



INTERNATIONAL HOUSE ANN ARBOR

IHAA World Newsletter

Spring 2019

The mission of IHAA is to be a welcoming community for students, scholars, and interns of all nationalities; to provide residential and educational programs fostering understanding and respect for all cultures and spiritual traditions; to promote lifelong friendships and leadership skills that contribute to harmony and peace between communities and nations around the world.

Where the World Comes to Ann Arbor

For over 130 years, International House Ann Arbor (IHAA) has welcomed students and scholars from abroad and from the United States to an intentional living learning community where international friendships flourish. We invite American students to join in this international community of which we are all a part. To achieve our mission of engaging all points of view in global understanding, American and international undergraduate and graduate students are encouraged to apply for life at IHAA. Students interested in developing a global perspective, useful for any field, have much to gain from global engagement on a local scale. Join us for one of our upcoming events posted on our Facebook page. Come meet our residents, staff, and supporters, or visit our website to get a snapshot of life at IHAA.



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ihouseaa.org



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International House Residents 2018-19

25 Countries and 6 Continents Represented

- Germany
- Czechia
- France
- Turkey
- UK
- China
- Japan
- Taiwan
- Hong Kong
- South Korea
- Myanmar
- Thailand
- Vietnam
- Singapore
- Indonesia
- Bangladesh
- India
- Philippines
- New Zealand
- Afghanistan
- Mexico
- USA
- Nicaragua
- Cuba
- Morocco

11
Undergrads

25
Graduates

4
Fulbright
Scholars

2
Knight-Wallace
Fellows

13
Professionals

For Prospective Applicants

International House Ann Arbor (IHAA) is an intentional living learning community of 50 university students and scholars from across the United States and the world at any one time. Upgraded apartments and multiple common spaces support opportunities for residents to cultivate friendships. A lounge, community kitchen, cafe space, and rec room are all part of the experience. IHAA is unique. Here, you develop cultural competency skills for a global world, make friends, and personally grow. This place helps prepare you to successfully manage global challenges and joyfully celebrate global triumphs with understanding. Apply at ihouseaa.org!



Living away from home was really something I needed to consider in choosing where to stay. But with International House Ann Arbor, I have found “home.” I have chosen IHAA because of the various programs it offers and its advocacy to foster global understanding, which I know will benefit me to expand my horizons and become more effective in society.

- Lex Michael Guiritan, Philippines

The International House Team



Bruce Martin, Executive Director



Janelle Fosler, Program Director



Stoney Griffin, Property Manager



Lauren Zinn, Development Director



Genna Miller, Intern



Amanda Hardy, Work Study

IHAA's Signature Program: Global Engagement for Understanding

The Global Engagement for Understanding (GEU) Program at IHAA supports residents and the public in developing cultural humility and a deeper and broader understanding of our world. Such awareness and the connections formed during GEU events are critical for peaceful, intercultural development while strengthening interpersonal relationships, turning the world's strangers into international friends. Whether it is through our Community Meals, Resident Appreciation Dinners, or Cultural Conversations like *Love and Relationships Around the World*, the chance to expand one's worldview is available here. The GEU Program benefits IHAA residents, the University of Michigan campus community, citizens of Washtenaw County and of Michigan, and ultimately the world. *Our context is global. Our method is engagement. Our goal is understanding.*



Welcoming New Board Members



Judith Pennywell



Angelo Pitillo



Rabbi Rob Dobrusin



Linda Kentes

Welcome to the IHAA Board!

Transitioning from Ecumenical Center and International Residence, a church-affiliated nonprofit, to International House Ann Arbor, an independent, professional, and educational nonprofit organization, is no easy task. In the process, our board has transformed. Today, we welcome four new members:

Judith Pennywell, Director of the International Center at the University of Michigan

Linda Kentes, Academic Chief of Staff in the College of LSA at the University of Michigan

Angelo Pitillo, Director of the English Language Institute at the University of Michigan

Rob Dobrusin, former Rabbi of Beth Israel and national co-chair of Rabbis for Human Rights

We also give a shout out to our current board members for their dedication to IHAA. Thank you, **Ashish Sarkar** - President, **Del Blain** - Vice President, **Jim Schaafsma** - Treasurer, **Brian Derickson** - Secretary, **Daniel Rubenstein**, **Elena Godin**, **Dan Cramer**, and **Bobbi Heilveil**, for your time and energy in serving this organization!

Why Our Board Members Serve

"IHAA is a practical, real-world incarnation of the international, cross-cultural perspective that has animated my entire career. I am honored to be able to use my years in global business and education to help IHAA provide more students the invaluable experiences it has to offer."

- Daniel Rubenstein, Assistant Director of the Beijing Institute of Collaborative Innovation at the University of Michigan

"I am always pleased when IHAA residents, upon leaving, express their thanks for having a home away from home at IHAA and convey their gratitude for the respectful experiences they had there with persons of different cultures and spiritual traditions."

- Del Blain, former Dean of Learning Resources at Washtenaw Community College

Resident Spotlight

Jawad Sukhanyar is an accomplished journalist with the New York Times and a Knight-Wallace Fellow at the University of Michigan. Raised in Afghanistan, Jawad studied in India where he earned his BA and MA in Political Science. In 2011, he joined the New York Times Kabul Bureau to cover the war in his country. Jawad spoke to an appreciative audience at IHAA on Warzone Reporting in Afghanistan as part of the GEU Spring Lecture Series. According to Jawad, life at IHAA has enhanced his ability to pursue his special interests: human rights and women's issues in Afghanistan. IHAA, he said, provides a friendly and supportive home for his wife, Yagana, and their family, especially when he travels. Upon hearing of his award, Jawad's grandfather joyfully responded, "Go for it, my son. Make sure you don't forget who you are and where you come from." For Jawad and his family, "It has been a wonderful year."



Markéta Skokanová studied at the Ross School of Business during the Fall 2018 semester. When asked how she benefited from the GEU program, she shared how much she enjoyed the variety of events, and that she learned "how to truly listen to others and treat their cultures with respect, through living with students from different countries and attending IHAA cultural events." Aside from her personal development, she said she was happy to have a safe place to live at IHAA. It was easy for her to make friends with other residents here and she appreciated how ready and willing the staff were to help her adjust to life in Ann Arbor.

Jisu Park is a visiting scholar from South Korea studying child psychology at the University of Michigan's School of Social Work. She chose IHAA because she saw the potential to build community here. Like many incoming students, she was nervous about being alone in a new and foreign place. Looking at the GEU Program, she was convinced she could quickly find friends, a diverse community here in Ann Arbor, and a place she could call home. She also appreciates the close proximity of IHAA to her courses.



IHAA Introduces Resident Appreciation Dinners!



Why Resident Appreciation Dinners?

Each month, residents get to know each other over a relaxed, family-style dinner where their friendships grow and deeper connections develop. These Resident Appreciation Dinners (RADs) are popular *resident to resident* events. The first RAD, held on February 1st, brought together 29 residents and four IHAA staff. With three Volunteer Corps members and a menu from Zingerman's, the event was a huge success. Our second RAD included 26 residents, six staff, two IHAA alumni from the IHAA Alumni Council, and one board member. The third RAD welcomed two new donors, one alumni (also a board member), and honored two long serving volunteers. To participate as a RAD guest, contact Lauren Zinn at lzinn@ihouseaa.org.

Thanks for making the RAD happen, it was such a wonderful initiative. I enjoyed every bit of the residents dinner night. The socializing part with other residents was amazing.. So thanks for doing that and looking forward to the next one. -Jawad

Thank you for hosting RAD! It was an amazing experience to get to know other residents :)
-Peter

Wait, Who's Oggy?

At the RAD, I found myself sitting with Soe Aung, a scholar from Myanmar, Ram, an undergraduate from India, and Modassir, an elementary school student from Afghanistan who lives here with his family. His father is a Knight-Wallace Fellow. Modassir is just learning English and was trying very hard to tell us about his favorite cartoon character. Ram and I had never heard of Oggy. But Soe Aung had. "The cat and the cockroaches," he said. "YES!" exclaimed Modassir, his face brightening and smile widening. "How did you know?" we asked Soe Aung. "Because my daughter grew up watching Oggy." Then Ram looked up Oggy on his phone so he and I could join in this revelation. One cartoon character made four of us from different cultures, countries, ages, and backgrounds all smile. Something in common was forged. Now, when we see each other, we immediately recall this moment of sharing and learning something new together and we can't help but smile. -LZ



Global Understanding for Youth

So how does life at IHAA benefit the local community?

IHAA residents have a unique opportunity to present their home country's culture (including the United States) from a global perspective to local elementary school children. The goal is to instill in children - tomorrow's leaders - feelings of international friendship, an awareness of cultural humility, and a sense of global rights and responsibilities.



Abdullah Al Mamun at Pittsfield Elementary school in Ann Arbor

Our pilot program has reached 143 youth in nine classrooms in two elementary schools this academic year. IHAA's Program Director, Janelle Fosler, oversees the project, currently referred to as "International Friendship Hour." IHAA participants have included Markéta Skokanová (Czechia), Lisset Sanchez (Cuba), Abdullah Al Mamun (Bangladesh), Lex Guiritan (Philippines), Ramgopal Chandrasekaran (India), Kampeeporn Santipochana (Thailand), and Ni Made Ariani (Indonesia).



It is so important to talk about diversity especially nowadays in this crazy scary world. It is important to teach people how to treat each other with respect and that every human life matters, no matter which race they are. And walking out of the class with a feeling that I've helped at least one kid to understand this is priceless.

- Markéta Skokanová, Czechia

How Are We Doing? Assessing Our Program

IHAA's Executive Director, Bruce Martin, recently introduced the **Intercultural Effectiveness Scale (IES)** to assess the impact of the Global Engagement for Understanding (GEU) program. As we implement this pre and post scale with residents, we gain another way to show our donors the positive outcomes of our program for developing global competency.

The IES scale, designed by the Kozai Group, gives residents a snapshot of their abilities to manage differences in the cultural gaps they experience. IES is used by educational institutions worldwide to provide participants with personal action plans for improving their global skills. International House Ann Arbor is proud to use IES.

The GEU program, along with IES action plans, will prepare our residents to lead from a place of understanding across multiple contexts both now and into the future.

Community Meals: A Highlight at IHAA



Photos of the *Bangladeshi Community Meal*, prepared in October by our resident and Fulbright scholar Abdullah Al Mamun, appeared on the US Embassy-Dhaka Facebook page! This past fall, we also hosted a *Ghanian Community Meal* featuring food and music from Ghana. Our resident and Fulbright scholar, Lex Guiritan, orchestrated the *Filipino Community Meal* in January along with a video of his country. The *Nicaraguan Community Meal* in February featured dishes by our resident Eimeel Carolina Castillo Dona with music and a slideshow of Nicaragua. The *Indian Community Meal* in March, organized by Nithin Danesh Karunakaran, exploded taste buds with exotic spices. These first five community meals alone attracted over 425 people and generated interest in resident-led cooking classes at IHAA.

2018-19 Academic Year GEU Events

23
Community &
Residential

11
Special
Events

6
Personal
Wellness

19
Film &
Lecture
Series

15
Holidays &
Celebrations

16
Service &
Learning

While Community Meals are always a hit, global understanding also develops through our special events like the popular tour of the Big House and resident-led celebration of the Filipino People's Power non-violent revolution. Residents also enjoy Personal Wellness activities like Mindfulness and Zumba. Social justice talks on *Indigenous Ways of Knowing* or *Asylum Journey: 10 Years of US Immigration* attract the general public. Holiday celebrations such as Diwali, Thanksgiving, Halloween, and a chocolate Passover Seder, as well as various service learning opportunities, are all ways to expand intercultural awareness among residents and campus community members. Our focus on inclusion means there's something for everyone!



Find upcoming events on our Facebook Page at iHouseAA!

IHAA Hosts: A Father and Son Immigration Story



“The uncertainty, the fear, is the same...The only thing we have left is hope that things could change.”

-Emilio Gutiérrez Soto

In March, IHAA hosted a public talk by Emilio Gutiérrez Soto, award-winning Mexican journalist and U-M Knight-Wallace Fellow, and his son, Oscar. Father and son shared the story of their continuing ten year journey to gain asylum in the United States after Emilio's life was threatened by the Mexican army for his articles exposing corruption. Mexico is the deadliest country for journalists worldwide that is not engaged in armed conflict. Reporters Without Borders confirmed that eight journalists were murdered in Mexico last year and two more have been murdered this year. Yet, Emilio's claim for asylum was denied for the second time. It is now under appeal.

Despite the many challenges they have had to face in their effort to gain asylum in the United States, Emilio and Oscar's relationship has strengthened. They have persevered and triumphed over death threats from the Mexican military. They have maintained their equanimity in the face of hostility from United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers. Indeed, they expressed compassion for our country's difficulties in determining a just immigration policy - one that holds their lives in the balance.

Audience members, moved by their story, took part in a letter writing campaign urging Michigan politicians to enact House Resolution 1751 in support of Emilio and Oscar Gutiérrez Soto to receive permanent residence in the United States. Emilio had the moral courage to expose the military's corruption in his country. Yet, he is unable to live life free of threats and intimidation from both sides of the border. While their lives remain in limbo, father and son are steadfast in hope that their request will be granted. We are, too.

This event was cosponsored by the University of Michigan Center for Latin American & Caribbean Studies, the Washtenaw Interfaith Coalition for Immigrant Rights, and the Interfaith Council for Peace and Justice. Palmer Rey, an Ann Arbor and Detroit based immigration law firm, was also represented.

Alumni- This one's for you!



**No matter where you live,
you can join in the
IHAA mission.**

If you live nearby, we welcome you to public events. Your presence adds to the rich community life IHAA residents have come to expect. Some of you joined in a resident-led Filipino holiday celebration, and many of you joined in the annual IHAA Thanksgiving celebration. We appreciate your participation, so keep coming - your presence is valuable!

If you live abroad, we invite you to get together with alumni in your area. We encourage you to organize events, share memories, and create new relationships.

To find alumni in your area, contact Lauren Zinn at lzinn@ihouseaa.org

Keep on Glo'in!

*Engage globally to lead from
a place of understanding.*

IHAA Leaves Its Mark



Yan Yu - China



Zilong Wang - China

"There are many programs at the University where they try to bring people together and make them appreciate each other's cultures. Not many succeed. Sometimes it's because people are naturally defensive about protecting themselves from different cultures. But IHAA succeeds. In the first place, it's a warm and safe space to live. What follows from one's love for the space is an appreciation for the people sharing that space with them. It's about working together to make their community better. Then, people learn to understand and appreciate each other's background in an environment where they've invested their efforts. That's my understanding of the experience.

People won't appreciate each other simply because they are in the same room. Intercultural awareness develops from this overall system where everyone listens and talks and, most importantly, feels well-protected. From my experience, it's more like this appreciation – developed by living at IHAA – helps people stay connected even though there are issues that divide them. The world is complicated and historic factors matter but IHAA teaches us to see a person as himself/herself, rather than judge a person by his/her cultural background. I think that's the best thing I learned."

- Yan Yu and Zilong Wang, IHAA Alumni

Meet IHAA's World Alumni Council

- **Paul (Baga) Bagavandos** – INDIA – 1977-1988
- **Keiko Yokoto-Carter** – JAPAN – 1996-1997
- **Sofia-Eleftheria N. Gonida** – GREECE – 2012 & 2018
- **Alex Morriss-Andrews** – CANADA – 2014-2015
- **Gal Lahav** – ISRAEL – 2016-2017
- **Infer Khalid Baig** – PAKISTAN – 2017

Our World Alumni Council includes former residents who value the benefits of an intentional and diverse living learning community. These professionals now share their time to promote the vision of IHAA.

THANK YOU

Why Give to IHAA?

"If you stand for nothing, Burr, what'll you fall for?"

- Hamilton, Lin-Manuel Miranda

When you give to IHAA, you feel the joy of standing for that which is significant and sacred - **our global rights and responsibilities as a human community**. Your gift helps the Global Engagement for Understanding program continue to be effective and robust at a time when the world increasingly needs all of us to better understand who we are together in the context of our rich and diverse cultures. It is because of your contributions that tomorrow's leaders will connect with, relate to, and understand each other today.

**To all our donors, who stand for leading the world from a place of understanding,
THANK YOU.**

IHAA Welcomes Legacy Gifts

Shirley Lewis, a former Program Manager here, left a legacy fund to IHAA. May her memory be a blessing. Her bequest makes a difference by strengthening our impact.

“Shirley was a very warm and welcoming person always ready to give a helping hand. What I still remember vividly is that as a freshly arrived foreign student, Shirley showed me how to properly write a bank check. Almost 50 years later, I still write my checks exactly the way she showed me. There are many other wonderful memories of Shirley's help, almost too many to count. - Ashish Sarkar, IHAA Board President”

If Shirley's generosity inspires you, contact Lauren Zinn at lzinn@ihouseaa.org to learn how you can best support the work of International House Ann Arbor. Thanks again!

IHAA Volunteers Are Busy!

The IHAA Volunteer Corps supports many aspects of the GEU Program. **Thank You, Volunteers!** for all your valuable assistance to our residents and staff. To experience volunteering with a growing global community, we welcome you to contact our team at info@ihouseaa.org.



150
volunteer hours this
academic year





INTERNATIONAL HOUSE
ANN ARBOR

International House Ann Arbor
921 Church Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
USA

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

IHAA Alumni News & Notes

Dear Alumni,

What inspired you about living at IHAA (formerly ECIR)? How did life at IHAA influence you? What seed was planted and how has it grown in the world? Your stories energize our donors, residents, and applicants. Keep us up to date! Share how your accomplishments benefited or will benefit others. Send your Alumni Story to izinn@ihouseaa.org for our next newsletter.

I was very fortunate to stay at IHAA [formerly ECIR], during my exchange program in the summer of 2017. As an international student from India, ECIR helped me to understand and appreciate people from diverse backgrounds and develop contacts across the globe. ECIR's friendly environment helped me perform better in my research and as result, I am currently going to be a Ph.D. student at U of M in Fall-2019. Janelle and Jessica are great and were always there to help me whenever I needed them, big thanks to them. Monthly events at ECIR are a great opportunity to socialize with people and make more friends, keep it going. - Harsha Gouda