

The IEP TIMES

Bringing the World to Eastern Mennonite University

December 14, 2006

Harrisonburg, VA 22802

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

December 14, 10:30 a.m. IEP Final Celebration
January 3, 8:30 a.m. Testing for New Students
January 8, 8:30 a.m. Spring Semester Orientation

IEP Events

Progressive Dinner

I went to the progressive meal. It was very good. First, we went to one house to eat salad. Second, we went to another house to eat soup and bread. I ate potato soup for the first time. I liked it. And then, we went to another house to eat the main dish. Finally, we went to the President's house, and I ate a lot of desserts. I was completely full!!

Yoh, Japan
Intermediate

Today we went on a progressive meal and we went to four houses. I did not really know about progressive meals and it was my first time. We went to the first house and we ate salad. They really welcomed us and we were happy. After we ate, we looked around their home and took a picture. We went to the second house and we ate potato soup with bread. It was really good and we asked how to cook it. At the third house we ate the main food and we were surprised. She was really good at cooking. It looked really pretty and I thought that I could not eat but I ate it. There was a shrimp and rice mixture inside an orange with lots of fruit. The fourth house was the President's house and we were excited. He also welcomed us and we ate dessert. There was pumpkin pie, apple pie and many kinds of tea. We really enjoyed that they offered many different kinds of food. It was a special experience for us. I felt thankful to them.

Yojin, South Korea
Intermediate

Lunch Together

I have a good subject to talk about, something very nice to remember. On November 17, after grammar class, we all went to La Casita restaurant for lunch. At first I thought that probably not all wanted to go, but everyone went except for one student who had to go to

work. When we got to La Casita the tables were set up for us, so we all took a seat and then we ordered our drinks. Susana asked for atole champurrado; then the others wanted to know what it was. Therefore, they each got a sample. They liked it a lot; it was a new drink for most. We ate Mexican food and took some photos. Pablito had a good idea. There was a Mexican mariachi hat on the wall, and he grabbed it and took a picture of everybody with the hat on. I enjoyed the company and being all together for lunch.

Bacilisa, Mexico
Advanced



Advanced class having lunch at La Casita

A Speaker from Haiti

Each country has its own culture. For that reason, if you want to leave your own country to live in another one; the first thing you should do is to learn about the new culture. November 8, 2006 we had Edwin who came to talk to IEP students about his experiences in Haiti during his 14 years of work for MCC in Haiti.

Edwin was born in the Netherlands and lived in Canada before he went to Haiti. He lived in Haiti with his family. His children went to school in Haiti and grew up there. I can say they are Haitian. It was interesting when Edwin explained his difficulty in adapting to this new culture. Edwin didn't speak Haitian Creole before living in Haiti. The interesting culture shock that Edwin had in Haiti was when he came to realize that he had a bad cook. Why? In Haiti

people usually pay someone to cook their meals. Sometimes the person can be a good cook or a bad cook. So when Edwin went to Haiti, in the beginning he didn't enjoy the Haitian food; he thought Haitian food was very bad. So after changing cooks, he came to realize he had a bad cook. Edwin came to enjoy the Haitian food and tried to eat it a lot. He really adapted to this new culture. He visited many places in Haiti. He said in Haiti people do not stay inside their houses. They usually stay outside of the house because Haiti is a tropical country with beautiful weather. If people stay inside the house in Haiti, others usually ask them, "Are you sick?"

So, it's really important for humans to move to have experiences in different countries.

Patrick, Haiti
Intermediate

Trip to Washington, D. C.

Students are happy to come to school every day, but sometimes they think about traveling to other parts of the world or visiting new places and having new experiences. Last Saturday was a good chance for the students to go to D.C.

We traveled to D.C. by bus. The bus was big and comfortable. In the beginning we went to the Air and Space Museum. We found much useful information such as the history of airplanes and how American and Russian people have been working in space together. From there we went to the Gallery of Art. We looked at many pictures and talked about the painters that we liked. For example, artists have to be very strong in their ideas about art and life and also must be sure and understand themselves. We were interested in the galleries.

We ate lunch together in the Union Station. Finally, we decided to go to the Museum of Natural History and saw many interesting things that we had never seen before. We saw the White House in the evening time and took some pictures. You have not seen Washington until you have seen it at night.

Andrey, Ukraine
Intermediate

I got up early and at 7 A.M. I prepared to go to Washington, D.C. I was a little excited. First we went to museums about science, airplanes and art. Most of the museums were free. In my country it is never free and so I was surprised. In fact, I don't like to visit museums but I tried to be interested. Yes, it became exciting. We walked to a lot of places and to me it was a good experience.

Gihun, South Korea
Intermediate

All students had a good time when we were in Washington, D.C., but I missed many things because I had with me my children. First, we visited the Air space Museum. There many things to see but not enough time. I can't read quickly the things they wrote and understand, but I'm happy that in Grammar class we already talked about Wilbur and Orvil Wright, and Charles Lindbergh. Those things helped me a lot. After that, we walked to Union Station for lunch.

We also visited National Museum of Natural History. There, my children were very excited to see animals. It was too bad to have just 1 hour for this museum. We planned to visit the old post office and White House but I couldn't go because my children were tired. I had to find the place they can have a rest. I took them and we found one place they can play after we pay money. They really enjoyed there.

Then my children and I began to look for where the bus driver dropped us off when we arrived. After 30 minutes, we realized that we took opposite road. I began asking people. First I saw two men and I said we are foreign and we are lost. "We have to find the museum where there are many airplanes." They said, "We are sorry we are foreign too." We continued to walk and I saw 3 women and I began my story. They said, "We are sorry! We don't know where the museum is." I was really embarrassed. My daughter began to cry. We continued to walk and I saw one man. I began the same story and then, he said, "Yes, I know. Is it the airplane museum?" and I said, "Yes, please." He gave us the good directions. Finally, we found the place and said "God bless you." I really enjoyed being there, but it was very difficult to have children with me.

Esther, Benin
Basic

Holidays

Thoughts at Thanksgiving

I had a good time with my husband on this Thanksgiving holiday. Even though my son wasn't home with us, Manuel and I had a delicious dinner together. However, this Thanksgiving was not the same. I have to realize that my son isn't my little boy anymore but is a teenager with his own decisions. I think that is how life is; we cannot keep our children forever with us, and they are like free birds. When I was sad my husband told me a quote by a famous poet that goes, "Our children are not our children forever; life lends us our children for a while, and later we have to let them go." Well, this is hard for me because I have just one child and I love him so much. Now I think that I am too old to have more kids. The good thing is that I have my husband, and now we are like a couple on our honeymoon with a lot of good moments

for us. So, I am thankful on Thanksgiving and
everyday. Toni, Mexico
Advanced

Black Friday

A new custom that the United States has is to go shopping on the Friday after Thanksgiving Day, a day which is now called "Black Friday." During that day a lot of people buy their gifts in order to get ready for Christmas. People think that they can get better prices and save money. However, as a buyer you stress yourself that day waiting in long lines to pay for your items because there are so many people at the stores. In some cases people get hurt pushing each other in order to get into the stores.

Black Friday should be called the "Day of Consumerism." People should choose another day for shopping. There are many stores that have good items for sale or clearance at other times which can help them to save money and get better things. I am against Black Friday.

Susana, Mexico
Advanced

Christmas in Venezuela

In my country, Christmas is a very special day, where the whole family tries to reunite. We make our typical foods, like bread with ham, chicken salad, and papaya.

During this month our families exchange gifts, buy new clothes, and workers or employees receive more money from their work so that they may buy more gifts. We also visit church at 6:00 in the morning, where we sing. Throughout the week it is a tradition to skate on the streets and everyone plays Christmas music. This holiday is very beautiful with peace and union between friends and family.

Yajaira, Venezuela
Basic

Christmas in Russia

I was born in a Christian family, that's why Christmas is very important to me. My father always brought a live Christmas tree. My mother always decorated the tree with old toys. My sister and I made paper snowflakes, and decorated the windows with them.

The night before Christmas we went to church. We learned Christmas poems, songs, and gave each other presents. Also the night before Christmas we celebrate my oldest sister's birthday. My mom makes dinner and many of my sister's friends would come to her party. After dinner teenagers went house to house singing Christmas songs. Russian people saved this tradition and brought it to America. If they come to your house, and start singing, then you must give them sweets.

When I was a kid only Christian people celebrated Christmas. Non-Christian people celebrated New Year's. Now they celebrate both holidays.

For us Christmas is an important holiday. It's not only a tree with presents, but we truly believe that Christ was born and lived on this earth. And I believe that He lives in my heart, and I thank God for that.

Tatyana, Russia
Basic

Reflections

I am taking four classes this semester. In listening and speaking class, we study pronunciation, talk about our own ideas or life, and listen to real English with TV or the tape. In grammar class, we learn a lot of rules. English grammar is like a card game that has many rules. If I can memorize them systematically, I get good score on the test, like winning a card game. In reading class, we read a lot of books, such as text books, newspapers, and advertisements. Reading is a test of understanding. Writing is a test of applying what I've learned from all three classes. For example, is it a proper style, clean style, the right expression? Writing is very hard for me, but I like it because I am poorer at listening and speaking. When I write silently, I can hear my inward voice.

Also, my teachers understand my English, like a word-association game. And they make good plans of classes so we can study enjoyably. If my teachers teach English at Japanese school, the students will like English. My classmates are friends. When I don't understand, they wait and help me. My teacher said, "Basic class is like a sponge. Now, you absorb many things, and you will use everything." So, I have to study and study. Finally, I hope I find my potential some day.

Kazuko, Japan
Basic

(The following are excerpts of responses to the book Blood Brothers, by Elias Chacour. Father Chacour is currently the archbishop of Galilee, of the Melkite Greek Catholic Church. He has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize three times for his work among the Palestinians and Jews.)

There are so many good ideas I learned from reading *Blood Brothers* written by Elias Chacour. I learned that it is very important for children to have good parents because their parents can channel them for their future life. For example, Elias' parents showed him, through their lives, how to love their enemies. They welcomed the Zionist soldiers. Elias' father prayed for the Jewish people. Elias Chacour is a strong man and has deep faith and hope. He showed by example that a leader should empower and encourage people. Elias built dignity for his people.

Through this book I learned the main reason for the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians. When I go back home I will be able to explain more about the conflict between the sons of Abraham to my students. I teach about the history of Palestine in Madagascar. I also learned from Elias that it's not easy to be a peacemaker. You should let God lead and guide your life. A peacemaker should not give up trying to find the way of reconciliation. You should have an open mind to make a dialogue with everyone, even your enemies. Elias made a dialogue with Muslims, Jews, and his teacher. I realize that to be a Christian means to be a peacemaker, to build a new bridge. As the Bible says, "Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called sons of God."

Toromare, Madagascar
Advanced

There are many conflicts around the world today, but the conflict between the Palestinians and the Jews is one of the most important on which the powerful countries focus their efforts in order to find out a solution. Father Chacour is an eyewitness of this conflict because not only does he live in Palestine, but he is also actively involved in making peace between Palestinians and Jews. Consequently, the book he wrote about his work as a peacemaker in Palestine is rich in lessons and brings to those who read it some thoughts, ideas and truths about the situation in Palestine.

Here are a few lessons that I have learned from reading *Blood Brothers*. God has made a plan for our lives and leads us according to that plan if we don't oppose our own will to his will. Telling Bible stories to our children can influence all their life. The Bible stories Elias' mother told him influenced his life and helped him to love Jesus, who was his hero. We inherit some things from our parents, for Elias has inherited his peacemaking skills from his father. We can understand more deeply some words or statements from the Bible only if we experience the situations that match with them. Elias understood the "Beatitudes" because he has lived in an unjust and peaceless situation. Forgiveness and love for the enemies brings more happiness and peace than hatred and violence.

I also learned that most of the Palestinians and Jews want peace, but there are some extremists in among them who are for violence. The second idea is that the conflict between Palestinians and Jews can never find a solution if the violence and hatred persists in Palestine. Another thing I would like to say is that the reading of this book has generated, in my heart, the desire to become a peacemaker, for we can do it anywhere we live.

Marcellin, Benin
Advanced

Blood Brothers challenged me. I have learned lessons that I will carry into the future. Being an autobiography, it has been good to learn how the truth of the word of God keeps its promises to the people. I learned, from Chacour's mother, to teach children to keep the Word of God, to live in peace, and also, from Chacour, how determined he was to restore peace.

One lesson I learned was how mothers' words are important to the children. Chacour's mother taught her children about the Word of God. For example the way she taught Chacour the Beatitudes helped him to have a good and firm foundation in the Word of God. Chacour kept remembering his mother's words.

Chacour was determined to unite Jews and Palestinians and through this fight he tried to use all the ways he could, especially when he tried to go door to door preaching peace. He spoke peace that made people change and helped to rebuilding the church. Patience made him achieve what he wanted – for people to reconcile – and it taught me that fighting for peace requires determination, patience, integrity and, above all, trust in God.

Jackline, Kenya
Advanced

The Final Word

Well, it's happened again. No, I don't mean "another semester has quickly come to its close." I mean IEP students have shown us again how to become a community—to become as close as family as we eat together, travel together, read together, and share our diverse cultural backgrounds. Thank you students and teachers for the wonderful semester! I wish you all a blessed Christmas and a great new year. For the first 7 months of 2007, I plan to be in Pakistan. During my absence, Maria Esther Showalter will be the director of the Intensive English Program. I know she will expend a lot of energy to build an even more beautiful community at IEP in Spring 2007.

-Mike Medley
IEP Director

- ▲ Improve your English skills!
- ▲ Enhance your education!
- ▲ Press forward in your career!

Please contact IEP at (540) 432-4059, email iep@emu.edu or see our website www.emu.edu/iep for more information

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