

THE CENTER REPORT

In Memory of Shirley Lewis, Interim Director (1998-1999)

Spring 2018



Ecumenical Center and International Residence

*An Intentional, International,
Intercultural, Interspiritual,
Living Learning Community*

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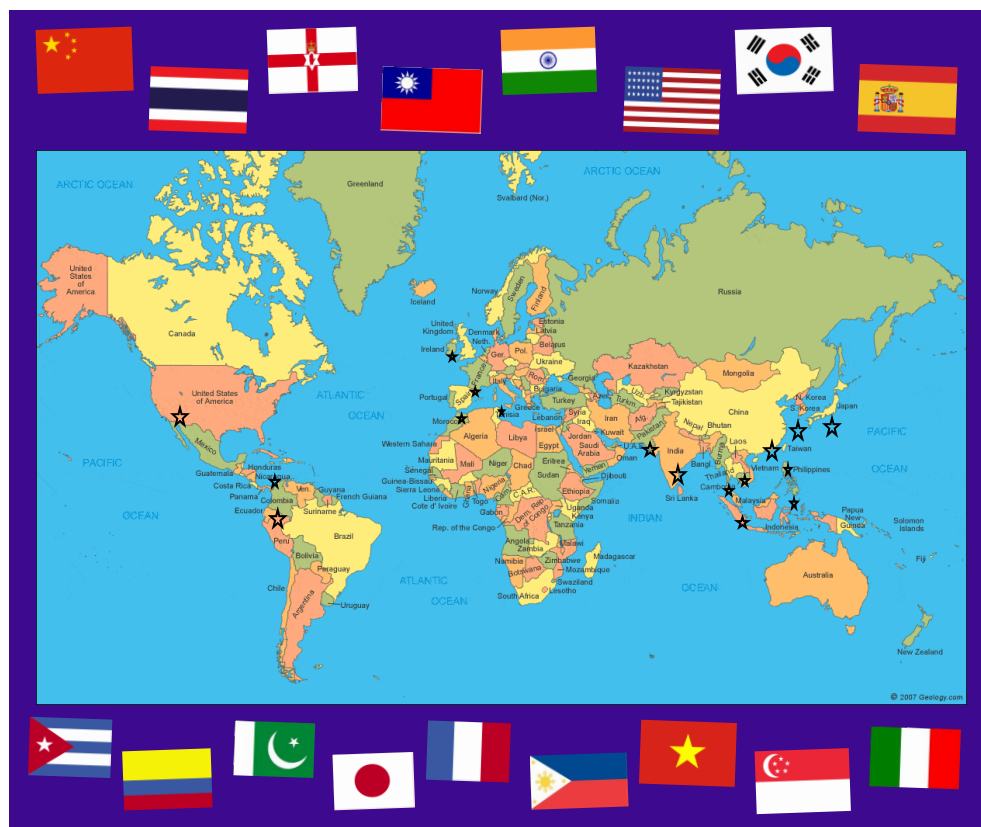
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Residential Diversity

This fall, the ECIR welcomes 49 residents from 17 different countries. Representing a wide variety of academic disciplines, our residents create a unique, culturally diverse, and multinational living environment. It is important to mention that many of our students identify with more than one nationality. ECIR's residential diversity bridges communities and helps foster relationships with people from across the world, bringing global collaboration all under one roof.

ECIR continues to attract students from diverse national, cultural, and spiritual backgrounds, stimulating a growing desire for cross-cultural connection and international diversity within the university and beyond.



Shirley Lewis (red) with Friends

YOUR SUPPORT, YOUR PROGRAMS

Donors and volunteers support the GEU and other programs offered to our international residents and non-residents. Your tax-exempt contribution is important and greatly appreciated.

DONATE BY PHONE (734-662-5529),

CHECK PAYABLE TO ECIR, OR ONLINE AT www.ecir.org.

ECIR, 921 Church Street, Ann Arbor, MI 48104

Student Support Team

Jessica Greenfield

Program Manager



I received my Master's in Social Work from U-M in 2013 and have been with ECIR since early 2014. And how the time is flying! It's often said that if you find a job you love, you won't "work" a day in your life. And that saying rings true for me. Coming to ECIR every day is like coming home. My heart is so invested in this center and our mission and I am so thankful to be here.

Shih-Ya Chang

Program Assistant



I am a first year graduate student from Taiwan at the U-M School of Social Work. My study focuses on community development that bridges majority and minority populations. I enjoy diversity and multicultural environments. I have lived in China, USA, and have done short-term volunteer work in Israel, Guatemala, and Kenya. I am grateful to be a part of the ECIR family.

Colleen Towler

Program Assistant

I am a second year graduate student in the School of Social Work at U of M. I am focusing on Community Organizing and Community & Social Systems. I am passionate about global social work, using dance and other artistic mediums to create social awareness, program development and implementation to meet the needs of diverse communities. I am grateful to be at the ECIR and have the opportunity to engage with residents and staff to learn about many cultures, lifestyles, and religions.



Jonathan VanTreeck

Office Assistant

I am a first year graduate student at the U-M School of Social Work with a focus in global social work. In July 2017, I returned home after serving 26 months with the Peace Corps in Ecuador. I am interested in grassroots community development overseas particularly in Latin America. I joined the ECIR team this fall because I am eager to stay involved with and support the international community on and off-campus.



The Legacy of Shirley Lewis



Shirley Lewis, former ECIR Residential Program Manager and Interim Director (1998-1999) passed away in November, 2017. Shirley was a native of Indiana, earned a B.A. from Hanover College, served as an intern with the World Student Service Association in Philadelphia, and served as a youth worker in Manila, Philippines. She eventually settled in Ann Arbor to work with Paul Dotson and the Ecumenical Campus Ministry.

We dedicate this issue of the Center Report to Shirley's memory. She was a counselor, friend, and confidante to several thousand international students/scholars over several decades. Many became strong supporters of the ECIR, especially during the fundraising for the new Center at our present location, 921 Church Street. No one served the vision of ECIR longer or international students/scholars with more dedication. ECIR is indeed grateful for her legacy — years of dedicated service and financial support. Her legacy will continue through her estate gift to further the ECIR vision and program.

Message from the Director

Make some Noise!



ECIR enjoys ice skating in Detroit

ECIR has been making changes quietly for the past five years. In 2012, the ECIR Board of Directors approved new Mission and Vision Statements (see www.ecir.org/About). Additional changes include:

- becoming sole owners of the 921 Church Street property after the dissolution of the University of Michigan Presbyterian Corporation,
- becoming a fully tax-exempt 501c3 nonprofit providing programs to international students and the greater Ann Arbor community,
- completing in 2018 a legal and permanent name change—from the Ecumenical Center & International Residence (ECIR) to International House Ann Arbor (IHAA),
- creating and implementing the new Global Engagement for Understanding (GEU) program, a robust catalog of engagement programs designed to deepen understanding of global diversity,
- transforming the 921 Church Street property into a local global engagement Center serving the greater community of Ann Arbor, and
- expanding our residential capacity, educational program space, and social event venue to better engage the global (international) and local (Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti) communities,
- becoming an affiliate member of International Houses Worldwide (IHW), an 85 year-old association of houses located in major cities across the globe (from Paris to Sydney to Berkeley).

Global Engagement for Understanding (GEU). *Our Vision for IHAA and the GEU is “glocal” (local and global). During the next couple of years, International House Ann Arbor (IHAA) will focus on developing and implementing our new GEU program that provides space for residential (living), educational programs (learning), and a variety of social/ cultural events. Valuing diversity and inclusivity, the GEU provides a rich living learning environment that identifies common values and explores solutions to the many problems we face in today’s complex and divided world.*

Global. *The GEU program is intentionally global in that we welcome to the Center students and scholars to live and learn with others from around the world. Intentionally local, the GEU program also welcomes to the Center American students and members of the Ann Arbor community to live and learn with others from around the world.*

Engagement. *The heart or center of our vision is engagement. Our program is designed to supplement the academic and liberal professionalism for which the University of Michigan and the City of Ann Arbor are internationally respected. Our methodology is engagement. The GEU program structure has four important theme pairs: 1) culture and spirituality, 2) leadership and service, 3) justice and peace, and 4) community and politics. The focus of the GEU is to welcome the world’s amazing diversity in one place, to explore and bridge the differences that so often divide us, to engage in programs designed to open our minds, reduce our fears, and deepen our respect for all who see and experience the world differently.*

Understanding. *There are many misconceptions about what the verb “understand” means. From the Old English “understandan,” it literally means “to stand in the midst of,” and “to see out from the center” while being surrounded by the other. Seeing and experiencing the world or a particular aspect of the world as another person or another culture would see it is to achieve understanding. The primary goal of the GEU is to deepen our understanding of the differences that exist in our wonderfully diverse and complex world. Understanding breaks down barriers, builds bridges, and promotes respect for the other. It creates space to identify common values, explore common problems, and work cooperatively and creatively to meet the challenges of our world.*



Homer A. Mandoka and Judge Timothy Connors speaking at ECIR’s Tribal Justice event in January ‘18

For too long, ECIR has been quietly serving the Ann Arbor community. The time for “quiet” is now over. While remembering and celebrating the past, it is time to embrace the future, to do good better by embracing the mission of IHAA and the GEU. **It is time to make some noise!**

— Bruce Martin, ECIR Director

Community Engagement

Ecuadorian Community Meal

What was your favorite part about preparing Ecuadorian food and the overall event?

Although it was advertised as “Ecuadorian community meal”, it was really an international effort. My favorite part was the enthusiasm everyone in the kitchen showed to prepare the meals. Even though I was the only 100% Ecuadorian at the kitchen, everyone was excited to learn about Ecuadorian food and contribute to the final product. The “kitchen crew”, as I called them, consisted of friends from the US, India, Morocco, Taiwan, and Russia who enjoyed the experience of cooking new, exotic meals.



How does cooking Ecuadorian food enhance cross-cultural understanding?



Every country, city, and even neighborhoods have different approaches for communicating their cultural traditions, and the most delicious way is food. By sharing a typical Ecuadorian meal, people can understand the main ingredients that we like and how different the meal is presented to the consumer.

What do you want people to know about Ecuador?

Ecuador is a small country with a very rich cultural heritage. We have inherited traditions from native South American civilizations (such as the Incan empire), but we also reflect European influence due to the Spanish conquest and, in recent years, American influence caused by globalization. This mixture of different cultures manifests at different levels in Ecuador through the food, clothing, dialects, and even interactions with people from and outside Ecuador. I always say that if you like to explore cultures different than your own, Ecuador is a great place to start!

— Jonathan VanTreeck, Office Assistant

Student Spotlight

My name is Lisset. I was born in Cuba and emigrated first to Spain as a kid, and then to Florida when I was older. I did an internship in inorganic chemistry here at UM in 2016 and ECIR was the place that I stayed at. After the internship was over, I stayed at ECIR because of the community. The events here are a must. I love meeting new people every time I can attend events. I love the intercultural environment, having a community that I know I can trust, and I love the great meals from the different countries.

— Lisset Sanchez, Resident



Lunar New Year Celebration

Lunar New Year is a time when families in many Asian countries come together, counting blessings from the past year and envisioning for a successful new year. Recognizing that it is the most important holiday for many of our residents and community members, on February 14, 2018, ECIR hosted a Lunar New Year party. We put up red decorations, played new year songs, served Chinese food (fried rice, dumplings, and spring rolls), delivered red pockets with blessings, and had traditional new year arts and crafts available at the event. There were around 50 students, scholars, and community members who joined the celebration. A few Chinese scholars arrived before the event and helped make dumplings and set-up the room. Besides having fun activities and sharing food, we also had Ly Truong Thanh Tam, a Fulbright scholar from Vietnam, present the Lunar New Year customs in her hometown. The night was full of laughter, discussions, and heartwarming new year wishes to one another. ECIR is beyond grateful for celebrating the 2018 Lunar New Year with all our friends and family!

— Shib-Ya Chang, Program Assistant

ECIR Engagement

Hillel: Spiritual Community Visit



Ann Arbor Hillel.

I joined ECIR attracted by its international program and by the opportunity to develop an understanding of other cultures and beliefs. That's why, when the visit to Hillel was announced for January 19th, I was eager to participate. Hillel is the Jewish spiritual and cultural community of the University of Michigan. It offers many events open to the public and every Friday it organizes the Shabbat service in accordance to the Jewish religious tradition. Shabbat is a day of rest and celebration observed by the Jewish community; it begins every Friday after sunset and ends the following evening. During the Shabbat, namely "the day to sanctify", the Jewish community doesn't pursue acts like driving, using electrical devices or cooking, so every activity is prepared in advance to respect the sacred day. When we arrived to Hillel, the place was already full of students who were preparing for the service. The

Shabbat is anticipated by a moment of prayer, that can be conducted in different fashions, from the most reformist to the most traditional.

I decided to join the Conservative Minyan, to get a more traditional sense of the celebration. The prayer was led by the students themselves, and it was divided between moments of singing in Hebrew and written prayers in English. We were provided with the book of Psalms to be able to read the translation of the hymns that were sung. The room was full of voices that created with their melody a very intense atmosphere. After the prayer we were invited to the dinner that the community shares to celebrate the beginning of the Shabbat. As guests, a member sat with us to help in the cross-cultural understanding of the event and to answer our questions about the religious traditions of the community. The visit to Hillel was for me a unique occasion to come in contact with an ancient spiritual tradition made still lively today by the care of its vibrant community. It was surprising to see how powerful participation and sharing can be in bringing people together.



U-M Hillel logo

— Marianna Trimarchi, Resident

Service in Toronto

The service to Toronto with ECIR was one of my good experiences as a Thai teaching assistant at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. I had spent my spring break with other new cosmopolitan friends on the trip. Deliberately, we visited two organizations whose missions fall primarily on food issues. We helped

one of the organizations sorting the food in boxes which would be sold in specific places and the organization will turn the profit into other food projects such as nutrition lessons for new moms, or composting lessons for natural fertilizer. Also, we volunteered with another organization where there are other community-based supports, like serving food, sorting clothes, planting lessons, etc. Here, we had met many volunteers who come, share and support others in the community. Besides, we had a chance to explore the city and experience the diversity of people by food and neighborhoods together. Personally, Toronto is like an ideal city where there's such a good blend of modern growth and vibrant culture and with the service trip to Toronto, I had such a great time on my exchange journey.



— Warangkana "Eve" Pongsatornpiat, ECIR Friend

Development

Global Engagement for Understanding (GEU) Update

The Global Engagement for Understanding Task Force has made fantastic progress in laying the foundation for our GEU Certificate Program (which will launch this fall!) We are a team of staff, University partners, professional intercultural educators, and committed volunteers working diligently to create a structured, flexible, and well-rounded Program for all who wish to explore intercultural education here at ECIR. This spring, we conducted a resident survey and focus group to gather feed-



back about programs, developed and implemented brand new programs, fostered new and strengthened existing organizational partnerships, piloted new methods of data collection and evaluation, and many other projects designed to move the GEU Certificate Program toward fall readiness. Keep your eyes out for updates from GEU this summer!

— Kelsey Dovico, Chair, GEU Task Force

Wish List

There are many ways to give to ECIR and help the community! If you are interested in donating items, please contact ECIR at infor@ecir.org. Here are some examples of possible donations:

- Microwaves
- Upright & canister vacuum cleaners
- Dining Chairs
- Baby Grand piano
- Table saw
- Love seat
- Bicycles
- Van

All new or used items (in good condition), as well as cash, are tax-deductible gifts in support of our mission.

Giving

Options are available if you wish to donate. We accept checks or credit cards, one time or monthly contributions. You may choose to include ECIR in your estate plans, make donation using stocks or securities, or utilize a matching gift program with your company or organization.

“By combining our donations, large and small, we create a legacy to advance our vision to expand our Center, to extend our program as a living learning community promoting understanding and peace between diverse peoples and cultures of the world.”

- Bruce Martin, Director



For more information, please visit our website, www.ecir.org and our online GoFundMe Campaign at www.gofundme.com/aaecir.



Visit us on Facebook and Yelp for photos, stories, and updates on our residents! Be sure to give us a “like” and share our posts with your friends and family.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ECIR.ORG/>

Yelp : <https://www.yelp.com/biz/ecir-ann-arbor>

ECIR needs you! Are you interested in being part of our program committee? Available to drive or participate in ECIR events? Email us at info@ecir.org

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