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# SPOTLIGHT

## Muskies Pitch In to Fight Flooding in Fargo

As the Red River rose to record levels in March, Muskie fellows at North Dakota State University (NDSU) in Fargo, ND joined the fight to prevent massive flooding. With classes cancelled, **Anna Ivashchenko** (Muskie 2007) of Ukraine, **Mukhabbat Yakubova** (Muskie 2007) of Tajikistan, **Fargani Aliyev** (Muskie 2008) of Azerbaijan, **David Chaganava** (Muskie 2008) of Georgia, **Shokhrukh Jalilov** (Muskie 2008) of Uzbekistan and **Tamar Kvaratskhelia** (Muskie 2008) of Georgia mobilized alongside thousands of community members to fill sandbags to hold back the Red River, contributing to their U.S. host community and experiencing civic participation at its strongest.

"The whole community during this crisis became one whole with one common goal, and this goal was to stop the river," reflected Mr. Chaganava. "I met some people from hundreds of miles away, who just came to Fargo to help others." Mr. Jalilov was in the thick of a variety of activities, from sandbagging to making sandwiches for fellow volunteers. "All students have come together to fight the flooding," he said. "I am really proud that I can help."

"NDSU students [gave] more than 25,000 hours and helped fill more than five million sandbags in just five days," said Mr. Aliyev. "I started as one

among many in the lines, passing the sandbags to the next person," said Mr. Chaganava. "As I was observing how things were going, how dikes were built, I learned the basics, so people noticed that and appointed me as a lead dike builder! It was tough work... I put all my heart in this job, as I knew I was building walls to protect someone's house. I felt that your personal, individual deeds and desire to do things are the most important; not what background, political sympathy or other interests you have. I think this was the main lesson that I learned from the Fargo community during the flood fight and I am proud to have had a chance to be standing side by side with those people!"

The flood coincided with the Novruz holiday celebrated in Mr. Aliyev's home country. "Usually, Novruz in Azerbaijan embodies the coming of the spring and you can actually see trees and fields [becoming green] as well as flowers flowering," he said. "But in North Dakota and especially in my city, Fargo, it does not [seem like] Novruz, as we have still 40 inches of snow on the ground...and Fargo is facing the worst flood in its history." Luckily, while many residents of the city were forced to evacuate, the Muskies stayed safe, living at one of Fargo's highest points.

Mr. Chaganava was especially inspired by one of his fellow volunteers. "I spent one day working next to a middle-aged lady," he said. "She was working more than me. I was extremely tired and my feet were wet. I wanted to go home, lie in hot water and sleep. My muscles were aching, though I was silent. I was watching her doing all she could to save someone's house, [someone] whom she probably will never meet in her life, and I was silently doing my best. She is my friend now, and I am proud of that. This small impact on others' lives makes me stronger and gives me a feeling of self confidence. I think that is the most important point of being involved in community service."



Georgian Muskie fellow David Chaganava assists with laying sandbags to fight record-level flooding in North Dakota (Photo by Laurie Lind)

## Fellow Serves as “Global Ambassador” for Uzbekistan at Georgia Southern

Of the many community service activities **Saida Akbarova** (Muskie 2008) participates in, the Global Ambassadors Program, organized by the Center for International Studies at Georgia Southern University (GSU), stands out as her favorite. GSU's Global Ambassadors are a select team of international and study abroad students who have the opportunity to share different cultures with people in the community. “Through its curriculum and sponsored activities, the Center for International Studies seeks to enhance the understanding of global issues and expo-sure to contemporary world cultures,” Ms. Akbarova writes. “I had a great chance to give several presentations on Uzbekistan to a seventh-grade class at Screven County Middle School. I was impressed by the students' curiosity about Uzbek history and culture. They asked many questions related to different branches of knowledge. Besides that, they shared their research project on Uzbekistan and clarified some facts. The kids liked the Uzbek language part of the presentation. They enjoyed reading part of an Uzbek text, although they did not understand it. By the end of the presentations, students learned some phrases and it stimulated them to continue their research on Uzbekistan.”



**Saida Akbarova of Uzbekistan with middle school students.**

The kids had a chance to show off their knowledge at the 4th Annual International Festival held in Statesboro, Georgia. With help from the Global Ambassadors, area middle and high school students created educational country booths that were displayed at the festival's Global Village. “When the seventh grade came with their dioramas, posters with pictures and information on Uzbekistan, arts and crafts that they have made, I was very surprised to see them,” Ms. Akbarova shared. “The kids were very creative. Together we set up their displays and the Uzbekistan booth was ready to meet the community. The next day, several representatives of the seventh grade acted as tour guides and they shared what they learned with festival attendees. They taught visitors how to say ‘Assalomu Alaykum! Hush Kelibsiz!’ which means ‘Hello! Welcome!’ and a few other phrases in Uzbek. The seventh grade did a great job and they were selected to get a prize for being the most informative among 15 other country booths of the Global Village. The kids were very happy!”

“This event promoted community harmony as it brought together international students, schoolchildren, parents, business and

community leaders in a positive, interactive environment which values the cultural heritage of all participants. By going into the school system and educating the school children, I felt that this was the way to reach the children and open their eyes to other people's cultures and take it home with them and share with their family. It was an exciting event for everyone involved. Through community service I learned a lot about American culture and made lots of new friends. I wish when I come back to Uzbekistan I will definitely organize this kind of event with our local schools. It is the best way to teach children about world around them!”

## Muskie Fellows Enhance Their Professional Knowledge at a Research Conference

**Elena Pripisnova** (Muskie 2008) of Russia has been an active volunteer with the International Coordinating Council (ICC) at Kansas State University (KSU), where she is pursuing an MBA degree. As part of her ICC Treasury Committee duties, Elena has helped organize fundraising events like the International Food Festival, which allow the group to cover its costs as well as finance scholarships and emergency loans for international students. Elena also represented Russia and Russian culture at the spring International Week celebration at KSU, which included a fashion show, talent show and cultural exhibition.

Elena believes her contact with diversity through the ICC will be useful in her future business career. “Any event or project involves serious discussions and plan development,” she said. “ICC consists of students from more than 10 countries and it brings a lot of cultural characteristics and distinctions in our meetings. Thanks to that I've learnt a lot about efficient working processes in a multicultural environment. Obviously, it will be a useful skill for me as for future manager.”

The activities have also helped her integrate into the local community. “International Week definitely brought new contacts and new people to my environment,” she remarked. “I was amazed by the [interest] among Manhattan, Kansas residents.”

Elena intends to continue working with the ICC next year and has already scheduled an on-campus presentation on Russian culture for the fall. “Working and developing projects in a multicultural team broadens my views, brings new knowledge and improves my communication skills significantly,” she reflected.



**Elena Pripisnova (left) and a fellow student at the International Week Russia booth.**

## Fellow Joins Community in Development Planning at Fayetteville Forward Summit

From March 31–April 4, **Asvad Gabul-zada** (Muskie 2008) joined local residents at the Fayetteville Forward Summit, an open, participatory event where community members brainstormed ideas to make their city a better place, lay a foundation for economic development, and move Fayetteville toward a sustainable future.

Ms. Gabul-zada, who is studying public health at the University of Arkansas, was very impressed by the event, writing, “The high point of the day for me was meeting a lot of new people, developing my own ideas, and having the opportunity to make my modest contribution to the process. I personally witnessed how a group of intelligent and committed people with a vision can suggest valuable ideas, discuss and evaluate them, make a list of preferences, and make constructive proposals which may later help in the policy-making process. I agree with the idea articulated there that partnership is a great power. To build healthy partnerships, people should respect each other, listen and evaluate the ideas. Every initiative should be assessed. I do not doubt that this summit day was an ideal example of partnership between a community and governing organizations.”

“On the first day we had group discussions about our dreams [for Fayetteville] and constructed our dream tree [a visual representation of the group’s ideas]. Our group’s core dreams were to improve community relationships and build a better future based on education. I offered some ideas, such as more public transportation units, issues of more lighting to make the city safer, and the proposal to increase community involvement starting with interaction with neighbors. I took this last idea from my cultural views.

“On the final day, our group of graduate students, professors, and community leaders put forward our topic about health and the ways of improving healthcare to move Fayetteville Forward. Some of our concerns were increasing access of the whole population to healthcare, promoting healthy lifestyles, early education and intervention issues, and including nutritional information on menu listings in restaurants. I came up with the idea about health literacy, because there are a lot of Latinos, Marshallese [from the Marshall Islands] and other non-native speakers in Fayetteville who encounter difficulties while getting help in the healthcare units.

“I made a lot of new connections, met interesting people, and finally felt like a part of Fayetteville. I enjoyed the entire format of the summit, the venue, and the caring people who wanted to change this wonderful city. I believe that by positive thinking and deep interest people can bring helpful changes to the community. As an international exchange student I want to bring some changes to my country as well. I think I can propose the idea of making such an event in my city, Baku, and other places in Azerbaijan,” Ms. Gabul-zada concluded.

## New Orleans Experience Inspires Fellow to Promote Community Service in Kyrgyzstan

**Ruslan Karabukaev** (Muskie 2008) and several of his MBA classmates at the Georgia Institute of Technology spent their winter break volunteering in New Orleans with the Saint Bernard Project ([www.stbernardproject.org](http://www.stbernardproject.org)), which aims to help rebuild the lives of Hurricane Katrina survivors, family by family. Says Mr. Karabukaev, “We spent an amazing week working from nine to four rebuilding houses damaged by the flood and hurricane: putting in drywall, painting, and cleaning. It was good physical exercise, which helped to reload busy brains after the final exams week. We met a lot of volunteers from all around the country, who came to help during their winter break. After long working days, we had a chance to enjoy the famous night life in the historical French Quarter of New Orleans, where you can listen to live jazz and enjoy authentic Creole cuisine.

“I really enjoyed our community service trip. It was really rewarding to hear the appreciation of our work from the owners of the houses, mostly elderly people who had been strongly hit by Katrina, because they are not so mobile as young people and can’t start so easily from scratch. Seeing how people live outside of a university campus helped me to better understand the life of people in the USA and enriched my cultural experience.

“In my undergraduate studies back in Kyrgyzstan, I never participated in volunteer projects since we did not have a big culture of community service at the school. Back to my country – we also have villages and people who need community service. One of the things I learnt from both from my studying at school and community service projects is the concept of [leadership through service]. As an educated person, I think it is our [civic responsibility] to help make community life better and help to prevent poverty and homelessness. After returning to Kyrgyzstan, I plan to combine my career in business with teaching in the universities, sharing the knowledge and values I learnt in my studies and inspiring students to volunteer for community service projects.”



**Ruslan Karabukaev** (front, in blue) and fellow Saint Bernard Project volunteers.

## Muskie Fellows Connect and Reflect Before Heading Home

With master's degrees in hand after two successful years in the U.S., the 2007 cohort of Muskie fellows reunited for a Commencement Retreat May 18-21 at the Rocky Gap Resort and Lodge in Cumberland, Maryland. Through interactive workshops and guided reflection, the graduating class of Muskies prepared for the next steps ahead—integrating in their communities, finding employment, and utilizing their U.S. experiences and new skills to foster Eurasian development and strengthen relationships between Americans and people in their home countries.

The Commencement experience brought together fellows from all participating countries and fields of study, many of whom had not met since their initial program orientation in August 2007. Alumni guests shared their perspectives on post-program personal and professional transitions. Team-building activities, as well as time spent sharing best practices and cultural insights, solidified this cadre of skilled professionals into a strong network ready to take on challenges and support each other's efforts at home.



(From left) Professor Bruce Clary, Muskie fellows Darya Trushkina and Ramil Mammadov, and Dean William Foster of the Muskie School of Public Service at the University of Southern Maine.

A celebratory Commencement luncheon concluded the week at the Hotel Monaco in Washington, DC, where representatives from the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, ambassadors, foreign embassy representatives and other special guests congratulated participants on successfully completing the Muskie program. Dr. William Foster, Dean of the Muskie School of Public Service at the University of Southern Maine, also spoke on the legacy of Senator Edmund S. Muskie, for whom the program is named, and encouraged participants to keep the Senator's spirit of public service alive after they return home.

Muskie alumni form a powerful network of change agents across Eurasia, working in government, business, education, international organizations and the NGO sector and sharing their first-hand understanding of American culture back home. "Before I was an ambassador of Turkmenistan educating people of Wyoming about Turkmenistan; now I feel that I will be an ambassador of the U.S. educating my colleagues, friends and neighbors about America," says Jeren Hakiyeva, who is returning home with a master's in public administration from the University of Wyoming.



Muskie fellows during a team-building activity at the Commencement workshop.

## Celebrating Earth Day at Georgia State University

In April, **Alexandra Arkadieva** (Muskie 2008) volunteered at Georgia State University's Earth Day Street Fair, "Georgia State University Going Green," where environmental companies and nonprofit organizations gathered to raise awareness of environmental issues in the community. Ms. Arkadieva and her classmates represented the Public Management and Policy Department of the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies, distributing policy briefs on national and local Atlanta environmental policy, as well as international environmental protection issues.

"This volunteer work allowed me to acquaint the interested community with the university's activities in terms of going green," writes Ms. Arkadieva, who is from Russia. "Participating in this event benefited and complimented my studies in the field of planning and economic development within the public administration program. It allowed me to use the policy analysis skills that I've learned in class in the preparation of the policy brief. I have prepared information concerning the problem of protection of the Baltic Sea, the area I am from, focusing on the attempts of the international community to harmonize the environmental policies and actions through various international conventions and programs."



Alexandra Arkadieva (right) with fellow public policy students at the Earth Day Street Fair.

## Alumni Panel Promotes Dialogue on Financial Crisis in Kazakhstan

The global economic crisis, a devaluation of Kazakhstan's currency and the government takeover of two major banks has heightened the growing sense of concern among Kazakhstanis about their country's financial future. To provide a forum for dialogue about these developments, IREX held a panel discussion February 26 in Almaty, giving over forty attendees the opportunity to explore financial issues with Muskie and UGRAD alumni who now hold leadership positions in Kazakhstan's banking sector.

While the Kazakhstani media was abuzz with reactions from business leaders following the overnight devaluation of the tenge by 22% in early February 2009, much of the commentary did not address the central issues related to the devaluation or the overall economic situation in Kazakhstan. The "A Financial Crisis in Kazakhstan?" panel was designed to start a productive dialogue on these crucial issues amongst members of the banking and wider business communities.

Global Undergraduate Exchange Program in Eurasia and Central Asia (UGRAD) alumnus Magzhan Auezov (1993-1994), Managing Director of Kazkommertsbank, moderated the discussion, which touched on the possibility of additional devaluations in the future and the impact of recent events on average Kazakhstanis. Panelists also discussed falling oil prices, bank lending rates, and the relationship between the Kazakhstani tenge and the Russian ruble. Panel members included Muskie alumni **Geniyat Issin** (2005) of the Royal Bank of Scotland Group, **Orinbasar Kumatov** (2002) of USB Advisory Services, and **Talat Sultanov** (2006) of Kazkommertsbank.

## Alumna Introduces Online Tools to Moldovan Teachers

Since returning home, **Daniela Munca** (Muskie 2006) has been sharing ways to integrate technology in teaching and learning with educators in her native Moldova. Ms. Munca writes, "Imagine over three hundred teachers and educators from all over the world exchanging messages on a daily basis using Ning, one of the most recent innovative social networks, posting their favorite pictures and video projects they created in class with their

students, leaving comments and suggestions on each others' lesson plans and teaching tips and sharing innovative methods of teaching using the new generation of web tools. All of this was possible due to an online training organized by one of the Electronic Village Online (EVO) sections of TESOL, the world's largest association for teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages. During six weeks in January through the end of February 2009, I had the most amazing opportunity to be one of the six moderators of this online training, called 'Images for Education,' which trained almost three hundred educators around the world on integrating images to their in-class and online activities in order to help learners develop their 21st century multi-literacy skills through active learning."

Ms. Munca became an active TESOL member in 2006 when she began her studies as a Muskie fellow at the University of Mississippi, where she received a master's degree in education. She has presented at the Alabama-Mississippi TESOL Conference and the 2008 TESOL Convention in New York, where she was invited by the EVO team to share her experience in integrating modern technologies in her ESL classes. "Upon my return to Moldova, I was contacted by the EVO team and asked to help them organize the 2009 round of online trainings, an opportunity which equipped me with the necessary training tools to become a successful teacher trainer back home," she writes.

"With the help of the IREX office in Moldova, I immediately started integrating Moldovan teachers from both the capital city and towns around the country in various projects and online trainings which offered them a totally new perspective on how we can benefit from social networks to help our students become digitally literate. My greatest achievement as one of the moderators of the EVO / TESOL 'Images for Education' online training was certifying six Moldovan teachers in integrating various online image manipulation tools into their teaching practices. At the moment, I am training and assisting over thirty teachers around Moldova in implementing various online projects to connect our students with learners from all over the world and I hope to involve even more schools and universities by the end of this school year."



**Daniela Munca** (second from right) with other EVO/ TESOL moderators from around the world at the TESOL Convention in New York City.

## Georgian Muskie Alumnus Develops Rural-Urban Youth Partnership

The isolated mountain village of Bediani, home to a community of eighteen former street children, is a two-and-a-half-hour drive from Tbilisi along poorly maintained, winding roads. It's an unlikely destination for young people from Georgia's capital city. However, thanks to an Alumni Small Grant (ASG) organized by **Koba Grdzelishvili** (Muskie 2003), Bediani has become the setting for a unique youth-to-youth development project that builds ties between rural and urban children and teens.

The Bediani youth, formerly living on the streets, were taken in at special cottages under the supervision of four caretakers. The kids now study alongside other children from the village at Bediani's public secondary school, which lacks after-school activities and internet access. Mr. Grdzelishvili's grant project links students and teachers from a resource-rich Tbilisi secondary school with the children of Bediani and their caretakers, opening up a dialogue on topics such as tolerance, human rights, ecology, and local history.

Joint educational sessions, debate lessons, and field trips are held twice a month to help the Bediani children – aged seven through nineteen – to develop new skills, socialize with peers, and build the self-confidence necessary for future study or employment outside the village. The Tbilisi students, many of whom had not been exposed to rural life before the project, are also benefiting from their contact with the diverse community of Georgians, Armenians, Kurds, and Russians in Bediani and learning valuable lessons about social inclusion. "This project helped me acknowledge the essence of equality and free myself from certain attitudes," reflected one of the Tbilisi teens. After spending time in the village, "I have more respect for my parents," another added. "I learned how bees and cows are taken care of and how, in general, agriculture works." To create a lasting reminder of the partnership, the group worked together to plant a Friendship Garden in Bediani. "I learned that relations are the most important thing," commented one of the Bediani participants. "This project gave me many new friends."

Mr. Grdzelishvili's U.S. experience laid the foundation for his professional contributions in Georgia. "My classes at the University of Minnesota gave me more professional confidence in preparing and implementing educational programs in different areas of the high school curriculum," he reflected. "My internship at a children's outdoor summer camp in Boulder, Colorado, gave me an excellent experience how to best incorporate teaching skills and knowledge while ensuring a fun atmosphere for children."

Currently a trainer of human rights education for the NGO Junior Achievement Georgia, Mr. Grdzelishvili has worked to empower youth since returning from the United States establishing student councils, conducting leadership camps, and heading the Ministry of Education and Science's Resource Center in his home region of Sachkhere.



Youth from Bediani and Tbilisi engage in a pre-lesson warm-up activity.

## Moscow-Based Muskie Club Promotes Ongoing Development

In October 2006, a motivated group of Muskie alumni from Moscow gathered to decide how to build upon their years of study and professional development in the U.S. Coming from various professional fields, but united by the idea of networking and giving back to society and each other, the group decided to establish an alumni club. The Muskie Club is an association for alumni of international educational programs and is an independent, non-governmental and membership-based organization. The club's mission is to create a vibrant, sustainable and influential alumni community in Russia and beyond.

The Muskie Club's activities focus on fostering members' personal, professional and social development by utilizing the resources and valuable relationships that each member brings to the organization. Today membership is open to alumni of many international educational programs, though Muskie alumni remain in leadership roles. **Dmitry Vishnyakov** (Muskie 2003) is Chairman of the Muskie Club Board, and **Marina Zinovieva** (Muskie 1998) serves as the club's Director.

One of the most popular club events is the networking breakfast. In April and May alone, alumni had the opportunity to meet high-profile business leaders, including CEOs and executives from Visa, Nokia, Delta Private Equity, Citi and HP. Past networking breakfasts with former U.S. Ambassador to Russia William J. Burns and other U.S. policymakers provided members with unique access to discuss the U.S.-Russia relationship. Vishnyakov met briefly with Hillary Clinton during one of his visits to the U.S. to raise awareness about the activities of the State Department-sponsored exchange program alumni community in Russia.

Muskie Club welcomes all alumni – not only Muskie Club members – to benefit from networking opportunities and social events. Information about upcoming activities can be found on the club's website – [www.muskieclub.ru](http://www.muskieclub.ru).

## Alumna Returns to Alma Mater to Speak at Rule of Law Symposium

**Ludmila Lavrova (Petrova)** (Muskie 1994) traveled from Russia to Washington, D.C. in February 2009 for the American University International Law Review symposium "Russia and the Rule of Law: New Opportunities in Domestic and International Affairs," where she spoke on the panel "Doing Business in Russia... as a Lawyer."

Ms. Lavrova received her L.L.M. degree from American University's Washington College of Law (WCL) as a Muskie fellow in 1995 and returned to WCL as Scholar-in-Residence through the Contemporary Issues Fellowship in 2004. She currently serves as Attorney-at-Law with the St. Petersburg Bar Association. In 2008, she received the prestigious Annual Award for High Professional Achievements from her fellow lawyers at the St. Petersburg Chamber of Attorneys, which has several thousand members.

Ms. Lavrova has remained active in the community and recently implemented a Project Smile grant to benefit members of the St. Petersburg Vyborgskoe Society of People with Disabilities, as well as an Alumni Small Grant conducting legal seminars for students at Yoshkar-Ola State Polytechnic University. "The project was a big success," reports Ms. Lavrova. "Students in a live and interactive way learned about the most important laws and law practice for everyday life: Consumer, Inheritance, Labor and Family Law. I would like to conduct such projects in future if I am lucky enough to win these grants again."



Ludmila Lavrova (front, left) with students at Yoshkar-Ola State Polytechnic University.

## ALUMNI SHORTS · ALUMNI SHORTS · ALUMNI SHORTS · ALUMNI SHORTS

**Marat Purliev** (Muskie 1994) of Turkmenistan was granted a patent by the Eurasian Patent Organization for his invention, the "Inertia Switch." Designed to make the roads safer, the device is fastened to the frame of a car or truck and, in the event of a collision, shuts down the vehicle's electrical circuit to prevent fires and explosions. The "Inertia Switch" has a simple and durable design, low manufacturing cost, high dependability and a maintenance-free life.

**Vitaly Hordus** (Muskie 1999) of Ukraine is now Head of the New Media Division at Ukrainian Media Holding in Kyiv.

**Alexander Bryukhanov** (Muskie 2000) recently joined a Russian software vendor, DocsVision ([www.docsvision.com](http://www.docsvision.com)), as a Managing Director. DocsVision is a producer of software for Document and Business Process Management. Alexander writes, "Developing its own product in St. Petersburg, DocsVision

is selling it through more than 100 partners all over Russia, the CIS and the Baltic states. For me this is an exciting opportunity to work with a brilliant team and deliver Russian high-tech products to the market."

**Olga Yakimakhov** (Muskie 2003) of Ukraine has recently been promoted to Deputy Chief of Party for the Organizational Development Support Program in Eastern Europe, administered by Pact, Inc.

**Oksana Panchuk** (Muskie 1994) spoke at the STEP Technology Entrepreneurship Workshop organized by the U.S. Civilian Research & Development Foundation (CRDF) held in Kyiv in March. Ms. Panchuk's presentation was titled "Basics of Competitive Intelligence Activity." She serves as the Deputy Director of the American Chamber of Commerce in Ukraine. For more information on CRDF, visit their website at <http://www.crdf.org.ua>.

## The Muskie Messenger Editorial Committee:

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### Submission guidelines:

If you are interested in making a submission to the Messenger, please send all text and pictures to <[muskiemessenger@irex.org](mailto:muskiemessenger@irex.org)> by August 15, 2009.

ECA and IREX reserve the right to edit submission content. Not every submission will be printed.



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# ALUMNI OPPORTUNITIES

US Government sponsored exchange alumni are eligible to take part in various Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) supported conference and training activities. In addition to events that support large audiences, individual alumni may apply for small grants that fund the organization of community service activities, conferences, publications, Internet-related activities, research trips, training programs, the creation of associations and other activities.

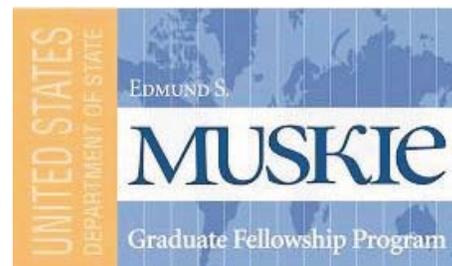
## ECA Alumni Programming for Edmund S. Muskie Graduate Fellowship Program Alumni

**State Alumni Website:** The State Alumni website is an online community by and for alumni of US Government sponsored exchange and training programs. As of May 2004, the website has over 8,500 registered users. The content of the site is updated every day and alumni are encouraged to submit information to the website for posting. Features of the website include: calendar of upcoming alumni events, job listings and career development information, searchable database of alumni and US host families who have registered at the site, grant opportunity listings, live online discussions, discussion forum, alumni news, alumni resume database, articles written by alumni, feedback form/online survey, live online guest speakers, photo gallery, and the Alumni ListServ. <<https://alumni.state.gov/>>

**The ECA Alumni Small Grants Program (ASGP):** Alumni may apply for a grant of up to \$3,000 to conduct a community development or professional development project. Fundable project ideas include coordinating a community service project, launching a pilot program at an NGO or organizing a training program for professional colleagues and/or other alumni. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis. <<http://www.irex.org/programs/asgp/index.asp>>

**Project Smile:** Project Smile is a community development program aimed at helping youth, the elderly and the disabled in Eurasia. Each grantee will receive up to \$250 to perform public service in their home city. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis. <<http://www.irex.org/programs/smile/index.asp>>

**Alumni Events:** IREX and the US Embassy organize monthly alumni events in all 12 countries of Eurasia. These events include workshops, conferences, trainings, roundtable discussions, happy hours, movie nights, seminars and lectures. Larger scale events include job fairs that allow alumni to have their resumes reviewed, learn about the current job market in their home country, and meet with potential employers. IREX local offices and the Embassies encourage alumni to actively participate in the development and implementation of such events.



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