

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT HOUSE

Washington, DC

www.ishdc.org



alumni

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ISH-DC Alumni Newsletter | Volume 1

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Greetings ISH-DC Alumni:

We hope this finds you well and for many, enjoying the long days of summer. The year has been a full one here at International Student House with a number of programs featuring exceptional speakers and student-run celebrations for the Lunar New Year, Mardi Gras, and a very popular encore of Bollywood Night. **Read all about these events below.**

As you well know, the changing of the seasons also mean a lot of goodbyes and welcomes here at the House. We transitioned from the spring semester with graduation celebrations and the excitement of promising careers, to a summer full of new residents engaged in internships here in Washington. While often brief stays, it is a joy helping our summer interns adjust to life in DC, as well as connecting them with members of our Board of Directors, alumni, and our greater ISH-DC community. Our local alumni recently hosted a weekend hike and picnic in Rock Creek Park for our residents, and a local alumna (and Board member) hosted a large group of residents at her home for a pool party and picnic on an extremely hot summer day. These opportunities further enforce the bond of this community that is always with us.

We are now welcoming those joining us for the 2019/2020 academic year - we cannot wait to get to know everyone and continue to strengthen this ever-growing community.

Wherever you are, our sincere wishes on a great season ahead and we look forward to continuing our efforts to share with you the consistently exciting life here at the House!

Sincerely,
International Student House

**Follow us on Instagram @ISHDC1825 for daily life here at the House - link in the image below!*



FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK (@ishwashingtondc) | INSTAGRAM (@ISHDC1825)

MASSOUMEH TORFEH, 1988

Thank you Massoumeh for sharing your story! In her words:

I am now 68 years old and I stayed at the International House when I was 38, exactly 30 years ago. I was doing research at the National Archives of the US State Department for my PhD while working full time at the BBC World Service in London as a journalist. I loved my one-month stay at the International House. It has left me unbelievable memories of a beautiful warm place, an astonishing period building in the heart of Washington, DC, with unbelievably kind supportive, efficient staff and wonderful fellow residents. I remember to this day the beautiful wooden staircase, the exact positions of the dining room and kitchen, the meeting rooms, the bedrooms and the little garden at the back where we had fun chatting away about our daily endeavours. We made incredible trips to New York, to Pennsylvania and a host of other nearby places. We were lucky to have a brilliant young photographer in our team of friends who took memorable black and white photos and developed them on site for us - these are still hanging in my sitting room in London.

We all shared rooms and although at first I didn't like the idea, I soon came to see the philosophy behind International House's preferred sharing of life and education. I found some ten good friends in the House with many of whom I am still in contact - one has become a best friend and we have shared great stories and ups and downs of lives and laughter together. We are still talking about those days at ISH and how we met.

I went on to complete my PhD in Political Science at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), and then I worked with the United Nations as the Spokesperson and Chief of Communication in 1998-2000 in Tajikistan. Later after 9/11 I joined the UN again in Afghanistan from 2002-4, and a third time in 2012-14 as the UN Director of Communication and Spokesperson. I felt honoured doing all these amazing jobs serving the people, peacemaking and peace-building and international diplomacy. In between those periods I worked with both the BBC as a senior producer, and at Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (an American international radio) as director of the Tajik Service and editor of Asia Desk in the Central Newsroom. I am now a research associate at the LSE and SOAS and a regular media pundit with the BBC, Aljazeera, CBC, NBC TRT, and so on with regular analysis of the situation in Iran, Afghanistan and the Middle East. I love staying in touch with ISH and read your Newsletters with interest.

JOSHELYN SMITH, Fall 2016



I joined ISH in the Fall of 2016 during the first year of my Master's degree at American University. Throughout those three years, I conducted research in Kenya, worked as an AmeriCorps VISTA volunteer and served as a Peace Corps Community Youth Empowerment Volunteer in Fiji. When I wasn't teaching computer literacy, I wrote my thesis on the under-reported health impacts on the region in the wake of Cyclone Winston and sat as the Communications and Research Coordinator for Fiji's Gender and Development Committee.

I became incredibly involved in the social events and opportunities the House provided and also became a front desk receptionist. Quickly I befriended scholars from over 15 countries. I was overwhelmed with the beauty of the house as well as the accessibility it had to the greater DC area. Coming from Ohio, I had never had the opportunity to live in such close quarters with people who were different from me geographically. Living at ISH allowed me to grow personally and professionally. I remember spending long evenings studying with fellow residents as well as just casually hanging out and joking around in the TV room.

ISH is designed to promote cross-cultural dialogue and foster global understanding. The moment you move in you are enrolled for a lifetime in the global ISH Alumni network. The experience affirmed my desire to work towards building a globally diverse and inclusive community. Through academia, I cultivated an unfathomable commitment to social justice and progressive advocacy efforts on and off-campus and I felt I had much left to accomplish.

I currently live in and work in Washington, DC as a Recruitment Associate for a non-profit called Atlas Corps where I communicate with potential candidates for a 12-18 month Fellowship specifically for non-US citizens. I manage our online application process, volunteers, and support Fellows during their training programs. Living at ISH gave me applicable experience in which I apply every day at Atlas Corps. Working with Atlas Corps has strengthened my passion for cultural diplomacy, increased my desire for advocacy of past and present social problems, and ultimately teaches me how to create innovative solutions for social reform and change. Hoping you are well!

Ambassador Tom Pickering at ISH



Ambassador Tom Pickering spoke quite candidly to a room packed full of residents, alumni, and Board members in early February. It was a great night.

Bollywood Night by ISH Residents



Residents held their FOURTH Bollywood Night at the House. Read all about the evening and find some great photos in Krystin's blog. Read more through the link in the photo.

Ambassador Araud of France Hosts ISH



ISH resident Julien Maire spoke at a dinner for ISH sponsors at the residence of Ambassador Gerard Araud of France. Read more by clicking the link in the photo and see Julien and his fellow housemates enjoy the evening.

ISH Residents Take on Philly



ISH resident Aakriti Thapar was a fellow at the BBC and blogged for the House for several months. Read about the fun time she and fellow housemates had as they traveled to Philadelphia through the photo link!

UPCOMING EVENTS: If you would like to receive information on upcoming events (often not on our website because they are exclusive for residents and alumni, or by invitation only) please email Katie at krussell@ishdc.org.

OTHER PROGRAMS THAT TOOK PLACE AT ISH IN EARLY 2019

Women in International Trade (WIIT) hosted an exceptional panel on how to negotiate with senior representatives in the field. A networking reception followed the discussion, including a number of WIIT members and their colleagues.

Ambassador Chas Freeman joined us to talk about his distinguished career in Foreign Service with a specific focus on his expertise in U.S.-China relations.

ISH welcomed **Teatro Lirico of DC**, a non-profit arts institution specializing classical lyric music from Spain and Latin America, who performed *Martin I Soler and Sor: Music for Voice and Guitar*, with songs from two of the most important Spanish composers of the XVIII century.

Our annual **Spring Garden Party** was once again an indoor evening, but a wonderful time with over two dozen alumni in attendance. You can learn about the experience through the perspective of a resident [here](#).

HE Excellency Kurt Jaeger, Ambassador of Liechtenstein, hosted a “Happy Hour” reception at his residence on Georgetown for the second summer in a row. Absolutely a highlight as our residents just moved in for the summer. Read about the night [here](#).

Alumni hosted hike and picnic in the Smithsonian Zoo and Rock Creek Park

Thank you to all who joined! We had such a fun time and plan to host another hike this fall ending with a bbq, so we expect another great afternoon and hope those who are local can join.



If you have any interest in hosting fellow alumni, whether it be in Washington, DC or Rome, let us know and we would love to help you connect! You can email Katie at krussell@ishdc.org and we will look forward to collaborating.