

Outreach activity in Kumanovo

Welcome to Arizona – Grand Canyon State and the Fulbright Program

Friday, March 28th, Euro College Kumanovo

The first outreach activity of the American Corner Skopje was held on March 28th, at the Euro College Kumanovo.

The 53 attendees were mostly Euro College students, but also ELTAM members and local high school and English school students, as well as English teachers. The presentation began with a short **introduction of what the American Corner is**, the membership application, the events and the available resources, given by Nevenka Stefanovska, Resource Center Specialist at the AC Skopje.



A presentation about the American culture followed, with Erin Traeger, a Fulbright student in Macedonia, giving introduction to her home state **"Welcome to Arizona – the Grand Canyon State"**, the geography, population, culture, famous people, universities, etc.

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The **introduction to Education USA** program was given by Gordana Mircic Resource Center Specialist and Educational Advisor. The presentation included introduction to Education USA, the scholarship programs, becoming a member, available resources to the members, etc.



As part of the education opportunities in the United States, Amy Storrow, Assistant Public Affairs Officer at the US Embassy, explained the several **Educational Exchange Opportunities: Fulbright, SUSI, Benjamin Franklin and Hubert H. Humphrey** programs: terms for applying, what are the benefits, what will the scholarship cover, the application process and other useful information.



Handouts given to the attendees were AC brochures, membership applications, Fulbright scholarship information and Education USA information. Almost everyone present started filling the membership applications at once. A local TV station was recording the event, and later made interviews with Amy Storrow and Erin Traeger.



American Corner Skopje outreach activity in Stip

American Holidays and Cultural Celebration

by Michael Szymanski, Peace Corps Volunteer in Stip;

Going to School and Doing Research in the US

by Erin Traeger, Fulbright Student in Macedonia

Thursday, May 8th 2008, City Library "Goce Delcev" – Stip



presentation about America's cultural

On May 8th, the American Corner Skopje organized the second outreach activity at the **City Library "Goce Delcev" in Stip**. Invitation were sent to the local high schools and university, as well as some organizations. The first presentation was a short introduction to the American Corner, followed by a



life:

American Holidays and Cultural Celebration, given by Michael Szymanski, PCV in Stip. Mike



talked about how certain holidays are celebrated in the US (New Year, Christmas, Independence Day, Halloween, ets), giving examples from celebrations within his own family.

The Fulbright student in Macedonia, Erin Traeger talked about "Going to School and Doing research in the US".

Erin talked about types of studies, differences between College and University, doing research in the US and briefly introduced the Fulbright Scholarship Program. The closing presentation was introduction to Education USA.



After all the questions were answered, David Fox, PCV in Stip, thanked the audience.

Some of the local media were covering this event. The AC Staff gave interviews for the TV station Iris and the Stip Roma Radio.





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Seminar at the American Corner Skopje



Graduate Studies



Choosing Your Degree
Funding Your Studies
Completing a Successful Application

28th June, 2008

with Gordana Mircic, Educational Advisor
and Jennifer Tuman, Peace Corps Volunteer



The much anticipated seminar on Graduate Studies took place this Saturday afternoon. The American Corner was filled till the very last seat as there were 37 people present interested in getting informed about studying in the US. The seminar consisted of 3 parts: Choosing the degree (providing information on the criteria to be



considered on how to choose the proper degree), Funding the Studies (the cost and the sources to be considered) and how to complete a successful application.



Insider tips on how to be more efficient in any of these steps were mentioned all throughout. Jennifer Tuman spoke about her experience as a graduate pointing out the significance of marketing oneself properly in order to make the application stand out more, resulting in being selected in the end. All of the resources available to



students at the American Corner Skopje were included in the presentation. Everyone present was also invited to attend all of the other presentations in July. The handouts given included a list of useful websites, tips on researching universities' websites more efficiently and all of the attendees present were sent an e-book on Graduate Studies. The seminar was really successful as one of the attendees, who has just got admitted at the University of Michigan offered to hold a presentation in July and share her experience as to how she managed to go through the application process and get a substantial financial aid package in the end.





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Presentation at the American Corner Skopje

Introduction to Junior Faculty Development Program

JFDP

June 29th, 2008

by Velika Angelova , American Councils Hub Coordinator
and JFDP Alumni, Bojan Karanakov



Representatives from the American Council came to promote their JFDP program at the American Corner Skopje on Tuesday, August 26th, 2008. The target audience for this presentation were university professors and administrators. Among the 17 attendees present (7



males and 10 females) there were several of them who have already started working on their applications and Velika did an excellent job informing the others about the goals of this program, the application requirements, what the selection process is like, the way the interview looks like and who it is conducted by. Bojan spoke about his experiences as an JFDP alumni and how he benefited from this experience, encouraging all of the people present to apply for this outstanding program. Many questions were asked after the presentation was



concluded which touched upon some details that the attendees were interested about. We wish all of the people the best of luck when applying for this program and we hope that next year we will have the there will be more JFDP alumni in the future.





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Presentation at the American Corner Skopje

The Fulbright Program



with Amy Storrow, Assistant Public Affairs Officer and
 Gazmend Ilazi, Educational Affairs Assistant

July 7th, 2008



The long-anticipated Fulbright presentation took place on July 7th at the American Corner Skopje. There were 21 people present (10 men and 11 women). Amy Storrow and Gazmend Ilazi spoke about what is necessary to complete the application properly and what the applicants should be



focusing on. Ms. Amy

Storrow explained what

the interview process is like, pointing out that the impartial aspect of it. Ms. Violeta Mircevska was the guest speaker and she spoke about her experience as the most recent Fulbright scholar who has just returned, informing the others what it was like to study at Berkley University and pursue her studies there. After the presentation was over the

attendees stayed for presenters some Fulbright Program.



a little longer to ask the questions regarding the





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Work and Travel Presentation at the American Corner Skopje

Held by James A. Catto, Consular Officer at the US Embassy Skopje

April 10th, 2008

The American Corner Skopje was simply not big enough to welcome all of the attendees who came to see Mr. James Catto and his presentation on Work and Travel. Among the 58 people present there were about 15 people who will be going to the States this summer thanks to this program. Mr. Catto also elaborated on the different types of visa and what is required to get issued an American visa. He also spoke about getting a visa as an exchange student, undergraduate or graduate and what might be the main reasons why a student might not be issued a visa. Many questions were raised as soon as Mr. Catto concluded his presentation. He stayed for an additional hour as our members wanted to talk to him personally and find out everything there is to know about being issued visa successfully and in time. This lecture was a great success and a rare opportunity for the students and the ones going to the Work and Travel program to talk to a Consular Officer face to face.





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Third American Corner Skopje Outreach: American International School

September 19th and 22nd 2008

The American Corner Skopje held its third outreach with American International Schools. Although it was planned the AC staff to visit the school, it proved better the students to come and visit the American Corner Skopje. Their visits were in two separate days. On Friday, September 19th first and second year students came into the corner, with their teacher. The AC Staff held presentations about the American Corner and about the American Educational Center, to inform the students better of what we do. Afterwards, the staff held the previously prepared quiz "American Capitals and their States" which proved to be a very fun, while educative experience for the students.

The second visit was on Monday, September 22nd, where third and fourth year students visited us. This time, beside the usual American Corner and American Educational Center presentations, a special emphasis was paid on the TOEFL tests, as these students were already in the process of either looking for a university, or applying for it. At the end of both visits, there were refreshments provided for the students, while they browsed freely the Corner's resources, and were taking membership applications.



Statistics
 Total visitors: 20
 Male/female: 10/10
 Type of audience: high school students



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Personal Statement Workshop at the American Corner Skopje

with Assistant Public Affairs Officer, Amy Storow

November 6th, 2008

Students interested in studying in the US have been waiting for this kind of workshop to be organized for a long time now. This Thursday evening all 18 students who were present (11 girls and 7 boys) had the opportunity to meet with Amy Storow and get some tips on how to write a successful personal statement. Amy started the workshop by asking them to introduce themselves and say which fruit they like the most so that she could remember their names easily and so that they can get to know each other too. After that she told them to think of 6 things in particular such as some distant childhood memory they remember, something their parents say to them over and over again, the last time they were mad or angry at someone etc. to exemplify the process of creative thinking that can help them get started with their writing. The trick was that they were supposed to connect 2 of these things and make them the beginning of a personal statement. Some of them had thought of really creative opening sentences and Amy was here to offer some witty suggestions on her own. The most important aspects of a personal essay were mentioned and exemplified later on; the catchy opening sentences, sentence structure, clear and concise vocabulary, the interesting subject matter of the essay and how to choose it wisely etc. The Educational Advisor Gordana Mircic had prepared a "*Personal Statements Writing Kit*" for them all which consisted of further tips on how to write a personal statement, sample essays and a list of recommended websites and books available at the American Corner Skopje which they can borrow. Amy read some of the opening sentences and pointed out the common mistakes students usually make. Very specific questions were asked after this workshop ended and we can surely say that with the advice Amy gave them and the kit they got they are now ready to start working on their personal statements and write a successful personal statement that will help them get into the college they have chosen.





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Presentation at the American Corner Skopje

The Unseen Face of Culture Shock

with Igor Lazarevski, MBI Graduate and Eric Prendergast, Fulbright Student in Macedonia

November 13th, 2008



The American Corner Skopje offered a very versatile program for the International Education Week and this event only serves to make this point more true. Rarely are students informed about the implications that culture shock can cause and therefore Igor and Eric were invited to offer their views on the culture shock each of them had experienced in the US and Macedonia. Igor discussed each of the stages that can be experienced by individuals when residing in a foreign country. Many of them didn't even know that what they had been experiencing were actually typical symptoms of culture shock. Igor used some very vivid photos in his presentation to illustrate his points better. Eric supported Igor's presentation by giving examples of the every day culture shock he is currently going through, especially at the university he is attending where things are done differently from the States. Among the 25 attendees (9 males and 16 females) in the audience there were also many of them who had gone through the same things Eric and Igor had and a wonderful discussion followed when each of them spoke about their own culture shock. We also had the privilege to



hear about the culture shock experienced by Liljana Kalenic-Ordev, English Language and Literature professor at FON University Skopje who had written a poem during her stay in Tampa, Arizona entitled "Sweet America". Her poem wrapped up the whole presentation in a wonderful way and also encouraged the others to share their opinions even more.





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Presentation at the American Corner Skopje

American Universities Part I

*University of Washington, Seattle & University of Georgia, Athens
with Undergraduate Exchange Alumni- Maja Savevska and Petar Arsovski*

November 16th, 2008

As part of the International Education Week the American Corner Skopje invited the 2007 alumni to present the Undergraduate Exchange Program to the students interested in applying for it. The informal discussion was very beneficial for the 7 students and one parent who were present as Maja and Petar spoke about the selection process in detail- how they should write the personal statement, what will the English test be like and finally, what will the interview be like and how to make the most of it. Petar also spoke about the positive aspects of the community service he was assigned to do in the States, the selection of courses, social life and the differences between the Macedonian and American higher education. Maja showed them the presentation she had prepared for Washington University where she explained the quarterly system and the different departments this university has. Moreover, she spoke about her life on campus and the importance of orientation week and home stay week. In the end all of the attendees were encouraged to apply for this outstanding program and have the chance to become students in the States.





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Presentation at the American Corner Skopje

TOEFL and SAT Tips and Tricks

With Peace Corps Volunteers Dan and Jillian Kearney and Ljubica Ristovska
November 20th, 2008



Standardized tests are always a challenge for non-native speakers. In order to make this easier for all of those considering taking the TOEFL and the SAT the American Corner Skopje organized a presentation with 2 Peace Corps Volunteers from Kriva Palanka, Dan and Jillian Kearney and their student whom they have been working with for 6 months now, Ljubica Ristovska. There were 21 attendees present; 6 male and 15 female. Dan started with the TOEFL test suggesting useful websites that the attendees can look at, where to



find wordlists, how to paraphrase questions; how to make flashcards and which other resources they can use. He then focused on each part of the test, how to do it more successfully and what things to focus on. Jillian explained the format of the SAT in detail with the help of the wonderful poster she had made. They both emphasized the importance of note taking and going through as many complete practice tests as possible before taking the real test and Ljubica confirmed the beneficial aspect of all the practice tests she had taken. After the presentation was over some of the students stayed for an additional half an hour as they had the chance to talk to Jillian

who gave them more tips on how to find short cuts for the SAT Math section, anticipate the questions and provided them with other specific tips on how to increase their scores. All

throughout the presentation Ljubica gave her own suggestions as to what worked most for her and advised the attendees on the issues they showed interested in.

This was a very successful presentation! Dan and Jillian also donated an SAT book to the American Corner Skopje which will surely be put to great use!





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Presentation at the American Corner Skopje

Volunteer Opportunities

November 21st, 2008

Our International Education Week would not have been complete without a presentation such as this one! On Thursday evening the American Corner Skopje welcomed representative from 5 different organizations. They came to the Corner to talk about the different volunteer opportunities available for anyone who is willing to do some volunteer work. There were 21 people present: 9 males and 12 females. There was a dog named Brza present as well. The Corner has never had a presenter of this kind before. Brza, the Peace Corps Volunteer- Marc Ackerman and the volunteer Monika Dimitrova came to urge everyone present to start adopting animals. Marc who takes care of Brza gave a very moving speech about the imminent



need that these stray dogs are adopted by families and thus removed from the streets. Monika showed the posters for the campaign which is about to start and spoke about the animal shelter where volunteers can help either by making a donation or assisting in any other way they can.



Our second group of presenters were from NOVA High School where community service is part of the curriculum. The Community Service Program Coordinator- Aleksandar Ristovski spoke about the many projects NOVA Highschool students have taken part in with different kinds of organizations and the benefit students get from their community hours. Inspiring pictures from their activities were shown in the background with people from all ages whom they have worked with. There were 6 students present, all coming from different countries who enjoy the community service so much that they do more than the required 10 hours per year. Each of them gave a personal account of the activities they enjoyed doing the most and invited all of the people present to start



volunteering!

The third group of presenters came from the Roma organization "Sumnal". They were first mentioned by Aleksandar



as they have worked together before and still are. One of the most active members of the organization, Mr. Elez Bislim together with the Peace Corps Volunteer Eryn Gibbs spoke about the kind of organization Sumnal is, the rich program they have and the versatile activities (primary educative ones)

volunteers can take part in, pointing out that motivation is the primary aspect they are guided by especially for those kids who have never attended school before.

The volunteers from the Volunteers Center Skopje along with their Project Coordinator, Inese Priedite were also an international group as they were all coming from different countries. They handed out their



“Voices” magazine and invited all of those interested in writing to contact them and send some articles for the next issue of the magazine. They reminded everyone present that December 5th is the Volunteers Day and that their Center will organize many activities to mark this occasion properly.

The last presenter was here to talk about the organization “Blue Sky”. Maja Savevska who is the Project Manager of this organization explained the kinds of projects students have created and encouraged every one present to come to them if they have any kind of idea for a project to be made. Maja

also emphasized that 70% of those student who were selected for the Undergraduate Exchange Program to study in the US were actually Blue Sky members.

The American Corner staff also spoke about the volunteering possibilities at the American Corner Skopje with the events organization, promotion and other activities. In the end 3 volunteers expressed their interest to help out the AC Staff.

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The handout that was given to

each of the attendees included the contact information for all of the organizations and their presenters so that they can be contacted by those interested in volunteering in their organizations.





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Study in the USA for Undergraduates Conversation Hour

With Gordana Mircic, Educational Advisor

and Eric Prendergast, Fulbright Scholar in Macedonia

Saturday, October 4th, 2008

A conversation of this kind was held for the first time at the American Corner Skopje. The purpose of this informal discussion was to familiarize the students with the educational resources the American Corner and the American Educational Center have to offer, all of the steps of the application process; the standardized tests students are required to take, the personal statement they will most likely have to write, how to obtain well-written letters of recommendation, the importance of community work, extracurricular activities and volunteering. Eric Prendergast who was the guest speaker spoke about his own experience as an undergraduate, giving examples for each of the abovementioned points. There were also students who are already working on their applications and informed everyone present what it was like to take the TOEFL and the SATs, who wrote their letters of recommendation, what kind of extracurricular activities they are involved in etc. They were also informed about the upcoming activities of the American Educational Center as well as the exchange programs they can start applying to. All of them had the chance to share ideas and hopefully keep in touch among themselves so that the application process can become a much easier process to go through. At the end each of them was asked to fill in a survey so that the upcoming activities of the American Educational Center can be planned according to their needs. Among the 13 students present there were also 2 parents who wanted to take part in the discussion as well.





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Presentation at the American Corner Skopje for the
American Council's Youth Exchange and Study Program



with Cassandra Payton, American Council Regional Director for Southeast Europe
and Velika Angelkova, Country Representative for Macedonia

Wednesday, October 22nd, 2008



The American Corner Skopje was simply not big enough to accommodate all of the 53 enthusiastic high school students who came to our premises to find out more about the YES exchange program of the American Council. Ms. Payton did a great job explaining the selection process and all the testing rounds of the program in detail. After she finished with the introduction the students were invited to

ask questions and they were really prepared for this as they had a lot of questions to ask. Some of the parents who came also asked questions on their own, mainly concerned about the host families the students will be placed in. Velika Angelkova joined her in the Q and A session facilitating the discussion. The presentation took one hour and a half due to the fact that the children were really inquisitive and some of them wanted to talk to Cassandra in person. All of them will be taking the first test scheduled in a week and we wish them a lot of luck.





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Outreach in the High School Rade Jovcevski -Korcagin

December 19th, 2008



Following the feedback rate from the outreach and in reach activities with the schools from the Skopje area, the American Corner Skopje Staff continues doing outreach presentations in the Skopje High schools.

On Friday, December 19th, we held 5 back-to-back presentations with five different classes in the high school Rade Jovcevski- Korcagin, informing a total of **164** students about the activities of the American Corner Skopje and the American Educational Center.

Each presentation consisted of three parts: first, the RCS Nevenka Stefanovska gave a presentation about what and where the American Corner Skopje is, what can the students expect by

becoming a members, their benefits, resources and past events, etc; then the RCS/Educational Advisor Gordana Mircic gave introduction to the American Educational center and Education USA, explained what the application process looks like for applying to colleges in the US, when is the best time to start the research, funding sources and other useful information. The last part was covered by Erin Gibbs, a Peace Corps volunteer in Skopje, who talked about how Americans celebrate Christmas, giving examples from her own family's celebration.

All the students present were enthralled by everything they heard and had fun especially when listening to the last part. Although they knew much about the celebration of Christmas in America from movies, Erin also covered other interesting traditions which were new to

them and particularly interesting.

Before leaving, each student was given a handout containing membership application for the American Corner Skopje and a list of useful websites for applying to US colleges.

