



Exchange Alumni Newsletter

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Long Time No See! Here Comes the Alumni Reunion

Given the fact that 2017 has been filled with many exciting alumni projects and formal occasions, the PAS Alumni Unit decided to create an informal environment for U.S. Exchange Alumni to network, meet and greet the new Public Affairs Officer, socialize and dance. Thus, on September 29, U.S. Exchange Alumni came together in a single assembly for an Alumni Reunion at the Wyndham Hotel. Not surprisingly, the reunion had the highest alumni attendance in years.

Delivering his remarks, Public Affairs Officer John Brown, thanked alumni for their outstanding work for the benefit of their communities, for their role in strengthening bilateral relations and mutual understanding between Uzbekistan and the United States.

Mr. Brown also encouraged those gathered to stay tuned to upcoming alumni and Embassy-wide events and projects such as 'Alumni Mentors' and 'Alumni on the Move.'



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Note:

The Alumni Mentors Project will represent a series of professional skills development workshops for the general public and the alumni community of Uzbekistan. Professional Alumni of different U.S. Exchange programs will be involved in the capacity of mentors. The project will help to connect the young generation of alumni with experienced alumni professionals and will facilitate the exchange of knowledge;

Alumni on the Move aims to create a platform for alumni who travel abroad to attend professional and personal development workshops, academic and scientific conferences, youth summits, fellowship and study programs, and cultural tours. Through this platform, alumni will serve as guest speakers and will share their acquired knowledge with the general public and other alumni.



Mr. Brown encouraged everyone to take an active part when a call for speakers and participants is announced in early 2018. He also shared his support for them to apply for the Alumni Outreach Grants Program.

The event also served as a good opportunity to recognize the alumni team who successfully implemented the first-ever Technology, Entertainment, Design (TEDx) project in Uzbekistan.

Following the PAO's remarks, the PAS alumni unit presented certificates to the TEDx Team and speakers as well as free TOEFL vouchers to six participants of the Alumni English Project.

The award presentation was followed by entertainment with up-and-coming illusionist Dmitriy Polyakov performing stunning tricks and drawing 'wows' from the audience.

Those gathered had the opportunity to enjoy groovy DJ music as well as drinks and light refreshments provided at the venue.

The "Lost and Found Alumni" booth set up at the venue helped collect and update contact information for alumni that the Embassy has lost touch with.

We look forward to organizing meaningful projects with and for alumni in 2018!

Alumni Bring Technovation Challenge to Uzbekistan

Have you heard of the Technovation Challenge?

Technovation is the world's largest technology entrepreneurship program for girls aged 10-18. It runs across 78 countries and is supported by UNESCO, Peace Corps and UN Women. The program offers girls around the world the opportunity to learn the skills they need to emerge as tech entrepreneurs and leaders. Every year the Technovation Program invites girls to identify a problem in their community and then challenges them to solve it. Girls work in teams to build both a mobile app and a business plan to launch the app, supported by mentors and guided by special curriculum designed by the Global Technovation Team based in California. Since its inception in 2010, 10,000 girls around the world have developed mobile apps and startups to solve problems around a diverse range of problems, including food waste, nutrition and women's safety.



Inspired by their U.S. exchange experience, 2016 TechWomen alumni Elena Selezneva and Saida Yusupova have become Technovation Regional Ambassadors and initiated the Technovation Program for the first time in Uzbekistan.

The initiative was well received by the people and government of Uzbekistan, international organizations and business entities.

On May 7, 2017, Ambassador Spratlen attended the first-ever Technovation Challenge Program in Uzbekistan and awarded two projects that had the potential to achieve great social impact in the local community.



To benefit all participants of the first Technovation Challenge Program, Embassy Tashkent presented the organizers and all participants with a one-year subscription to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Technology Review – one of the longest-running tech magazines in the United States – which has been in publication since 1899. This journal is specifically dedicated to observing emerging technologies and the wonders of science.

There was another wonderful gift on the Uzbek government side as well; Tanzila Narbayeva, the Deputy Prime Minister and Chairman of the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan, encouraged participants to contribute to Uzbekistan's development in STEM fields and committed to provide Uzbek government support for the development of mobile applications proposed by 22 teams.

We believe in the power of alumni to make positive contributions to their local communities and truly hope that the Technovation Program will become an annual event that will serve as a solid platform for future Uzbek women leaders in the STEM fields.

Alumni Get Their Creative Juices Flowing at Art Therapy Session

On June 2, IVLP alumna Tatyana Chabrova conducted an Art Therapy Session at the U.S. Embassy in Tashkent.

The session participants were welcomed by former Cultural Affairs Officer Diane Del Rosario, who introduced Chabrova and emphasized the importance of art therapy sessions and expressed hope that the participants would gain new skills and enjoy the session.

Those gathered – twenty-five U.S. exchange alumni and children – learned exciting painting tricks and skills while enjoying the company of friends in a serene setting. Chabrova had the participants split into four groups. The workshop participants created a variety of remarkable paintings and appliqué works of art reflecting the four seasons. Toward the end of the session, the four groups posed for photos, holding their artistic creations.



Chabrova currently works as a trainer at the National Center for Social Adaptation of Children in Tashkent. In November 2016, she was named Alumna of the Month as she works tirelessly to make the lives of children with disabilities more meaningful and the local community a more inclusive place to live. Chabrova used what she learned during her IVLP experience to conduct trainings and publish books for parents of children with disabilities.



Daniel Pearl World Music Days in Tashkent

On October 13, the U.S. Embassy celebrated the annual worldwide Daniel Pearl World Music Days with a gala concert at the Old U.S. Embassy in Tashkent.

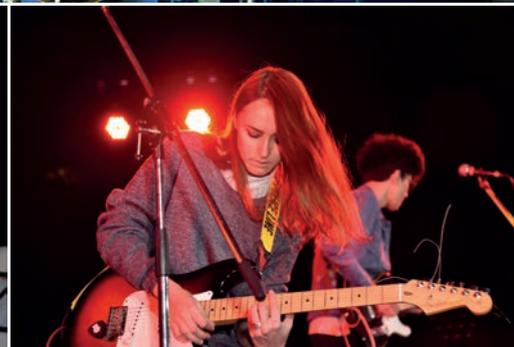
The concert was attended by more than 500 guests, with concert-goers lined up more than two hours ahead of the show. In return for their patience, fans enjoyed seven diverse and talented musical groups, including three Uzbekistani mega-stars and four emerging local acts performing in English. The Embassy held an open call for talent via social media and received entries from more than 30 musicians across Uzbekistan and even from the United States.





The mega-stars included legendary singers Farrukh Zakirov and Yalla, Shahzoda, and DJ Pilgrim. Other performers included 10-year-old Janset Bogdalova, who brought the house down with her first-ever live performance, covering Linkin Park and the Disney hit, "Let It Go." Janna Kim, who learned banjo skills with the help of online friends living in Kentucky, transfixed the audience with authentic American bluegrass and stories of her American friends, who actually pitched in to send her a real American banjo with a cowboy hat and boots. Archie Sundance reached the counterculture crowd with original songs reminiscent of Bob Dylan, as the tattoo across his right forearm declared, "Music is the Food of Love." IWALF band, made up of four students from the Westminster International University in Tashkent, rounded out the emerging artists set with the look and sound of a quintessential American college band, stopping between songs to thank their parents, who were seeing them perform for the first time.

The Embassy also set up displays at the venue with information on exchange and educational programs. Several local media outlets covered the concert, and the Embassy's social media accounts have been flooded with fans' comments and reactions.



U.S. Ambassador Meets with Alumni in Uzbek Regions

In August and September 2017, Ambassador Pamela Spratlen traveled to Samarkand, Namangan and Nukus, where she met with alumni of U.S. exchange programs.

The U.S. Embassy is dedicated to keeping in touch with alumni of U.S. Government-funded exchange programs because they are among the U.S. Embassy's most valued contacts, viewed as cultural ambassadors who play a vital role in the maintenance of relations between the two countries.



Samarkand

During her September 21 visit to the ancient city of Samarkand, the Ambassador met with six alumni of exchange programs such as the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP), Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence Program, and the E-Teacher Program. Speaking with the alumni, Ambassador Spratlen said she was very touched by the warm welcome and noted that thanks to the alumni, people in Uzbek regions can learn about life in the United States and the opportunities available there. She emphasized that keeping in touch with alumni and expanding alumni outreach, especially in the regions of Uzbekistan, is one of the U.S. Embassy's highest priorities.

Namangan

Meeting with alumni in Namangan on October 5, Ambassador Spratlen said she had been to Namangan several times before and was delighted to be back in this beautiful city, adding that Uzbek cities had changed considerably in the years she had been working in Uzbekistan. After delivering greetings, the Ambassador invited those gathered to share their thoughts and ideas and have a discussion about the ways they have contributed, and can further contribute, to the development of their regions. She added that over the past twenty-five years they had done many wonderful things for the benefit of our two nations.





Nukus

During the alumni roundtable in Nukus on October 30, Ambassador Spratlen had the opportunity to speak with alumni of the Future Leaders Exchange Program (FLEX) and the Edmund S. Muskie Graduate Fellowship Program, as well as Embassy contacts working in the areas of health and environment. Greeting those gathered, the Ambassador reiterated the importance of meeting with alumni of U.S. exchange programs, emphasizing that the Embassy always stands ready to support alumni in their efforts to accomplish their goals and implement important projects. She also mentioned that one of the ways the Embassy supports alumni is through the Alumni Outreach Grants Program, expressing hope that their projects would continue to produce positive results. The meeting was an excellent opportunity to discuss the existing ties between the United States and Uzbekistan, as well as future cooperation in programs and outreach activities.





Get Ready for the 2018 AEIF

Our life is filled with so many deadlines and often times we need an extra hour, day, week or month to meet those deadlines successfully. However, to give you enough timing for generating ideas worth realizing, we would like to give you a heads up and inform you a month in advance about the upcoming launch of the 2018 Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund (AEIF) competition. Through the AEIF, YOU can implement an innovative public service project in your community. Alumni are eligible to apply for up to \$25,000 in grant funding.



Your project should support one of the five 2018 AEIF themes below:

- Fostering Economic Prosperity
- Building Civic Participation, Good Governance and Resilient Communities
- Advancing Science, Technology, Health and Innovation
- Promoting Inclusion and Educational Opportunity
- Empowering Women and Girls

If you are planning to apply, we highly recommend that you do the following before the launch date on March 1st:

- Make sure that you are a verified member of the International Exchange Alumni (IEA) global online community. If you need an account or don't remember your password, get help with your account setup here.
- Start forming your team of at least three U.S. exchange alumni (this number includes the team leader). The team can be comprised of local alumni who reside in Uzbekistan or other U.S. Exchange Alumni from abroad. However, every team member including the team leader should have an active account in the IEA global online community.
- Start developing your project idea and put together your budget. Budget form is attached.

Not sure where to start?

Check out the AEIF Help Desk, where you can view commonly asked questions, theme definitions, sample proposals, sample budgets, and guides to help build your project.

Need some inspiration for your project? Check out the 2017 winners.

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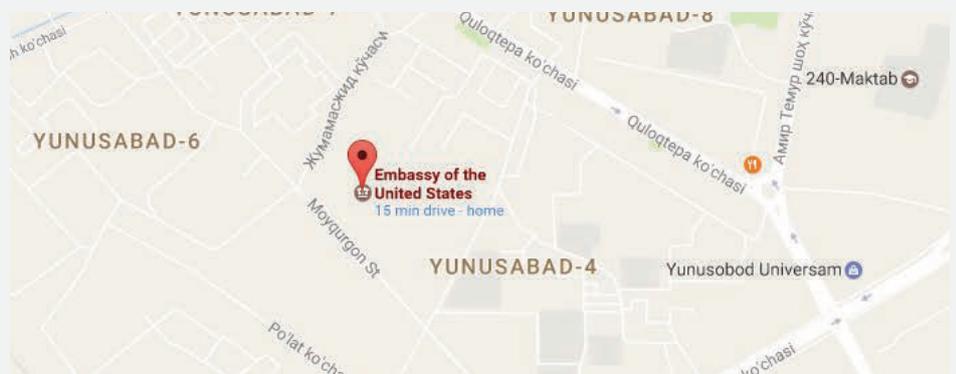
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