

# PTPI – GPAC News

Greater Phoenix AZ Chapter



*Summer of 2012*

Editors: Ruth Allen, Margaret DuBois & Andrew Sherwood

## RUSSIANS & AMERICANS HAVING FUN IN THE ARIZONA SUN

*By Kristina Efimenko*

How many students can say that they spent the summer learning a little Russian and getting to know some Russian students their ages? That's exactly what 15 American students will boast on their first day of class thanks to People to People International.

PTPI was started by President Dwight D. Eisenhower on September 11, 1956. Today, it is a nongovernmental organization (or NGO) that is run by his granddaughter Mary Eisenhower. The goal of our honorable group is peace through understanding.

In a world where adults fight endlessly about foreign policy it was a refreshing sight to watch Russian and American children take time to get to know each other. This summer's visiting group was from Vladivostok, Russia..

The American students partnered with their Russian guests for English lessons and learned some Russian words and expressions. Out of the classroom they enjoyed daily field trips to places like the Phoenix Art Museum, the Desert Botanical Garden and a Phoenix Mercury Game. We want to thank Machan School Principal Eric Dueppen for allowing us to use the facilities for the classes.

The Russian students got a chance to improve their English speaking abilities and create relationships with their counterparts. All students could be seen exchanging words and simple gestures for shapes, animals, and colors, in both their native languages. These fundamental social skills then enabled participants to become familiar with some of our American culture and heritage. It was a learning experience for all.

One host parent, Nancy Paserk, wrote, "Our two girls absolutely loved the experience of going to class every day and living with the students for those three weeks. They relished learning first-hand the cultural differences and personal similarities." Meanwhile, the Russian students spent the three weeks with their host families learning about everyday life and enjoying family weekend trips to places like



Kartchner Caverns, Prescott Rodeo, and camping.

Taking the time to speak another language and understand a culture provides an interesting glimpse into our own humanity. Some say that to have a truly cultural experience it must be bilingual - perhaps. Regardless, the point is that a legitimate exchange has taken place. This is the purpose of the tireless members of the Greater Phoenix Arizona Chapter of People to People International. This is why PTPI leaders Ruth Allen and Margaret DuBois choose this program as their vehicle to contribute to the world.

Friendships were formed between American and Russian students, and many are communicating via email. This is the end result that makes People to People International worthy of its namesake. In a post-modern world this is an outcome that can only be perceived as success.



\*A Russian language and culture event and weekly classes may be offered to interested PTPI members this coming year. In addition, plans are being made for a visit to Vladivostok by an Arizona PTPI delegation sometime next year.

## Open World Delegates Gain Knowledge in Phoenix



Five Ukrainian delegates spent an intense week of trainings, and meetings to enhance their knowledge and abilities as mayors and council members in February 2012 through the Open World Leadership Program, <http://www.openworld.gov> which is administered by the Library of Congress and funded by the U.S. Congress.

The main purpose of the Ukrainian delegates' visit was to inform them in the ways our three branches of government work to assure transparency, openness, and accountability. With that aim in mind, many different speakers, trainings and informational sessions were provided by a variety of governmental offices and non-governmental organizations like Greater Phoenix Economic Council, the Center for Progressive Leadership, the city manager and council members of Guadalupe and Scottsdale, the economic development specialist from Gila Bend, and the city planner of Scottsdale.

Attorneys James and Patience Huntwork, Joseph A Kanefield (President of the Arizona State Bar), and Judge Orest Jejna provided insights into the importance and need for fair elections, reasonable laws, and an independent bar and judiciary.

Cultural activities included a trip to the Grand Canyon, an educational tour of the Arizona State Capitol, watching Native-American dancing, enjoying shopping trips, a Suns Game, home Bar-B-Qs, area restaurants, and host family meals and hospitality.

A special thanks goes out to former U.S. Representative Harry Mitchell who worked with the delegates on a daily basis to answer questions and explain the workings of our government at all levels.

We hope that all of our members become involved in our next Open World program.





**Connie Isenbarger**

Connie is a native Arizonan who retired after 31 years as an educator in our state. Her passion is international cultural exchange of conversation, and the desire to share this passion with others in our international family.

**Kristina Efimenko**

Kristina is an educator with a background in Russian. She enjoys meeting people from all different countries. She would like to help promote the appreciation of other cultures, and form bridges of friendship with people from other countries and those in the Phoenix area.

**Heidi Clemons**

Heidi is an educator and a Family Support Group Leader for an Army Reserve Unit in Phoenix. She has met the challenges of military life, but also volunteered with local organizations to promote international relations and embrace cultural diversity.

**Andrew Sherwood**

Andrew is a lifelong Arizona resident, born in Tucson and moved to the Phoenix area to attend Arizona State University, where he earned a BA in American History and Sociology. He has run his own small business, and helped build other businesses. He also works in politics.

**Welcome a'Board – Meet the New Board Members**

**Connie Isenbarger**



**Kristina Efimenko**



**Heidi Clemons**



**Andrew Sherwood**



**A Tale of Two Cities – Student Ambassadors in France and England**

*By Tyler Smolko, Tallynn Maldonado & Kyle Clemons*

This wonderful experience with People to People helped participants understand how the world is not just "us"; there is more to it. The group was only in two countries, England and France, but they discovered that in a lot of ways people are all the same, they just speak different languages. They had the opportunity to see things they have only seen in pictures, like the Tower of London and the Crown Jewels. Learning more about European history, and visiting significant sites like Churchill's War Rooms and the Beaches of Normandy, helped Tyler better understand the struggles nations go through for independence. Kyle Clemons states, "At Normandy Beach, I got to do one of my favorite, and most honorable things on the trip. I laid the wreath, with 3 other delegates, in the American Cemetery there. It was really special, because my dad is deployed with the U.S. Army in Afghanistan." They saw architectural wonders like Stonehenge and the Eiffel Tower. They were able to see places of wealth and places where the people seemed to have very little, just like here in the United States. "Sometimes we think we are so different from others, but we really aren't. The delegation I traveled with was made up of students from several other states. It gave me an extra chance to meet people from other places, and see that we are more alike than different," says Tyler.



**TALE Con't on page 4**

## ***TALE con't from page 3***



*Laying of the wreath at Normandy Beach and Mud Day at the Outdoor Adventure Center*

“Wearing my People to People uniform as a Student Ambassador gave me great pride. I was proud of being from the United States, and happy that I could help show other people that students from the United States want to learn about others,” says Tyler. It took a year of work and effort to raise the money for the trip, but it was worth it. They have a lot to tell friends about people in other parts of the world. It really isn’t as big as we sometimes think!

Students had lots of opportunities to team build too. A special day enjoyed by all and especially by Taillynn was in Swindon England, mud day. She writes, “Me and my team got soaked head to toe with water, mud, and cow manure. When I got stuck in tubes and holes, only the boys would help me and some of them weren’t on my team. But it was really fun and it taught me teamwork. After the mud part my team got to build a raft but at the same time it was freezing. I didn’t know how to do anything about building a raft. Someone from my team said one of the barrels for the raft was warm and so I hugged it for dear life. I was so cold! As soon as the raft was built we put it on the water. Most of the time some people on my team were rushing. As soon as we were done we got dressed in dry clothes and never got a shower. We actually “washed” ourselves up in the river! Then we went back on the coach for another wonderful adventure.”

Kyle also loved France, the Palace of Versailles and the large and bustling city of Paris where he was able to take a picture of the Mona Lisa and Venus de Milo at the Louvre Museum. Coming home was great, but in Houston, they had to say goodbye to many of their new and good friends. “I learned so much about the world and myself. I am hoping I can do more with People to People International in the future,” states Kyle.

## **Down Under is Downright Wonderful**

*By Madisen Heinzl*

This summer I traveled to Australia with People to People. While there I discovered a whole new world and culture all together. I met new people and learned about a place that is half way across the world. I witnessed crocodiles being fed, saw the Sydney Opera House, snorkeled the Great Barrier Reef, and took a gander into their history at

the Australian War Memorial. The whole time I was there I kept thinking to myself, “This is unbelievable. I’m in Australia!” Even as I sit here in my home in the states, I can’t wrap my head around the fact that I have traveled farther than most adults. My trip helped me grow in maturity in forcing me into situations I may not have been put otherwise. It made me more responsible in having to keep track of my

own things. Some of my favorite activities include seeing the Hyde Park Barracks, swimming in the many falls, and watching the sunset on Ubirr Rock. I tasted new foods like kangaroo, damper, and the wondrous banana cake. I enjoyed listening to Australian interpretations of Americans. Among my many learning experiences was making lifelong friends. This was a journey worth taking.





## Living Room to Living Room – Hosting & Being Hosted

*Russian guests in Sedona*



*By Pat Clark*

The ability to participate in a homestay is one of the greatest benefits of being a member in PTPI. When you travel and “see the sights” it’s interesting but staying in hotels and eating in restaurants still isolates you from the culture of the place you’re visiting. Being able to stay in someone-local’s home, eating a home-cooked meal and, believe it or not, figuring out how to operate the bathroom goes a long way in helping you understand a place.

My first hosting experience was when I housed two teenage Italian boys. At the time I lived alone and I wasn’t sure what I was going to do with them. As it turned out the group had enough activities planned that I mainly chauffeured them to various places in town. It was like being a parent to a teenager again. The

highlight of their stay was when they insisted on preparing dinner for me. We gathered ingredients as close to their requirements as I could find. During preparation I sat and observed them while drinking a glass of wine and laughing so hard my stomach hurt. That evening I had four boys total and they each had a strong opinion on how to prepare our meal. After many consultations with their mother’s back in Milan and arguments among themselves we had a meal. It may not have been exactly what they wanted to achieve but it tasted good to me and was a totally enjoyable evening.

Since that time I have hosted a government spokesman from Murmansk, a dentist from Lima, a translator from Kyiv and it amazes me each time to discover our surprising similarities and differences.

I have also been fortunate enough to be hosted by PTPI members in Eastern Europe and Japan. I was so nervous for my first homestay in Poland, I had no idea what to expect even though we had communicated beforehand. Luckily for me they spoke wonderful English and we were able to talk and exchange ideas. I did have one homestay where the conditions included brushing my teeth in the tub, sleeping on concrete blocks, seeing daylight through the ceiling and only one person out of many who could speak any English. But these hosts also touched me because they went to so much trouble in order to show me a place that became a highlight for that trip. In Japan I attended a political dinner for a local politician, and participated in the home’s Buddhist blessing and other daily activities.

If you do decide to take advantage of homestay opportunities be prepared. If you are hosting be aware of the time commitment, it’s like getting another family member who’s very social and can’t drive. Also be open minded and flexible. Several times, for instance, I researched what I thought my guest would like for breakfast and found that I was totally wrong. You have to relax and know you are doing the best you can.

That same attitude works also for being hosted. In the situations I’ve been in, the host has assumed full responsibility for me and I’ve had to let go and trust them. In turn I’ve been lucky enough to meet some incredible people who are ordinary folks.

From time to time our chapter hosts groups from other countries and you, in turn, can join a chapter trip or plan your own trip to include homestays. If you get an opportunity to participate in the homestay program I encourage you to do so.



*Yuko and grandson in Japan*

*Ruth Allen, our homestay coordinator, can answer questions or assist you.*  
[ruta1@ptpi.org](mailto:ruta1@ptpi.org)

*My exhausted Host in Pecs Hungary*





## Message from the President

Dear Members,

This year has again been filled with wonderful interactions with international visitors. So many of you have been so helpful with our hosting programs and other projects. Our chapter Board of Directors hasn't been meeting this summer, but has still been very active with our recent partnering with the PTPI Vladivostok Chapter. I hope you will read all about this wonderful program in this newsletter.

In February/March you elected our board that will serve for two years. This board has elected the following officers: Vice President: Yefim Toybin, Treasurer: Ruth Allen, Secretary: Kristina Efimenko and me as the President. We are all glad to take on these roles and hope to serve you well. We are grateful to Dave Appleton and Adele Beckwith for their service as President of the chapter from 2010-2012. I hope you'll enjoy getting to know all of us this year.

We have been so fortunate to attract members that are willing to pitch in and really help us carry out the mission of People to People. During this next two years we plan to have more chapter events that we hope you will find interesting and attend.

We will again apply to provide programming for the US Congress backed Open World Program. Our 2011 and 2012 Ukrainian delegations were part of this program. As the result of our hosting an Open World Leadership delegation in 2008, we attracted the recent partnership with Vladivostok and sponsored them starting a new PTPI Chapter in Vladivostok.

Our primary goal for this year is to encourage you to be a more active member of our chapter. We need your advice regarding events you would like to see us provide that would interest you. Please contact us via our [www.ptpi.org](http://www.ptpi.org) website. The dates for our board meetings will be posted on this website and we invite you to attend.

Happy vacation travels and staying cool the rest of the summer!

Margaret DuBois

## Adventures in Fundraising Support Adventures Abroad

We would also like to thank all of the companies that support our fundraising efforts, especially Fry's and Basha's.



Madisen Heinzl and friends in Australia



Many students and their families work hard each year to be able to travel and experience the world. We are proud to say that close to \$14,000 was awarded in Effort Scholarships by our chapter through fundraising efforts.

**Congratulations** to the following students who were awarded a total of \$2750 in General Need Scholarships for their 2012 Student Ambassador adventures:

- Kyle Clemons – Phoenix
- Madisen Heinzl - Mesa
- Angelina Lewallen - Scottsdale
- Tailynn Maldonado - Surprise
- Ryan Smolko – Phoenix
- Ben Womer – Phoenix



## Open World State Officials Hosted in 2011



*Her Honorable Judge Mary Schroeder addresses delegates at the Sandra Day O'Conner Federal Courthouse Building in Phoenix*



*Delegates visited the Arizona State Capitol Museum as well as the Capitol Building.*

Five Ukrainian legislators recently spent a week in Arizona, learning about accountable governance and tourism, in order to incorporate some aspects of their gained knowledge into their own communities. They were hosted by members of [PTPI's Greater Phoenix, Arizona Chapter](#) during their stay.

Recognized as political and civic leaders by the [Library of Congress Open World Program](#), the legislators spent an intense week meeting with Greater Phoenix civic and political leaders for workshops, presentations and dialogue. Additionally, they visited the Grand Canyon, Sedona and other tourism sites in Arizona.

Some of the program highlights for the Crimean delegates were meeting with Sherri Henry, Executive Director of Arizona Office of Tourism, and Scottsdale Mayor Jim Lane. [Crimea](#) is a beautiful but undeveloped peninsula at the northern end of the Black Sea. A future hope is to create a treaty of cooperation with the Arizona Office of Tourism and Crimea. All of the delegates found the attention and expertise of former [Congressman Harry Mitchell](#) to be of great value. He met with delegates daily for a debriefing. At that time, he was able to provide answers to questions they had from the previous day's events.

Two of the delegates are lawyers and work with legal issues related to legislation, so meeting with Her Honorable Mary Schroeder, Circuit Nine Federal Judge, was an interesting experience, especially as she explained her ability to be free of political concerns, as a federal judge's appointment is for life and her pay can't be decreased. This insulates judges from the shifting sands of popular political sentiment and allows the judges to act with only the constitution as their guide. When asked if it wouldn't be better to have existing judges nominate or appoint new judges instead of the President, she responded by saying that having the President appoint judges allows for more diversity in appointees.

The week culminated with a farewell party hosted by PTPI members Lenny and Annette Frankel. This was an opportunity for the many people involved in the program and the delegates to socialize and have a last opportunity for conversation and networking.



*"Visiting the Grand Canyon was an amazing experience for us."*



## Scholarships and Grants

*“Peace through Understanding”*

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Arizona Chapter**

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*See us at:*

**[www.ptpiaz.org](http://www.ptpiaz.org)**

PTPI Greater Phoenix AZ Chapter each year awards grants and scholarships to chapter members who promote our mission to enhance international understanding and friendship through educational, cultural, and humanitarian activities involving the exchange of ideas and experiences directly among peoples of different countries and diverse cultures. Chapter members can put together a program or event to educate others in our community about a country or culture, or travel to another country to attend an event that enhances cross-communication with another culture. These are just a few ideas, and our hope is that applicants use their own interest and creativity to design an activity that promotes PTPI Greater Phoenix, Arizona Chapter ideals. Scholarship/Grant applications can be downloaded from our website under Fundraising at [www.ptpiaz.org](http://www.ptpiaz.org).

Six scholarships were awarded for the summer of 2012 PTP Student Ambassador Programs. Ben Womer, a student from Phoenix, was actively involved in our fundraising projects to help with his program tuition to Australia. He did recycling activities which helped our environment and raising funds. Madisen Heinzel, from Mesa, also traveled to Australia. She is very active in her junior high after school Aerospace program. She is looking forward to comparing the life of a student in Australia to an average teen like herself. Tailynn Maldonado, Kyle Clemons and Tyler Smolko traveled together in the grade school program to England and France. Tailynn wants to learn in person (not from a book) about different cultures. She hopes to support other students from her community in Surprise with their program tuition through her Peerbackers webpage. Kyle had actively participated in our chapter by hosting international guests in his home. Honor student, Angelina Lewallen hopes to contribute back to our chapter by promoting PTPI through school programs, and to host a guest in her home next year.

Our chapter is very proud all of the students who volunteered at the Arizona Heart Walk in Tempe by providing participants with water and snacks as they walk to raise donations for heart diseases. We hope that our student chapter members will encourage other students to participate in our chapter events, and to create their own journey to promote “Peace Through Understanding”.

## Monthly Board Meetings

Board meetings are held the third Thursday of each month 5:30- 7:30 p.m. except in June, July and December.

We invite members to become more involved with the chapter by attending meetings and joining a committee to help with a cultural program, humanitarian activity, newsletter, website, or in another way.

If you would like to attend a meeting, or get involved, please contact Margaret DuBois [mdubois@ptpiaz.org](mailto:mdubois@ptpiaz.org) for more information.

