EXCHANGE VISTOR PROGRAM
AMERICAN IMMIGRATION LAW FOUNDATION

SEPTEMBER 2008 NEWSLETTER

This newsletter is sent to all active participants in the American Immigration Law Foundation (AILF) J-1 Training/Intern Program. Please review the information below and remember to always contact AILF if you have questions or concerns about your training program or non-immigrant status. If you are no longer participating in our program, please notify us. If you have a question for AILF, please do not reply to this message, but instead send your question to exchange@ailf.org.

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Important Dates

• *For all new trainees/interns, please wait at least **48 hours** after sending AILF your follow-up documents before applying for your social security number (SSN). Make sure you have been in the United States for at least **10 days** before applying for your SSN.*

• ***Two Weeks** prior to international travel, you must send in your DS-2019 for endorsement.*

• *Mid-Point Evaluations are due **halfway** through your program.*

• *End-of-Stay Evaluations are due during the **last month** of your training/internship.*

Celebrate OCTOBER

Don't be left in the lurch when your coworkers wish you a "Happy Halloween." Check out these holidays on www.wikipedia.org to find out how and why we celebrate.

National Hispanic Heritage Month

World Teacher's Day – Oct. 5

Columbus Day – Oct. 13

Bosses' Day – Oct. 16

Sweetest Day – Oct. 18

United Nations Day – Oct. 24

Mothers-in-Law Day – Oct. 26

Navy Day – Oct. 27

Halloween – Oct. 31

EXCHANGE VISITOR OF THE MONTH

Lisa Intini Runs for Rugrats

Lisa Intini, featured in the neon yellow tanktop, runs through New York City's Time Square

The Exchange Visitor Program is pleased to announce Lisa Intini as September's Exchange Visitor of the Month. Each month, we select an exchange visitor who has made an effort to get involved in his/her community and explore American Culture.

Lisa Intini, 26 of Toronto, Canada, is a J1 Exchange Visitor in New York City. Lisa came to the United States back in April to train in the banking industry and truly loves New York City and everything the city has to offer. Lisa also enjoys running and exercise—a hobby she's using to benefit a very good cause. Lisa and a coworker signed up for Team for Kids, a youth running charity that improves health, combats obesity and enhances personal development of children from low-income communities.

"A coworker told me about Team for Kids and we signed up together," Intini said. "In Canada, I used to be involved with the Credit Valley Hospital Foundation—as my family members are active volunteers. I picked Team for Kids because it's a great way to help children within the community and around the world stay healthy and fit. I have always been an athlete, so I am happy now to use my athletic ability to help others."

She trains with the Team for Kids group three times a week in Central Park and in other areas of the city. So far, Lisa has completed one race (the Nike Half Marathon) for Team for Kids and finished in the top half of 10,000 people. With her sights set a bit higher, Lisa plans on running the full NYC marathon on November 2, 2008. That's 26 miles (or 42 km) of nothing to sneeze at!

But aside from the intrinsic value of keeping fit and helping kids stay healthy and happy, Lisa experiences the added bonus of connecting to her community—which is not as easy as it sounds in city of 8.2 million people.

"Getting involved in a charity and racing has helped me meet new people and learn new things about the city," Intini said. "It has also motivated me to be active and get involved in more sport groups, like volleyball. It has also shaped my experience on a personal level. I have been able to see many beautiful places within NYC due to the trails we run. And people I have met in the charity have now become close friends of mine."

New citizens raise their right hand to pledge their allegiance to the U.S.

Understanding American Culture

Citizenship Day and the People Who Say "I Do!" to America

As all you exchange visitors know, training or interning in the United States is not an easy process. Getting here is only half the battle—finding a host company, filing the correct paperwork, coordinating travel plans—and then there's the follow up after you've arrived. But imagine the difficulty of actually becoming a citizen of the United States. Just thinking about all the red tape, paperwork and waiting makes me want to breathe heavily into a paper bag.

But all the hassle doesn't stop today's immigrants who integrate into American society just like the generations of immigrants before them. On September 17 of every year, we celebrate Citizenship Day to honor and commemorate these new Americans on their journey to call the United States home.

Citizenship Day, also known as Constitution Day, has been celebrated in some form since 1940, when Congress designated the third Sunday in May as "I Am an American Day." President Harry Truman signed a bill formalizing the celebration of Citizenship Day on September 17 in remembrance of the U.S. Constitution signing in 1787. In 1956, President Dwight Eisenhower proclaimed the week beginning September 17 through September 23 as Constitution Week.

Citizenship Day was celebrated this year with more than 40,000 individuals becoming new citizens of the United States. Naturalization ceremonies, large and small, were held all across the United States—from as few as 20 citizenship applicants in St. Albans, Vermont to as many as 3,000 applicants at Fenway Park in Boston, Massachusetts. In all, roughly 177 naturalization ceremonies were held during Constitution Week.

So why do we celebrate citizenship in a culture seemingly entrenched in a heated immigration debate? Perhaps because acknowledging that America is truly a nation of immigrants—immigrants whose cultures, values, customs and traditions strengthened our nation—is at the heart of why our Founding Fathers wrote the United States Constitution. Citizenship, to quote U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) director Jonathan "Jock" Scharfen, is far more than a piece of paper.

For more than 200 years, the United States has benefited from our multicultural citizens and the freedoms that we share in this country. If you have ever witnessed a US naturalization ceremony—when applicants from all over the world take an oath of allegiance to the US, our Constitution and laws—you might think about your home country, your civic duties, what it means to be a citizen, and about the true meaning of "patriotism".

And who better to understand the benefits of cultural exchange and education than a J1 Exchange Visitor? For all our cultural diversity, there is no denying that we have more in common than not and that everyone can benefit from sharing culture, customs and beliefs. J1 Exchange visitors have the added benefit of going home to share this cultural exchange experience with friends and family.

Making the Most of Your Experience

FALL in Love with Mulled Apple Cider

What better way to experience American culture than through food? Autumn is a great time to find an abundance of local produce, no matter where you are in the country, and put it to use in typically American ways. To find a farmers' market close to you, visit http://www.localharvest.org/ and enter your postal code. To sample Autumn favorites, try foods made with pumpkin, butternut squash, cranberries, or apples. Ask your coworkers and American friends for recipes, browse the web, or get started with this typical Autumn drink from the Northeastern part of the United States:

MULLED APPLE CIDER:

1. Pour one gallon of fresh apple cider into a large pot on the stove.

2. Add a half cup of brown sugar.

3. Add 1 teaspoon of whole cloves, 1 teaspoon of whole allspice, 3 cinnamon sticks, and 1 teaspoon of grated orange zest.

4. Heat the cider to a boil, stirring regularly. Leave the pot uncovered.

5. Once the cider boils, lower the setting to simmer for at least another 15 minutes. Stir occasionally.

6. Remove the spices from the pot and ladle hot mulled cider into mugs or other glasses designed for hot beverages.

7. Add a splash of rum or brandy if you'd like to warm up a chilly day.

Tell us about your Autumn adventures, culinary and otherwise, by emailing jnews@ailf.org.

Change of Address

We are required to report any changes in your U.S. home address in the government's Student & Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) database. We ask that you report any residential address changes to us within 5 days of your move so that we can enter the information within the government-imposed deadline. Failure to update your address could result in serious consequences to your J-1 visa status. Please remember to contact AILF if you change your U.S. address!

CONTACT INFORMATION

The best way to contact us with address changes, evalutions, questions and suggestions is via email. Please send your messages to exchange@ailf.org. We welcome any and all newsletter suggestions or comments.

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