

# Friends of the International Center of Princeton University

*Creating Understanding through Conversation and Friendship*

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## President's Corner

The Friends of the International Center are deeply grateful for the dedication of our volunteers and the generosity of our donors.

Over 170 volunteers in our Host Family and English Conversation Programs have helped 225 international graduate students, visiting scholars, and spouses improve their English fluency and become more comfortable living in Princeton.

Our donors have enabled us to meet our budgetary goals for the year. These funds underwrite our programs, as well as the Excellence in Teaching Award we present annually to an outstanding international graduate student. Donations also allow us to help support the activities of the International Center at Princeton University on behalf of all international students at Princeton.

Thank you, all! **Anne Bolick, President**

## Host Program Offers Hand Of Friendship

The Friends' Host Family Program provides international graduate students, spouses and visiting scholars the opportunity to visit the homes of area residents to learn first hand about local customs and traditions in America. The hosts offer the hand of friendship at a time when the international students are feeling a bit homesick and overwhelmed.

Holiday dinners, potluck dinners, telephone calls, day trips, and even a baby shower made up the host/student activities this year. Group dinners, brunches, and receptions have also been held so all hosts and students can interact.

As host Sally Chrisman says, "I feel we are giving the international students a positive exposure (I hope!) to America. Many of the hosts and students remain friends long after the students leave Princeton.

## Former Student Is Assistant



**Helga Wellhoefer** enrolled in the Friends' Group Conversation Program four years ago because she wanted to understand English better, improve her fluency, and meet new friends.

Having accomplished all that, she is now assisting

**Sunny Onish**, the group conversation coordinator, who says about her newest assistant, "What a delight to have Helga here as an example to the other students!"

Helga and her husband Hartmann came to the United States from Germany six and one-half years ago. Trained as a social worker, Helga now devotes her time to her fourteen-year-old daughter Lena, and to her hobbies of quilting, reading, and walking.

When asked what she has learned from the conversation program, Helga says she has become more self-confident in speaking with Americans. "I also learned a lot about cultural differences among people from different nations. I uncovered my own prejudices and changed my perception and attitude."

Helga was very happy when Sunny asked her to take on a different role in the conversation program. "I am an assistant to the Empress of Murray Dodge Hall," a reference to the fact that Sunny was crowned 'Empress Sunny' two years ago at her 85<sup>th</sup> birthday party at Murray Dodge, where the group meets.

"I am very happy to give back to the Friends as Sunny's helper. I help set up the class before the students come, help select material for the group, and lend my ear to the students who need help. If I'm needed to do more, I will."

## 'English' Tutor Tutors English

**David Shinkfield**, a tutor in the Friends' Group Conversation Program, is himself learning English--that is, American English!

David hails from London and has a very pronounced and determined British accent. The international students love his accent because many of them learned English in their native countries from teachers who originally came from the United Kingdom. David is teased regularly by the American group tutors, but he's a 'right' good sport and always just smiles.

David retired as a managing partner with PA Consulting Group, based in London. During his career, he worked in the UK, France, Germany, and the United States, where he has lived since 1976, becoming a US citizen in 1996.

A tutor for three years, David believes that having lived in other countries helps him understand the challenges faced by foreign visitors. "However, I have learned more from the students than they have from me!"

Not only is David a group tutor, he also serves on the Board of Trustees of the Friends of the International Center, where he chairs the Finance Committee, assists with fundraising, and helps maintain the Friends' website and newsletter. This past year he coordinated a Board group to redefine the focus and direction of the Friends. He also helps the conversation group in lesson planning and record keeping.



*David Shinkfield, with group coordinator Sunny Onish and several students*

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## Friends in Brief . . . . .

- **As the volunteer wing of the International Center at Princeton University**, the Friends provide funds to assist the IC in its activities on behalf of the international students at the university. These activities include the weekly Thursday lunches at Murray Dodge; social events throughout the year; help in sponsoring cultural, social, and speakers programs, and the annual International Festival events. "I wish to extend a sincere thank you to all the Friends' volunteers, including the Board, for their dedication to the IC," says **Paula Chow**, Director of the International Center.



*At the group conversation holiday dinner in December 2005 are, left to right, Paula Chow, Director of the IC, Sunny Onish, conversation coordinator, and Anne Bolick, President of the FIC.*

- **Speaking of the International Festival**, this year there will be events throughout April, culminating with the annual Communiversiety Day, April 29. Check the IC website for details at [www.princeton.edu/~intlctr](http://www.princeton.edu/~intlctr).
- **The annual meeting of the Friends' Board of Trustees** will take place on May 1<sup>st</sup> at noon in Room 243 at the Frist Campus Center. A light lunch will be served. If you wish to attend, please RSVP by April 24<sup>th</sup> at 258-1170.
- **A donor appreciation event** will be held this fall in conjunction with the International Center.

### To Contact the Friends

Want to volunteer? Donate? Learn more about the Friends? Call Hanna Hand, 609-258-1170, or email [hhand@princeton.edu](mailto:hhand@princeton.edu)

**We want to hear from our Friends' alumni:**

Tell us about yourselves by e-mailing Hanna Hand at the above address.