

# servas INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Vol. 5 No. 2 - October/November 2015

## *Presenting...* **SERVAS ONLINE!**

*SEE PG. 6*

### **IN THIS ISSUE:**

<b>Which Way Servas? .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Internship At The U.N. ....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Peace Through Hospitality .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Peace School Of Servas .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Servas Youth? .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Why I Like Servas? .....</b>	<b>15</b>

**And Much More!**



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Vol. 5 No. 2 - October/November 2015

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## The Kowhai

The genus of *Sophora*, or Kowhai is regarded by most New Zealanders as their national flower.

Kowhai are among the most beautiful of the many flowering trees in New Zealand and may indeed be included among the most beautiful trees in the world.

## Editor's Corner

By Terry Squire Stone  
[newsletter@servas.org](mailto:newsletter@servas.org)



I'm looking at a Kiwi - no, not the fruit, but the person! Trish Janes, a very gracious Servas host (who has a splendid B&B here in Auckland) has been pampering me for five days prior to the GA! I've never been this far "East" and even after 37 hours of travel time (from Greece) I'm thrilled to be here in New Zealand for the Servas triennial international conference. I feel so special!

Sad to say, however, I think I'm becoming redundant as the SINews editor. With the introduction of the new Servas web site ([page 6](#)), all news items, member stories and international announcements will be posted directly to the web. We'll see how things have shaken out at the conclusion of the conference. I'm sure there will be lots of ideas on how the new web site will affect

the presentation of SINews. Oh, I see quite a jolly and exciting few days ahead of us!

So, this could be goodbye from all of us at Newsletter Central. The entire staff thanks you for letting us play in this sandbox called SINews, and I've given permission for them all to car pool to the *Delphi Coffee Shop and Ouzo Bar* to have a gala farewell party (on their own dime, of course!).

Enjoy this issue, it's a pip; a lot *has* happened, *is* happening and *will* happen. We will let you know how we will be sharing your ideas/stories/opinions in the future... just as soon as we know!!! 

President's Message .....	4
Servas - Part Of The Sharing Economy .....	
Notes from SICOGA - Survey Results .....	4
Here Are Your 2015 Servas Nominees .....	5
The New Servas Web Site Is Here! .....	6
Which Way Servas? .....	7
Internship At The UN In Geneva, A Great Opportunity .....	8
What's Happening At The U.N. In New York .....	8
Peace Through Hospitality.....	9
Diversity Dinners .....	
Peace School of Servas .....	10
Antakya, Turkey .....	
How Can We Raise Awareness About Servas Among Young People? .....	13
My Servas Experiences - Chapter 7 .....	14
How To Organise A Regional Meeting .....	14
Why I Like Servas? .....	15
"Mamma, shall we go to Santiago?" .....	17
Building A Canoe From 300 Plastic Bottles .....	20
The Ecological Awareness Project .....	
The New Servas Logo .....	21
Presenting A Strong, Unified Identity Around The World .....	
We're At Your Service! .....	21
About the Servas Image & Design Team .....	
How To Prepare Your Submission For Publication In Servas International News.....	22
Servas Continues To Grow On The World Wide Web .....	23

**IMPORTANT NOTICE!**  
 Servas Palestine was created in the spring of 2015. A big step for Servas Israel and the Servas members in Palestine.

**Why I Like Servas?**  
 by *Sergiy Kibitkin*  
[Page 15](#)



## UPCOMING INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS & EVENTS



# Welcome to Sweden

## International meeting in Uppsala August 2016

Servas Sweden invites Servas members to join them for a week in the historic city of Uppsala. The number of visitors will be limited to 30 persons. During that week you will stay with Servas families in and around Uppsala and there will be a full programme of activities.

**Dates: 24 - 31 August 2016**

During the week we will visit different places of interest in and around Uppsala. There will also be social activities together with the other participants and local Servas members.

You are also welcome to stay on after the week in Uppsala and visit other Servas hosts in other parts of Sweden.

**Read more: <http://servasuppsala.webnode.com//>**



Email your meeting & events announcements in .txt or .doc format to: [newsletter@servas.org](mailto:newsletter@servas.org)

# Servas - Part Of The Sharing Culture

By Jonny Sägänger, President, Servas International



In today's world there's a lot of talk about sharing. We share experiences in text and photos via social media. You can enjoy the convenience of having a car without having to own it by being member of a car pool and share one with others. You can find a ride with BlaBlaCar and share the cost of petrol with the driver and other BlaBlaCar members. You can rent out part of you home via AirBnB and your and your visitors can both enjoy the personal experience of meeting someone new while you earn a small income.

These are commercial aspects of the growing so-called "sharing or collaborative economy". More and more people realize how convenient and economical it is to not own things and to share the financial burden of expensive property, like a home or a car.

It also means that if we share more we can reduce the use of scarce and diminishing raw materials such as minerals and oil.

My conclusion is that it has become fashionable to share. It's "in" and "cool" to think about how our limited resources are used and the importance of putting a stop to the destruction of mother earth's natural environment.

The development is well in tune with one of the definitions of peace\* that is used inside Servas:

*Green peace;*

*being in peace with nature creates a better world.*

This movement towards sustainable development fits Servas very well, and it's a development that creates conditions for our organisation to grow significantly over the next decades. I think one key for us is to support the United Nations member states initiative for a 2030 Agenda with 17 global goals for a sustainable world, in which all people should be permitted to build their lives, safe

from war and climate disasters, persecution and poverty.

I can assure you there will be a lot of discussions about the United Nations 2030 Agenda during the Servas International Conference and General Assembly in New Zealand October 10-16. There will be discussions around motions, during workshops and in topic groups. The aim is that some concrete initiatives for actions will come out of all the good ideas and well-meaning words.

By showing our support for the United Nations 2030 Agenda with words, actions and constructive criticism Servas can show the world that we sincerely want to be part of a such worthy cause.

I'm convinced that in this setting Servas will benefit from our status as a not-for-profit non-governmental organisation. As a non-profit organisation Servas members do not need to be concerned that their personal data we might be exploited for commercial purposes.

Servas members have always shared. We have shared memories, experiences, views on life, politics, religion, gender issues and hundreds of other subjects. And we have shared our homes. Some of us have also swapped our homes and cars with each other.

As long as there's trust between the members of Servas and a willingness to trust others we can share all kinds of things. 🌱

\*Other definitions of "peace" being used in Servas: *Positive peace - a peaceful society that is based on social justice, not just the absence of war. Human rights peace - peace needs to be based on each individuals individual rights to expression, to travel et cetera. Inner peace - if you're in peace with yourself you're at better odds to be peaceful with others.*

## NOTES FROM SICOGA Inside the Minds at the Servas International Conference

as reported by your roving reporter, Terry Stone in New Zealand

What are those people thinking? What are their hopes and dreams? What do they think they're going to be doing? Ever wonder what is in the minds of the delegates you send to the Servas International General Assemblies?

Well, SI Exco did and they created a survey on SurveyMonkey.com asking 185 conference attendees what they expected to happen during the General Assembly, and what they would like to see happen afterwards.

Based on the information gleaned from 44 answers (out of 185 polled) to these two questions, I can now give you the skinny (and it has to be skinny, you can see how much space has been allotted to me):

- Most participants want Servas to rush into creating global peace as quickly as possible, with as many new and young members as possible, using every bit of new technology available to us.
- On the other hand, many participants are here to create new, and rejuvenate old, friendships.
- A shocking number of people want to get down to productive work, work, work here at the conference! None of this "kumbayah" stuff for them.
- Others would like to tell their country's unique situation (like me) and look for "outside-the-box" solutions.
- A few members would like to see a change in our demographics, especially among travellers (our travellers now tend to be more from the richer first world, either visiting itself or visiting the second/third world, with very little traffic in the opposite direction). This is a comment that a lot of us agree with, but what do we want to do to change that?
- One respondent would like to show the location of all member on an online world map with no country boundary lines. Interesting idea.
- A few people would like to know what Exco has been up to over the last 3 years, complementing a few who are looking forward to the elections
- And, one soul wants SYLE programs for adults!

So now you know what's up. Stay tuned for more results as they pour in. (We will post actual results, someplace, as yet unknown)

# Here Are Your 2015 Servas Nominees!

The SI Nominations Committee has been busy collecting forms from candidates who are running for positions in SI Exco and the international committees.

If you are thinking of running and are wondering what a three-year term in one of the positions actually involves you can read about it in the "Job Descriptions". You are also welcome to contact the Nominations Committee (nominations [at] servas.org) and we will provide more information or put you in contact with a person in the role now or someone with similar experience.

When you have decided to run, you can read all about the nomination process in "Nominations Procedure and Guideline".

For job descriptions, nominations procedure, and nominations form go to:

[www.servas.org/sicoga2015/general-assembly-elections.php](http://www.servas.org/sicoga2015/general-assembly-elections.php)

Additional elected roles are Distant Vote Coordinator, and News Editor. Job Descriptions and Statutes Committee, Youth Leadership Committee.

Please share this information in your National Group. Nominations will remain open until immediately before the elections, which will take place during the General Assembly.



<b>As of 16 September 2015 the following candidates have been confirmed:</b>			
<i>Role</i>	<i>Candidate Surname</i>	<i>First name</i>	<i>Country</i>
President	Sågänger	Jonny	Sweden
Vice president	Capezzuto Greenhough	Roberto Ann	Italy GB
General Secretary	Pattison	Penny	Canada
Treasurer	Cao	Aneris	Chile
Peace secretary	Beudet Seelig	Normand Margaret	Canada GB
Host List Coordinator	Philippo Colangelo	Arnoud Pablo	Netherlands Argentina
Archivist	Koster	Anna	USA
Audit Committee 1	Burrowes	Ashley	New Zealand
Audit Committee 2	Kakinda	Emmanuel	Uganda
Conflict Resolution Committee 1	Henner	Martin	USA
Development Committee 1	Dzierżawska	Ewa	Poland
Development Committee 2	Dominguez	Miguel	Spain
Development Committee 3	Rutayisire	Fidele	Rwanda
Development Committee 4	Stapelfeldt	Wolfgang	Germany
Development Committee 5	Buinova	Kristina	Russia
Nominations Committee 1	Thestrup	Susanne	Denmark
Nominations Committee 2	Peterson	Dianne	Singapore

“Aotearoa! New Zealand! How lucky I am! I am going to visit the other side of the world, the land of the Kiwis.

I have bought my plane ticket so let's find some nice people to meet. I access the Servas web site at [www.servas.org](http://www.servas.org) and log in with my username and password.

Great, it works!

Now to find a host. Let's click on "Find Members".

I have to enter a search criteria so I click on "Select a Country?", select New Zealand and click "Submit".

Members found: 295! That's too many. I'll have to add a more selective search criteria.

I click on "More Options", choose "Member Type, Host", type "Farmer" in the text field and click on "Submit".

Members found: 45

Good. I can see their locations on the map but I want to find those who live in the region I'll be visiting.

I click on "Select a servas region" and choose "Waikato" from the drop-down menu. Seven names appear.

Now I just select each member's profile and send them personal hosting request directly from the web site. Oh! I must not forget to attach my brand new "Letter of Introduction" that I created in my online profile! ”

## The New Servas Web Site Is Here!

by Bernard Andrieu, Servas France

You may think the experience on the left is a fantasy but you would be wrong. It is an example of what your experience will be like when using the new ServasOnline System (SOLSYS)! and you'll be hearing a lot more about it over the next year. As a traveller you will be able to find the member(s) you would like to visit, online, directly from the Servas web site. As a host, you will have entered your profile (name, country, occupation, interests, etc.) so that travellers can easily contact you.

Because members will enter their own data into the SOLSYS system coordinators will have

less work to do and can follow, with more accuracy, the administrative aspect of their member's activity in order to concentrate on the more rewarding parts of their job. Additionally, SOLSYS treasurers will have access to up-to-date data related to their member's activity.

In the near future you will have the opportunity to make direct contact with other Servas members around the world — directly on the Servas web site. You will be able to communicate with each other on subjects of similar interests just like you would on most social media sites and you will create discussion groups on issues of mutual concern and importance.

SOLSYS is being developed step-by-step. New functions will be added over time in accordance to Servas countries suggestions. For the system to be satisfactorily operational, all Servas countries should adopt SOLSYS as soon as it is launched. It will reinforce the feeling of belonging to a community of shared interests in peace and tolerance.

Last but not least, you will notice that SOLSYS is currently available in four languages: English, Spanish, French, and German. We'd like to open it to more. If you would like to volunteer as a translator for your language please contact Servas Exco at [exco@servas.org](mailto:exco@servas.org)!



# Which Way Servas?

by Maria Fernanda, Servas Brazil



The Servas Brazil National Meeting was held Sept. 4 to 7 in São Paulo. It was a good moment to share experiences, reflect about our accomplished activities and foreseeable expectations, review our steps and plan new strategies to strengthen Servas (and Servas values) in Brazil. We agreed to start our meeting with a debate about Servas identity and the concept of peace that is guiding us (or should guide us). It took us a whole morning and certainly the ideas that came up at that moment were spread through other discussions. It was a very special and salutary moment indeed.

## What is Servas today?

- A host-and-traveler network based on friendship?
- A real friendship or only a matter of discourse?
- A network for peace?
- Which peace? Positive peace (cf. Johan Galtung), it means, collaborative and supportive relations, or only the absence of conflicts? (\*conceptual contribution from the Brazilian member Alvany Santiago).
- A self-referring organization? An open-to-dialogue organization?

We discussed why and when Servas may be at risk to become an organization for “medium-class interests”, reflecting all power structures in course nowadays in the world (Male/ White/ Rich or medium class/ North Hemisphere – North American or European/ only English-speaking etc.).

## How much is Servas Brazil representative of Brazilian society?

## How much is SI EXCO representative of Servas countries?

## How much is Servas representative of the world?

We can't delegate only to United Nations the concepts of peace we want to follow, I am sorry – and, “No”, in answer to someone who posed me that question, I don't think the solution is simply “giving up UN”. “Giving up” or “let it be like it is” are always the most comfortable and easiest solutions. Does the UN have the monopoly on the concept of peace?



## What kind of Servas do we want?

In our meeting we also talked about the urgent issues of today. Issues such as refugees (since Brazil is also receiving refugees from Haiti, Bolivia, African countries, Palestinians —and medium-class Syrians, too) and marginalized social groups in our country. This is the world we live in, as Servas members, as citizens, as human beings. Well, we've reached some answers, but we're left with more, and new questions – would they be seeds of change, seeds of peace into ourselves? Perhaps.

I'm sharing all this with you because I've been thinking we have lots of necessary and not-so-necessary motions to discuss during SICOGA 2015, but we've been missing the opportunity to go back to some important values in Servas and face them appropriately. In this way Servas can become a white elephant, very bureaucratic. Perhaps we can find a small moment during our busy agenda in SICOGA 2015 to experience deeply what Servas is. And understanding why we are there.

Please, note, my friends, I don't want to change the SICOGA agenda, or motions, or whatever. These lines are only a sharing of someone in her farewell (from her NS position, from her international Servas meetings etc.). Only food for thought.

The very little contribution of Servas Brazil was already done with our motion about transforming Spanish into a Servas working language. We – Portuguese-speakers – are glad with the movement that the motion is bringing to Servas International. This message is all about that: movement, inclusion, openness. :) And. an attempt to spread seeds of (positive) peace. 🌱

# Internship At The UN In Geneva, A Great Opportunity

by Danielle SERRES,  
Servas International Peace Secretary



Lore Purroy, Servas Spain member, intern with Servas International at the UN in Geneva, during the 29th HRC Session. June 21st, 2015

**L**ore Purroy, from Servas Spain, undertook an internship with SI at the UN in Geneva from 15 June to 3 July 2015. Lore was able to attend the entire 29th regular session of the Human Rights Council.

The HRC is the principal United Nations intergovernmental body responsible for human rights. Composed of 47 Member States, it meets in at least three sessions per year in Geneva, Switzerland – March (4 week), June and September (each 3 weeks). Access to these meetings is very restricted and it is a great opportunity to look behind the scenes .

Attending the meetings of the HRC means to meet people from around the world who are passionate about human rights. New friendships are established quickly.

During the 29th session of the HRC Lore was able to meet with Servas members from Germany, France and the UK. On request every Servas member has the opportunity to attend. See SI side event organized in Sept. 2014.

The most fascinating meetings take place next to the HRC in the form of side events. Side events can be organized by accredited NGOs in order to discuss topics related to the work of the Human Rights Council. They usually consist of a moderator and 4 to 5 panelists who give a presentation on a specific theme followed by an interactive dialogue. Side events are a great opportunity to learn more about particular HR situations.

During her internship Lore did not only have the opportunity to listen to side events, but was also allowed to take a look behind the scenes and meet panelists as well as learn how the presentations are prepared. In the picture Lore after a side event organized by the International Youth and Student Movement for the United Nations (ISMUN) that discussed the issue of Western Sahara and occupation.

Accredited NGOs have the possibility to deliver oral

**U.N. INTERNSHIP - continued on page 16**

## WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE UNITED NATIONS IN NEW YORK CITY?

### Planning for Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals

By Jeanne Devine, Servas International representative at UN-NYC, April, 2015

**W**henever I am in New York, I welcome the opportunity to attend UN hearings that are open to NGO's (non-governmental organizations). In April, I attended several and thus broadened my perspective on complex issues affecting our world and the concern we all have to nurture and care for it.

The first I attended was "Nuclear Weapons and the Moral Compass" presented by the Global Security Institute. The essence of this hearing was that our security lies not in nuclear deterrence – based on preparedness for a nuclear attack – nor in the management of nuclear weapons. Rather, we should embrace Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon's call for a nuclear weapons convention to establish a verifiable, universal elimination of nuclear weapons. Recognizing the immorality of testing, building, and possessing nuclear weapons, collectively – governments, UN, churches, mosques, synagogues – must work toward the complete abolition of such dangerous weapons.

The next day I listened in to "Summary Discussion . . . on Oceans and the Law of the Sea". Through panels and interactive discussions, delegates of 68 countries and 16 intergovernmental organizations and NGOs discussed issues in preparation for the Nov/Dec, 2015 UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in Paris, France. The topic was the essential role of oceans and current pressures on oceans and their resources, in particular overfishing, pollution, coastal runoff, invasive species, impact of tourism on vulnerable coastal areas, degradation of coral reefs, small-scale fisheries, climate change and ocean acidification which jeopardize the oceans' ecosystem with implications for food security and livelihoods and challenges to local and global economies. Several needs were discussed in detail:

Global indicators – practical, policy-relevant, transparent, and action-oriented – to ensure a scientific approach for providing input and review into the governance of ocean activities

Scientific data – on which to base policy-making, particularly in Arctic and Antarctic where climate change is altering usage patterns; and cooperation among scientists in observation, data collection, monitoring, mitigation of coastal hazards, and transfer of marine technology

Monitoring and effective governance of fisheries at regional and global levels, diversification of species fished, data collection, participatory decision-making, involvement of stakeholders and communities.

As Servas hosts and travelers, we become aware of peace, human rights, and environmental issues impacting countries whose citizens we are privileged to meet. We care about our global neighbors and learn about issues that impact us locally and globally. Through discussion and reflection at all levels, we become involved in creating a brighter future for our children and world. As members of an NGO with UN representation, we are challenged to learn about upcoming actions that will be part of the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). 🌱

## Peace Through Hospitality Diversity Dinners

by *Stephanie Downs Hughes, Ph.D.,  
Humanist Feminist Caucus*

Many people around the globe today, in so-called developed countries and less developed areas, are aware of and upset by the inequities that they feel and see around them. Violence in many forms is all too common, too frequent, and implants fear. They/We yearn to be in a very different setting and with others around us to having a different mindset: “live and let live”. We long to be able to do constructive things so that we can be immersed in a community where fairness, justice, is growing and expanding.

“Peace through Justice” is a principle promoted by many people who categorize themselves in many different ways – many as religious or spiritual, others as skeptics or freethinkers. Diverse people from around the globe (though perhaps not all of the most rich and powerful) can come to agree in theory that fair treatment of everyone is a good way, probably the best way, to encourage a “live and let live” effect. When nations and communities and individuals within identity groups of various kinds feel they are being dealt with by others more justly than before, they have less motivation to resort to violence to defend themselves and to go on the offensive to attempt to dominate. Fairness and sharing of resources promises to be crucial to long-

term solutions -- to reducing the impetus for intergroup conflicts and the sufferings of so many caught in them.

Various ways exist that jump start and advance a fair play ethic and process. One that is easily accessible and fast is: Peace through Hospitality. Called by various names, this approach is being enjoyed in various places around the globe. The leadership of our program is happy to help anyone anywhere start such a series. Local publicity from one area explains the concept:

### Your Invitation to Join

Enliven and enrich your social life by joining Diversity Dinners this year! Many of us as “members” of certain heritage, belief, work, political, and other “identity” groups tend to spend time mostly with “our own kind”. However since 1997, Diversity Dinners have been acquainting folks in and near Naperville with “other kinds” of really interesting people. v13

You’d be placed with a congenial group of about 10 people of various backgrounds and values, who will get to know each other at Saturday night cooperative suppers that begin around 7 pm. We take turns hosting in our homes -- gathering

with the same group once every 4-6 weeks over 7+ months. Each participant brings something for each meal. It’s easy and delicious! Pairs and singles are welcome. We talk about ourselves, our families, identity groups and communities; about life for others here and elsewhere; and about our issues, politics, concerns and ambitions for the future. Further explanation is at [www.USServas.org](http://www.USServas.org) -- on the homepage, under Projects.

Most starts are in Sep/Oct but anyone may apply anytime year round. Applicants send to 916 Royal Blackheath Ct, Naperville IL 60563 a few lines about themselves and a small annual fee made out to “S. Hughes (DivDin)” that defrays our administrative expenses. Questions are welcome at 630/420-4233 or via [SDownsHughes@yahoo.com](mailto:SDownsHughes@yahoo.com). Discover the exhilaration of collaborative hospitality and wide-ranging conversation with fascinating folks. 🌱

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*Stephanie Downs HUGHES, Ph.D. is a Consulting Sociologist and peace-through-justice activist. She directs Just Views (see [DuPagePeace.org](http://DuPagePeace.org)) and Diversity Dinners, serves as Co-chair of the Feminist Caucus of the American Humanist Association, and on the Board of the United Nations NGO USServas.*

## KNOTTED GUN SCULPTURE

### New York, New York

“Non-Violence” (also known as “The Knotted Gun”) is a pro-peace sculpture by Swedish artist Carl Fredrik Reuterswård, designed in late 1980 and inspired by the shooting death of his pal, John Lennon. It was given to the UN by the government of Luxembourg in 1988

See more at:

[www.roadsideamerica.com/story/26878#sthash.6DM9lj7P.dpuf](http://www.roadsideamerica.com/story/26878#sthash.6DM9lj7P.dpuf)



*Jeanne Devine at the entrance to the UN, April 2015.*

*“We inhabit a universe that is characterized by diversity.”*

- Desmond Tutu

## ALL ABOUT DIVERSITY DINNERS

by Jeanne Devine, SI Representatives at UN NYC.

Diversity Dinners have become the highlight of participants’ social lives. They expand more than our culinary appreciation and skills — they expand our minds and our community networks! The so-called “feminine” virtues of cooking and nourishing, cooperating and sharing that reside in both genders are actualized at Diversity Dinners fostering civil dialogue and interpersonal understanding.

Participants discover that they can deal amicably with the same kinds of issues confronted at workshops on conflict management and peace building. They realize that, simply because we are human, with individual histories and personalities, of different genders and cultures, both similarities and differences are to be expected. Different outlooks and opinions, disagreements and disputes cannot be avoided; they are natural, normal, inevitable. So instead of trying to ignore, hide, or suppress such differences, think of them differently: As fascinating, and useful — for building creative and fair solutions to the problems we face. Sharing cooperative meals hosted in our own homes makes exploration of even touchy issues possible, palatable and productive.

Consider joining the “peace through hospitality movement”. Start a Diversity Dinner group in your area! Making and breaking bread together is a simple old-fashioned recipe for fostering sharing and acceptance which breeds fairness and peace among partners and strangers who become collaborators and friends. 🌱

# Peace School of Servas

## Antakya, Turkey

by Mehmet Ateş Servas Member/Turkey  
Programme Coordinator  
mehmettates@yahoo.com



Children making peace symbol.

*“I do not want the peace that  
passeth understanding.  
I want the understanding  
which bringeth peace.”*

- Helen Keller

Servas Turkey has been running international volunteering Programme for children called Live with Us Share with Us (LUSUP) for 7 years now. The Programme takes place in a village of Antakya, Turkey every year between the dates July 06-16th. Local and International Servas members come to the village, stay with local families and teach local children (more than 70) whatever they know usually in an informal way in the gardens, streets or house yards. The topics are usually peace, music, art, environmental issues, drama, chess, storytelling, games, sports, languages, etc. The objective of the programme is to introduce peace, open new horizons in the lives of children when they are very young and bring the international perspective to the village and to create an opportunity for the Servas volunteers to experience the local culture and share their knowledge and background. For detailed information and archive for 7 years; [www.facebook.com/groups/95345139652](http://www.facebook.com/groups/95345139652)

I heard a joyful voice of a small girl asking me; when is the Servas School starting? It was the 6-year-old child; Tuana. I remember her attending the Servas Live with Us Share with Us Children Programme (LUSUP) last year. She looks bigger now. I notice the new teeth growing in her smiling mouth. So cute. What a lovely name she has found for the things we are doing with the kids every year; Servas School. Yes, it is a school. What does the school look like then? Well, it is not a typical school that everyone knows well. This school is located in the green area of vegetables and fruit trees. The gardens, house yards, the stairs and the rooms are the classrooms of the school. The teachers of the school are the Servas ([www.servas.org](http://www.servas.org)) volunteers coming different countries and different cities of Turkey and from the village. Different



Indian volunteer doing yoga with local people.

cultures, art, music, games, dance and peace experience of the world is carried to this school and then to the village called Ekinçi in Antakya/Turkey by the volunteers. On the other hand, the volunteers are exposed to Antakya which has a vast multicultural, historical and natural richness. Then they share this experience with the rest of the world when they leave the village.

In this school, there is no formality, no curriculum, no registration and absolutely attendance is not compulsory. There is a direct mutual learning, experience share, language learning and cultural understanding at the school. What subjects are taught in this school? Actually, the volunteers teach whatever they know. However, the basic subjects are peace and cultures. The philosophy of Servas is based on these subjects, isn't it? Live with Us Share with Us Children Program (LUSUP) is an unusual event which aims to introduce these values to the kids in their early ages. That means, the seeds of peace and idea of being a world citizen are planted in the heart of the kids in this crucial periods of their lives. Since different volunteers come to the village to

**PEACE SCHOOL - continued on page 11**

## PEACE SCHOOL

*continued from pg. 10*

work with kids every year the topics, experience and background they share with kids are also different. The children are always interested in the program activities, games and workshops as the volunteers are not the same ones every year. That makes the Servas School quite different than normal schools.

We have had a variety of topics and activities in the program this year again. Not surprisingly the number of windows of the kids and local people which opens to the world have increased and diversified. Once the volunteers live with the local families, they experience the life in its everyday routine with its smell, bilingual (Turkish-Arabic) conversations and good taste of music which is the combination of the Middle Eastern, Anatolian and European ways of life in Antakya.

Around 90 children (aged 06-14) attended the event activities during the seventh LUSUP this year. Every morning, the children left their houses and moved towards the Servas Campus like snails. They filled the Servas School classrooms; the large house yard, under the orange trees, the balcony of the house where they could watch the panorama of Antakya. Shortly, every empty spot of the area was filled with the kids and volunteers. The children and the volunteers were usually in the vegetable and fruit gardens with the owner of the house; Aunt Huriye and neighbor farmers. Coming from India, Ulhas and Sumon shared the Indian culture, yoga, vegetarian lifestyle and multilingual experience of India with

the children and the volunteers. Also, Sumon woke up at 07.00 O'clock every day and did yoga with the local people in the neighborhood and made Yoga their unusual habit. One of the Yoga participants, Hayat says; "I didn't know Yoga could be such a nice thing. I should go on practicing it after the Indian friends leave." Sumon cooked for the local people at nights and the street smelled India for some time. This kind lady had nice time with local people singing and dancing for them. Sumon and Ulhas learnt about the local dances, the food, music, the languages, the economy and political situation of Turkey in return.

Coming from the outskirts of Alp Mountains in France to a village of Turkey near Syria, Janine (65) sat on the ground under the fig tree with the kids every day and taught them French songs and words. She introduced the children the map of Europe. Janine helped these little travelers imagine their future trips by showing the pictures and videos of geography of France and the city life of Janine's town-Annecy. Being energetic and good with children, Janine experienced the 'little-free with no loneliness life style' in Ekinci Village of Antakya which is different from the typical European cities daily life; 'much freedom with loneliness'. She learnt some Arabic and Turkish words from the kids who grow up bilingual. She sent photos of peaceful life of the area despite the fights in Syria to her friends who had tried to stop her travelling to this city near the border. By the way, this program also aims to keep feelings of peace live in the hearts of the children and local

people despite the cruel violence and killings going on in Syria and other parts of the world. That's why; we did Fly your Kite for Peace activity with a local association called SAGID on the second longest beach of the world (14 km) in Samandağ which is the neighboring town of Syria. One of the kids, Ege, asked me while flying the kite very high in the sky joyfully; "Do you think the kids in Syria can see my kite now?" I could not give him an answer but only smiled.

The local sacred places of Antakya such as mosques, Ziyareths (Allawi's), churches (Ortodox, Catholic and Protestants) and a synagogue were visited. The artists; Zeynep&Naim held the hands of kids to teach them the art of drawing on wood with fire. The local artists focused on multicultural and local values of Antakya in their works. The artists Musa and Ediz coming from the local art faculty of the university painted peace, Servas and the world in the imagination of the children with the children in the center of the village.

We went to visit the biggest library of Antakya to create the chance of discovering the rich collection of the library (60.000 books) and the tradition of reading in Antakya. We did joint activities with the library workers. Ümmü Hanım, the library director, was very curious and open-minded that she wanted to learn everything about the libraries of India and France. French and Indian volunteers told us about the library systems in their countries. She also shared her library activities with the guests. She said at the end; "What a big chance for me to have the people of the world (Janine, Sumon) in this library. I am going to practice at

*Children playing games.*

least some of the ideas I got from them soon."

The volunteers and kids learnt the Art of Marbling from an artist at the library. They could practice art too. Hasan, one of the local volunteers, taught kids the Arabic alphabet, how to read and write their and their parents' names. The aim was to create awareness towards Arabic which is the fading ancient language of the area. It was not only Arabic we focused on during the whole program. The Servas Multilingual Choir conducted by Zuleyha sang the songs of other languages of Antakya such as Turkish, Armenian, Hebrew and Kurdish. The concert they gave to the local people at the Servas Party at the end attracted lots of attention. The practitioners of the program believe that the children growing up with more than one language will not discriminate people. That's the reason why creating language awareness is one of the main goals of the program. Just like peace. Integrating peace into all program activities such as songs, words, art workshops, stories, poetry, games and different languages and creating the possibility of being exposed to these activities helped children develop their minds. The books that Ferdus, a local

**PEACE SCHOOL - continued on page 12**

**PEACE SCHOOL***continued from pg. 11*

volunteer, used in the reading workshops made big difference in the conscious of the children. The books were; Little Prince, Marti, Momo, the Children of Pal Street and the children books of Aziz Nesin. Many other books were displayed under the tree during the program and children were always travelling through the world of the books. They borrowed the books at the end of each day and took them home. They read them and brought them back to place them under the tree again. We can say that kids had a Travelling Library for 12 days.

Some of the young people who started to attend this program 7 years ago have learnt at least one language. So, now they can volunteer at the activities as translators and assistants. They have met so many different people with different opinions and perspectives during the seven years that they are able to discuss topics about world citizenship, the stupid existence of the borders, vegetarianism, different religions, philosophies and gender preferences in the village. Local young people had conversation with the foreign volunteers after the activities among the trees and under the stars every day. This activity also proves that this program deserves to be called a School. By the way, the first graduates of the school are ready to become Servas members now.

Let me tell you more about this school. Combining the traditional values with the contemporary knowledge and

background of the world, the school provides the topics the children will certainly need in their future lives such as languages, different cultures, art, writing, oral expression skills, and awareness towards environment, peace, human and animal rights. These are the vital topics that the normal schools usually do not focus on.

This is a school with no walls. A school of life. For example, the children have the opportunity to observe the farmers working in the gardens during the program activities. Children sometimes help them. They can see the big boiling sauce pans making tomato paste while playing, drawing pictures or passing by. Or they can notice how to make local alcohol drink (Arak) or traditional bread making process.

What else did the children do within LUSUP this year? The curious kids went out into the nature to discover and collect plants around. They walked bare feet in the small river and watched the fish, frogs and cancers. When they came back in the evening they displayed the leaves of the plants on big papers and wrote their names in three languages (Arabic, Turkish, English). They used technology (Google translation) to learn some of the names. It was a task based traditional and modern learning style. The children with different ages watched and watered the growing beans

they planted in the recycled flower pots made out of bottles. The naughty and sweet kids played the traditional games rolling on the dusty roads and smelling their sweating bodies and the dust. They made traditional toys out of the natural resources around and recyclable bins. Children realized that they could make many things without spending money. They kept away from the computers and sat in the laps of the nature every day. On the ground. Side by side. Putting their feet or hands in the running water and picking up apples, pear, fig and grapes made their days interesting. The neighbors brought water, coffee and sometimes food to the volunteers and kids. They were too quick to bring cotton and ice for the bleeding knees of the kids. People living near and around the Servas School Campus could watch the activities, the way we organize them and the products at the end.

The tolerance level of the parents has increased after hosting a lot of volunteers with different lifestyles, ideas, religions, ethnicities and clothes. As a result, parents started to think more liberal and became more open to new demands of their children. It is clear that peace starts at this moment. Doesn't it? What would happen if Servas Schools were opened in every neighborhood of the village and other villages of Turkey and the world? It is not hard to imagine the results.

We don't need money for the Servas School. No need to a headmaster. There is no standard program for each day. The topics, classes, games or workshops are planned every night and instant changes can be done. For example, a local man passing by can become an educator all of a sudden and teach kids how to make and play his childhood toys.

This year we have received international support to the program just like every year. Some good friends who are from Korea, Belgium, İstanbul, İskenderun, İzmir and Diyarbakır and who believe in this program have been the sponsors of the programme T-shirts, books, paints and stationary. The Servas School would not have functioned well enough without this support.

We use technology as little as possible in this program. Videos related to peace, environment, children rights, songs and good examples of the world are displayed on the walls for the kids. All activities of the program are recorded and shared with the world through the social media and blogs. Day by day. It is because we believe in dissemination and spreading the good examples. We want to share what we have experienced, learnt and produced during the whole day with the rest of the world. It is because we want to open new schools everywhere in the world within Servas. It is possible, isn't it? 🌍

*I would like to help do this programme in any Servas countries. Anyone interested, please get in touch with me at [mehmettates@yahoo.com](mailto:mehmettates@yahoo.com)*



*Local volunteers talking about and drawing Servas.*

# How Can We Raise Awareness About Servas Among Young People?

by Susana Martinez, Servas Spain Youth Coordinator

Servas Spain has raised that question and we have concluded that we must organize events that are attractive to young people because they are the new generation who have the future of our organization in their hands. We started to organize national youth meetings in 2010 and the most recent meetings have been one week summer camps. The meetings have been very successful and each year we enjoy a greater number of participants. In these camps the young share their time with families with children and other members of Servas of any age, which makes this activity a special and enriching experience. Two years in one of those meetings it was decided to start doing brainstorming among young people about the activities that interest them most and how to make those activities reach a larger

number of people do. Clearly, network is the place where more people can be captured, especially among young people, so it was discussed what activities could be organized in the network would be. They set many, and decided to start with a short film competition with the theme of human rights. Themselves formed a youth committee and thought and designed the

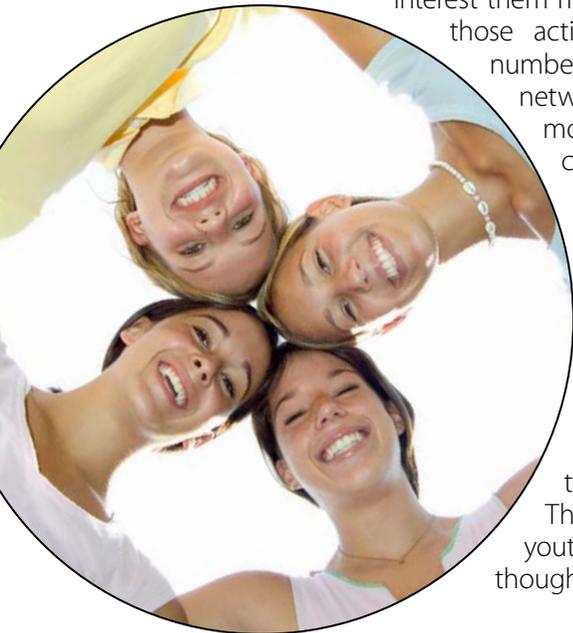
contest. This contest had two clear purposes: Making an international activity involving young people from different countries and to raise awareness about Servas to young people.

I think it's an excellent idea and it shows that we have very talented young members and many good ideas to implement. From my experience as coordinator of youth I realized that organizing such events not only gives them a base to meet and know each other and learn more about our organization, also serves as a platform to develop their creativity and encourage their participation in the organization. I think this is a good way and this is only our first step. 🌱



*“We all benefit by having young people exposed to the ‘way things are done’ in a democratic society. Isn’t it time... to ‘tap the power of youth?’”*

- Hans Bernard



## First International Servas Youth Short Film Competition

by Florentina Sanchez, Coordinadora Nacional Servas España  
servaspresidencia@gmail.com

The Servas Spain Youth Committee invites you to take part in the “First International Servas Youth Short Film Competition”. The competition is part of a group of activities related to communication which are being developed throughout 2015. The subject that we have chosen for the competition is “Human Rights”. Through these films we intend to reflect the young people’s vision towards these fundamental rights.



*This is one of the short films from Servas Summer Camp 2015.*

[CLICK HERE](#) to play.

## Primer Concurso Internacional De Cortometrajes Servas Joven

by Florentina Sanchez, Coordinadora Nacional Servas España  
servaspresidencia@gmail.com

El comité de jóvenes de Servas España quiere invitarte a participar en este proyecto que está incluido en un conjunto de actividades relacionadas con la comunicación que se están desarrollando para este año 2015. El tema que hemos elegido para los cortometrajes son los derechos humanos, ya que con estos cortos queremos reflejar la visión de los jóvenes sobre estos derechos fundamentales.

# My Servas Experiences – Chapter 7

by Alexey Tereshchenko, Servas Latvia

In 2003, I received a French government scholarship and went to study for a Ph. D. in Paris. It was an incredible possibility but, strange to say, at first I felt really unhappy. I was 23 years old and had never before lived on my own. My mother had always taken care of all my household needs and I was accustomed to be surrounded by a multitude of friends. But, suddenly I was there — in a country very different from my own — surrounded by people of different mentality, where there was no one to take care of me — and even no one to be friends with me. Locals seemed to not have any interest in me. I felt lonely and unhappy, like a baby abandoned in a forest.



booth with a cold rain beating on the glass. A voice answered and I explained that I wanted to become a member of Servas France. Mme Sigg answered in a severe voice, “Why do you want it?”. I was discouraged. I felt I would be surely rejected once more. Still, I told her all my reasons and, suddenly, she said, “If you wish, you may come to

my home now. I have some pancakes.” I was really astonished. “Well”, said Mme Sigg, “it is not obligatory that you come to my home to become a member of Servas France. But you may.” Of course I went. It was difficult to find the house in the dark but I did it. There to meet me was a nice old lady who offered me tea and pancakes. She spoke with me for two or three hours. All this felt absolutely unbelievable. For the first time in almost two months I was in a real home with a nice, local person who cared for me and was interested in me. It was an absolutely unbelievable happiness. “That’s what Servas is about”, I thought as I went home that evening.

A few months later, meeting Mme Sigg again, I told her how incredible it had been to be invited to her home on that very first evening and how grateful I was. “Well”, she told me, “I did not know what to do with the pancakes. My grandsons left without eating them. Besides, it was a pity to know that a Servas child feels himself lonely in a foreign country.” 🌱

It sounds really funny now when I think of all the refugees coming to Europe. Compared to them I was extremely rich and well-placed in life. I had money (an immense wealth of € 750 a month), I had a place to live (for just the half of this money), I spoke French, I was in the country I dreamed of during all my childhood and whose history I knew very well – and yet, I was very unhappy.

Then suddenly I thought of Servas. “Servas people like to meet foreigners”, I thought, “they would not refuse me as a friend”. On the web site of Servas France I found a contact e-mail. I wrote a letter and received the phone number of the Paris coordinator, Edith Sigg.

At around 7:00 p. m. on a bleak February evening I phoned. It was dark, I was in a phone

## HOW TO

### ORGANISE A REGIONAL MEETING

by Ewa Dzierzawska, Servas Poland

**FIRST  
IN A  
SERIES!**

#### WHY A REGIONAL MEETING?

There is nothing like a face-to-face meeting. It opens up for better co-operation and communication, it helps solve problems, it gives a feeling of tight bonds with the neighbouring countries. It leaves you with lots of positive feelings and plenty of energy. It helps to develop Servas in the area.

The meetings are usually organised over the weekends.

#### HOW TO ORGANIZE IT?

1. Identify / decide on what you mean by “regional”. It might be neighbouring countries or the countries that were once together because of different political arrangement (e.g. post- Soviet countries)
2. Get a group of enthusiast within the Servas organisation in your own country 3 – 4 people who would like to organise the meeting.
3. Write e-mails to national secretaries of the countries you’d like to invite to find out how many people are interested. You can also make an announcement in Servas Facebook Group.
4. Once you know the approx. number, look for a suitable place. It should be cheap, something like a hostel because you may have people with little money. You need a common room where you can all meet. Find the best (nice and cheap) place to eat. Calculate the costs. It’s good to calculate a little bit more as unexpected things do happen. The costs usually include: accommodation, meals, some kind of transportation
5. If there is particularly little money and you have a lot of hosts in the area you can put up your guests with the local hosts.
6. When you know the costs you can apply to Exco for the regional meeting grant. With the money you get you can either help the ones who wouldn’t have otherwise come or divide the money equally among all participants.
7. The programme of the meeting usually focuses around Servas problems but it’s good to include some cultural activities as well. Urban game to discover the city like we had in Tbilisi, sightseeing the town with a local guide, a trip in the mountains if you’re outside the city, a free concert in town. There are many possibilities.
8. Have the participants fill in an evaluation sheet. It will help you and others to organise meetings in future.
9. After the meeting write a report to Exco. It’s good to include photos and reports from participants. If got money from Exco or DC you have to make a financial report. 🌱

Please note that this is a first draft of our first **HOWTO** document. Many members have much more experience in running national and regional events. Please take this draft, edit it to your heart’s content and return it to us and we will eventually put up it up on the Servas web site with a whole series of HOW TO articles. We need your help!! – editor



Petr and Ilona – Servas Czech Republic



Kobus motorbike- Servas South Africa



Jordan- Servas-Canada



Jordan- Servas Canada

# Why I Like Servas?

by Sergiy Kibitkin,  
Servas-member, Host/Traveler, and  
Servas Ukraine National Secretary



Some people asked me what interesting I had found in Servas. So, in this article I will try to answer this question and explain why I love this organization so much.

Of course, I'm not a veteran with 30-year experience but it has been 5 years since I joined Servas and I am fully convinced of the right choice. Now I would like to tell you my story from the very beginning. Our young family has always loved to travel.

Actually it doesn't matter where and how. The impressions remained after visiting new countries, cities have always been in our memories and photographs. We have always been interested not only in the country which we visited as tourists but also the current situation in it. You can't judge about a country by looking at how it looks like through a coach or hotel window. It's like watching a commercial. You'll be shown the best of it but the rest will stay behind the frame. Personally I think that the most interesting for us as travelers is not only a country but also its people. There is one more option here – you can try living in the country you are visiting

for 1 or 2 years just to get to know it better but unfortunately you'll always be limited by time or resources. That's why the key factor of getting acquainted with a country is its people. With the help of them you'll always be able to find out all the details just asking different questions. Such meetings not only make us richer but they also help us a lot. That's why I became a Servas traveler.

Tell me please what I could see and learn staying as a tourist in an ordinary hotel. A tour schedule, guidebooks...this is not the same. That's why I think Servas gives you, a common traveler, something you can hardly get from other journeys. Do you know what it is? That's a real life chat with people.

## The world itself comes to you

Unfortunately we cannot constantly travel around the world. My wife and I



Servas Poland and Servas – Israel are our guests

work hard, our son studies at school. So, what can we do in this case? Should we wait 1 year for the next vacation? I think not.

Why don't we make the world come to us? I decided to become a Servas host. I was thinking about meeting new people who could tell me about their countries and I wouldn't have to go anywhere to learn about them.

Moreover, my son would be able to learn about other cultures and traditions, practice speaking foreign languages.

Soon my dream day came. We were contacted by Kobus from South Africa. At that time he was traveling by bike around the world (a marathon across Canada, America, Europe, Ukraine, Russia and Mongolia).

Can you imagine my son's impressions after listening to such stories? Strangers on motorbikes were telling us their stories about traveling. Our conversation was exciting and relaxing. My son couldn't refuse an offer of riding a motorbike. It was the brightest moment of the meeting. Our chat with Kobus and his team gave us lots of fresh impressions. I started thinking of going on a long journey. One more interesting moment for me was the meeting with the Polish delegation in

**WHY I LIKE SERVAS - continued on page 16**

## U.N. INTERNSHIP

continued from pg. 8

statements during the Council.

Interventions must either relate to the agenda item under consideration (there are 10 items all together) or to the reports of Special Procedures mandate holders (also called Special Rapporteurs). During the 29th regular session SI delivered 3 oral statements:

- General Debate under item 5 – HR bodies and mechanisms
- General Debate under item 8 – follow-up and implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Program of Action
- General Debate under item 9 – Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance.

In its statements SI called for an implementation of the rights to peace and the elimination of the root causes of conflicts such as discrimination and xenophobia as well as denial of economic and social rights, and underlined the importance of the right to development, the right to self-determination, and the right of women and children as well as the post 2015 development agenda.

In her statement Lore Purray Sanchez further called to fight the intolerance through direct contact between human

beings and better involvement of civil society.

Throughout the session it was SI message that dialogue is the main way to promote international cooperation and mutual understanding, and hence prevent HR violations. Direct contact between people is essential and the right to peace must be made an international priority.

### In Lore's own words :

*"I am very grateful for having taken part in such an enriching event. I will never forget the knowledge I have acquired and the people I have met. This experience has opened my eyes about how much is still to be done and how many engaging people are needed. I want to thank especially Daniela Doenges, also a Servas Member, for having helped me to adapt easily to this new place and for having explained to me patiently about the functioning of the Human Rights Council. I also want to thank Danielle Serres for having offered me the opportunity of being here. Their help shows that Servas International is a big family with members that are always happy to help each other! It is in its heart a very human NGO!" 🌱*

*To deny people their human rights  
is to challenge their very humanity.*

- Nelson Mandela

## WHY I LIKE SERVAS

continued from pg. 15

Lviv in 2012. By the way it coincided with my birthday. I made friends with new inspiring people from Poland. Personally I think that Servas members shouldn't only take but give something. I was very glad to get acquainted with Jordan from Canada. At that time he was learning Ukrainian in Lviv and wanted to visit us in Ternopil.

Actually Ternopil is not far away from Lviv, it only takes two hours to get from one city to the other. During his stay we spoke both English and Ukrainian. My son was very happy to give some grammar lessons to Jordan. Raising his qualifications he made new Lego robots with

our guest, spent hours learning how to extract energy from chemical processes using water splitting. Later we rode our bicycles in the park, played basketball together and talked a lot.

### I realized that Servas really worked.

The world itself started coming to us. The representatives of different countries who started visiting us gave us lots of necessary and interesting information from within the country. Eventually we became hosts for Servas travelers from Poland and Israel. Their team was on a tour. The route passed through our city. I was lucky to get a chance to learn more about the two countries at the same time.

We showed our quiet and cosy city to the guests too. During our conversation the time flew by quickly. The answers received about Poland and Israel we couldn't find on any website or in Wikipedia. They were really interesting people, even our dog made friends with them though it happens very rarely.

Looking back I regret not knowing about Servas when I was a student.

How many new friends I could have made. I feel sorry for those people who haven't become members of Servas. Perhaps they don't realize benefits of being a member of this organization. That's why I am

doing my best to promote the ideas of Servas via our Ukrainian website and an educational video about Servas on Youtube. Observing Servas President's promotion of our organization I see myself moving in the right direction. We cannot ignore the web factor as an important part which allows you to fully embrace all people around the Earth.

### What's next?

We have already planned our family trip to new countries.

I have contacted Hosts, Day Hosts and I think we will make new friends soon. What about your friends? Aren't they in Servas yet? 🌱



*“The end of one journey  
is simply the start of another.”*

~Jose Saramago, “Journey to Portugal” - 1981

## “Mamma, shall we go to Santiago?”

by Raffaella and Aurora, Bergamo, Italy



Me and my daughter in Porto

**W**e have been thinking on a trip for a long time. Both of us, Aurora and I. It would give us time to talk, to think things over, to explore and to know each other.

Problems at home had obliged us to post-poner it.

“Yessss... sure, but by bike”!!

A trip starts by looking at a map (ok, ok, even on a Google map!) and thinking about an itinerary... why not... the Portuguese Way to Santiago. From Oporto to Santiago and then... maybe Finisterre/Muxia.

First of all we have to decide if we want to rent the bikes or to carry our own on the plane. We decide to bring our bikes, unassembled and packed in carton boxes, well equipped with keys and tools to re-assemble them upon their arrival airport!!

But thinking about the trip also inspires our thinking about all to the people we want to meet.

So, with the idea of meeting new Servas friends, we begin scrolling down the Servas Portugal Host List for people we hope to visit. We fix the dates... send e-mails with our Servas LOI (Letter of Introduction) and contact prospective hosts on Facebook or by phone.

After arranging our stays with SERVAS



Ponte de Lima (miguels photo)

members, we began our trip. We arrived in Oporto on the 30th of June, having planned on being hosted by Maria Teresa Branco and her daughter Mariana in Rua de los Combatentes, a new quarter of the city near yellow Metro line. The name immediately arouses our curiosity.

Oporto is fantastic... some city streets and country roads are paved in cobble stones... biking up and down... on both banks of the river Douro, a placid and gray river. Baroque churches and buildings are decorated with “azulejos”, white/blue ceramics representing historical scenes (as, for example, in the San Bento station), or with baroque floral designs. It’s easy to get distracted by all the interesting things to see and we think it’s better be careful so as to not get lost looking around.

We decide to enter the “Se Cathedral” in order to collect the “Credential” — our pass card that will show that we have

traveled along the Santiago Way. People are smiling and helpful when they give us information and tickets and as they show us where to enter into the Metro with our bikes.

As strangers in a foreign city it’s a pleasant feeling to know that someone is waiting for us, someone you never met, but who has prepared for you a welcome. After biking along wide sidewalks, paved with white and black mosaics in strange designs we arrive at Maria Teresa’s home on time (being born in North Italy, we naturally have an interior Austro-hungarian clock!),

Maria Teresa’s neighborhood is bright, even the houses are white and tidy, with large gardens. The meeting with her is rich with this light, full of smiles and laughter. Our daughters, Aurora and Mariana, chat in a fluent English and the cat, Mou, does

**SANTIAGO - continued on page 18**

## SANTIAGO

*continued from pg. 17*

not want to be excluded.

Maria and Mariana help us park bicycles and take the rear-bags to the rooms they have prepared for us. Then we take a long walk around the neighborhood. We talk like long-time friends... we speak of the city, of the political situation in Greece and Tsipras, of Pope Francis and ecological emergencies... and of our life plans, in this whirlwind of news and changes.

Then back at her home... a fantastic traditional dinner that I am sure Maria Teresa has cooked all day for us. This is such a welcome, she is a caring attentive hostess!

Cous cous, baked vegetables, croutons and Alheira sausages, is a typical plate that allowed the Portuguese Jews to survive during The Inquisition. It is late but we want to go on talking. Maria Teresa is an artist and shows us her ceramics which have sweet and round shapes that remind us of the "Great Mediterranean Mothers"; the ancient Gods of Fertility.

Because we want to ride our bikes in the cool part of the day in the morning we awake very early, which obliges everyone else to also make "an early start". However, we instead enjoyed spending a lot of time at the table with a rich breakfast, followed by "goodbye" hugs and promise to meet again.

By 7:30 we are already in the saddle and descending towards the Ribeira and the Douro river, the encañaded roads offering us a gentle massage. We ride along the estuary and the embankment, enjoying

the view of fine sand beaches and the long waves of the ocean. For Aurora and me, people of the Alps, experiencing "loceano-mare" is a profound event. It is like a wave that attracts us and repels us, gives us unusual horizons, effervescent in the morning mist.

Along the way, we buy cherries and a detailed map. We are following the "Portuguese Way of the Coast" until we reach Povoá de Varzim and then turn inland to St. Pedro de Rates, Pedra Furada and Barcelos. To reach the "Portuguese Inner Way to Santiago", it will be a long trip, almost 70 km, but with only a few steep climbs.

We arrive in Barcelos and find a place to stay overnight in an "Albergue Municipal". It is a public hostel, so it is pretty busy. We immediately make acquaintances with Jose, who is on a trip for three months, and Marco, a young Italian. We communicate in Spanish, Italian, English, in an incredible mixture, but we understand each other perfectly because Portuguese and Italian are Latin based languages, and also because we share the same values. We are quite tired and have a dinner of "Bacalhau" in a small restaurant.

The next morning we find that the downpour of rain during the night has washed clean this small town and has refreshed the morning air. We are early getting on the bikes and ride across to the market. Aurora is attracted by the noise of hens and chicks in large baskets and colorful fruit stands and takes a lot of photos. We buy more cherries and plums, which add a little weight on our rear-bags



*Ponte de Lima by night with Miguel C. and Susan L.K. servas in Ponte de Lima*

of about 4 kg each.

We leave the town of Barcelos, following the yellow arrows of the "Portuguese Trail to Santiago" on country byways and little dirt paths that seem to get lost in the countryside. Even though we have good tires the terrain is often too challenging with rocks and stones testing our bikes. Sometimes we have to go on foot and push the bikes.

On the way, we find a succession of small rural simple churches in the Romanesque style. Their names remind me of my childhood prayers: for

example "Virgen de la Nives"... at every cross road, even the most remote, there is a "Cruzeiro" in stone, with Christ on one side and a Madonna in tears on the other... I feel moved by this "Stabat Mater" and the unbreakable bond between mother and son.

Traveling on bikes allows us to have time to experience in deeper detail the places that we find; we can decide which trails to use, what distances we want to cover, depending on the "climb", and depending on the location of Servas,

**SANTIAGO - continued on page 19**

## SANTIAGO

*continued from pg. 18*

friends who we want to meet.

As we continue, forests of eucalyptus and oak trees alternate with fields of corn and rows of vines. It's all very green. We meet a few "pilgrims" and some farmers who greet us and smile.

Today is our third day and we arrive in Ponte de Lima where we are going to meet two Servas members, Miquel Cardoso, a Day Host and Susan Lorraine Knox, who would host us for the night. We get a first view of the city around lunchtime, finally enjoying riding downhill a little while, after long steep, up-and-down paths.

Ponte de Lima is a beautiful tourist town, full of flowers and avenues of shady Plane trees, lemon trees and willows along the river. We meet Silvio, a Neapolitan pizza maker, who is also waiting in front of the Albergue, which will open in a couple of hours.

Miguel will not arrive until later in the afternoon so we decided to lay on the grass by the river to have a rest while we wait for him. Indeed, time in Portugal has a special dimension and we are slowly getting used to it. Or it may be it is the heat that forces us to a "siesta" in the green?

When Miguel arrives we almost don't notice him, dressed in green, in perfect mimicry with the environment. He is a botanical expert, specializing in birdwatching, and a tour guide on the surrounding hills. He offers to host us for the night, since Susan's home is located on top of a hill, over 7 km climb with 20%

slope, and for our legs it is too much. We are happy about this invitation and we follow his car by bike on the paved road (uphill!) Miguel lives with his mother, Adele, in a house in the countryside. Orange trees grace an ornamental garden. Mom is happy to meet us. She speaks only Portuguese, but we understand each other perfectly. She tells us about her youth in Mozambique, a former Portuguese colony, recalling memories

that bring up a deep feeling of nostalgia. Even Miguel was born in Mozambique before his family had to return to Portugal because of the civil war.

Later Susan joins us too. We are very happy that she has found time to reach us and to meet us. We decided to go to a small restaurant together. Typical dishes include "arroz de Sarrabulho", a symphony of meats roasted with potatoes and served with a side dish of rice cooked in the

blood of pork, but I prefer the "pescada" (fish), followed by rice pudding which is excellent. Susan is a beautiful and proud lady of American origin. She settled here with her husband, after retirement, in a cottage and has two old horses to keep down the weeds, some cats and a dog. She grows her own potatoes and has a kitchen garden. From the village, I can see the hillside where her house is located in wonderful green area and really regret not to have climbed up the hill to visit her. She is a woman of many interests, we talk about the country, literature, and travel.

After dinner, we visit Ponte de Lima. It is a lovely soft evening. There is a full moon and Susan starts singing a melody about the moon; I echo her with an old lullaby. It is very late, we are not yet accustomed to Portuguese times, and we are very sorry that we can not stop another day and to join our new friends.

Tomorrow we have the most difficult part of our journey, with a stop at the highest point, the "Alto de Portela", and overnight in the Albergue in the historic city-fortress of Valença on the Miñho River, which creates a natural border with Spain.

To be continued... 🌿



*Teresa's home (Servas in Porto)*

*I decided to write about this first part of our trip so that it can be shared, remembering Saramago's words: "A viagem não acaba nunca. Só os viajantes acabam. E mesmo estes podem prolongar-se em memória, em lembrança, em narrativa. ...O fim de uma viagem é apenas o começo de outra." ("Viagem a Portugal").*

*“We have a responsibility to look after our planet. It is our only home.”*

*The Dalai Lama*

# Building A Canoe From 300 Plastic Bottles

## The Ecological Awareness Project

by Giuseppe Rapisarda, Servas Italy

**A** Day of Ecological Awareness took place on August 29th, 2015. The event consisted of crossing the coast of Playa of Catania (Sicilia) with a special Eco-canoe built exclusively with recycled materials. This Eco-canoe was built by myself, as the project leader, along with the involvement of students from two schools who provided the 300 recycled plastic bottles needed for its construction.



Giuseppe Rapisarda in his Eco-canoe made from 300 recycled plastic bottles.



Giuseppe (second from left) with members of the Ecological Awareness Team



A typical Italian "Green Point"

The event was attended by various organizations: Circolo Canoa Catania, Catania Municipality, Endofap, Legambiente, Lyceum of Belpasso, Mani Tese, Oratorio dei Popoli, Zero Waste, Rigenera, WWF North Eastern Sicily, and Sicilia Zero Waste.

As the Eco-canoe was being launched into the sea, members of the various participating associations, attached posters to the dustbins on local beaches that listed the biodegradability times of the most common beach waste. The success and appreciation of this initiative were beyond our wildest expectations. Swimmers cheered as we passed expressing their appreciation and information was requested.

Eliminating, or even reducing, the indiscriminate abandonment of waste in the environment takes a lot of effort and resources in the area of penalties, video surveillance, etc. in order to punish this wrong behavior. However, it takes little effort to create the environmental education that will help remove the cause. It is our hope, that with the promotion of Eco-canoe, we will draw attention to the idea of this free Ecological

Awareness Project to as many people as possible.

When it will not be in the water, the Eco-canoe will be on display at various "Green Points" (see photo above) around Italy. During the 2015-16 school year the Eco-canoe will be available for display, free of charge, to schools that request it. From next year onwards, before the opening of the beach establishments, we will make a weekend of cleaning the beaches. Recovered materials will be used to improve the Eco-canoe/raft with which we will do a symbolic competition where the winner will most certainly be the environment.

Good projects are contagious and after this event was announced there have been several requests for collaboration, partnership and exchange of information from groups from other regions in Italy. Some contacts even came from another continent. 🌱

*For more information, please contact Giuseppe at [pippo.rapisarda@tiscali.it](mailto:pippo.rapisarda@tiscali.it) Like us on Facebook: Da rifiuto a risorsa*

## THE NEW SERVAS LOGO

Presenting A Strong,  
Unified Identity Around The World

A logo is a visual representation that helps define the personality of an organization, movement, company or other organized body. It is "The Face" that's presented to the world. The new Servas logo was designed to create a memorable and lasting impression on the viewer. Its unique, professional design sets it apart from other, similar organizations in order to establish immediate recognition. By adopting this new logo Servas member groups will help present a more uniform international identity that strengthens our organization as it continues to grow in the coming years.

### SERVAS MEMBER COUNTRIES WHO HAVE ADOPTED THE NEW SERVAS LOGO

AS OF SEPTEMBER 2015



## We're At Your Service!

Since the introduction last year of the new Servas Image & Design Support Team (SIIDST) has assisted over 25 member countries with adapting the new logo just for them. But, we're also here to help you with any of your other Servas related projects, whether it be for web or print.



We realize that everyone is not a designer or may not have the tools necessary to produce quality graphics. SIIDST members are design professionals, as well as Servas members, who have volunteered their time to help and/or advise Servas member countries with their next Servas project.

If you are a Servas National Secretary or a project/event coordinator you are welcome to contact us with your questions and/or assistance.

We also want to encourage all Servas member countries to consider the importance of maintaining a consistent and unified image throughout the Servas family. We ask you to please refer to the SIIDST web site for logo usage and design guidelines before applying the Servas logo to your project. You're also welcome to download various versions of the Servas International logo. Contact us if you have any questions or need assistance.

Email: [servasdesignhelp@gmail.com](mailto:servasdesignhelp@gmail.com)

[designhelp@servas.org](mailto:designhelp@servas.org)

Web Site: [www.siidst.servas.org](http://www.siidst.servas.org)

**HELP WANTED:** The SIIDST is looking for more team members. If you graphic design and promotional experience, a working knowledge of Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator and/or web design please apply for team membership please email us with your qualifications and background information.

# How To Prepare Your Submission For Publication In Servas International News

## ACCEPTABLE MATERIAL

- Details on Upcoming International Events & Meetings
  - Articles on Servas activities in your country, opinion pieces on peace, travel & hosting, travel stories with a Servas Theme
  - Letters to the Editor (complaints, questions, praise)
  - Short quotes regarding peace/travel/friendship, etc.
  - Servas travel experiences, peace projects, event reports
  - Web sites of interest to Servas members
- Send files to [newsletter@servas.org](mailto:newsletter@servas.org)

## MATERIAL NOT ACCEPTABLE:

- Events or announcements of interest only to an individual country's members
- Long reports, such as technical and financial data, should be posted on the Servas web site.

Send such material by email to:  
[add\\_to\\_website@servas.org](mailto:add_to_website@servas.org).

## IMPORTANT THINGS TO DO:

- DO assume the reader knows nothing about your story. Provide an opening paragraph that explains what your story is going to be about. 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.
- DO give your story an APPROPRIATE HEADLINE and, if possible, a SUBHEAD, so your reader has an idea of what is being presented.
- DO include your (the author's) name, Servas title (if any), your country and, if you want it public, your email AT THE BEGINNING OF THE STORY immediately following the headline or subhead

(the exception would be for a Letter to the Editor where it should be at the end).

- DO make your article engaging and interesting, and pertinent to an INTERNATIONAL audience.
- DO avoid abbreviations so your message is clear.
- DO spell check and proof your story, twice. If possible have a friend review it for you. We will not edit your copy unless there are space limitations.
- DO prepare your story in a text application such as Microsoft Word, TextEdit. Save your file as .doc, .rtf or .txt format and attach to e-mail. Please give your file a name that RELATES TO YOUR STORY.
- DO include photos in .jpg format at 150 dpi or better in the SAME email (but NOT inside your text file).
- DO review this and previous issues of SERVAS INTERNATIONAL NEWS for examples of story format and structure.
- **DO thoroughly proof your article/event listing/letter before submitting it. We do not correct for spelling or grammar. Some editing may be done for space limitations.**

All material for publication in Servas International News should be submitted as E-mail attachments addressed to: [newsletter@servas.org](mailto:newsletter@servas.org)

## THINGS YOU SHOULD NOT DO:

- DO NOT format your text with tables and fancy fonts.
- DO NOT double-space after a sentence.
- DO NOT add a space before a period or comma. Remember, a computer is not a typewriter.
- DO NOT enter double paragraph returns.
- DO NOT place photos within the story text. Submit them separately in the same email.
- DO NOT write your story in an Email message.

# Translate Servas International News Into Your Country's Language

The current issue of SERVAS INTERNATIONAL NEWS available to any Servas member country who would like to convert an issue into their native language.

SERVAS INTERNATIONAL NEWS is produced using Adobe InDesign CC v9.1 for Macintosh. A press-ready, packaged file containing the fonts, photos and linked graphics used in the current issue along with the complete InDesign file. A Macintosh or Windows version of Adobe InDesign CC v9.1 or better is required to open the file but if you have an older version just let us know. Fonts may not convert properly from Mac to Windows so some adjustments to the text might be necessary when using the Windows version.

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 by using 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](mailto:newsletter@servas.org). Instructions on where and how to obtain the file will be furnished at that time.



## Servas Continues To Grow On The World Wide Web

Here is a current listing of Servas-related web and social networking sites. If you don't see 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 INTERNATIONAL**  
facebook.com/Servas.International  
facebook.com/groups/2519241851 (Servas Members Only Group)  
facebook.com/groups/servas (Open Group)  
Twitter: twitter.com/ServasI (Servas International)  
twitter.com/Servaspresident (Servas President)  
servas.org
- **SERVAS YOUTH**  
facebook.com/servasyouth  
facebook.com/groups/31004490866  
servasyouth.org
- **SERVAS YOUTH ESPAÑA**  
facebook.com/pages/Servas-Youth-España/107873695946821
- **SERVAS YOUTH PERU**  
facebook.com/ServasYouthPeru  
servasyouth.org

### LINKS TO SERVAS MEMBER COUNTRY SOCIAL NETWORKS AND WEB SITES

- **SERVAS ARGENTINA**  
facebook.com/groups/629327650426841  
argentina.servas.org
- **SERVAS YOUTH ARGENTINA**  
facebook.com/groups/136739839825106
- **SERVAS AUSTRALIA**  
facebook.com/servasaustralia  
servas.org.au
- **SERVAS AUSTRIA**  
austria.servas.org
- **SERVAS BRAZIL**  
facebook.com/ServasBrasil  
facebook.com/groups/servasbrasil  
servasbrasil.org.br  
servasbrasilis.blogspot.com.br
- **SERVAS BELGIUM & LUXEMBURG**  
belgium.servas.org
- **SERVAS BRITIAN**  
facebook.com/servas.britain  
servasbritain.org
- **SERVAS CANADA**  
facebook.com/pages/Servas-Canada  
canada.servas.org
- **SERVAS COLUMBIA**  
columbia-servas.org
- **SERVAS COSTA RICA**  
facebook.com/servascostarica
- **SERVAS CZECH REPUBLIC**  
servas.cz
- **SERVAS DENMARK**  
facebook.com/groups/servasdenmark  
servas.dk
- **SERVAS EGYPT**  
facebook.com/pages/Servas-Egypt/195657580637097
- **SERVAS ESTONIA**  
emmk.ee/janc/servas
- **SERVAS FINLAND**  
facebook.com/servasfinland  
finland/servas.org
- **SERVAS FRANCE**  
servas-france.org
- **SERVAS GERMANY**  
servas.de
- **SERVAS GREECE**  
facebook.com/ServasGreece  
greece-servas.org
- **SERVAS HUNGARY**  
hungary.servas.org
- **SERVAS INDIA**  
servasbharat.org
- **SERVAS INDONESIA**  
servasindonesia.wordpress.com
- **SERVAS IRAN**  
facebook.com/ServasIran
- **SERVAS ISRAEL**  
facebook.com/pages/Servas-Israel/318802998214263  
israel.servas.org
- **SERVAS ITALY**  
facebook.com/servas.italia  
servas.it
- **SERVAS JAPAN**  
servas-japan.org
- **SERVAS JORDAN**  
facebook.com/groups/Servas.Jordan  
joy-or-above.com/support-groups/servas-jordan/
- **SERVAS KAZAKHSTAN**  
servas-kazakhstan.narod.ru/
- **SERVAS KENYA**  
pages.intnet.mu/servas/Kenya/
- **SERVAS KOREA**  
facebook.com/ServasKorea  
servas.or.kr
- **SERVAS KOSOVA**  
facebook.com/KosovaServas
- **SERVAS MADAGASCAR**  
pages.intnet.mu/servas/Madagascar/
- **SERVAS MALAWI**  
facebook.com/servas.malawi  
pages.intnet.mu/servas/Malawi
- **SERVAS MAURITIUS**  
www.pages.intnet.mu/servas/Mauritius
- **SERVAS MEXICO**  
facebook.com/ServasMexico  
mexico.servas.org
- **SERVAS NETHERLANDS**  
facebook.com/groups/357680234308014  
servas-nederland.nl
- **SERVAS NEW ZEALAND**  
servas.org.nz
- **SERVAS NORWAY**  
norway.servas.org
- **SERVAS PAKISTAN**  
facebook.com/ServasPakistan  
/pages.intnet.mu/servas/Pakistan
- **SERVAS POLAND**  
facebook.com/servaspl  
servas.pl
- **SERVAS PORTUGAL**  
facebook.com/ServasPortugal  
servasempotugal.blogspot.pt
- **SERVAS RUSSIA**  
facebook.com/ServasRussia  
servasrussia.ru/
- **SERVAS SAMOA**  
pages.intnet.mu/servas/Samoa
- **SERVAS SOUTH AFRICA**  
pages.intnet.mu/servas/SouthAfrica
- **SERVAS SOUTH KOREA**  
servas.or.kr/
- **SERVAS SPAIN**  
servas.es
- **SERVAS SWEDEN**  
facebook.com/Servas.Sweden  
servas.se
- **SERVAS SWITZERLAND**  
facebook.com/ServasSwitzerland  
servas.ch
- **SERVAS TAIWAN**  
facebook.com/pages/Servas-Taiwan/130195033703178  
servastaiwan.org/
- **SERVAS THAILAND**  
facebook.com/servasthailandfanpage
- **SERVAS TURKEY**  
facebook.com/servas.turkey  
servasturkiye.org
- **SERVAS UKRAINE**  
servas.org.ua  
facebook.com/pages/Servas-Ukraine/749516811806719
- **SERVAS UNITED STATES**  
facebook.com/us.servas  
usservas.org
- **SERVAS URUGUAY**  
uruguay.servas.org/
- **SERVAS VIETNAM**  
facebook.com/ServasVietnam  
Blog: servasvietnam.blogspot.com
- **SERVAS ZAMBIA**  
pages.intnet.mu/servas/Zambia

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

#### OTHER SERVAS-RELATED LINKS

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