

Global Times Monthly

March 2007



Preparing for a Global College Education

So you've made the decision to become a Global College student? Excellent! There are several things that you can do now to prepare to make the most of your upcoming adventures. With the assistance of our Global Director of Academic and Student Affairs, Joann Halpern, we have compiled a few ideas to help you begin your Global College education on the right foot:

1. **Prepare for your country!** – The most logical first step in preparing for your education is to learn as much as you can about the language, culture, history, and people of the country you will be visiting.
2. **Enjoy the time you have left at home with friends and family!**
3. **Take care of your health!** – Make sure to check with your family physician regarding inoculations and any other questions you may have before going abroad.
4. **Read the Guidebook and all the materials that Global College sends you closely and completely!** – These documents have been prepared over time and include a vast array of tips and tricks to make your stay with us as unique and exciting as possible.

5. **Make sure your passport is up to date!** – It can take weeks to receive your passport, so once the decision to attend Global College has been made, ensure that your passport is valid and that you have your visas!
6. **Get an address book!** – If you want to stay in touch with friends and family back at home, make sure to get all of their contact information before you leave the country. The address book will also be useful to get the contact information of people who you meet out on the road, and there will be many!

Colors - A New Type of Restaurant!



A restaurant has opened in the East Village which is owned and operated by people who used to work at *Windows on the World* in the World Trade Centers. The restaurant is called **Colors**. It is unique in that everyone who works there is an owner, and has a say in how the restaurant is run. Their recipes are all from their own families – the things their grandparents cooked when they were kids, or what their moms had ready when they got home from school. Let's get the word out to those of us in Metro NY that this is a place we might want to support! www.colors-nyc.com

*-Helen Boxwill,
Global College Council of Overseers*

March Spotlight

Japan Center!



The Japan Center is located in Kyoto, which is the former imperial center of Japan. It remains the cultural center of Japan, with a magical maze of Buddhist temples, Shinto shrines, and myriad esoteric gardens. Students study at the Japan Center for a semester, either in the spring or fall of their junior year alternating with the semester in South Africa, and take classes in Japanese language, area studies, digital literacy, writing, and a three-credit Directed Independent Study of their own choosing. For our spotlight this month, we are highlighting five former students' experiences, as described in their self-evaluations which they wrote following their time at the Center.

Simply being in Japan as a foreigner is always an adventure, much less living there! Between the amazing sights, crazy fashions, unfamiliar food, and complex culture, though, sometimes it's the little things that can really amaze. Merely the humble act of walking into a grocery store, for instance, can be quite the shock for a person who is average height in the U.S. - a sea of black heads, all about chin-high, as all the grandmothers and housewives go about their daily shopping. I'm 5'5 and I feel like a giant while I speculatively eye the squid that implacably eyes me back while older women giggle at the sight of me. Trucking back up the hills to my apartment, my bike laden with grocery bags, I pass a shrieking horde of middle-schoolers who shout

"Bye-bye!" after me, and the occasional random, "I love you!" Farther along, after the little shrine nestled on the street corner, I walk through a cadre of boys playing baseball... safely in the middle of the community parking lot filled with cars. I enjoy the sight of the beautiful, gargantuan dragonfly as long as my hand that zooms quietly through the neighborhood. Sensing my impending doom, I am nearly flattened by a vespa buzzing down the hill as I take the last leg home, but with professional finesse the driver swerves around me, each of the individual boys behind me, the oncoming car, a startled cat, and the mother and two children across the street before zipping off to the highway. The omnipresent crows circle above the bamboo grove across from where I live, and tiny fiddler crabs scuttle under cover as I pass the mossy rain gutters to the stairs of my apartment. I may have just witnessed a gorgeous tea ceremony earlier that day, but it was the sixty-year-old woman gamely plowing uphill on her bicycle while I lagged behind, panting and sweating, that really amazed me.

-Maggie Traylor, Spring 2007

I can't imagine a better experience in Japan than the one Global College has given me, my only regret is not having discovered the program earlier. If I could stay in Japan another semester, I'd do it in a heartbeat. I believe that my surroundings in America have stunted my growth as a person, and it was such a freeing experience to be halfway around the world and virtually independent.

-Adele Carr, Fall 2006

Living in Japan for a semester has undoubtedly changed my life. When I first arrived in Japan in



September, I was lost and confused about where I was heading in my life; I had no idea what I wanted to pursue for a career in the future, or even if I wanted to stay in college. Now, because of my time in Japan, I feel like I finally know myself a little better and am

prepared to take on whatever challenges lie ahead when I return to America. In the end I am very glad that I chose the Japan Center for my semester abroad. I feel that I thrived in the amount of independence this program provides the students, and produced some of my best work to date. I have a clearer sense of where I want to go with my life, and what interests I want to pursue. I am leaving this country with a new confidence in myself, I am proud that I not only lived in Japan for a semester, but I made good friends, and thoroughly accomplished the goals I set for myself in my learning plan.

-Barbara Lindhardt, Fall 2005

Academically I feel like I have made a considerable amount of progress considering that when I first arrived here I knew maybe three words in Japanese



and now I can string together whole sentences and write in the *Hirigana* and *Katakana* with perfect

fluency. I also feel like I have learned a lot about different aspects of aesthetic values from the culture, experienced traditions like *kaiseki* and tea ceremony. During my free time, I have explored all around Kyoto and been to many different temples and shrines, which give me a deeper insight to the country's religions. In other words, I have gained the ability to travel in a foreign country in which I am not completely fluent in the language, but can still manage to get around.

-Melissa Sherman, Fall 2006

My trip to Japan has nurtured my ability to appreciate challenges in life, and yet my goal is to develop the ability to see challenges as such while they are occurring, to "show up" as sensei would tell me. You cannot hide from life, you have to face it head on, and meet the challenges as they arise, or else they will tie knots within you that will only

create further suffering in the future. Showing up is thus the act of being present in life, and with this presence you are able to respond to life in a more conscious manner. Not showing up is the equivalent to merely relying upon your default response to situations; these automated responses to life allow you to distance yourself from the act of living and contributing to the world. So in essence if you are not showing up for life, it is the same as if you were not showing up for class; you don't learn anything, and you waste



your time and money. Taken as a whole, my experience at the Japan Center in Kyoto was an educational wake up call. I found that during a lot of my education I have been absent minded; I have made a habit of relying upon my automated responses to assignments, and challenges. When things don't operate smoothly I just complain and curse my environment for disturbing my slumber. I would say that the most salient lesson that I have learned this semester is that life is not worth living unless you SHOW UP. This semester taught me that the beginning of my education is in showing up in life, and when I am present in life all things will blossom, and all things will act as my teacher.

-John Killian, Fall 2006

Links of Interest

Japan Center Website:

<http://www.friends-world.org/eastasiacenter/>

Student Work:

http://friends-world.org/eastasiacenter/?page_id=22

Next month's Spotlight: Comparative Religion and Culture Program

Have your writing, stories, or pictures featured in the April issue. Please email your submissions to virginia.harris@liu.edu! We look forward to hearing from you.

Katherine Fleming-Strous

Alumni Spotlight



Katherine Fleming-Strous says that she applies what she learned during her time at Friends World every day to her job and life. “It taught me that there are many paths one can take in this life, and it gave me the courage to follow those paths wherever they may lead.”

The path that she has gone down couldn't have happened without Friends World, the May 2005 Friends World graduate says. “The program offered a global education that, through contacts with so many different ways of living, allowed me to expand my thinking.” Her year with CRC (Comparative Religion and Culture Program) and two years at the China center opened Katherine's eyes to the conflict between the desire of developed countries to address social issues within developing nations and how to implement these strategies in a culturally sensitive way. This study culminated in her thesis and, ultimately, her career.

Today Katherine is a Professional Skills and Development Training Manager in Hangzhou, China, where she provides on-site training and program development of professional skill sets aimed at increasing the effectiveness and capabilities of working with global clients. She also works as a freelance intercultural consultant for expatriates relocating to and from China. On top of all this, Katherine is currently pursuing her MA in Intercultural Relations at the University of the Pacific.

“I believe that it is the education that I received at Friends World that led to my current career path. I realized through my experiences and education that intercultural competence is essential to function within a world that is so globally interconnected,” Katherine says.

Aric Clark

Alumni Spotlight



Aric Clark, a May 2004 Friends World graduate, vividly remembers an eye-opening moment in Taiwan while on the CRC (Comparative Religion and Culture Program):

“One fall afternoon, on our field trip down to the eastern side of the island, we stopped at a massive temple for a brief visit. Unbeknownst to any of our organizers it was the day of a major pilgrimage festival for the deity of this particular temple. The deities were proceeding up with the path with firecrackers, drummers, costumed dancers, priests and mediums flagellating themselves to encourage a trance...the experience were overwhelming. Several in our group were appalled by the violence of this, while others were mesmerized by the music and dancing. I felt that I had quite suddenly been plunged through the membrane between this world and a very alternate dimension.”

Aric's experiences with Friends World, especially while on CRC which took him to Taiwan, Thailand, Italy, Greece and Turkey, have profoundly affected the direction of his life. He is on his way to finishing his Masters of Divinity degree at San Francisco Theological Seminary and is pursuing ordination in the Presbyterian Church where he hopes to focus on inter-religious dialogue with other traditions. “Quite frankly, I received my call to ministry partly through my experiences on CRC. It was the immersion in religious communities with committed practitioners from traditions very different than my previous experiences that prompted me to explore my own commitments more closely,” he says.

Aric's advice to current students is to never make the mistake of believing that education is primarily about content or communication of information. “Education is about transformation. To discover what you have learned and whether it is worthwhile to ask yourself ‘who have I become?’ rather than ‘what do I know?’”

Read Aric's blog at www.aricclark.blogspot.com

Where in the World is CRC?

Country Website Links

CRC stands for **Comparative Religion and Culture Program**, one of the junior year options with Global College. Here is the latest news that we have received from our travelers.

Dear Friends and Family,

We are relieved to be back home at Crystal Springs Guest House after four days of meditation. We woke up at 5am to begin our days of 8 hours of meditation. We had delicious home-cooked meals to break up our day. Break times got pretty wild by the end of the retreat as we explored our inner child, dancing around the halls and wrestling with each other (I think we were going a bit crazy with our bounds of energy from all the meditation).



Vipassana was a challenging dive into the inner world but I think we all benefited in the end. It was a worthwhile experience as we learned a lot about the technique firsthand. Everyone has their own experience to digest now that we are back "home".

The week before the retreat was also a highlight. Everyone came back together after the week of vacation with many stories from their adventures in **Thailand** or **Laos**. The first week of the program in Thailand was a hit. Everyone was relieved and excited about how organized and structured the program is and how stimulating and interesting the lectures are. After India, it is a whole new introduction to culture in Thailand. We have to relearn manners and a whole new set of cultural customs. I think it is a shock for some entering back into the developed world after India.

One more week in **Chiang Mai** and then we make our way down to **Bangkok**. So far Thailand has been great and we still have so much more to go!

-CRC crew

Learn more about the country you'll be living by taking a look at these useful websites:

Costa Rica: www.costarica.com/home

China: www.fwpchina.com

India: www.tourindia.com

Japan: www.friends-world.org/eastasiacenter

South Africa: www.southafrica.net

Dear Readers,

Creating this newsletter every month has become a very rewarding monthly project! It is great to know that we can provide a forum to keep everyone in touch with both the program and each other. Keep in mind that this newsletter is all about you, the reader, so please keep your submissions coming! If it is important to you, it is important to others, and we want to hear about it. Have a great month!

-Virginia Harris and Megan McCormick, Editors

Thank you for Reading!



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