

Global Link

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WELCOME TO NEW AND RETURNING MEMBERS

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Meet the SOSA Winners!

AAFSW congratulates the 2012 winners of the Secretary of State's Award for Outstanding Volunteerism Abroad (SOSA). The six awardees were honored at a ceremony at the Department of State on Tuesday, December 4, 2012. We will be sharing details of that event along with photos very soon on our website, www.aafsw.org, and in the next (February) edition of *Global Link*. For now, please enjoy these photos and descriptions of the winning projects!



Karl P. Deringer

Bureau of African Affairs (Kigali)

Mr. Deringer, who is the spouse of a Foreign Service Officer, visited a village called Bwiza ten days after his arrival in Rwanda in July, 2009. By chance, he came upon a young woman in a difficult labor there and helped her access medical care, resulting in the safe delivery of a healthy baby boy.

The poverty of Bwiza's 170 villagers, most of whom are socially marginalized Batwa (descendants of pygmies) contrasted with their irrepressible spirit, especially as expressed in their rich, original songs. Karl was inspired to work to improve their lives. Drawing in Rwandans, Americans, and others, he helped Bwiza become food-secure and to develop income-generating skills.

Continued on page 4.



From the President's Desk

The ceremony honoring the SOSA, Dorman and Tragen Award winners is a highlight of the year for AAFSW. Ideally, the Secretary of State presents the SOSA awards herself, in the Diplomatic Reception Rooms.

This year, foreign affairs priorities shifted us to another room, and Deputy Secretary Bill Burns kindly filled in for the Secretary. But no matter: the inspiring examples of the honored volunteers and Debbi Miller's special musical offering to each of them filled the dowdy auditorium with an exalted spirit.

Debbi Miller played a double role this year, as winner of the Lesley Dorman Award and as our musical performer. The Dorman Award recognizes an AAFSW member who has made outstanding contributions to the organization in all areas. A history of the Dorman Award and the details of Debbi's outstanding achievements will be presented in next month's issue.

For now, though, I would like to describe Debbi's unique musical gift to the SOSA and Tragen winners, for the benefit of those who were unable to attend the ceremony. Once the winners were chosen, Debbi — a professional singer with an impressive résumé including leading roles in numerous operas — set to work choosing and rehearsing songs that would reflect and honor their contributions:

- Appropriately for Cassie Brenn's two-way cultural exchange with students in Hanoi, Debbi sang "Getting to Know You" from Rodgers & Hammerstein's *The King and I*.
- To honor Karl Deringer's efforts to help villagers in Rwanda improve their lives, she chose "The Blessing" by John Waller & Troy Denning, since "Blessing" was the villagers' nickname for Karl.
- For Elizabeth Joy Shaffer's work raising awareness of autism in Macedonia, Debbi movingly sang "You Raise Me Up" by Rolf Lovland & Brendan Graham.
- For Jan Cote-Cartwright, who provided sewing machines and marketable sewing skills to trafficking victims in Israel, Debbi offered insight and humor with "The Sewing Machine" from *The Perils of Pauline* by Frank Loesser.

- For Amy Zimmerman, who set out to teach music to orphans in Brazil and ended up creating an organization to support an entire school, Debbi chose "The Bird" by John Duke on a poem by Elinor Wylie, dedicated by the composer to Brazilian soprano Bidu Sayao.

- For Dr. Charles Wright, who persevered with a range of medical projects in India, Debbi sang "Upstream" by Albert Hay Malotte on poetry by Carl Sandburg, with the lyric "The strong men keep coming on."

- The last song honored Tom Gallagher, winner of DACOR's Eleanor Dodson Tragen Award. Tom greatly advanced equal opportunity in our community by making the first assignment of a tandem couple in the 1970s and by coming out as the first openly gay Foreign Service officer. Debbi sang "I Know Where I've Been" from *Hair Spray* by Marc Shaiman & Scott Wittman.

Organizing the SOSA award and ceremony is a year-long commitment, and Lara L. Center, our volunteer SOSA Chair and a previous SOSA winner herself, handled it all with impressive competence and grace. Our State Liaison, Mette Beecroft, managed the mind-boggling number of necessary arrangements within the Department, including such arcane details as the caterers' access to the loading dock and permission to use the piano. And due to the last-minute change in venue, she had to do all of this twice, the second time within only a few days! At the same time, our quietly competent Office Manager, Barbara Reioux, went well beyond the call of her limited office duties to support Lara, Mette and myself in every way. Many other AAFSW volunteers were also crucial to the success of this event, including Judy Felt, Lucy Whitley, Anna Dworken and Anne Cekuta. Thank you so much to all!

Of course, SOSA is only one small part of what AAFSW does. Throughout 2012, I was humbled to witness the hard work of all of our talented, capable and dedicated volunteers. It was a great year for AAFSW, with rising membership, a strong Art&BookFair, and a wide range of events, activities and publications. Here's to an even better 2013!

Patricia Linderman
AAFSW President
president@aafsw.org

January Program

Cathedral Tour

On **Wednesday, January 23, 2013, at 11 a.m.**, AAFSW members are invited for a guided tour of the Washington National Cathedral, followed by coffee/tea and a discussion of interfaith dialogue efforts at the Cathedral. The sixth largest cathedral in the world, its mission is to be a House of Prayer for All People, and to provide hospitality and opportunities for education toward peace and reconciliation among all people. The foundation stone was laid in 1907 by President Theodore Roosevelt, and George H.W. Bush placed the finial completing construction in 1990.



Please join us for a tour of this beautiful and historic structure combined with a fascinating discussion. The cost will be \$5.00 per person. To RSVP, arrange a carpool, or request a ride from the Cleveland Park Metro station, contact our office at office@aafsw.org or 703-820-5420. Updates will be announced on our website and Facebook page.

Sheila Switzer
AAFSW Program Chair
programs@aafsm.org

February Program

Art, "Argo," and History

Join us on **Tuesday, February 5, at 7:00 p.m.** at the Randolph Towers Building Community Room, 4001 North Ninth Street, Arlington, VA 22203, for a fascinating presentation.



Kathleen Stafford is a Foreign Service spouse who escaped captivity by the Iranian radicals in November 1979 by hiding in the residence of the Canadian Ambassador in Tehran until she and her five colleagues were extricated from Iran to the US by CIA agents.

Kathleen, a professional artist, will also exhibit (and offer for sale) some of her paintings from Africa that are presently on display at Alexandria's Black History Museum. "African Encounters from Coast to Coast," will be shown until February, 2013.

Before this program, we suggest that you see the excellent film "Argo" in which Kathleen's terrifying experience in Iran is grippingly portrayed. There will be an opportunity for you to ask Kathleen about the details of her experiences in Iran and the continuation of her Foreign Service life.

Please RSVP to office@aafsw.org or 703-820-5420 if you would like to attend.

Global Link's Greatest Hits

Our Articles and Advice archive is now publicly available!

Many of the articles that have been published in our monthly newsletter, Global Link, over the years are archived on our website, www.aafsw.org. They were in our members-only section, however, after a recent tidying and update to make the section more current, we decided to make the articles public, for all to use and enjoy.

The articles are divided into several sections: Life at Post, Foreign Service Kids, Family Life in the Foreign Service, Working and Volunteering Overseas, Returning Home, and general commentaries on Foreign Service life. They represent the "greatest hits" from many years of Global Link.

Community Liaison Officer Coordinators (CLOs) and embassy newsletter editors are welcome to reprint the articles in post newsletters. We do ask that you credit the original author of the article and include this blurb with a live link to our website, if possible.

"From Global Link, a newsletter of the Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide. AAFSW advocates for Foreign Service families. Visit us online at www.aafsw.org for more information." Thank you!

New FSYF Newsletter

The Foreign Service Youth Foundation (FSYF) has launched a new resource for Foreign Service parents: “Around the World,” a newsletter providing news and feature articles. The fall issue includes links to FSYF news and events as well as articles on raising resilient children, writing the college essay, celebrating the holidays overseas, and more. FSYF is looking for contributions for future issues. To view the current issue or to learn more, visit the FSYF website: www.fsyf.org/newsletters/newsletters.html.

SOSA Winners, continued from page 1.

During his three years in Rwanda, Karl visited the Bwiza village weekly. He initiated and oversaw numerous projects, including building agricultural terraces, planting crops, raising rabbits, and teaching first aid. He promoted Bwiza’s informal singing group, Kwizera (Faith), leading to professional performance opportunities and eventually attracting the attention of Rwandan officials and non-governmental elite who continue to support the village.

Karl’s work advanced rural development, social integration, and ethnic reconciliation in Rwanda.

Elizabeth Joy Shaffer

**Bureau of European Affairs
(Skopje)**

Elizabeth Shaffer, spouse of a Foreign Service Officer, learned that the Republic of Macedonia had no early intervention or early detection programs that address the needs of young people with autism. An occupational therapist by profession, Ms Shaffer committed herself to raising awareness and providing the necessary resources and tools to help children with autism spectrum disorders.

Ms. Shaffer designed a public awareness campaign to educate people on the common signs and treatment options for children with autism while promoting cooperation among multiple organizations. She also organized the country’s first autism awareness symposium, which attracted over 200 participants, and included opening remarks by the Macedonia’s First Lady, Ms. Maja Ivanova.

Through several additional seminars, Ms Shaffer further helped parents, teachers, and professionals to understand the special needs of children with autism and interventions to help improve behaviors. She worked to build the resource capacity of local organizations by creating a new resource center with books pertaining to children with special needs. She also helped several schools and private centers acquire specialized equipment to address the specialized sensory-motor needs of children with autism spectrum disorders. Ms Shaffer found innovative ways to use her knowledge and training to help an underserved population in need.





Jan Cote-Cartwright

**Bureau of Near-Eastern Affairs
(Tel Aviv)**

After arriving at post as an Information Management Specialist, Jan Cote-Cartwright looked for ways to contribute to the mission and to the local community above and beyond her professional realm. Within the mission, Ms Cote-Cartwright served as the volunteer Federal Women's Program Coordinator, organizing quarterly speakers, employment workshops and mentoring sessions for entry level employees. She also provided assistance with the Trafficking in Persons (TIP) portfolio, becoming familiar with TIP shelters in Israel.

Ms. Cote-Cartwright raised awareness of the needs of these shelters, and collected household items such as clothing, food, cleaning supplies, reading materials and toys for distribution. In addition, with the help of a Kirby Foundation grant, she established and equipped sewing centers in three shelters to provide an income-generating skill for the residents.

Amy L. Zimmerman

Bureau of Western Hemispheric Affairs (Brasilia)

Amy Zimmerman, spouse of a Foreign Service Officer, founded Project T.E.A.C.H. in August 2011. T.E.A.C.H. translates into Trazer (Bringing) Educação (Education) Alimentação (Nourishment) Carinho (Care/Compassion) e Hope (and Hope), and the project does just that for a school serving disadvantaged children in Greater Brasilia, many of whom reside at an orphanage.

Ms. Zimmerman has recruited over forty volunteers from five countries to share their experience in teaching, literacy, art, music, and physical education. These volunteers have given over 500 hours of service at the school, and bring perishable, nutritious food to supplement school meals on a weekly basis. The project also established a functional library.

To keep the program funded, Ms. Zimmerman has obtained a J. Kirby Simon Trust grant, brought in other volunteer groups such as Boy Scouts, and organized a variety of fundraisers such as bake sales and a cultural evening.



Dr. Charles E. Wright

South-Central Asia Bureau (New Delhi)

Regional Medical Officer Dr. Charles Wright combined his professional skills and personal engagement in several ways to help the urban poor in New Delhi. He set up a medical clinic in a slum in New Delhi to examine and treat patients in need.

Dr. Wright also set up a community health program to eradicate anemia in schoolchildren, especially in adolescent girls. At eleven schools, he used a finger-stick blood test to identify anemic individuals and provided iron supplements to them. He also lobbied national authorities and organizations to address malnutrition among the poor more effectively.

Dr. Wright also formed a group of doctors to teach trauma care and appropriate responses to a major disaster such as an earthquake or bombing, which were simulated for training purposes. Finally, he served as the mentor to SCRUBS, a high school medical club. He taught the young members of the club skills such as suturing and giving shots and gave them the opportunity to put their skills into practice while assisting at a weekend clinic.



Cassandra D. Brenn

Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs (Hanoi)

Cassie Brenn, spouse of a Foreign Service Officer, organized and continues to lead a regular series of “Conversation Hours” at Embassy Hanoi’s American Center in response to growing demand among Vietnamese students for English language opportunities.

Ms. Brenn created a weekly “Culture Connection Series” covering American culture, government, politics and history. Specific topics have included American icons such as Neil Armstrong, American holidays, and American customs such as the tooth fairy. The discussions were creative and interesting, while at the same time providing an opportunity for Vietnamese participants to practice their English skills.

At times, the American Center accommodated over 100 attendees at a session. The series was especially popular because Vietnamese citizens are subjected to censorship based on Communist Party ideology. Ms. Brenn also furthered cultural exchange between the US. and Vietnam by contributing numerous articles to the Embassy newsletter about Vietnamese culture.



Classified Advertising

AAFSW now offers free classified advertisements to its members. The *Global Link* is sent by mail and electronically to our members and to Community Liaison Offices worldwide for a sizable total monthly readership.

Do you have a business or service that you would like to advertise to the Foreign Service community? Send a brief notice (100 words or less) to office@aafsw.org for approval with the subject line AD FOR GLOBAL LINK. If you have a business website, it can be hyperlinked in the electronic version of the newsletter, so please include your URL. Advertisements will run on a space-available basis for one month at a time and will rotate in order of receipt.

We also accept classified advertising for real estate rentals and sales, as well as sales of other items (cars etc.) on our website, www.aafsw.org. View or submit ads on the website. Not a member of AAFSW? Join now! Apply online at our website: <http://www.aafsw.org/aafsw/membership.htm>.

Consider Home-Based Business Options

Want to make your own hours, get paid and work at every post? Many family members are able to do this through home-based businesses or freelance work. The Family Liaison Office (FLO) Home-Based Business Guide (<http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c21620.htm>) makes it easy for you to get started. Inside are the relevant State Department regulations, advice for planning your business, consulting guidelines, resources, and success stories. Reminder: Always make sure you get permission from post before launching your business.

If you are not sure what kind of work you could do, check with FLO for a list of the types of home-based businesses managed by family members around the world. Included are film producers, Japanese tutors, IT consultants, CPAs, jewelry designers, speech therapists, caterers, and authors and many, many more. Please send an email to FLOAskEmployment@state.gov for a copy of this list.

Job Opening: EPAP Coordinator

Family members returning to the Washington area may be interested in applying for the Expanded Professional Associates Program (EPAP) Coordinator position in the Family Liaison Office (FLO). This is a new position in FLO; EPAP previously was managed by HR/CDA. The incumbent will serve as the subject matter expert and be responsible for managing the program, including developing policies, procedures and regulations for EPAP; working with the regional bureau representatives, and coordinating the application process. This is a GS-12, full-time, two-year limited appointment with potential to be extended up to a maximum of five years (Excepted Service, Schedule A—not in the Competitive Service). The selected candidate will receive a two-year non-career term appointment with benefits (FERS, TSP, FEGLI and FEHB). This position reports to the FLO Director.

The application deadline is 5:00 p.m. (EST), December 21, 2012. For details and application instructions, refer to the ALDAC (STATE 1121800) or view the announcement on FLO's website: (<http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/201993.pdf>).

AFSA Scholarships

The American Foreign Service Association (AFSA) is offering merit awards and college scholarships to children of Foreign Service employees. AFSA is accepting applications for:

Needs-based college scholarships for undergraduate college study in the 2013/14 year

Merit awards recognizing current high school seniors' art and academic accomplishments

AFSA's Academic Merit and Art Merit Awards, with top prizes of \$2,000 each, recognize the accomplishments of Foreign Service children in their senior year of high school. High-school seniors, as well as college undergraduates, may apply for renewable needs-based scholarships, with awards ranging from \$1,500-\$4,000.

Beginning this year, AFSA scholarships and awards are now a benefit of AFSA membership. AFSA members' tax-dependent children are eligible to apply if their parents are active duty, retired or deceased Foreign Service employees with the State Department, USAID, FCS, FAS or IBB. Students should apply online and can track their application status. The deadline for merit award applications is **February 6, 2013**. The deadline for financial aid scholarships is **March 6, 2013**.

For more information and/or to download an application, visit the AFSA website at www.afsa.org/scholar. Please direct specific questions to Lori Dec, AFSA Scholarship Director, at 202-944-5504 or dec@afsa.org.

New Happy Hour Coordinator



Thank you to Dave Pernal for volunteering to help with AAFSW's Happy Hours! The next Happy Hour will be held in mid-February at the Oakwood Apartments in Falls Church, Virginia. Contact happyhour@aafsw.org if you have questions or would like to help.

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This holiday shopping season, please remember to click through the Amazon links on our website, www.aafsw.org. AAFSW nets several hundred dollars every year through our affiliation with Amazon.com. It's a quick and easy way to help, and we really do appreciate it!

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