

# THE **Bradley** HERALD

## Following one's Professional Career Dreams

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My first dream to come true was being selected for the FLEX program, an experience that inspired me to take an active approach to life, and transformed my outlook. One result of this transformation was a determination to get involved. Through my first volunteering experience of serving free dinners to the poor on Thanksgiving Eve, a charity event organized by a local church in Coatesville, I discovered the vital importance of the contribution volunteers make for the improvement of their local communities and I decided to devote my time and effort to benefiting society as well. But what is more important, it taught me I could make a difference. This realization prompted me to pursue a career in law, which I considered a powerful tool for acquiring a sense of legal empowerment, which would better equip me to help others.

My commitment to making the world a better place inspired me, as a second year student, to volunteer for a legal aid project initiated by a small Moscow law firm. Through the project, I provided free legal advice to the most vulnerable people in our society. My involvement in the project grew into a full-time job, forcing me to decide on my priorities and even sacrifice participation in extracurricular activities -- theater, debates, parties, and academic Olympiads -- in the law school. The choice was easy when I saw the five little kids of one of my clients, whose case I was preparing for trial. They had been forced to live in a gloomy basement as a result of the local

authorities' questionable actions. My work had an impact on the lives of real people, and that was more important than any extracurricular activity.

Although working for the legal aid project was one of the most gratifying experiences in my professional career, my growing fascination with intellectual property law, which established economic incentives for creation of new technologies -- a matter of vital importance for the economic development of Russia -- made me switch my specialization to this sphere. To make my transition easier I took classes on U.S. business and IP law as a part of Pericles LLM program in Moscow and won scholarships to participate in the study abroad programs of the University of San Diego Law School for three summers in a row.

A year ago, I started my career all over again. This was indeed one of the most difficult choices to make, since it required that I abandon a nice position at my now former employer, where I was trusted to lead the matters of our key foreign clients, be it negotiations in San Diego, signing a contract in Tokyo, or handling a trial in Moscow. I chose to transfer to an international law firm, as my priority was to grow professionally and acquire new skills. My new job demanded applying my knowledge at a new level, while providing legal support for international multi-million dollar transactions, involving transfer of technology and many other things.

My aspiration to undertake a year of graduate studies in a U.S. law school became only natural, to acquire expertise needed for my new job. And my firm determination about this enabled me to make another dream come true, which is being selected as a fellow of Edmund S. Muskie graduate program to pursue graduate studies in the U.S. at Duke University Law School, one of the leading schools in the nation.

Even with this new job, and my studies at Duke, I still manage to work on pro bono projects. Recently, I completed work on a pro bono case, under which our team prevented the deportation of an Iranian dissident, who has been kept with her two children in a Moscow airport transit area for almost a year after she has been denied asylum by the Russian Federation. Our international team of lawyers, in close cooperation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, helped this family to obtain asylum in Canada. (<http://www.cbc.ca/news/reportsfromabroad/spicer/20070126.html>.) Cases like this one give me the strongest incentive to become yet a better professional. ■

## FUTURE LEADERS EXCHANGE ALUMNI NEWSLETTER



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## Letter from the Editor



Dear FLEX Alumni,

The first order of business is to welcome the over 1,000 new alumni who returned from the U.S. this past summer. During re-entry seminars, which are a longstanding FLEX tradition, newest alumni gathered to talk about making successful transitions home, met older alumni, and brainstormed about projects they'd like to conduct in their cities. This year '07 alumni in Ukraine and Tajikistan were honored to have U.S. Ambassadors participate in their seminars.

Speaking of honors, more than 50 FLEX alumni in Moscow had the privilege of meeting Senator Bill Bradley, architect of the FREEDOM Support Act of 1992, through which the U.S. Congress funded many exchanges, one of the most successful of which is the FLEX program. Senator Bradley, who visited Moscow in June at the invitation of U.S. Ambassador to Russia William Burns to celebrate the 200th anniversary of U.S. – Russian diplomatic relations, especially set aside an evening for a FLEX alumni gathering. Many alumni from the first years of the program were in the audience, and reflected on how the program had influenced their academic and professional choices. They told the Senator how their experiences changed their stands on cultural and social issues, and made them more equipped to tackle the daily obstacles they face in their lives and the problems of their communities and nations. In addition to remembering high school boyfriends and girlfriends, and voting unanimously to make Senator Bradley's sport, basketball, the official sport of the FLEX alumni program, we also reflected on the FLEX program's vision to give talented young people the opportunity to develop the leadership skills to help build their new independent countries. Senator Bradley also confided to alumni how the program exceeded his initial expectations, and how FLEX has actually brought new inspiration to his life.

In reading this issue, you'll see that there is again "old" information. While Global Youth Service Day is long past, we decided to print highlights of this spring's projects, as they speak so clearly to the goals of the alumni program. Hundreds of bags of trash were collected. Perhaps more importantly, hundreds of young people participated in seminars and games, which educated them about the need to change their habits, so that trash won't be thrown in the first place. More and more alumni are promoting conservation and recycling efforts in their cities, as they join with others to address critical issues of waste management. They also continue the long tradition of outreach to orphans, and are moving beyond single "holiday" visits, developing in addition ongoing education programs to help give these kids a much needed boost.

Speaking of old information, we have good news! By January 2008 the FLEX alumni database is going online! This means that our staff across Eurasia will be able to update your information anywhere anytime! But we can't update information unless you supply it! Send your updated contact information to the FLEX Alumni Coordinator for your country/region. Do it today! (See addresses on the back cover)

In closing I'd like to invite you to help us tell the story of the impact of the FLEX program. We also ask you to post the photos of your alumni activities on the Faces of FLEX photo contest web site <http://www.flexphotocontest.org>. Go to the site to learn what other alumni are doing! We're accepting submissions until February 1, 2008.

And as the holiday season is fast approaching, our team in the Eurasia Alumni Office wishes you joy and peace in 2008!

Mary Shea  
Editor



Senator Bradley enjoyed communicating with alumni from the first years of the FLEX program. L to R, Mikhail Gritsishin '94 (Volgograd), Evgeniy Pogrebnyak '94 (Moscow), Tatiana Skorodumova '94 (Moscow), Senator Bill Bradley, Tamara Zarechneva '94 (Navoi, Uzbekistan), Evgeniy Gribov '94 (Bryansk), Anastasia Ekkert '95 (Samara), Timur Shikov '94 (Maykop), Galina Polonskaya '95 (Rostov-na-Donu), and Tatiana Gerastovskaya '94 (Moscow).

## INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS FOR THE BETTER FUTURE OF UKRAINE

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Looking back to May 2006, I recall strolling down through a beautiful park in Kyiv Polytechnic University. A host of chestnut trees were in blossom and attracted young people to hide in their shade. I was thinking over Natalya Shtukhetska's, FLEX alumna 2003, impressions after visiting a conference organized by the European Association for the Transfer of Technologies, Innovation, and Industrial Information (TII). At the TII conference, Newcastle was promoted as the Science City, a center of breakthrough innovations and collaboration between academia and industry. I wondered why Kyiv cannot become such an innovation point. After the breakup of the Soviet Union, Ukraine inherited considerable scientific and technical potential, but during the next decades it was neglected both by the state and by the not yet formed market. What are we, Ukrainians, lacking to establish our own Silicon Valley? What can and should the young generations of leaders do to improve Ukraine's competitiveness ranking in international community (currently Ukraine occupies only on the 86th position out of 125 countries)?<sup>1</sup>

As we could not answer these questions ourselves, we thought of organizing a meeting of representatives of business, science, and government to have a public discussion on Ukraine's innovative future. Thanks to the FLEX grant, Natalya Shtukhetska '03, Hanna Zubko '03, and I were able to expand our idea and create something more tangible than just another round-table meeting of local experts. Having received technical support from BirchBob International, a Belgian Innovation Transfer and Intellectual Property Consulting company, we organized a first conference as a part of our project "Intellectual Property Rights for the Better Future of Ukraine" (FLEX 4 IPR), which took place on October 21, 2006. During this event 50 young people from different parts of Ukraine learned how IP rights can help advance knowledge-based economy, heard about European best practices, and discussed current developments in Ukraine. This first meeting gave birth to the network of young scientists, lawyers, and businessmen who are going to develop the Ukrainian innovations market. We kept in touch with these bright minds via a listserv and website created specifically for this purpose, thus we were able to exchange ideas, publications, and project

<sup>1</sup> According to the Global Competitiveness Index 2006

## Project Clothes. Mission Accomplished!

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It was March. I was sitting in a room that looked like a clothes warehouse. Boxes were everywhere and getting to my bed involved stepping over a bunch of children's shoes. A late night trip for a glass of water meant careful maneuvering among the towers of brown boxes. Sometimes, they decided to prove that gravity still works and I had to lie to my parents that the noise was coming from a sudden raccoon attack on our garbage can outside. Here I was in the middle of my project. I thought it would never end.

In December, I graduated from a good university in Colorado, with a Bachelor's degree in psychology. Ready to conquer the universe, I bravely dived into the real world. I started job searching and came across a different breed of humans: the employers, busy people with little time to spare for a green, recently-graduated college girl. Since I had no work experience, nobody wanted to hire me. That is why I started working in a local franchise of MyGym, a non-competitive children's fitness facility, which helped children develop cognitively, emotionally, and physically, while establishing a good self-esteem. I began as an assistant and soon became a lead teacher. It was a fun job.

Once, I was going through our lost-and-found and I found the cutest hat. Naively hoping that my head is as small as a five year old's, I tried to squeeze it on. Once again confronted with the fact that I am actually an adult, I sadly gazed at the hat. Being such a girly girl, I could not throw it away. Then it hit me: Georgia! I immediately contacted our FLEX Alumni Coordinator Lana Chkhartishvili '04 -- I am so grateful to live in the era of the World Wide Web! -- and she promised to help. Then I talked to my boss and we started announcing that I was collecting donations for the orphans in Georgia (the country). I spent three hours making a nice poster, which was a big challenge, since even I cannot decipher my handwriting. Then I wrapped an old TV box in shiny blue paper and wrote on it: CLOTHES FOR GEORGIAN CHILDREN.

It turned out to be a big project: in the beginning I was planning to ship only 15 pounds. However, since the parents of the MyGYM children generously donated five times more, I had to look for new ways to sponsor the shipping. Thus, this project turned to be a big collaboration between many different people. First, the parents helped ship one huge box. Second, after I have contacted the former Peace Corps volunteers who had recently returned from Georgia, they agreed to pay for the shipment of one box also. I am very grateful for their moral support and encouragement as well. Finally, words



Lana Chkhartishvili '04 Connects with a Child from the Nutsbidze Infant House

fail to describe how much I owe to Dmitry Polyakov '98, FLEX alumni from St Petersburg. I was connected to Dmitry, who was serving as a Legislative Education And Practice (LEAP) Fellow in Denver, through the FLEX Eurasia Alumni Office staff in Moscow. He readily prepared and delivered a presentation about my country and the orphanage, and as a result of his powerful speech, the Bromwell Elementary School provided us with needed funds.

In the end, I have sent more than 80 pounds of clothing -- six boxes. In order to obtain boxes of the needed sizes, I had to ask for them in different stores. They gave me boxes of all shapes and sizes, which flooded my parents' basement. They were not happy about that, but hey, now they have a supply of boxes for at least five years.

Unfortunately, the boxes didn't reach Georgia in time for Easter, as we originally planned. However, it was still a gratifying experience. It was great that Lana assisted me in getting donations to the destination; otherwise, as I do not trust our postal system, this project would be impossible.

Finally, I believe that this is just a beginning. Several parents expressed interest in donating clothes in the future and I am sure that we could find more schools that would be willing to help. I hope to continue working on this project (now from the Georgian side, as I have recently returned home!) and help ease the burden of the orphaned children. Besides the rewarding realization that this project brought a little positive change, working on it was so much fun! It gave me the opportunity to meet wonderful people, work as a team, and even get friendly with the post office workers. Now, that can always come in handy when your family lives in the U.S., especially when you have a big supply of shipping boxes in their basement. Truly, as someone once said: you can never help others without helping yourself. ■

## Jeyhun Karamov '99 Elected Chair of Azerbaijan Alumni Association

This November Jeyhun Karamov FLEX '99/Muskie '06 was elected chairman of the board of the U.S.-Educated Azerbaijani Alumni Association (AAA), which unites and brings together the resources of the alumni of various educational programs. As the chair of the board, Jeyhun's goal will be to enhance alumni's positive impact on Azerbaijani society through various projects. Jeyhun currently works as a member of BP Azerbaijan's Communications & External Affairs team, and is responsible for the implementation of social investment projects. He also teaches part-time at Khazar University's School of Economics and Management. [karamovjj@gmail.com](mailto:karamovjj@gmail.com)



Intellectual Property Rights For The Better Future of Ukraine from p. 2



Natalya Shturkhetska '03 and Hanna Zubko '03 Assisted Yaroshchuk in FLEX 4 IPR

proposals in line with our innovations topic. Our small organizing committee managed to keep the interest of our network members by announcing the contest *Innovative Ukraine* with a special prize from TII – a free trip to Paris to participate in the TII annual conference, Innovation for Development. Thus, everyone was looking forward to the second FLEX 4 IPR event, planned for February 17, 2007. This is when we remembered our Kyiv Science City conversation and decided to explore this audacious, but fascinating idea. Our partners helped us to invite Dr. Martin Hinou, one of the world's most renowned

experts in knowledge economy, the founder of Silicon Consulting Company, and Business Development Manager of Greater Region of Leuven, Belgium, to share his successful experience in establishing an innovation region. With this conference we expanded not only the number of our participants, but also the list of our partners. We express special gratitude to Kyiv Mohyla Business School; Iacocca Institute of Lehigh University in Pennsylvania; Mobile operator Life, IntellectTechnologies; State Agency of Ukraine for Innovations and Investments; Science and Technology Centre in Ukraine; Techinvest; the U.S. Embassy in Ukraine, and American Councils in Kyiv for their support in organizing these memorable events.

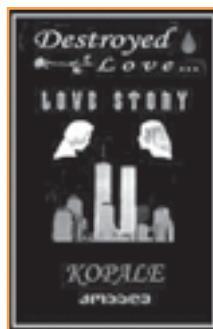
Unfortunately, politics remains in Ukraine the most profitable and all encompassing business. While the country delved into another crisis, foreign investors and modern innovations policies are waiting for better times. Yet, despite this political turmoil, there are some prospects for entrepreneurs and inventors. Exactly a year after Nataka's and my conversation about Kyiv – City of Innovations, the agreement was signed on the highest state level to form the corporation "Scientific Park 'Kyiv Polytechnic." On May 15, 2007, First Deputy Minister of Ukraine, the Head of State Agency on Investment and Innovations, and the Dean of Kyiv Polytechnic University committed to connecting and increasing state support for academic research, science and industry to promote innovative advancement of Ukraine's economy. Although our FLEX 4 IPR organizing committee was not invited to celebrate this major development, we all sincerely rejoiced and applauded to such a long-expected action.

[www.flex4ipr.iatp.org.ua](http://www.flex4ipr.iatp.org.ua) ■

## Picking up a Pen to Make Dreams Come True

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I believe that when a writer gets inspiration it happens for some reason and he has to use it for sizable purposes. I have already published four books: three poetry books in my home-country and a romance in America. My pen-name is Kopale and all I try to do with help of my books is to bring the feelings that live inside me to the readers and inspire them, too. I have always had a dream to change something in the world. We always have a choice. I made the decision of my life: I took a pen in my hand to make my dream come true.



*Destroyed Love* is the name of the book I have self-published in the U.S. It is a love story based on the tragedy of 9/11. When the tragedy took place I had one of the hardest periods in my life. I was watching the news and thinking about how people make each others' lives harder when they destroy something and especially when they kill human beings. I decided to write a book in which I would be able to express what I was feeling while watching that global disaster. Afterwards it became my dream, too. I used the whole year as an exchange student in America to write my book. BookSurge, an Amazon.com company, published it after I returned to my home county of Georgia.

The goal of the book is to show people how terrorist acts can destroy everything beautiful and great in this world. Almost every person in every nation and in every religion appreciates the feeling of love. If people will read this story, I believe that they will realize that our world needs lots of love and not wars. That's why I decided to publish this book and let people feel real love, real feelings, real happiness

and real sadness... I can say that the book achieved its aim as the readers loved it. I can share what some of them have said:

"As far as I know this is the first try to transfer a worldwide disaster into an interesting and originally written book. I can say that the author did his best job to express his own thoughts and beliefs from completely different viewside. The plot develops in close connections between individual human emotions and worldwide tragedy. The story will make a reader think over his/her own life, respect and appreciate people around and understand the author's nature. This book is one of the original and not-regular-boring-types of books I've ever read."

"Your last chapter is inspiring, giving hope not only to a nation, but to all survivors who lost loved ones."

Allow me to introduce you to the end of the last chapter of my book:

"A lot of people lost their sweethearts that day but nobody lost the hope of the future. The flag of the U.S. wasn't going to stay lowered for a long time and soon it again rose to make this hope stronger and to show the world how painful everything was and to make everybody sure that it wouldn't happen any more..."

That's what I believe and that's why I have written and published this story.

Currently I'm working on a new book. It will be a children's book called *Bobby Scout*. I'm planning to write a whole series, and the first one will be called *The Magic of Friendship* because in this book Bobby tries to save the world through magic adventures with the help of his friends who are from different countries. I got the inspiration for the book after my exchange experience. There in America I had Russian and American friends who made my life very special. There we all realized that without each other and without the friendship we had, life would indeed be harder for each of us. That's why I decided to create Bobby Scout, a new hero for young people, who will help them find true friendship and understand the meaning of it. I'll publish it as soon as it's done and I'm able to find a good literary agency, which will bring it to mass market audiences of youth readers.

<http://www.destroyedlove.narod.ru/> ■

## The One World Youth Project

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Applying for The One World Youth Project (OWYP) Program Ambassador (PA) position, I never believed that it would create such a change in my life. Flying to D.C. in the beginning of July for the retreat, I did not know what to expect. The OWYP annual retreat in Hagerstown, Maryland, was a great meeting, which broadened my knowledge about the world and gave me an opportunity to be an active world citizen. OWYP is a unique program for middle and high school students, linking together groups in the U.S. and Canada with groups around the world in learning partnerships for the purpose of community service toward the achievement of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).



As soon as I entered the St. James School in MD., where the retreat was held, I felt that I became a part of something big and global. I was not a young leader just of Kyrgyzstan, but a young leader of the world. I was immediately welcomed into a multicultural team from America, Asia, and Africa that shares positive attitude, new ideas, and cultural differences. I have never met so many talented and successful people at one time.

During the retreat I kept thinking how unique the OWYP project was and that it can turn into a real global network of young people from all over the world. At the retreat 25 project ambassadors from 20 different countries gathered together for brainstorming and sharing ideas. Over the course of seven days we would stay up late discussing how to make the coming year more successful and how to make our work more productive. Before we went to bed we would have some time to share stories; some of those stories gave me chills. It was all about building mutual understanding between countries. I told my international team about FLEX alumni and I brought several copies of *The Bradley Herald*, as well as calendars and cards that alumni in Kyrgyzstan created for fundraising purposes.

Since OWYP is a world network each of us has project responsibilities besides being a project ambassador in our home country and those countries where we coordinate schools. I decided to be on the Government Liaison Team, which means I am responsible for establish-

ing contact and building relationships with government officials representing regions where OWYP schools/groups are located and helping coordinate OWYP lobbying activities for the OWYP Summits. In August, we had a summit in Ghana, Africa. In March we will have OWYP Asia Summit in India and I am one of the people responsible for its organization. Next summer we will have the OWYP North America Summit.

OWYP helped me to expand my network. Every day we would have a meeting with our partners such as Sister Cities International, Three Dot Dash, YFU, UNESCO Center for Peace, etc. For the coming year I was assigned to coordinate four schools: Cheyenne Mountain Junior High in Colorado (my FLEX home state) is paired with Gymnasium #59 in Ulianovsk, Russia and 6th Line United Youth group in Canada is paired with the youth group Community Leadership Program in Sierra Leone, Africa. I am in charge of 80 students from all over the world, and on a weekly basis I contact four leaders from four countries (educators) who are in charge of these high schoolers in their countries. Students have received a curriculum that includes a year-long program that they are supposed to study together and discuss through video, telephone, letters, email, and packages.

I was privileged to pick out an MDG goal on which I would like to work with these students. I chose goal number three: empower women and promote gender equality. I am now helping students and educators organizing different social projects in support of MDG # 3. In order to make work more productive all 25 PAs meet on Skype two times a month for two or more hours for discussion and brainstorming. Each PA maintains his/her Ambassador blog. We are all involved into MDG campaigns, MDG awareness day, youth summits, youth leaders email lists, educator email lists, workshops, and many other great events.

Time flew by and on the last day we all went to Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. where we met professors and future partners who were highly interested in our efforts. I met great people who inspired me even more to be a good ambassador and peace promoter since OWYP is all about creating mutual understanding in a culturally diverse environment. It unites young people from different countries whose governments can not find common ground for mutual understanding. It makes the whole world move and spin, while promoting MDGs. It makes the world smile and cry together. It unites young people for a good purpose. Every year OWYP accepts some new PAs. I recommend that you all apply. I can just imagine what FLEX alumni could do if we were all involved in OWYP! Since I am the only one so far in among NIS countries I will try to attract more schools and youth groups around my area to apply for this project. Who knows? Maybe in several years we will be organizing OWYP Eurasia Summit. After the retreat I was invited to stay for the UNESCO Center for Peace Summer Camp - another multicultural experience aimed on United Nations Model organization. This camp was for future peacemakers by peacemakers. I left the USA on a very positive note, holding the book *A Call for Conscience* by Dr. Martin Luther King that was presented to me by a professor who teaches human rights at Georgetown University. Dr. King said "...take action, and transform your once-impossible dreams into living realities." I think it is time to turn my dream into reality. A dream of peace on earth and a world of a global mind and heart! ■

### FLEX Facts:

This year 1,928 high school students showed up in Tbilisi, Georgia to test for the FLEX Program. This is the single largest FLEX Round One testing event ever.

The FLEX Program is in its sixteenth year (2007-08). Over 750,000 students have applied to the program.

## Back to the USA

### Back to the USA: Reviewing and Sharing During Civic Education Week

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This year, for the fourth consecutive time, the U.S. State Department selected and invited three outstanding FLEX alumni to travel to Washington, D.C. to represent the FLEX alumni program at events marking Civic Education Week, which took place from February 26 to March 3, 2007.

There were several goals for the week:

1. to let current students on the FLEX program think more seriously about their life as alumni and what they can achieve;
2. to showcase what FLEX alumni are doing during meetings with U.S. State Department representatives, Congressional representatives and their staff members on Capitol Hill, and American Councils FLEX volunteer evaluators.

The FLEX alumni selected to take part in the program this year were Jafar Asimov '94 (Ohio), Tajikistan, Yulia Molodtsova '98 (Vermont), Russia, and Lilia Fusa '04 (Oregon), Moldova

This week was a wonderful opportunity for us to share our experiences with everyone. We decided to summarize our impressions of the week in a question-and-answer mode because each of us has his or her own unique experience of living in the U.S. and getting back to his/her native country after that.



(L to R) Jafar Asimov, Yulia Molodtsova, American Councils President Dan Davidson, and Lilia Fusa Met in Washington, D.C.

#### What have you accomplished back in your countries since your FLEX year in U.S.?

**Jafar:** I graduated from Belarussian State University of Informatics and Radioelectronics, Minsk, Belarus in 2000. I began my career in the IT industry in 1995 as a computer technician, becoming a software developer in 1999, and starting a web development company in 2001. I lead a group of 12 IT specialists at Babilon-Mobile, a leading mobile operator in Tajikistan. I received an award for best web-designer in 2001, and headed a project www.president.tj, the official website of

the President of Tajikistan. I have been an active member of the FLEX alumni group since my return to Tajikistan and recently married a FLEX alumna, Miskola Abdulloeva '02, and we have a daughter. I created the Faces of FLEX website and was the winner of the Faces of FLEX photo contest last year.

**Yulia:** I graduated from Russian State University for Humanities, English History and Literature Department, Moscow in 2004. I worked for five years at the Focus Media Foundation, a Russian NGO, established in 1996. The Focus-Media Foundation implements mass media campaigns and social advertising aimed at HIV prevention among young people, as well as works to help Russian NGOs to develop fundraising skills and to support different civil initiatives. I have started the international Dance4Life project for Russia, raising HIV/AIDS awareness among youth through creative interaction, dancing, and music. After a successful pilot, which included active participation of many FLEX alumni who became members of a Dance4life presentation team, I have conducted trainings in six other regions of Russia sharing the successful model and launching the project further in Russia. In October 2006 I took a new job as a bureau manager in the Moscow bureau of the British newspaper *The Guardian*. For the past five years I also professionally sing in my own rock-bands, the latest one of which is called "ButTerFly."

**Lilia:** In 2005-06 I served as FLEX Alumni Assistant at American Councils, and am currently a student at the Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova, Department of International Economic Relations. At the IVth Alumni Congress in Moldova, I was elected to be part of the Moldovan Alumni Board as Central Region Alumni Representative, which provides a great opportunity to implement the ideas that the alumni community has, to keep in touch with alumni friends, and to network on a professional level in this community. I coordinate the "Disability with Ability" campaign, aiming at raising disability awareness in Moldova, empowering disabled teenagers, and encouraging them to become a more active part of our society, by participating in the creation of a newspaper, a short film, and organizing other activities for children. I also worked on the 'Bridges Between Us' program, which was funded by the U.S. Embassy and designed to encourage FLEX Alumni to share their experience in all the regions of Moldova. This included 11 monthly trainings with alumni, a summer camp, and other regional events designed to convey the FLEX experience to rural youth through community-based programming. I am currently a full-time student, and employed part-time at Horizon Capital Advisors, LLC, a private equity fund manager that originates and manages investments in mid-cap companies with outstanding growth and profit potential in Ukraine and Moldova.

#### What were the most memorable moments during this week in D.C.?

**Jafar:** I was touched to see older retired men and women reviewing and evaluating the applications and essays of the current candidates for the FLEX program. I always thought that all our applications and essays are evaluated by American Councils staff, but the moment when we had a chance to be in the room where evaluations take place and meet people doing that important job was the most memorable. Evaluators of the FLEX program are people who previously held important positions at the State Department. They do evaluation work as volunteers, because they want to contribute to the FLEX program. The evaluation process proves that the selection process of the FLEX program is open, fair, and entirely merit based.

**Yulia:** Entering a room full of current FLEX students just upon our arrival to D.C. was a memorable and exciting moment for me. I suddenly felt a ten-year flashback being one of them, coming to D.C. for the first time for my civic education week. Another bright moment was seeing the headquarters of American Councils and all the staff

including the evaluators! After having spent a lot of time in both Yekaterinburg and Moscow American Councils offices, I feel it's always a place where people are glad to see you, where you can find friends and people thinking similarly. One more memorable moment was watching a documentary film about Beslan and talking to the filmmaker and the girl-narrator who is a FLEX alumna.

**Lilia:** I believe it was the spirit of the week, mostly. People gathered to share ideas and to learn from each other. I never thought I will ever have the chance to see how the Senate or the House works from the inside, but I did, and it was impressive! Besides that, one thing that inspired me was meeting with FLEX evaluators. The dedication with which they conduct this work is admirable.

#### Of all the people you met, who impressed you the most?

**Jafar:** At American Councils office we had a short gap between meetings to see American Councils President Dr. Dan Davidson. I'd met Dr. Davidson once before in Kyiv during 10th FLEX Anniversary, but on this second occasion, Dr. Davidson impressed me again by his deep knowledge of each of the former Soviet countries' specifics. He is a great speaker, and I wish I had had a longer conversation with Dr. Davidson.

**Yulia:** Almost every meeting was memorable and interesting in its own way. It was very exciting for me to meet and spend time with our Capitol Hill guide Jim Dykstra. He is a remarkable man who worked for many years for the U.S. government, holding different posts, meeting and working with a lot of top decision-makers. He accompanied us to the meeting on Capitol Hill, telling life stories, being extremely open and hospitable. It was extremely involving and interesting to be there exactly with that man.

**Lilia:** Most of our meetings over the week were fairly short, but one person whose enthusiasm and vision for the future impressed me most was Ms. Mary Ellen McGuire, who is staff director to Senator Chris Dodd. I loved to listen to her speak about the way the education system works in the U.S., the way educational institutions relate to the U.S. Government, and the tools and policies that the Government uses to improve it constantly.

#### Have you got new ideas for your further personal and professional development after this visit?

**Jafar:** The people I met in Washington, D.C. inspired me to advance my knowledge and do some scientific research in order to get a doctoral degree.

**Yulia:** The visit didn't end for me in D.C. After that I went to visit my host-sister in Stanford, CA, where I got to attend several meeting on U.S.-Russian relations as well. All these meetings made me quite interested in the sphere of public diplomacy. I started to search for opportunities to learn more about it as a sphere of study and professional work.

**Lilia:** Every time I go anywhere outside the country, I come back "recharged." And this visit to Washington, D.C. was the right thing at the right time. I met Yulia Molodtsova, who gave me more ideas for our Disability with Ability Campaign; I talked to Jafar, whose peaceful presence basically implied that "nothing is impossible if you put your head to work." I met the American Councils staff in DC, especially Vice President Lisa Choate, who so diligently took us to all those meetings and made sure we were having a great time there. After being surrounded by so many great people it is impossible not to try to become a better person.

#### What impressed you the most about the current participants of the FLEX program?

**Jafar:** The energy that young FLEX students showed during Close Up events impressed me a lot. The students' awareness on the local and global issues and problems, aspiration to make changes towards

better future, understanding their own cultural values and the great patriotism demonstrates a strong belief that these students will be real future leaders in their home countries.

**Yulia:** I was impressed by the questions FLEX students asked both at the meetings with and at the meeting on the Capitol Hill. It seemed they are even more conscious and motivated than we were ten years ago.

**Lilia:** FLEX is a label for Energy and Motivation, and the current FLEX participants weren't any different; except maybe for the fact that they are a bit more serious and goal-oriented than I was on program. The group from Moldova impressed me a lot. I completely fell in love with the project they designed there, so realistic and feasible, and so different. I can't wait to welcome them home and see them implement it!

#### Having talked to the decision-makers of this program what is your view on its future?

**Jafar:** There is no doubt that U.S. government will continue to support public diplomacy affairs, which in turn will affect citizen exchanges, and particularly the FLEX program. I strongly believe that the FLEX program will continue, since its vision is far sighted for the global long term mutual benefit.

**Yulia:** I hope that the stories and experience we shared with all the people we met during the week were convincing enough for the program to continue. During this week in D.C. we ourselves realized much more about what the program gave us by answering various questions. It became evident and convincing for us too that this type of youth exchange proves to be more successful and fruitful than many other professional exchanges.

**Lilia:** I have been lucky enough to meet both people who work for the program, as well as many FLEX alumni, and I strongly believe that the FLEX program will continue to change minds and inspire people for a long time ahead.

#### If you have been asked by other alumni about your trip to D.C., what would you tell them about?

**Jafar:** The best way to tell about your trip is to show pictures. I have taken over 400 pictures using a digital camera, which I had won in the FLEX photo contest in 2005. I will show photos from the week in D.C. to alumni, as well as meeting my host family after 13 years and my old teachers at my high school in Deshler, Ohio.

**Yulia:** I would definitely tell them more about the evaluators, and about these new motivated FLEX students who soon will come back and join our friendly alumni community.

**Lilia:** I would tell them exactly what I wrote above. For more personalized answers, please feel free to e-mail me: Lilia\_fusa@yahoo.com

#### What do you think impressed people you met this week in D.C. most about you?

**Jafar:** My age! As the oldest FLEX participant many people in D.C. were impressed that the first generations FLEX alumni still continue to devote their time being active in the alumni communities in their home countries.

**Yulia:** I think my relationship with the host family was the most frequent topic I talked on. It really became my true second family which I was happy to tell about to all people I met. My visits to both my host mom and dad in Vermont and my host sister in California following the visit to D.C. only proved to me again that meeting them was the most valuable part of my exchange experience.

**Lilia:** Well, except for my continuous, overexcited, impetuous babbling, I hope I helped the alumni team inspire our future leaders to implement their ideas when they come back. ■

## Alumni Beat

In spring 2007 FLEX alumni across Eurasia joined with other young people in their communities to conduct Global Youth Service Day (GYSD) projects. Alumni leaders raised funds locally and secured contributions from partner organizations. Depending on the amount they raised in the community, they were also awarded matching grants of up to \$500 from FLEX alumni funds. Below is a sampling of the many meaningful GYSD projects alumni conducted. In fact, they organized many more low cost, high energy projects! To learn more about Global Youth Service Day, contact your FLEX Alumni Coordinator or go to [www.gysd.net](http://www.gysd.net). In 2008, the ninth annual GYSD will take place April 25-27. GYSD goals complement those of the FLEX alumni program and offer a perfect opportunity to promote community service and volunteerism. Start thinking about projects for 2008 now!

### Armenia

#### Take Action for Environment Debate Tournament

Eduard Kankanyan '04 and eight other FLEX alumni organized the Take Action for Environment Debate Tournament in Kotayk region to raise awareness about Armenia's environmental issues among university students. In preparation for the event, Ani Hakobyan '00 and Sona Manucharyan '00 conducted trainings and led mock debates for the participants. Throughout the two-day event, students debated three important environmental issues: air pollution, forest conservation, and recycling. Stella Matevosyan '00, Mher Sharoyan '96, Public Relations officer at the Armenian Forests NGO, and other environmental experts acted as judges and evaluated the speeches.

### Azerbaijan

#### GYSD Zoo Visit

Eleven alumni and 15 members of the "OL" Azerbaijan Youth Movement (OL-AYM) took children from a local orphanage to the zoo and played games with them to celebrate GYSD. This was the first of a series of events to introduce and increase interaction between the orphans and general society.

### Belarus

#### Breaking Down Barriers Film Festival

With the cooperation of the Russian NGO Perspektiva, Belarus alumni conducted two film festivals, which aim to break down stereotypes and misconceptions about persons with disabilities, educate the public, and raise awareness about issues that the disabled face. Breaking Down Barriers (Kino bez Bar'erov) film festival has introduced participants to issues affecting the lives of persons

with disabilities and provoked discussions on this issue. Various newspapers and the First National Radio channel covered the event and announced its opening.

### Georgia

#### First Step on the Career Pathway Training Program

Mikheil Benidze '06 initiated the First Step on the Career Pathway Training Program for 26 young men and women from the Momavlis Saxli orphanage in need of computer skills for professional development. During this two-day event, participants took part in computer training sessions and learned the basics of Microsoft Windows and Word applications, Internet Explorer, and English language terms and phrases needed for computer use. Local experts and 16 alumni served as trainers for the event, conducted interactive games, and gave personal instruction to all participants.

### Kazakhstan

#### Clean Up Activity

Following the Kazakhstan City Representative Conference, the 10 recently appointed City Representatives along with 25 local alumni, 25 English Club and Contact Club members, and over 70 representatives of NGOs and community members celebrated Global Youth Service Day by removing trash from a mountain valley near Almaty. Participants collected over 40 bags of trash and discussed nation-wide projects, as well as those, which newly trained City Representatives plan to initiate in their cities.

### Kyrgyzstan

#### GLOBE Project Leader

To celebrate GYSD, Nargiza Ajimatova '05, together with four alumni and the Director of National Democratic Institute in Kochkorata, held a wide range of interesting, entertaining, and informative activities, trainings and seminars to instill the values of conservationism in high school students from the regions. Kochkorata Mayor Toyali Anarbaev welcomed participants to the seminar and participated in the park clean up. Forty-two community members, including volunteers from the National Democratic Institute cleaned the territory of the park and raised awareness of environmental problems. Alumni later conducted professional development trainings and leadership seminars for the participants.

### Moldova

#### Balti Park Clean Up

In the spirit of GYSD alumni throughout Moldova rose early on April 21 to clean up a favorite park in Balti. Thirteen alumni and



Alumni Joined Local Volunteers in Balti for a GYSD Clean Up Project

ten community members gathered over 300 bags of trash.

### Chisinau Dantes Parliament Environmental Project

Anastasia Pojoga '06 and students from Dante Alighieri Lyceum in Chisinau created a series of projects to increase student awareness of the need to protect the environment. They played the Building a Perfect Environment activity, where over 500 children worked together to figure out how to arrange pieces of an enormous puzzle. The exercise showed the children how all living things are connected and at the same time, individual. Later, the children competed in the Biggest Pile of Trash Contest. Students competed to collect the most trash for their class and to illustrate how littering can easily destroy the appeal of school and leisure areas.

### Russia

#### Kazan Orphanage Visit

Alumni visited a number of socially vulnerable members of Kazan society for GYSD. They organized local volunteers and students to perform a play at an orphanage and taught English to children with mental illnesses at orphanage #11 in anticipation of visits from American volunteers. Coordinators created games, teambuilding activities, and an art contest for the children and told them about an initiative involving visiting residents from a local nursing home. With the hope that the children would gain self-confidence when



Anton Petrov '03 Plays Checkers with Boys during GYSD Orphanage Visit

## Alumni Beat

they learn about the needs of others, alumni organized a tea party for the residents of a local nursing home. The children and residents competed together in a number of intellectual games and shared life experiences.

### Saratov City Clean Up

Kseniya Gnevshcheva '03, Anna Sergeyeva '05, Viktoria Spiridonova '06, and Sofya Yurasova '06, together with Eurasia Undergraduate Exchange Program alumni, local volunteers, and American Corner visitors planted flowers



Saratov FLEX Alumni Clean Up the Territory of a Local Library

and picked up trash around the territory of a local library. Following the clean up, participants talked to community members about the holiday and encouraged them to take part in future FLEX projects.

### Vladivostok Orphanage Visits

GYSD events in Vladivostok began months before the holiday. In February, alumni collected clothing and toys for the children at a local orphanage and made presentations at schools to raise awareness of volunteer possibilities associated with orphans. They conducted clean up activities with the children, presented them with the donated items, including two used computers and educational materials, and announced plans to hold computer skills classes at the orphanage to give the children a head start in their careers. Future plans, including the formation of a sister school relationship between the orphanage and school #13 and a FLEX school supplies drive, will further the positive relationship among alumni and the children.

### Tajikistan

#### Dushanbe Building a Healthy Future for Youth

Project Leader Inomjon Igamov '05 worked with alumni, local gynecologists, teachers from the department of Hygiene and Health Protection at Tajik Medical University, and professional trainers from the HIV/AIDS Center to conduct trainings and seminars on healthy living, reproductive health, and HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted disease prevention for street girls on May 22-24. Organizers hoped



Alumni Organizers and Participants of the Mary Regional Debate Tournament Show their Awards

to inform these young women on ways to protect themselves from dangerous diseases and reduce the chances of problematic pregnancies. Alumni targeted these young women, many of whom are homeless, as a way to serve those who are most in need.

### Turkmenistan

#### Ashgabat Nature Zone Clean Up

Ekaterina Sultanova '06, together with four alumni and Peace Corps and American Corner volunteers, conducted a five-day Spring English Camp for 25 children who have slight disabilities. Project organizers hoped to increase participants' self-confidence and leadership skills and develop their knowledge of English language. Classes and activities helped participants to learn more about U.S. history, improve their English, and learn about the FLEX program and opportunities at American Corners. Further, it was a great chance for alumni and volunteers to work together and discover the needs of the disabled community in Dashoguz.



#### Mary Regional Debate Tournament

Anastasiya Kuznetsova '05 and Peace Corps volunteer Chris Schirm conducted a Regional Debate Tournament for 22 student participants from communities outside of Mary. Each debate team was judged on the structure and content of its argument. Participants debated on topics associated with conservation, youth leadership, and tolerance to combine the idea of GYSD with the tournament. Lyubov

Lakomova '06 and Serdar Mommadov '06, along with Peace Corps and American Corner volunteers, judged the competition.

### Ukraine

#### Lviv Ecological Expedition Pure Mountain

Orysia Kobel '02 gathered 28 FLEX alumni, 50 members of the Student Fraternity Organization of Lviv, and 20 university students, who traveled to the Gusne village to launch the Ecological Expedition Pure Mountain project. On May 12-13, the participants cleaned up the peak of the highest mountain near Lviv, Pikui. They also participated in eight seminars on ecological movements and forestry, and increased their awareness of ecological problems in their country. Kobel, together with Alumni Coordinator Alla Myshalova (Striy) '03, hoped that this project would "...attract young people to take care of our Motherland and natural heritage."

#### Sevastopol Alumni Promote Healthy Living among the Youth in the Community

Eleven FLEX alumni and Sevastopol student council representatives increased public awareness of rising HIV/AIDS infection rates and smoking-related illnesses. Organizers and volunteers used a slightly shocking approach to introducing the problems to the public: they invited all willing parties to trade in remaining cigarettes in their boxes for a pack of condoms. With the in-kind support of 1,000 boxes of condoms from the official distributors of Contex condoms and permission from the City Council, alumni knew that they had a striking project that would raise eyebrows, but more importantly awareness. Group members talked to the public about the dangers of smoking and unprotected sex and by the end of the day, collected over 1,000 packs of cigarettes and made huge steps in increasing awareness of the problems. During a follow-up press conference with representatives from 14 media sources, the volunteers shared the results of the event to further public awareness.



Sevastopol GYSD Team Cheers as Cigarettes are Exchanged for Condoms

## Bradley Bits

Please help us share your news with fellow alumni. Send news to [bradleyherald@actr.ru](mailto:bradleyherald@actr.ru).

## Class of '94

## Russia

**Mikhail Gritsishin**, originally from Volgograd, works as a project leader at RUSAL Global Management B.V. in Moscow. He recently helped organize a senior alumni gathering, which attracted more than 20 people. [mag-marketing@mail.ru](mailto:mag-marketing@mail.ru)

## Class of '95

## Tajikistan

**Gulbahor Nematova** has worked for the United Nations Development Program in Tajikistan since 2003. Currently she is the area manager for the Communities Program, and responsible for the management of a project designed to decrease poverty in isolated districts of the Zerafshan Valley. She received a FLEX Alumni Grant for a project to help rural women develop their own computer skills, and in turn teach computer classes in local schools. [gulbahor.nematova@undp.org](mailto:gulbahor.nematova@undp.org)

## Class of '96

## Russia

**Mariya Shaftan** graduated from MGIMO in 2003 with a Master's degree in Economics. Since then she has been working for PriceWaterhouseCoopers in Moscow as a senior tax consultant in the Financial Services Department. She will be working for PriceWaterhouseCoopers in London for the coming year. [mshaftan@yandex.ru](mailto:mshaftan@yandex.ru)

## Class of '97

## Russia

**Rigo Ovchiyan**, vice president on Fundraising and Project Finance at the Russian MicroFinance Center in Moscow, used his professional skills to raise 5500 rubles to support the Moscow alumni Handshake Project.

## Ukraine

**Vasyl Myroshnychenko** recently became a member of the Ukrainian British City Club. He is a partner at CFC Consulting, a government relations, strategic communications, and investment consulting agency in Kyiv.

## Class of '98

## Armenia

**Zaruhi Sargsyan** works as a Training and Communications Specialist at the USAID Social

Protection Systems Strengthening Project.

## Georgia

**Matuta Bzhalava** (Zugdidi) hosted the South Caucasus Documentary Film Festival "Nationality: Human" on June 9-11. Additionally, many of the school students that participated in her 2006 FLEX Alumni Grant Project entitled "Active Youth Leading the Future," dedicated to introducing children to the concept of community service, volunteered during the film festival. For more information about the festival, go to <http://www.ya-chelovek.caucasus.net>. Furthermore, Matuta was named a finalist for the Edmund S. Muskie Graduate Fellowship Program.

## Russia

**Vladimir Gordeev** (Kirov) graduated cum laude from the Health, Medicine and Life Sciences faculty of Maastricht University, the Netherlands, with a specialization in health policy, economics, and management. [gordihou@mail.ru](mailto:gordihou@mail.ru)

## Class of '99

## Azerbaijan

**Nargiz Hajiyeva** was selected as a Muskie Fellow and is studying inclusive education. She will focus her studies on working with special needs children. [nara23@hotmail.com](mailto:nara23@hotmail.com)

## Moldova

**Maxim Anmegikyan** was appointed program director of the Brussels-based NGO European Region of the International Lesbian and Gay Association. Maxim also serves as an advisory board member of the Sexual Health and Rights Program (SHARP) and of the Open Society Institute in New York.

## Class of '00

## Armenia

**Arpine Porsughyan** (Gyumri) participated in the "Young Eastern European Volunteer Innovators" seminar, organized by the Citizen in Deed Hellenic State Organization for Volunteering in Athens, Greece in March. [arpine\\_p@yahoo.com](mailto:arpine_p@yahoo.com)

## Georgia

**Salome Tsereteli-Stephens**, who works at World Vision International in Tbilisi as a monitoring and evaluation specialist, attended a training seminar Do No Harm in Tirana, Albania in March. It is an approach, by which international aid organizations try to consider the effects of their aid on the community and make sure that they don't exasperate any existing conflict, include all people in the community, and, especially in conflict situations, do not escalate the

conflict. [sallome@yahoo.com](mailto:sallome@yahoo.com)

## Ukraine

**Mykola Pekh** (Lviv) is in the process of organizing a school, which focuses on Ukrainian studies for international students.

## Class of '01

## Georgia

**Tamar Vashakidze** received a U.S. State Department scholarship for young lawyers from transitional democracies who are working for the public sector. He plans to pursue a degree in democratic governance and rule of law at Northern Ohio University. [neens3@yahoo.com](mailto:neens3@yahoo.com)

## Kazakhstan

**Assem Zhumakhmetova** was awarded a Bolashak scholarship to Ohio University, where she is working towards a Master's degree in Financial Economics, which she will receive in November 2007. [zhumakhmetova@yahoo.com](mailto:zhumakhmetova@yahoo.com)

## Russia

**Igor Babichev** (Novosibirsk) graduated from Novosibirsk State University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Physics, and a minor in Informatics. He is currently studying for a MS in the same field. Since 2003 he has also been employed at Sibpromdesign, Ltd as an IT specialist. He was recently offered a position at the Microsoft Canada Development Center in British Columbia. [netghost@netghost.ru](mailto:netghost@netghost.ru)

**Liubov Borisova** (Snezhinsk) graduated from the State University - Higher School of Economics, Moscow, with a B.A. in Political Science in 2006. She was then granted a Swedish Institute scholarship, and completed a Master's degree in European Politics in the Program of European Affairs at Lund University, Sweden. She has been accepted to the University College London Program of International Master in Economy, State and Society in Central and Eastern Europe/Russia and granted an Erasmus Mundus Scholarship. [borisova.liuba@gmail.com](mailto:borisova.liuba@gmail.com)

**Anna Milyutina Lomakina** (Kirov) was appointed Deputy Service Manager of the Privolzhsky branch of Citibank. [amil23@mail.ru](mailto:amil23@mail.ru)

## Tajikistan

**Farrukh Khamzayev** is the finance manager at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) organization and for the past two years worked for the Finance Bank in Kurgan-Tyube. [timajon001@hotmail.com](mailto:timajon001@hotmail.com)

## Class of '02

## Moldova

**Ala Ursu** is a research analyst at the German financial consulting firm, Business and Finance Consulting. In April she was a judge at the

## Bradley Bits

15th annual Odyssey of the Mind Eurofest in Germany. [ursu\\_ala@yahoo.com](mailto:ursu_ala@yahoo.com)

### Russia

**Yulia Tell**, originally from Tashkent, graduated with honors from the Moscow Power-Engineering Technical University and was included in the book of the "Best Moscow University Graduates of 2007." Yulia currently is involved in the Russian Intellectual Resources Program and will participate in the Intel Europe, Middle East, and Africa (EMEA) Academic Forum in Budapest, Hungary. [sunnyrockgirl@hotmail.com](mailto:sunnyrockgirl@hotmail.com)

### Class of '03

#### Georgia

**Giorgi Chaladze** (Rustavi) works in the office of the Prosecutor General of Georgia in the Organizational and Analytical Unit.

[gcucan@yahoo.com](mailto:gcucan@yahoo.com)

### Class of '04

#### Georgia

**Levan Inadze** is a leading specialist at the International Relations and Euro-Atlantic Integration Department of Ministry of Defense in Georgia.

**Ia Kurdiani** was offered an internship with the Millennium Challenge Georgian Fund and won a scholarship to participate in a semester-long program for the Associazione Intercomunale per Esercizio Sociale (AIPES) in Prague.

#### Kazakhstan

**Dina Astayeva** was recognized as one of the ten most influential women at the Kazakhstan Institute of Management, Economics, and Strategic Research (KIMEP) by the KIMEP Times newspaper. She is president of the Student organization SIFE (Students in Free Enterprise), a senator at the Student Government of KIMEP, a member of the Youth Parliament, Kazakhstani party "Zhas Otan", as well as the best English league speaker in debates. [dina\\_taraz@yahoo.com](mailto:dina_taraz@yahoo.com)

#### Russia

**Elena Dorofeyeva** and **Maria Stoyeva** (Rostov on Don), both students at Rostov State Economic University who study Japanese language and culture in the Oriental Studies Department, won first place in the student conference on their presentation of how the English language has influenced Japanese and how globalization has influenced the culture. They presented it both in Japanese and Russian. [mstoyeva@yahoo.com](mailto:mstoyeva@yahoo.com), [dealenka@mail.ru](mailto:dealenka@mail.ru)

**Tatyana Borycheva** (Birobidjan) studies jurisprudence at the Academy of the Federal Penal

Service in Ryazan. She chose this university because it offers a Master's Program in jurisprudence. [yahtzee0109@mail.ru](mailto:yahtzee0109@mail.ru)

#### Ukraine

**Anastasiya Herets** (Kharkiv) was named best camp leader for her work at a children's summer camp for children with visual impairments, which was held in Crimea region in June. In July she joined fellow Kharkiv alumni to work on the FLEX alumni grant project of Konstyantyn Achkasov '06 "We Share" summer camp. [msnastya@yandex.ru](mailto:msnastya@yandex.ru)

### Class of '05

#### Belarus

**Aliaksandr Krasko** won a public speaking contest organized by the English Speaking Union and the British Embassy in Belarus. He took part in the finals of the competition in London on May 13-20. Aleksandr competed against more than 30 representatives from different countries. [alexkrasko@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:alexkrasko@yahoo.co.uk)

#### Georgia

**Kate Chachava** was elected a Bologna Process Committee Member of the European Student Union. [geto87@yahoo.com](mailto:geto87@yahoo.com)

#### Kyrgyzstan

**Aleksandra Solomatova** was accepted as a Project Ambassador for the One World Youth Project (OWYP) [www.oneworldyouthproject.org](http://www.oneworldyouthproject.org) and attended the OWYP Leadership and Training Retreat on July 10-16 at St. James School in Maryland.

#### Ukraine

**Andriy Bryn** (Nikolaev) as head of the youth organization of the Party of Industrials and Entrepreneurs of Ukraine, participated in the party's local convention. [andriy\\_united@yahoo.com](mailto:andriy_united@yahoo.com)

### Class of '06

#### Georgia

**Sopho Natroshvili** (Dedoplistskaro) is taking part in a U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) program internship. He will research for the Association for Protection of Landowners' Rights and the Public Relations and Marketing Units.

#### Kazakhstan

**Albert Kuramshin** took the post of the vice president of the FLEX Alumni Association of Kazakhstan. [arcos@ok.kz](mailto:arcos@ok.kz)

**Roman Lushakov**, Uralsk city representative, held weekly discussion club meetings at the American Corner in July. He gathered alumni

and 28 university and high school students to discuss issues associated with marriage. Groups made presentations about wedding traditions and marriage stereotypes of different cultures. [lushakov77@yandex.ru](mailto:lushakov77@yandex.ru)

#### Moldova

**Victoria Mihalachi** won the English Speaking Union's National Public Speaking Contest and will represent Moldova in the finals in London, England. [vittoria\\_rull@mail.ru](mailto:vittoria_rull@mail.ru)

#### Tajikistan

**Nozanin Donayorova** won the Tajik Republican Tajiki language Olympiad and was awarded the opportunity to enter the university of her choice without taking entrance exams. [nozanind@yahoo.com](mailto:nozanind@yahoo.com)

#### Turkmenistan

**Selbi Durdiyeva** and **Albina Volosevich** were accepted to the Kazakhstan Institute of Management, Economics, and Strategic Research in Almaty. [durdiyeva@yahoo.com](mailto:durdiyeva@yahoo.com) and [albinavol@yahoo.com](mailto:albinavol@yahoo.com)

### Class of '07

#### Russia

**Marina Kornikhina** (Volograd) participated in a mini summer school for children from foster families at the Russian - American Center in August. She and fellow alumni took the children on a virtual journey to the United States to find out more about the country, its history, geography, and traditions. This journey was a part of events planned for the alumni grant Future Leaders for Diplomatic Relations and International Friendship. [kornikhina@yahoo.com](mailto:kornikhina@yahoo.com)

### All Classes

#### Moldova

**Corina Ajder '06** and **Mihaela Isac '05** represented Moldova at the World Karl Popper Debate Championship and took fifth place out of 48 teams. Mihaela was among the top ten speakers of the mixed teams tournament. [octombritza@yahoo.com](mailto:octombritza@yahoo.com) and [Mihaela.isac@yahoo.com](mailto:Mihaela.isac@yahoo.com)

#### Ukraine

**Alla Myshalova '03**, **Mykhailo Shelemba '03**, and **Volodymyr Valko '04** participated in the American Institute for Political and Economic Studies (AIPES) program in Prague. The seminar is organized and funded by the Fund for American Studies with Charles University and Georgetown University. They passed graduate examinations in Political Science and Economics and earned three credits from Georgetown University. [myshalova\\_allya@yahoo.com](mailto:myshalova_allya@yahoo.com)

## FLEX Family News

Evgeniya Musatova '06 (Sevastopol, Ukraine) won hip-hop dancing competitions in Odesa and Simferopol and qualified for the National



Hip-Hop tournament in Kyiv, where she made it to the semi-finals.

Farkhad Fatkullin '96 (Kazan) introduced his FLEX host brother Kevin Wall to Russia this fall. Kevin, a playwright, originally from St. Louis, MO, spent two months as the guest of Farkhad



and his family in Kazan. Farkhad, whose travels often for his interpreting work, was able to show his brother St. Petersburg, Moscow, and several places in Ukraine.

Turkish Delight: Ekaterina Timofeeva '95 reports that ten FLEX alumni, who are also alumni of the Global Village program, gathered for the first ever official Global Village reunion in Antaliya, Turkey, August 18-25. In addition to sun and fun, they held seminars and study sessions on topics such as "Business Angel Investments," "Business Partnerships," and "Creating National Brands," which were great learning tools and broadened everyone's



horizons. FLEX alumni were Sophie Balavadze '95, Nino Makatsaria '00, Teona Mikadze '97, Anastasia Mishurova '95, Vasyl Myroshnichenko '97, Anastasia Nanayeva '99, Natalia Pilipenka/Wallenberg '00 (just got married after the reunion), Ekaterina Timofeeva '95, and Nadezhda Yuzhannikova '98.

## Team Work Experience in the California State Legislature

**Oksana Kholod '01**  
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The Legislative Education And Practice (LEAP) fellowship program provided me a variety of opportunities for personal development and professional growth. As an attorney, I found the experience of working as a member of California Assembly Member Hector De La Torre's legislative team particularly valuable.

A legislator's success and the benefits he/she is able to bring to his/her constituents depends directly upon the work of the staff team. Every member of the legislature is interested in a strong and reliable team. As a LEAP Fellow, I was placed in the California State Legislature and joined the motivated and well-organized team of Hector De La Torre of Los Angeles. His team consisted of five consultants, all of whom had legal or economic education.

Hector De La Torre sits on public safety, local government, healthcare, and budget standing committees, and two budget subcommittees on resources, health, and human services. Besides he is a chair of the Assembly Committee on Rules, which acts as the executive committee of the house. Given the volume of legislation that is introduced and considered, it is impossible for a Member to review in detail all of the changes, additions, and deletions that are proposed. Every staff member was responsible for one or two areas. Primarily, I focused on the work of public safety committee, which covered criminal justice issues. It was one of the busiest committees at the Legislature. California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger singled out criminal justice as a priority issue for California in 2007. A real crisis in the prison system and a large number of controversial bills initiated hot discussions during the committee hearings. I was impressed by the atmosphere during the committee hearings. It looked a lot like a performance. Since the legislature is open to the public, hearings were always crowded. Usually people were passionate about the subject and made emotional speeches; they showed videos and photographs to justify their arguments and to convince legislators to pass the bills. Every week there were 20 to 45 bills in front of the Public Safety Committee, and I had to be aware of the situation on every bill and brief the Member on them.

It was exciting to see the process by which new ideas developed and were turned into bills. As a team we discussed the text of each bill, and contacted experts to get the most



Oksana Kholod '01 (L) and intern Erica Boyd attended the Hastings Legislation Clinic in Sacramento.

updated and correct information. After the bill was introduced and referred to the committee, we started working on ways to make effective presentations of the bills in front of the committee. We involved interested groups in support of the bill. At the same time, it was crucial to be aware of the people who might be in opposition to the bill in order to be prepared to answer their questions so the bill could survive.

People contacted me as a staff member and asked me to meet them. Lobbyists, constituents, and other interested groups wanted to attract the legislator's attention to their issues and concerns. They shared ideas and wanted to get answers to their questions. Sometimes it was a real challenge, because I had to be aware of different policies and issues to be able to have a discussion with visitors. Then I was responsible for delivering their message to the legislator. I learned a lot of lessons during these meetings, and developed my negotiation and communication skills.

At the end of each day we had a staff meeting with the Member, during which we discussed our results, and shared information. I felt responsible for work that I'd done during the day. Even after work we spent time together socializing and discussing hot topics. I really enjoyed this team spirit and tried to contribute to the constructive working process. ■

**THANK YOU!** On behalf of FLEX recruiters across Eurasia, many thanks to all alumni who assisted us this year.



Ulyana Vasilyeva '05, Roza Vasilyeva '04, and Maria Mozgovaya '98 Recruited for FLEX in Northwest Russia

## Education Without Borders Conference - Finding Solutions to Global Challenges or Tips to Change the World

Nataliya Shturkhetska '03,  
Kyiv, Ukraine/Youngstown, OH  
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### What was different on February 25, 2007 when you went to bed and woke up?

On that night, over 1,000 students from more than 100 nations converged on Abu Dhabi, the United Arab Emirates, to attend the Education Without Borders 2007 (EWB) international student conference. The youth of the world came together to experience the awe-inspiring diversity of cultures represented, and to search for innovative solutions to global challenges.



Nataliya Shturkhetska '03 and His Excellency

The mission of EWB is to engage students and experts from countries around the world in active dialogue about the globe's most pressing social challenges and empower them to create and implement solutions. Just imagine the force in that one room – young people from all over the world who dare to be different have come together to create global harmony and make this world a better place in which to live.

An array of distinguished speakers from all over the world included:

- Dr Muhammad Yunus -2006 Nobel Peace Prize Winner and the Founder of the Grameen Bank;
- Nicholas Negroponete – One Laptop Per Child Foundation co-founder;
- Rita Levi-Montalcini – Nobel Laureate;
- Heinrich V. Pierer – Siemens Chairman;
- Cedza Dlamini, Ubuntu Institute for Young Social Entrepreneurs founder;
- Gavin Esler, author, newspaper columnist and BBC broadcaster;
- Shiraz Gidwani, United Nations Simulation Mission, Youth Development Programme Director General;
- Chris Cramer, CNN International managing director;

- Shashi Tharoor, UN Undersecretary General for Communications and Public Information.

Over 40 world-class speakers at the event inspired the youth, reminding us that they, too, were young people like us who were eager to take action.

Unique and collaborative forums were held, featuring prominent guest speakers, student presentations, stimulating debates, interactive workshops, and Arabian cultural activities. Leaders of business, education, NGOs, government, and technology from six continents, were brought together in the hopes of creating networks, which would positively impact communities and individuals around the globe.

The presentations and discussions were organized under four conference tracks:

1. Inequitable Access to Education and Technology in a Knowledge Economy;
2. Media: A Tool for Social Impact;
3. Responding to Natural Disasters as a Global Community;
4. Harnessing Education and Technology to End Poverty.

The event was inaugurated by His Excellency Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan, UAE minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research.

"The potential of the Internet to facilitate life-long learning, promote cooperative learning, empower individuals, and advance the cause of global, borderless education cannot be underestimated. Students who participate in this conference are change makers. Through their participation they recognize and seek opportunities to initiate change and make a real difference in the world," Sheikh Nahyan said.

Of particular interest were the tips to change the world, shared by Shiraz Gidwani, United Nations Simulation Mission, Youth Development Programme Director General:

1. It is no longer a choice. Your actions are inevitable as they will impact anything around you.
2. It is our privilege to be responsible – able to respond.
3. Tools and technology are to our advantage to initiate change.
4. Challenging environment is a key.
5. You can do anything you want, but not everything you want.
6. Anything worth doing takes a generation, so don't give up.

### ■ If it doesn't start with us, who does it start with?

It is the environment that is crucial to unleash the potential and become inspired to take action. It is a task of a leader to create the environment and enable others to excel themselves, to initiate change and fulfill our dreams. The stamina to create and innovate is within each and every one of us. As Dr. Yunus said: "Do what you feel, go for it, change the world. Don't be absorbed in the textbooks; just go and change the world..."

*Editor's Note: In 2007, Nataliya Shturkhetska graduated with a Bachelors degree in International Economics and Management from Kyiv National Economic University, Ukraine. Alexey Valyugin '03 (Nizhny Novgorod) and Lilia Iskhakova '03 (Kazan) also attended this event. Natallia Pilipenko '00, originally from Grodno, Belarus, now working in Moscow for IKEA as a recruitment and training manager, served on the International Student Organizing Committee. If you know other FLEX alumni who participated, please let us know. ■*

To learn more about Education Without Borders 2007 (EWB), go to [www.ewb2007.com](http://www.ewb2007.com).

## FLEX Alumni Grant Winners 2007

Alumni by Country	City	Project Title
<b>Armenia</b>		
Ghukasyan, Ani '00	Vanadzor	International Outreach Camp
Hunanyan, Ophelia '02	Hrazdan	Discussing the World through Debate
Porsughyan, Arpine '00	Gyumri	All Different-All Equal
<b>Azerbaijan</b>		
Yagublu, Govhar '03 (I)	Baku	Participation in AIPES (American Institute on Political and Economic Systems) Summer School Program in Prague
Zeynalova, Maryam '05	Baku	I Cook Myself
<b>Belarus</b>		
Dybovsky, Dmitry '02	Minsk	Round Lake - Continuation
<b>Georgia</b>		
Jabanishvili, Koba Givi '06	Rustavi	WOW (Widely Open World)
<b>Kyrgyzstan</b>		
Firsov, Sergey '00	Bishkek	Youth Community Outreach Project: "Leadership School"
Kulmamatov, Seitek '06	Osh	Be my Sibling
Mamatova, Diana '04 (I)	Bishkek	Participation in AIPES (American Institute on Political and Economic Systems) Summer School Program in Prague
Mamatova, Diana '04	Bishkek	Bride Kidnapping: Tradition or Crime
Molchanova, Regina '06	Karakol	Clubs Fair
<b>Moldova</b>		
Chernets, Irina '00	Chisinau	Tolerance Club for Teenagers
Corcimaru, Ana '06	Balti	The Future Comes Tomorrow
Solonari, Silvia '02	Chisinau	Become a Mentor!
<b>Russia</b>		
Agapova, Anastasiya '06	Tomsk	Discovery
Galkin, Dmitry '94	Smolensk	Multicenter Analytical Study on Investigating Medical Professionals' and Patients' Perception about Infection Control in Various Wards of Multidisciplinary Hospitals in Russia
Gnevshveva, Kseniya '03	Saratov	English for Children
Gorodova, Maria '99	St. Petersburg	Social Program of Human Health Protection and Environmental Improvement in St. Petersburg
Lopukhina, Elena '04	Petrozavodsk	New Discovery of America: Language, Culture, Civil Society
Melnikova, Olga '03	Volzhsky	With Love to a Book
Semenova, Kseniya '02	Cheboksary	Homeless Are Not Disengaged (H.A.N.D.)
Yumagulova, Lilia '99	Ufa	Facial Rehabilitation Booklet
<b>Tajikistan</b>		
Aliev, Ilhom '05 (I)	Dushanbe	Participation in AIPES (American Institute on Political and Economic Systems) Summer School Program in Prague
Igamov, Inomjon '05	Dushanbe	<i>Tajik Alumni in Action</i> FLEX Alumni Magazine
Kassymbekova, Botakoz '99	Dushanbe	Seminar "Central Asian Hospitality and Other National Myths" with a concluding conference On Theory of Nationalism and its Historical Development in Soviet and post-Soviet Central Asia
Nematova, Gulbahor '95	Dushanbe	Helping Rural Women in Building a Better Educational Environment
<b>Turkmenistan</b>		
Hojakuliyeva, Sabina '05	Turkmenabat	Debate Tournament in Turkmenabat
Razahova, Kristina '04 (I)	Turkmenbashi	14th International Youth Leadership Conference in Prague
Razahova, Kristina '04	Turkmenbashi	Summer Professional Development Training
<b>Ukraine</b>		
Achkasov, Kostyantyn '06	Kharkiv	We Share
Chopa, Vladlena '05	Mykolayiv	International Outreach Camp
Panchak, Olha '03	Novyi Rozdil	Let's Tell People the Truth! Human Trafficking Exists!
Pukhalska, Yuliya '01	Ternopil	International Outreach Camp
Tsymbal, Oleksandra '04	Lyubotyn	Democratic Leadership in the School
Yaroschuk, Marina '02 (I)	Kyiv	AIPES: Live and Learn in USA, Czech Republic and Ukraine

(I) indicates an individual grant.

To learn about FLEX Alumni Grant Program 2008, go to [www.americancouncils.org](http://www.americancouncils.org).  
Deadline for proposal submissions Feb. 29, 2008.

## Profiles



### Maksim Lobatyv

**Home town:** Novosibirsk, Russia  
**U.S. City and State:** Palmer, AK  
**Year returned home:** 2003  
**Email:** max-alaska@yandex.ru

**Education:** 5th year student, Novosibirsk State University, Department of Humanities. Major: Oriental history and languages, specialization: modern history of Japan.

#### Current place of work and title:

Electronic Components Group, Co. Ltd., my position is international trade manager. It is my job to find international (mainly East Asian) suppliers and supervise deals in electronic components trade, and do translations of documentation involving English, Japanese, and Chinese.

**Educational, professional, and/or personal goals:** Having completed four years of university education, I will continue my studies and research this coming year during a year-long study trip to Japan. After university I am planning to continue graduate studies in the same field, though there is a chance I will expand my interests to a new field that complements Oriental languages. As for personal goals, I want to become a person who can benefit his country and local community and contribute to their future; having original ideas and some models and ways from the countries and places I've seen, I would like to be able to participate in projects and activities, that can bring Russia and its people to a new level in the modern world.

**How I feel about the future of my country:** It's a country of many opportunities. The key is to apply one's knowledge and skills in the right way to benefit

the future of it. There is a lot for the country to learn from others, and a long way to go in its development, but I am personally glad that things are changing and moving to the better.

**The global issue of greatest concern to me and why:** Political instability in the modern world, lack of tolerance, unsolved problems, attention being paid to the wrong problems. The reason for my concern is that a stable and safe world is the foundation for the future of humanity, but so far no matter how hard the international society tries to achieve good results, too often it turns out to be in vain, and usually for the reasons stated above.

**The local issue of greatest concern to me and why:** Ecological and transportation situation in my native city of Novosibirsk. The city is growing rapidly, but its obsolete layout, lack of communication systems, and polluted environment make it an uncomfortable and even a dangerous place to be. For these reasons I would like to stay and continue my work here to make it a better place, even to go as far as making it a place of universal importance.

**Right now I'm reading:** *Hoyo Kazoku* (roughly translates as The Family of Tolerance) by Nobuo Kojima, a novel which metaphorically depicts Japanese society after the WWII period, tells about the Japanese people that lost their bearings in the changing modern world, while trying to adapt to ways and institutions of the Western civilization. Somehow I associate this with the situation in Russia.

**The FLEX Program is important because:** in my opinion it is greatly assisting in laying a base for the future of the relationship not only between Russia and the U.S., but the future of the modern world. It's also a great tool for making and/or shaping the future of many young people that get sent on the program and the people they get to interact with while on the program and after it.

**What I'd like to say to fellow alumni:** Never forget what FLEX stands for and make sure you do everything to implement the idea in the real life.



### Dmitri Dybovski

**Home town:** Minsk, Belarus  
**U.S. City and State:** Browntown, WI  
**Year returned home:** 2002  
**Email:** dimad2002@list.ru

**Education:** I'm a fourth year student at Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radio-electronics. I will receive a degree in computer programming.

**Goals:** My immediate goal is to earn my university diploma. Then further in the

future, I'd like to set up my own business. For this entrepreneurial activity, I will need to continue my studies. I would like to study both foreign languages and accounting. In addition to further improving my English, I plan to resume my study of French. I am still thinking about possible businesses.

**A personal achievement I'm proud of:** I am now a two-time FLEX alumni grant winner. My project helps young disabled people to integrate into the "ordinary" world. Thanks to the cooperation and support of my friends from the Belarusian NGO Different and Equal, we have helped a group of Belarusian young people – both those with disabilities and those who never communicated with disabled

people before – become more open, communicative, and confident. At our wilderness summer camps they have had many positive new experiences. They have developed useful skills, which will serve them in whatever they do with their lives. One of the outcomes of this summer's camp is a new project to help disabled youth find employment. This spring FLEX alumni in Belarus also worked with the Belarusian NGO Different and Equal and the Russian NGO Perspektiva to conduct the "Breaking Down Barriers" disability film festival in Belarus.

**The local issue of greatest concern to me and why:** I worry that the FLEX program will be cancelled in my country. The alumni team can't exist without new alumni, who have fresh motivation. I want more young people in Belarus to have a chance to compete for an experience like the one I had.

**The FLEX Program is important because:** The FLEX experience helps teenagers to become more confident and free-thinking. It is important because it gives youth a chance to see this huge world from a different angle and express our own independent point of view.

**What I'd like to say to fellow alumni:** I'd especially like to address Belarusian alumni. I want you to think about what the FLEX program has done for you personally. At this point we are the only ones who can keep it alive. With a FLEX office in Minsk, we can develop a lot of fun and useful projects with tremendous outcomes. You are all invited. Contact us and come to our next planning meeting.



### Wepa Myalikgulyev

**Home town:** Ashgabat, Turkmenistan  
**U.S. City and State:** Las Vegas, NV  
**Year returned home:** 1996  
**Email:** wepam2000@yahoo.com

**Education:** Department of World Economy and International Relations, Turkmen State University, Ashgabat.

**Current place of work and title:** Press and Public Affairs Officer, British Embassy in Turkmenistan.

**Highlights of Work:** In my current job to which I moved one month ago, I aim to promote U.K.-Turkmenistan relations through education programs, cultural activities and developing other types of contacts between the people of the two countries. I had had similar goals when I worked at the U.S. Embassy for five years, first as media assistant and then as political/economic assistant. I am glad that I have been able to share my knowledge and insights about my country with American and British diplomats and learn firsthand about the U.S. and U.K. foreign services. Interpreting for high-level U.S., U.K., Turkmenistan and other government officials, including heads of state, has been a special highlight of my jobs.

**Professional and personal goals:** In my professional career, I aim to become a good specialist in the field of international relations and use these skills to promote better relations between Turkmenistan and other countries. Later in my career, I hope to work for a Turkmen government foreign policy agency. In my personal life, I am blessed to have a loving wife and two wonderful kids. My goal is for them to be honest in life and love people around them.

**How I feel about the future of my country:** I wish Turkmenistan to continue its path toward greater prosperity and the Turkmen people to live by values such as integrity, mutual respect, and genuine interest in the common good.

**How I have made use of my U.S. experience:** Knowing ideals and life values of the American people and government, I try to "interpret" them and make them understandable to the people around me so they would have a more informed opinion of the U.S. By explaining to people around that Americans' passionate belief in liberty and democracy is indeed genuine, I try to discuss with them how this positive spirit can be translated to the Turkmen society and local mentality.

**What I'd like to say to fellow alumni:** Whether you want it or not, you have undertaken a role of being a bridge between the two parts of the world by simply participating in the FLEX program. It is up to you now how much you use that role to help the people in your country, the U.S. and other countries understand and respect each other more.

## Future Leaders Exchange Offices in Eurasia

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