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Thai Link

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Happy Halloween!



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STATE ALUMNI: YOUR GLOBAL COMMUNITY

'State Alumni' are current and former participants of U.S. government-sponsored exchange, teaching or professional programs.

Join alumni.state.gov to stay in touch with fellow alumni, and with the U.S. Embassy in Bangkok and U.S. Consulate in Chiang Mai, so that your exchange experience

does not stop when you return home, but continues to result in productive professional, societal, cultural, and community engagements.



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SUSI Reflection

Ms. Ploi Lakanavid, SUSI (Study of the U.S. Institute Program) Alumna 'Student Leaders on Global Environmental Issues' May 23-June 27, 2010

When I heard of SUSI (Study of the U.S. Institute for Student Leaders on Global Environmental Issues) for the first time, it sounded so interesting. To study in the U.S. is one of my dreams, especially when it comes to environmental issues.

On TV, I saw a lot of news about disasters, such as the tsunami in Thailand, the earthquake in Haiti, flooding in the Philippines, and the amount of those disasters just keeps increasing every year. I realize that our earth's condition is worsening, but we still harm it every day, every hour, and every minute. These realizations empowered me to join this program immediately.

What I learned from SUSI, is more than just knowledge, I learned a lot about people, cultures, policies, teamwork, etc. But the main thing that I learned from SUSI is the norms of the group. Social animals like us, we like to get acceptance from the group. We

would do almost everything to be a part of the group. Because we are social animals, we cannot live alone on this earth. In the group, there are norms (situations or patterns of behaviors that are usual or expected) that everyone has to follow; if you don't follow it, you will get punished by your group.

Related to SUSI, everyone has an environmental heart, every action we do is to preserve and conserve our earth; for example we don't or hardly use any plastic bags. If I use it, everyone in the group will look at me and ask, "Why did you use plastic bags?" You will be ashamed of yourself, and the next time when you want to use plastic bag, you will remind yourself whether it's necessary to use it or not. It inspired me to do my action plan in Thailand: "Let's Reduce Plastic Bags" is my project when I return home.



Above: Ms. Ploi Lakanavid attends a briefing with her fellow program participants at the U.S. Department of State in Washington D.C.

Right: U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Academic Affairs Ms. Alina Romanowski talks to the SUSI program participants during their visit to the U.S.



I will start small, within my community. Yesterday, I started my plan by talking to the fruit sellers. I got a lot of information. I think this project could work well.

And what I learned from the U.S. is that I got to know more about different kinds of people, how they live, speak, think, and survive. I saw a lot of differences between people in Hawaii and Washington D.C.



In Hawaii, it's quite similar to South East Asian countries, especially the climate and the food. I saw a



lot of Asian people there, I went out to a Thai restaurant 3 times and I felt like I was home. But in Washington D.C., it's quite different, there weren't many Asians. When I walked on the road, everyone looked at me surprisingly, especially when I

walked alone. But one thing I know is that almost every person that I met in U.S. likes Thai food. I'm proud of that!

People are different in Washington D.C. People always wear suits and are in rush hour mode, but in Hawaii, they wear casual clothes, and most of them are tourists.

I think, the U.S. is so diverse in terms of how you can see such differences like

these in one country. But I think this thing give the U.S. an edge to deal with different problems. Different

kinds of people, different ways of thinking, good ideas always come out. When I interviewed American people what they like the most in their country. Everyone said "freedom". American people have freedom to do whatever they want. They

can express their opinions in politics, religions, health care insurances, and other systems. Those are the things I learned in the past 5 weeks, but I think learning is not

stopping yet. It's a long, long way to continue my study about myself, environmental issues, the U.S. and the world.

Thank you for this opportunity that the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, United States Department of State gave me. I promise that I will bring all I got to improve and help my country as much as I can.

For more information about SUSI Program, visit <http://exchanges.state.gov/academicexchanges/scholars.html>



Above: Program participants visit the Greenpeace Office in Washington D.C. and join the fieldtrip to Hawaii

Left: Ms. Ploi enjoys spending her free time at the museums and exploring Washington D.C.

60th Anniversary of Fulbright Thailand Celebration



Top: H.E. Dr. Manaspas Xuto and U.S. Ambassador Eric G. John present the Fulbright Hall of Fame Award to Emeritus Prof. Dr. Kasem Wattanachai

Above (From left to right): Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Ms. Alina L. Romanowski, H.E. Dr. Manaspas Xuto and U.S. Ambassador Eric G. John

BANGKOK, Thailand - On Thursday, July 15, 2010, the U.S. Embassy, together with the Thailand-United States Educational Foundation (TUSEF), and the Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs, organized an International Symposium on “Caring Leaders Across Cultures” to celebrate the 60th Anniversary of the Fulbright program in Thailand at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Deputy

Assistant Secretary of State for Academic Affairs Programs, Ms. Alina L. Romanowski, presented the Caring Leaders Across Cultures Award to HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn for her exceptional work in promoting cultural exchanges between the United States and Thailand. Ms. Romanowski also gave a speech on “Fulbright and the Legacy of

Leaders” to 200 symposium participants. During the evening reception at the Dusit Thani Hotel, H.E. Dr. Manaspas Xuto, Chairman of the Board of Directors of TUSEF, and U.S. Ambassador Eric G. John, presented Fulbright Hall of Fame Awards to 24 distinguished alumni.



Photos Credit: TUSEF

YES Alumni Commemorate the 4th of July with Access Students



BANGKOK, Thailand - On July 1, 2010, an energetic group of the Youth Exchange and Study Program (YES) alumni organized an afterschool event for students at the Islamic Wittayalai School. More than 35 students from the Department of State’s English Access

Microscholarship Program (Access) participated in this informative and engaging activity. At the opening ceremony, Ms. Chollada Suawong, an International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) alumna and an English teacher, delivered welcoming remarks to the participants and introduced the YES alumni who helped make this event happen.

This one and a half hour session consisted of a series of educational and fun ac-

tivities, including a PowerPoint presentation on U.S. Independence Day, a YES program on life in the U.S. as Muslim exchange students, games, quizzes, and prizes. This program gave the Access students a great opportunity to open their minds and made classroom learning more real through interactions with State Alumni who had lived and studied in the U.S.

State Alumni Reunion in Chiang Mai



Vice Consul, from the U.S. Consulate Chiang Mai, joined this special gathering and greeted all the guests. Later that afternoon, Alumni Coordinator Mr. Adisorn Laopiroon gave brief remarks on State Alumni and its benefits and also offered assistance for alumni to implement community service projects.

CHIANG MAI, Thailand - On Tuesday, July 6, 2010, alumni of U.S. government-sponsored exchange programs including Fulbright, Global UGRAD, USBT, YES and ASEAN Youth Leadership, reunited at the House Restaurant and enjoyed the evening making new friends in the area. Mr. Dean D. Tidwell, Chief of Political/Economic/Public Diplomacy and Mr. Thomas M. Schmidt,

assistance for alumni to implement community service projects.

If you would like to host an alumni event in your area, please contact Mr. Adisorn Laopiroon, Thailand Alumni Coordinator, at

Adisorn@state.gov or Tel. 02-205-4849 or 081-813-0704. The U.S. Embassy in Bangkok would be honored to help you plan your event.



Alumni Join the 4th of July Celebration at American Corner, Chiang Mai University



CHIANG MAI, Thailand - On Wednesday, July 7, 2010, the American Corner at Chiang Mai University, in cooperation with the American Studies Club, U.S. Consulate General and U.S. Embassy Bangkok, organized a 4th of July Celebration at the Chiang Mai University Library. Mr. Phi-phat Sukjindasatian, a Global UGRAD alumnus and Chiang Mai University student, and Ms. Weerin Chairiyakul, Fulbright alumna and English language lecturer, both shared some tips on

how to achieve scholarship in their exchange programs on the topic of "Wonderful U.S. Experience, Never Too Far to Reach". The alumni also talked about their fun experiences living in Montana and Hawaii, respectively. More than 140 students and faculty members partici-

pated in this colorful event to commemorate America's 234th year of independence. It started with an opening address by Acting Consul General Gary Anderson and was followed by a ribbon cutting ceremony. Besides the presentations by State Alumni, the program also included live performance by the University's American Studies Club, American burgers, snacks, games and prizes.



YES Alumni Annual Projects Planning



BANGKOK, Thailand - On August 7, 2010, more than 20 AFS-YES and the U.S. Embassy scholarship alumni who recently returned from the U.S. participated in a two-day workshop on 'Alumni Annual Projects Planning'. The event, which was organized by AFS Thailand, took place at TK Palace Hotel in Bangkok. The program started with a wel-

come message from AFS staff. Then participants took turns sharing their experiences in the U.S. with fellow alumni. Ms. Nudi Manundawi, a YES upperclassman, later took the stage to give the new alumni ideas on how to conduct community service projects and displayed her previous successful initiatives. The program also included a session which Mr. Adisorn Laopiroon, Alumni Coordinator, from the U.S. Em-

bassy, who gave an introduction to the State Alumni website and many of its benefits. He also shared some U.S. Embassy activities relating to alumni and encouraged them to get involved. Afterward, attention was turned to the brand-new alumni for new ideas. The alumni were divided into small groups and various activities were used to inspire fresh ideas throughout the workshop.

Fulbright Alumni Inspire the GE Foundation Grantees



BANGKOK, Thailand - On August 12, two State Alumni gave presentations relating to self-improvement to approximately 45 current GE Foundation Scholar-Leaders Program and its alumni at the Jasmine City Hotel on the Annual Gathering Day 2010. The current grantees are 2nd-4th year undergraduate students from ten public universities in Thailand. They are among the most talented students in their respective schools but come from needy families. The program began with Fulbright and Harvard alumnus Mr.

Chavapas Ongmahutmongkol talking to the students on the topic 'Learning for Success: Strategic Learning Skills'. Throughout his 45 minute presentation, the speaker shared his entrepreneurial knowledge and insights on what it takes to be successful both in study and career.

The next session was a presentation on another interesting topic 'Personal Branding'. Presented by Fulbright and University of Pennsylvania alumnus Mr. Tinnapat Kaewmueang, he offered words of advice to these young students on how to brand themselves for success. He shared his

expertise working with branding companies on what the students should do to build, show and publicize their image and achievements.

This program was organized by the Institute for International Education (IIE Thailand), visit www.iiethai.org for more information and other scholarship opportunities from IIE. Also visit <http://www.fulbrightthai.org/> for more information about Fulbright program in Thailand.



Alumnus Shows How to Become a Diplomat

HUA HIN, Thailand - As part of the U.S. Embassy's Alumni Speaker Program, Fulbright alumnus Mr. Natapanu Nopakun visited Wang Klai Kang Won School and gave a presentation on the subject of building a career as a diplomat to approximately 160 12th grade students on August 27, 2010. He discussed issues students need to know and how to prepare if they want to pursue a profession in the foreign service. The speaker also talked about his experience working as a diplomat at the Royal Thai Embassy in Washington D.C. and shared some anecdotes concerning Thai-U.S. Relations. In addition,

he stressed the importance of learning English in today's world. The program concluded with a Q&A session, in which students enthusiastically asked topic-related questions. Mr. Natapanu is currently Counselor at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and is also seconded to the Secretariat of Thai Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva.

The program was also recorded and will be broadcast on Distance Learning Television Stations and to education satellite networks operated by the Distance Learning Foundation (DLF) under the Royal Patronage of H.M. King Bhumibol Adulyadej.



Tips on How to Join the LL.M. Programs from a Thai Fulbrighter



PATHUM THANI, Thailand - On September 6, the Puey Ungphakorn Library Conference Room was packed with more than 100 Thammasat University's law students who came to listen to a presentation on LL.M. (Master of Laws) Programs in the United States from Mr. Verapat

Pariyawong, a Fulbright alumnus. Drawing from his experience as a former graduate student at Harvard Law School, Mr. Verapat explained what the LL.M. is all about. In addition, he advised students on how to apply to and get accepted to law programs. In addition, Mr. Verapat talked about the Fulbright Scholarship Program for Thai students to study in the U.S. He encouraged the students to apply and participate in this prestigious program, which promotes mutual understanding between Thailand and the U.S. Following the discussion, Mr. Verapat opened the floor to questions.



1st Annual U.S. State Department Alumni Networking Reception for Northern Thailand

CHIANG MAI, Thailand - Over 70 alumni of U.S. government-sponsored exchange programs attended the "1st Annual U.S. State Department Alumni Networking Reception for Northern Thailand" on September 16, 2010, at [the U.S. Consulate General, Chiang Mai](#). U.S.

Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission Judith Cefkin and U.S. Consul General Susan Stevenson co-hosted the event, which not only honored the alumni, but also celebrated the Consulate's 60th anniversary. Ms. Stevenson and Ms. Cefkin briefly informed the alumni and distinguished guests from northern educational institutes about the online "State Alumni" social network, and promised a greater emphasis on alumni activities in the region.

Photos Credit: Korawuth Asana, Chiang Mai News



Above: State Alumni and 60th Year U.S. Consulate General pins are given to the guests at the event



Right: Deputy Chief of Mission Judith Cefkin gives welcoming remarks to State Alumni and guests



Far Right: Consul General Susan Stevenson greets the distinguished guests



For more alumni news & photos, please visit www.facebook.com/Thai.SAC



Global State Alumni Member of the Month



**Abdishakur Sheikh
Hassan Ahmed**
Somalia/IVLP 2007

July 2010

Abdishakur Sheikh Hassan Ahmed is a selfless and dedicated alumnus who puts the welfare of his community ahead of his own personal interests. Since participating in the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) on "Contemporary Challenges in Higher Education" in October 2007, Ahmed has worked to empower his community members through organizations such as The Somalia Center for Education & Research (SCER) and the Somalia Alumni Association, both of which he founded.

Log in to State Alumni to read more about Abdishakur Sheikh Hassan Ahmed.

August 2010

Rezani Aziz empowers professional women while helping to build a robust civil society in her native Sri Lanka. As chief operating officer for a global public relations firm, Burson-Marsteller, and a member of the Women's Chamber of Industry & Commerce, Aziz's work draws heavily from her experiences in the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP).

Log in to State Alumni to read more about Rezani Aziz.



Rezani Aziz
Sri Lanka/IVLP 2006

September 2010



Kenneth Sydhagen
Norway/BFTF 2008

Though only 20 years old, Kenneth Sydhagen of Norway is an accomplished leader and an indefatigable supporter of the ideals of his exchange program. Since participating in the Benjamin Franklin Transatlantic Summer Institute (BFTF) in 2008, Sydhagen has initiated a number of programs to advance transatlantic relations, foster people-to-people exchanges, and develop youth leadership skills among his peers in Norway.

Log in to State Alumni to read more about Kenneth Sydhagen.

Click on the link below to sign up for **State Alumni**



Stay in touch with your fellow alumni and make new friends!

Familiar Faces



Mr. Petch Manopawitr
PhD Candidate
Department of Geography,
University of Victoria,
British Columbia,
Canada

IVLP July 2005

“I was a training and education coordinator for Wildlife Conservation Society – Thailand Program when I joined the IVLP in 2005. It was a fantastic learning experience on many aspects of environmental issues in the United States. The 3 week program was very well organized and we had excellent opportunities to learn first-hand by discussing with federal agencies in the capital, exploring National Parks and discussing with local community organizations in various states starting from Washington D.C. I have become friends with other 21 delegates from 20 countries and we still keep in touch and exchange ideas regularly. After the program, I became deputy director of the organization and the experiences gained from the program proved to

be invaluable. I have recently furthered my study in the area of climate change and protected area research and continued to correspond productively with my U.S. and international contacts.”

Ms. Thidarat Sukhanindr
Graduate Student, George
Washington University,
Washington D.C.

Asia Pacific Leadership Program (APLP), East-West Center, Hawaii 2006-2007

“I had the best experience in the US during the APLP program while studying with 40 participants from 22 countries who have strong leadership and tremendous range of expertise. I also learn a lot about current global issues and had chance to exercise my cross-culture and leadership skills as well as being friends with wonderful people from U.S. and all over world.”

Ms. Kasama Laosen
Student, Civil Aviation
Training Center

*YES 2007-2008
Oswego high school, NY*

“Being away from home for 11 months and living with a nice

family in USA has taught me a lot of new things. I have grown and got lots of new experiences that I never would have imagined. I made a lot of good friends and met so many people. I



joined a cross country club and volunteered for The salvation

army. Being an exchange student has proven to me that anything is possible and I can do anything. It was a great time of my life.”

Mr. Sarawut Malaipong
Student, Islamic College
of Thailand

*YES 2008-2009
Washington High School,
South Dakota*

“I have learned American life and culture. That includes the opportunity to publicize the information and culture of Thailand. It also has a good understanding between Americans and Muslims.”



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on select topics of current interests such as "U.S. Policy Challenges in Asia", "Human Rights and Economic Development", etc. Links to online full texts are available at your fingertips through the embedded hotlinks.

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"These articles (from Web Alert July 2010: Digital Learning Challenges) are indeed very informative and useful. Thank you so much of sharing them with us."

-- Faculty and Research at Chiang Mai University's Department of Computer Engineering, August 2, 2010

Latest Issue of "SAM" Is Now LIVE!

The special Halloween issue of the U.S. Embassy's youth e-Zine "SAM" is now available with fun information from the history of Halloween to an easy way to make a jack o' lantern. Also included in this issue are a letter from a Thai AFS student in Florida and lots of fun quizzes.



NEVER MISS SAM AGAIN: Just click [here](#) and choose "subscribe to SAM", and the latest issue of this awesome magazine will be delivered right to your e-mail box.

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What is IRC, by the way?



"This (SAM e-Magazine) is such a great fun to read! So informative. I love it and I learn a lot from it!!!"

-- A Thai Graduate Student at John Carroll University, July 27, 2010

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Embassy Insiders

Getting to Know 'AMERICAN CORNERS'



Above: American Corner, Nakhon Si Thammarat



American Corners in Thailand are one-stop centers for information about the United States. They are partnerships between the U.S. Embassy in Thailand and host institutions.

Located in the main libraries of [Prince of Songkla University \(Pattani campus\)](#), [Khon Kaen University](#), [Chiang Mai University](#), [Nakhon Si Thammarat Rajabhat University](#), and [Yala Rajabhat University](#), the Corners aim to foster mutual understanding between Thailand and the United States through a variety of means including satellite broadcasts, digital video conferences, hi-speed Internet access, book, game and multimedia collections. The Corners show the rare films that might not found anywhere else. The Cor-

ners are also used to stimulate dialogue with individual citizens, organizations, institutions and the media by providing information and cultural activities.

This year, we are celebrating the 10th Anniversary of the American Corners Program since its first opening. In 2000, U.S. embassies worldwide began to sponsor partnerships with local libraries to bring a bit of the USA to local readers and visitors. Local residents can go to American Corners to learn about American culture, politics, history, and other topics. Since then, there are more than one hundred American Corners worldwide, including 5 Corners in Thailand.

American Corners in Thailand are open to the public during library business hours. For more details on services and current programs at each Corner, please click on the links provided above or visit <http://bangkok.usembassy.gov/education/american-corners-in-thailand.html>.



Update your personal information

For State Alumni who have new contact information, please kindly fill out details on the following link.

http://bangkok.usembassy.gov/alumni_signup.html

If you have articles you wrote or activities you plan to do and anything else you would like to share with the U.S. Embassy and your fellow alumni, please contact us by one the following options.

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