



STATE ALUMNI VOICE

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E-Teacher Scholarship Recipients 2013

The U.S. Embassy in Muscat recognized three Omani alumni and seven new participants in its E-Teachers Scholarship program at an orientation on January 6th 2013. During the orientation, U.S. Ambassador Greta C. Holtz congratulated the E-Teachers for their participation in the program and wished them good luck in their learning journey to become better Eng-



Ambassador Greta C. Holtz, middle, with a group of E-Teacher Scholarship Recipients and Alumni

lish language teachers. The event included an opening presentation on the E-Teacher Scholarship program and State Alumni Website conducted by Alumni Outreach Coordinator Sami AL-Kharusi. Also, IRC director, Walaa AL -Salmi, gave a presentation about the Information Resource Center (IRC) at the U.S. Embassy and highlighted how teachers can benefit from the resources available to search for information during their study. Afterwards, E-Teacher Scholarship alumna **Raya AL -Hajri** gave a presentation about the Blackboard application used for online courses and gave participants some tips to complete their courses successfully and take full advantage of the course material. During the event, program alumni, **Fahad AL Bulushi and Moosa AL Nabhani**, also shared their experiences with fellow teachers who are currently enrolled in the program courses.

The E- Teacher Scholarship Program offers English teaching professionals living outside of the United States the opportunity to take seven innovative, online, graduate-level classes through the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, and the University of Oregon. The courses explore major areas of the academic specialty of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL). For more information visit: <http://oman.usembassy.gov/e-teacher-program.html>

Alumni Corner

Alumna Shares her Exchange Story

Zahra Mohsin, alumna of the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) 2012, shared her exchange program experience in Mississippi, on “Special Education Strategies”, a regional project for the Near East and North Africa that was administered by the Mississippi Consortium for International Development, conducted from June 9- 30, 2012.

What was the project about? This 21 day project examined U.S. education strategies for students with intellectual, developmental, emotional and behavioral disabilities. Within that framework, I, as a participant, had an opportunity to meet with individuals who legislate, advocate and formulate policy for programs that addressed the needs of disabled children. Through meetings with a broad range of public and private sector professionals, I explored the various strategies used to intervene, assess and develop independent educational programs to assist students with various types of disorders.



What surprised you the most about the U.S. and Americans? What surprised me the most about Americans is how friendly and helpful they are, not only with each other, but with people from other countries. They are modest and welcoming and show respect and appreciation to other cultures and languages. Another thing that was astonishing to me is the encouragement and commitment for the concept of volunteering that other places may lack. Volunteering is encouraged and practiced by all members of society despite their age, profession and education. In the U.S. I admired the progress and development that has been accomplished in a re-

markably short time to provide services for people with special needs.

Did you acquire knowledge that you can apply in your country? I came to realize that supporting the disabled people is society’s responsibility and not an individual’s responsibility. Also, I learnt to encourage and support volunteer work and establish services where people can participate. In addition, the IVLP equipped me with enough knowledge to support the concept of introducing a whole new world of services for disabled kids, such as: after school services, summer camps, introduction of art and music, introduction of fitness centers, assistive technology, detailed information for parents, advocacy for parents, teaching the parent and individuals how to fight for their rights and the use of media to increase awareness of special needs. Being part of the IVLP gave me knowledge of the rights of disabled and how to defend it and who is responsible for it.



Zahara, second from right, at the graduation

In brief, “Taking part in the IVLP was a great and fantastic opportunity to develop my knowledge and experience in the field of special education. It was also beneficial in terms of the topics, as they gave me a whole new perspective on special education and about the rights and laws of disability. It also taught me what can be done in order to provide a better quality of life and services to them.” She adds “It was a great opportunity allowing me to experience how Americans work and live. It was nice to meet Americans in social settings, to learn what they are really like, to see that they live in harmony regardless of political, social or religious differences. IVLP also helped through the gatherings in which our cultural values are conveyed and exchanged, and where long-lasting friendships are formed.”

For information on IVLP, visit: <http://eca.state.gov/ivlp>

Orientation for TEA Scholarship Recipients

U.S. Embassy Muscat conducted a pre-departure orientation for three teachers from the Ministry of Education who have been selected to attend a prestigious U.S. exchange program. Mr. Saleh Al Habsi, Ms. Muna Al Alawi and Ms. Salima Al Rajhi, will be participating in the "Teaching Excellence and Achievement" (TEA) program in the U.S. for six weeks starting February 3, 2013.

During the orientation, U.S. Ambassador Greta C. Holtz congratulated the teachers for being selected for this program and wished them a productive and rewarding trip. The teachers also heard from three alumni of the TEA program, who shared their experiences and lessons learned from the exchange last year.

About the program:

The program will provide the teachers with a six-week professional development program at U.S. universities combining academic seminars with an internship at a U.S. secondary school. The program will also include academic seminars fo-



Omani Youth Discuss Volunteerism with U.S. Ambassador

A group of leading "Youth Exchange and Study" (YES) alumni met with Ambassador Greta C. Holtz at the U.S. Embassy in Muscat to discuss their YES exchange program experiences, and the community service activities they are carrying out in Oman to increase youth involvement in their communities. Community service and volunteering are important components of the YES exchange program, and many alumni return to their home countries eager to continue their involvement in community ser-



TEA Recipients with Ambassador Greta C. Holtz

ocusing on new teaching methodologies, curriculum development, lesson planning, teaching strategies, and computer training. Cultural enrichment, mentoring, and support will be provided to participants throughout the program.

For more information about the TEA program visit: http://oman.usembassy.gov/exchange_12042010.html

vice. Just last November, the YES alumni held a two-day awareness campaign about blood disorder diseases in support of the Oman Hereditary Blood Disorder Association. Ambassador Holtz congratulated the alumni on their successful project and welcomed their ideas and proposals on reaching out to Omani youth on volunteerism. As part of its regular alumni programming, the U.S. Embassy organizes discussions and training events for alumni from the many exchange programs offered by the U.S. State Department.

The Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study (YES) Program was established in 2002 and is funded by the U.S. Department of State to provide scholarships for high school students (15-17 years) to spend up to one academic year in the U.S. Students live with host families, attend high school, engage in activities to learn about American society and values, acquire leadership skills, and help educate Americans about their countries and cultures. The program is administered in collaboration with AMIDEAST, the Ministry of Education, and supported by the U.S. Embassy in Oman since 2004.

For more information visit:

http://oman.usembassy.gov/youth_exchange_and_study_yes_program2.html

Access Alumni Career Development Workshops



The Public Affairs Office at the U.S. Embassy and in cooperation with AMIDEAST office in Muscat and the Ministry of Education organized a series of workshops for alumni of the access program in Nizwa, Sohar and Salalah on Jan 28, 29, and 30. The career development workshops titled “ **Choosing a Career and Course of Study**” aim to enhance students’ understanding of their own skills and abilities and help them develop an approach to matching their personality traits with future academic studies and career paths. The workshops included discussions and various interactive activities about careers in Oman and the importance of starting to plan a career path early in life. Participants were introduced to resources and specific practical steps to plan their own future careers according to their personal, professional and academic skills. These workshops are part of the PAS section alumni project that will continue until May 2013 and will cover different aspects of youth development and empowerment.

EVENTS & DEADLINES

1. Access Alumni Mentoring Discussion
Nizwa. February 11, 2013
2. NESAs Undergraduate Program
February 25, 2013
3. ESPW Global Sports Mentoring
Program. March 1, 2013
4. Access Alumni Workshop.
Muscat. March 3, 2013
5. TEA Program
May 13, 2013

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ALUMNI CORNER

Drop us a line!

Share your alumni experience in the next
alumni newsletter.

Contact: AL-KharusiSS@state.gov



BUREAU OF EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE ALUMNI

Inspire. Empower. Connect.

alumni.state.gov

Introducing the New International Exchange Alumni Website

The place where exchange alumni connect just got better.



NEW NAME, NEW LOOK, MORE RESOURCES

State Alumni is now International Exchange Alumni! It's faster, more modern and easier to access. We're still at the same web address: alumni.state.gov.

WHAT'S NEW?

International Exchange Alumni features exciting resources to help you network and collaborate with your peers. Now, you can:

- Create a **Project** page to share a project that you're working on.
- Connect with **alumni** through other social media accounts.
- Read stories of **alumni achievements** on the new publicly-viewable pages.

ENHANCED RESOURCES FROM STATE ALUMNI

You will continue to have exclusive access to your favorite resources:

- Post an **alumni update**.
- Share an **event** that you are organizing.
- Explore the **grants database** and the **online library**.
- Access **job and volunteer opportunities**.

This is your space, so have fun with it.

Visit alumni.state.gov today to check out the new International Exchange Alumni Website!

Website Features:

International Exchange Alumni features exchange alumni's favorite tools from State Alumni as well as new resources to help alumni network and collaborate with each other.

Alumni will continue to have exclusive access to popular resources, including the ability to:

- Interact with other alumni and share content through Alumni Update (previously called "Alumni News");
- Access job and volunteer opportunities
- Share an alumni-related event
- Access to the multi-billion dollar grants database

Search the online library for free magazines and other resources.

New features include:

- A project collaboration space
- The ability to more easily interact with other alumni not only on the site, but also on the social media sites that alumni belong to.

Additionally, the new site will feature pages that are viewable by the public so that we can work with alumni to share their achievements with a broader audience!



AMERICAN ENGLISH

A Website for Teachers and Learners of
English as a Foreign Language Abroad

americanenglish.state.gov



AMERICAN ENGLISH OFFERS

- Resources for teaching and learning American English language and culture
- Materials for teacher development and student use in the classroom
- New opportunities to practice English and learn more about the United States
- Access to *Trace Effects* English learning game and supplemental resources

FEATURES AND RESOURCES

THE AMERICAN ENGLISH WEBSITE (AE)

This website provides resources to learn and teach English and to discover more about American culture.

KEY FEATURES OF AE WEBSITE

- “Search” or “Browse” by keyword, audience, skills, content type, theme, or pedagogical area
- “My Resources” saves and shares resource links by e-mail
- Facebook and Twitter connections
- “Content Spotlight” highlights U.S. culture through lesson plans, links to materials, and social media shares
- Descriptions and links to U.S. Department of State-funded English programs
- Calendar of events related to English teaching in all regions of the world
- “Suggestion Box” to share ideas and lesson plans, ask questions, or contact us

DOWNLOADABLE RESOURCES

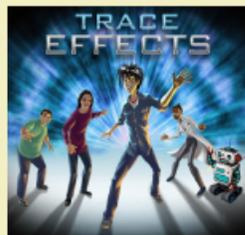
- Print publications and teacher’s guides
- Audio books and song collections
- Posters for use as visual aids in the classroom
- “Shaping the Way We Teach English,” a multi-media training program for teacher development

UPCOMING PUBLICATIONS

- Games and art activities for primary and secondary school students
- Reading and literature for young adult learners
- Music to appeal to teens and young adults
- Teacher’s guides to use and adapt in classes

TRACE EFFECTS

In this interactive 3-D multimedia English learning game, students explore American society as they travel virtually around the United States. Themes include community activism, entrepreneurship,



environmental conservation, women’s empowerment, science and innovation, and mutual understanding. The game is also available in DVD format for both teachers and students.

WEBINAR COURSES

Teachers worldwide can participate in a series of certificate and non-certificate webinar courses for topics that foster interactive, student-centered language instruction. These webinar courses will be available soon for downloading on the American English website. Participants are able to engage in a dynamic online discussion forum on a Ning site. They also can earn an e-certificate if they attend a majority of the webinar sessions in a series.

ENGLISH TEACHING FORUM

English Teaching Forum, a quarterly journal for and by classroom teachers of English as a foreign or second language, is searchable and downloadable.