS FINLAND**
FB: www.facebook.com/servasfinland
Web: www.finland/servas.org
- **SERVAS FRANCE**
Web: www.servas-france.org
- **SERVAS GERMANY**
Web: www.servas.de
- **SERVAS GREECE**
FB Page: www.facebook.com/ServasGreece
Web: www.greece-servas.org
- **SERVAS HUNGARY**
Web: www.hungary.servas.org
- **SERVAS INDIA**
Web: www.servasbharat.org
- **SERVAS INDONESIA**
Web: www.servasindonesia.wordpress.com
- **SERVAS ISRAEL**
FB: www.facebook.com/pages/Servas-Israel/318802998214263
Web: www.israel.servas.org
- **SERVAS ITALY**
FB: www.facebook.com/servas.italia
Web: www.servas.it
- **SERVAS JAPAN**
Web: www.servas-japan.org
- **SERVAS JORDAN**
FB: <http://www.facebook.com/groups/Servas.Jordan>
Web: www.joy-or-above.com/support-groups/servas-jordan/
- **SERVAS KAZAKHSTAN**
Web: www.servas-kazakhstan.narod.ru/
- **SERVAS KENYA**
Web: www.pages.intnet.mu/servas/Kenya/
- **SERVAS MADAGASCAR**
Web: www.pages.intnet.mu/servas/Madagascar/
- **SERVAS MALAWI**
FB: www.facebook.com/servas.malawi
Web: www.pages.intnet.mu/servas/Malawi
- **SERVAS MAURITIUS**
Web: www.pages.intnet.mu/servas/Mauritius
- **SERVAS MEXICO**
FB: www.facebook.com/ServasMexico
Web: www.mexico.servas.org
- **SERVAS NETHERLANDS**
FB: www.facebook.com/groups/357680234308014
Web: www.servas-nederland.nl
- **SERVAS NEW ZEALAND**
Web: www.servas.org.nz
- **SERVAS NORWAY**
Web: norway.servas.org
- **SERVAS PAKISTAN**
FB: www.facebook.com/ServasPakistan
Web: pages.intnet.mu/servas/Pakistan
- **SERVAS POLAND**
Web: www.servas.pl
- **SERVAS PORTUGAL**
FB: www.facebook.com/ServasPortugal
Web: www.servasempotugal.blogspot.pt
- **SERVAS RUSSIA**
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Web: www.servasrussia.ru/
- **SERVAS SAMOA**
Web: www.pages.intnet.mu/servas/Samoa
- **SERVAS SOUTH AFRICA**
Web: www.pages.intnet.mu/servas/SouthAfrica
- **SERVAS SOUTH KOREA**
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FB: www.facebook.com/ServasSwitzerland
Web: www.servas.ch
- **SERVAS THAILAND**
FB: www.facebook.com/servasthailandfanpage
- **SERVAS TURKEY**
FB Page - www.facebook.com/servas.turkey
Web - www.servasturkiye.org
- **SERVAS UNITED STATES**
FB Page - www.facebook.com/us.servas
Web - www.ussevas.org
- **SERVAS URUGUAY**
Web: www.uruguay.servas.org/
- **SERVAS VIETNAM**
FB: www.facebook.com/ServasVietnam
Web: servasvietnam.blogspot.com
- **SERVAS ZAMBIA**
Web: www.pages.intnet.mu/servas/Zambia

**MORE SERVAS COUNTRY WEBS
CAN BE FOUND ON THE SERVAS
INTERNATIONAL
WEB SITE: WWW.SERVAS.ORG**

OTHER SERVAS-RELATED LINKS

- **SERVAS TRAVEL**
FB: www.facebook.com/groups/12708295429
- **RICK STEVES' EUROPE ARCHIVES**
ricksteves.com/graffiti/archives/servas.htm
- **SERVAS ON WIKIPEDIA**
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Servas



UTOPIA

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Christina helped kids to use their right to be kids using various dances and creative co-operative games. The little kids appeared in the garden where the activities took place very early in the mornings every morning showing no tiredness. The owner of the garden, Aunt Huriye, had lovely conversations with the kids and she encouraged them to pick up and eat ecologic cucumbers, tomatoes and cherries before breakfast. Serap, the mother of the triplets, tells the passion of their children to attend this programme with these words; "It is always hard for me to wake the kids up during school days. But when this programme starts every year three of them wake up themselves and leave home with a rush without breakfast and screaming; "we are going to Servas". Yes, they come to Servas. Christina had special time not only with the kids but also with adults. She woke up at 06.00 and went for a walk in the nature



with the people in the neighbourhood. The sweet kids of the village, so keen on literature had the chance to discover the world of poetry with literature teacher, Ferdus and poetry lover, İsa. Uygur was the correct person in the background to complete the connection between the human voice and the guitar. Uğur, Maths teacher, could easily persuade the kids that Maths can be an easy subject. Akan dedicates himself to make the village "a village of music". A number of kids had the pleasure of playing the guitar, Bağlama and percussion. He also created a fantastic atmosphere to watch movies at night with the voice of the crickets. The screen was the garden wall painted white. The kids sat and usually lied on the rugs and travelled with the heroes and heroines in the movies. The usually fell asleep before the films ended and were carried home on the back of their parents.

Selen often did the translation and make the program flew smoothly. She put her first step into the international arena at her early age as a school girl. I, as a Servas peace Secretary, helped kids learn and experience the idea of Servas by creating this Servas event in their village, taught them how to say and write "peace" in many languages, explained them not to discriminate, to respect to differences using so many examples from the world. They were so surprised to discover some ways of recycling with every day materials. For example

planting tomatoes and peppers in the plastic bottles and hanging them upside down was amazing for them.

The volunteers changed families every four or five days because we wanted to allow volunteers and families know as many people as they can to develop life-long relationships. They made special friendship in that short time. When they left they grew happy tears in their eyes. Maybe they didn't speak their languages very well but it was not difficult for their bodies to express their love. However they had a big complaint during their stay. It was when the host families insisted on eating more and more each time by saying in the local language, Arabic, 'Kili Kili' which means 'eat' 'eat' in English. When the volunteer friends passed by the neighbours every day they stopped by for a coffee and made strong connections with the sweet people. Servas volunteers also explored the roots of multicultural society, togetherness with differences when they visited the old streets, houses, the mosques, Allawi tombs, churches and the synagogue in the same street in Antakya. We discovered how the dreams of the children grew from the local to the universal level with their body in the fourth year of the Servas Live with us Share with us Programme.

Next event is coming soon. 5th Servas Live with Us Share with Us will be hold on July 06-16th2013, in the same place called Ekinci, in Antakya-HATAY/TURKEY.

Why don't you come live with us and share with us?

Things to consider...

Things you can teach: Languages, dance, music, chess, maths, wall decoration, pandomime, cooking, environmental issues, biology, art, toy making, drama, etc.

Event location: Ekinci-Antakya/Turkey. Ekinci is a town with 7 000 people living in here. It is 5 km far from the province called Antakya (Antiochia). The town and the province is liberal (can wear shorts, drink alcahol, etc. This ancient city which consists of a number of cultures and religions. Sightseeing&swimming tours are organised during the programme.

How much do you need to teach: 1,5 hours in the morning and 1,5 in the evening.

Sponsoring: No fund to sponsor the volunteers' travel expences and others.

Accomodotion: With welcoming local families-Staying with different families every three or four days. Food&drinks provided. Transfer from/to airport/bus station OK.

Weather during the programme: Not as hot as the neighbouring cities. 30 C average (July)

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Servas Peace Secretary of Turkey
www.servasturkiye.org
www.facebook.com/groups/95345139652

A 'Golden Rule' For Travelers & Hosts

By Alice Diamond,
Servas USA Complaints Committee

“What is hateful to you,
do not do to your fellowman.
This is the entire Law;
all the rest is commentary.”

- Talmud, Shabbat 31a

Now that the summer season is approaching, with an increase in visits, this is an excellent time for a friendly reminder. There is a reason why almost all faith traditions have an “ethic of reciprocity” that requires each person to engage with others fully aware of the two-way nature of every relationship. So the next time you are either a host or a traveler remember the Golden Rule, however you feel most comfortable in expressing it.

Which brings me to the number one “annoyance” we hear from travelers... that they have written to many hosts and no one has responded. We can understand that because of very busy schedules, hosts may feel a bit overwhelmed at times. But consider how the Servas traveler feels, not wanting to write to new hosts before hearing from those already contacted?

Here is a list of tips for both sides of this mutual encounter that I have found lead to greater success in arranging Servas visits.

Look them over so that the next time you are trying to arrange a Servas visit, or have the opportunity to be part of a traveler’s fond memories of your country, you’ll think about the Golden Rule and do the right thing.

Tips For A Better Travel & Hosting Experience

TIPS FOR THE TRAVELER

- Always put the word “Servas” in the Subject Line of your e-mail.
- Individualize your letter to indicate why you would like to meet this Servas host(s). Sure, a blanket request is easier, but it is far less likely to result in a positive response, since the host can usually spot it and automatically takes him or herself off the hook by assuming that “someone else will have already agreed.”
- If you commonly have trouble with people saying they never received your international e-mails, it may be that your e-mail server is on a “black-list.” You can see if any specific mail server is on these lists at www.mxtoolbox.com/blacklists.aspx by entering its IP address. Having just one spammer on the mail server you use can cause your mail to die in transit. It sounds unfair, but you can be punished merely for the company you unknowingly keep. If need be, try getting an e-mail address on any of the major providers such as Yahoo or Gmail or Aol. They will check to see if your server is blacklisted, and you can try to switch servers.
- Attach a copy of your scanned LOI to provide additional information. (This does not replace the requirement of bringing and showing your original LOI if a visit is arranged, but will provide supplementary information about you that may “click” with the host and demonstrate shared interests.)
- Remember that not everyone in every country stays as “glued” to their e-mail traffic as you may do. Some hosts take vacations without their iPads or computers, and most European vacations are far longer than that of the average American! Since we Americans like to go traveling when our hosts travel also, problems connecting are not too surprising. Aahh, how this can contribute to your study of cultural diversity!
- If you don’t receive responses through e-mail, try calling. Many people list mobile phone numbers in the directories, and even if on vacation, may just have their phone with them. How marvelous to find that, while out-of-town now, they will be ready to greet you on the dates you would like to schedule a visit. Whereas international phone calls used to be very expensive to make, I now have a phone card which allows calls to most destinations for less than five cents per minute,

and Skype to a landline is probably even less. (But remember if you leave a message, don’t expect your host to bear the cost of a long distance call in return; they may not know about cheaper options and the costs may sound daunting. Better to leave your e-mail address and ask them to write with a convenient time for you to connect.)

- If visiting a popular travel destination, try a visit with a host who may not be in the very center of the metropolitan area and thus gets fewer requests. Particularly if you are visiting a location with good public transportation, this may not be a big inconvenience.
- And finally, plan ahead and contact hosts early. If you put forth the effort and are patient, you may just be making a new friend for life.

TIPS FOR THE HOST

- If you are using a spam filter in e-mail, check that spam folder at least weekly for requests for visits that have landed there because your system does not recognize the address. Yes, spam filters are a blessing so that you don’t get 100 notices of on-line pharmacies each week, but I always find there are a few legitimate pieces of mail within the 100 or so real spams I get weekly. When this happens, be sure to follow the procedures to add that contact to your list of acceptable addresses. (Often this merely entails clicking on the name and choosing “add to contacts.”)
- If your e-mail provider has the ability to add identifier words that assure a given piece of mail is directed to you, be sure to add the word “Servas” and/or “Visit.” Not all e-mail providers have this capability, but if they do, it is usually called a “White List.” Recognize that this only affects junk detection. It won’t have any effect on messages your mail server won’t accept in the first place since they are from a black-listed provider.
- If the number of requests for hosting you get is really high (as it seems to be during Spring Break in San Diego!), consider creating a Word Document that simply says: “As much as I would like to host you, I am not available for the days you requested. Wishing you a lovely visit to San Diego.” When a request is received, simply click “Reply” and copy in the two sentences from the document.

HELP WANTED: SERVAS WEBMASTERS

Renee Gendron, one of Servas International's very appreciated collaborators, has decided to resign from her volunteer work as webmaster for Servas.org. Arun Bharatula is about to succeed Renee but more webmaster resources are needed, especially persons with different language skills.

We're now looking for volunteers who can speak and write Spanish and other major languages in combination with English.

Please note that there's an ongoing project to modernize and replace the outdated Servas website.

Interested? Email your CV to president@servas.org

For more details about the position please read the information at the following link: www.servas.org/#VolunteerWebmaster

HELP WANTED: SERVAS EDITORS/Writers

Servas International is seeking editors/writers for stories & articles to be published in SI News, on the new servas.org website currently in development and on SI's official Facebook page.

Knowledge of English, Spanish and other languages required. Translation ability a plus. Experience with writing and editing text for publication is preferred.

Email your CV to president@servas.org with cc to newsletter@servas.org.

WANTED: HOME EXCHANGE

Host "home exchange" wanted by australian servas couple for 3-12 months in 2014 or 2015. Anywhere in western europe, in exchange for our beachside home in Adelaide, South Australia. Reliable hosts since 1984. Email Julie: tourguidessa@hotmail.com

HELP WANTED: SERVAS ASST. TREASURER

Responsibilities include assisting current Servas Treasurer Miroslaw Wasilewski with some of the many tasks associated with the job with the possible opportunity to succede him as treasurer after 2015.

Email your CV to treasurer@servas.org, with cc to president@servas.org

Email your classified ad in .txt or .doc format to: newsletter@servas.org



VOLUNTEERING

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unforgettable experience.

I had my meals at my host's family house, sometimes I helped preparing the meal, and then the food was cooked in a community oven, which is very practical. The father of the family is a very nice man that, like most of the men in Ekinci, works in Saudi Arabia. When he is at home he shares with his wife the house tasks, which I think is simply wonderful.

There were no signs of war threats, ...but there was some political tension floating around, due to the recent events on Taksim Square and other places in Turkey. People were united for a common cause, and I shared a couple of moments of protests, both in Ekinci, and later in Istanbul.

During the program week, Mehmet teaches the kids on how to use a camera, and the kids take hundreds of pictures of the environment and faces around them. They can take pictures for instance of animals, insects, the garbage on the streets, on family members, babies, on houses, etc. I think that is a great way of making them aware of the reality, both

beautiful and/or ugly, that is around us daily, You can find some of these pictures on the Facebook page "Live with us, share with us"

On the last day of the program, everybody was very excited: we were going to have the closure show. The whole village was invited and in a spirit of joy, the children performed for us. They sang and played instruments, they performed a theatre play, they did some pantomime and recited some very emotive poems. I loved it !!! And the following day we all went for a walk in the field and had a breakfast/picnic, under some olive trees, shading from the intense heat, sharing food that we had brought along and followed by a huge jump in a pool nearby, with clothes on and everything. I still have the image of a big group of children and adults, lying with their wet clothes on the grass, all side by side in perfect harmony, getting the warmth and peaceful embrace from the sun.

Next year i hope I can come again, and I am already making plans on what kind of activities to have with the children. And I wish this small and happy report has made you, who reads this, want to come too and... live with us, share with us. In peace and friendship.

TYPES OF ARTICLES APPROPRIATE FOR PUBLICATION IN SI NEWS

Global calendar items • Articles, opinion pieces, travel stories with a Servas theme • Letters to the Editor • Short quotes regarding peace/Servas • Servas travel experiences, peace projects • Web sites of interest to Servas members • Questions about Servas

TIPS ON SUBMITTING STORIES TO SERVAS INTERNATIONAL NEWS

SERVAS NEWS is an INTERNATIONAL newsletter. Events or announcements of interest only to an individual country's members will not be accepted for publication. Also, long reports, such as technical and financial data, should be posted on the Servas web site. Send material by email to: add_to_website@servas.org.

1. Assume the reader is new to SERVAS and knows nothing about your story. Include the Who, Why, What, Where and When in the first paragraph. Remember, you're writing a STORY or presenting INFORMATION not an sending an email or letter to a friend.
2. Give your story a HEADLINE and, if possible, a SUBHEAD, that gives the reader an idea of what is being presented.



3. Include your name, Servas title (if any), country and email immediately following the subhead.
4. Make your article engaging and interesting, and pertinent to a global audience.
5. Avoid abbreviations so your message is clear.
6. Keep articles to one page if possible.
7. Spell check and proof your story, twice. We will not edit your copy unless there are space limitations.
8. Look at this or previous issues of SERVAS INTERNATIONAL NEWS for examples of story format and structure.

If you have any questions send E-mail to: newsletter@servas.org

REMEMBER: What you write is what we'll post. Please thoroughly proof your article/letter before submitting it.

IMPORTANT TECHNICAL TIPS

- Prepare your story in a text application such as Microsoft Word, TextEdit. Save file as .doc, .rtf or .txt format and attach to e-mail. (If it is not possible to use a text application software you can write your story in the body of an e-mail).
- Avoid fancy text formatting and do not double-space after a sentence, or add a space before a comma. Remember, a computer is not a typewriter.
- Attach photos to e-mail in .jpg format. DO NOT PLACE PHOTOS INTO THE TEXT DOCUMENT. Use file names that match your story (i.e., "SYLE-meeting_01.jpg").
- Photo captions (if any) should be keyed to the photos (photo A, photo B, etc.) and listed at the end of your story as lines of text.
- Include Country/Article Headline in the subject header of ALL e-mails relating to the story.

Translate Servas International News Into Your Country's Language

We have received several requests for help with translating the newsletter into different languages. We want SERVAS INTERNATIONAL NEWS to be accessible to as many members as possible, so, to help toward achieving that goal, we are making current issues of SERVAS INTERNATIONAL NEWS available to any Servas member country who would like to convert an issue into their native language.



As of the Nov/Dec 2013 issue, SERVAS INTERNATIONAL NEWS is produced using Adobe InDesign CC v9.1 for Macintosh. A press-ready, packaged file will contain all the fonts, photos and linked graphics used in the current issue along with the complete InDesign file. You should have either a Mac or Windows version of Adobe InDesign CC v9.1 or better to open the file but if you have an older version just let us know. Some fonts may not convert properly from Mac to Windows so some adjustments might be necessary after opening the file in Windows.

If you do not have Adobe InDesign and want to produce a version of SERVAS INTERNATIONAL NEWS using another software application you can still make use of the images and graphics contained in the packaged file and use a PDF copy of the current issue as a design and production template or a guide to rebuild your copy of SERVAS INTERNATIONAL NEWS. Experience with the preferred software and producing publications or other materials is highly recommended.

To receive a complete, press-ready packaged file, your country's Servas National Secretary should send a request by email to newsletter@servas.org. Instructions on where and how to obtain the file will be furnished at that time.