

INTERNATIONAL YMCA
SERVING THE WORLD
SINCE 1911

International Y News

For US Host Sites ~ News You Can Use!

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 11

DECEMBER 2008

A word of "thanks" to our many host sites around the US...

We appreciate your support and our collaboration with you and we look forward to many more years of working together.

From Your International YMCA Team



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Good News...

Young Travelers Aren't Changing Their Plans

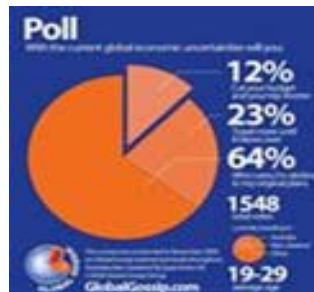
A November '08 poll conducted by Global Gossip.com confirms that young people aren't changing their travel plans despite the economic downturn. Of the 1,550 young travelers surveyed from Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, Spain and the UK about "whether the current woes are effecting their travel plans"....

64% responded "who cares, I'm sticking to my original plans"

23% responded they "would travel more until it blows over"

Just 12% responded they "would cut their budget and shorten their trip"

This is *good news* for the International YMCA and for our US Host Sites! The International YMCA brings approximately 8000 young people to the US annually for a variety of cultural exchange opportunities sponsored by J-1 visa programs—summer camp counselors and support staff (office, kitchen/food service, maintenance), conference centers, Trainees & Interns, Work & Travel in



hotels, restaurants and amusement parks. The International Y has been working with young people to build global citizens who are caring, responsible and committed to service since 1911, working locally, nationally, and internationally, bringing people together in local YMCAs, summer camps, school, business, and in homes of local families. A complete listing of all programs can be found on the web site:

www.internationalymca.org



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**“...diversity is
a step to the
ultimate goal
of inclusion.”**

A Message from our CEO

Dear Friends,

Greetings and warmest holiday wishes. The International YMCA has undergone several changes this year, one of which is that I joined as Executive Director in June 2008. I am very proud to be a part of the excellent team here that is working tirelessly on behalf of all our participants, colleagues and supporters.

As we near the end of 2008, we prepare for times of celebration with family and friends, and celebration of our faiths and spiritual foundations. This is also a time for reflection on the joys we have experienced and all that we have learned during this year, and a time to thank all of those who have helped us make our way.

The core of our international programs is people—human beings from a wide range of backgrounds—who have the potential to learn and grow and to contribute to the learning and growth of others; people who serve and who are served. In fact, we often gain the most through giving. By reaching out to truly understand the worldview and life experiences of others, we broaden our own horizons. By enabling young (and not-so-young) people to work or volunteer in another country and cultural setting, we help them develop leadership, communication and intercultural skills while imparting excitement to those they work with – be they campers or co-workers – about different ways of acting and viewing the world. Thus, we aim to bring the world together and promote global citizenship. It is more than bridging differences; rather, it is helping people truly appreciate that there are different though equally valid worldviews, and taking these into account means we can be better neighbors and contributors to our own diverse communities. In this way we create the basis for true dialog and understanding between individuals, groups and nations.

As we look back on 2008, let us also take time to think about all the lives that have been changed through our international programs. This is our contribution—your contribution—to a brighter future and a better world. Thank you all for helping make this possible. I look forward to your continued and renewed energy and commitment as we enter the new year. With warmest wishes for joy and peace this holiday season and for the coming year,

Sandy

Moving to Inclusion via Diversity

Amy Panetta, of the Indianapolis YMCA, reminds us that diversity is a step to the ultimate goal of “inclusion.”

She writes, “There is a course available on *YMCAexchange* that

anyone can use—“Developing a Culture of Inclusion.” Appropriate terminology, accommodating individuals with disabilities, and inclusive philosophy are just a few of the subjects covering in the two hour work-

shop. Find the training design at:

[www.ymcaexchange.org/
front/programs/creating%
20a%20culture%
20training%202006-06-
30.aspx](http://www.ymcaexchange.org/front/programs/creating%20a%20culture%20training%202006-06-30.aspx)

Contact Amy at:

apanetta@indymca.org

Best Practices for International Staff

The following "best practices" have been identified as those that directly contribute to the success of the cultural exchange experience for the Host Site and for the staff member. They also support the legal and regulatory obligations of the exchange visa program. Originally developed for summer camps by the American Camp Association, with input from J-1 visa organizations, including the International YMCA, they have value and apply to all sites hosting international staff, whether for summer camps, or for Trainees, Interns, or Work & Travel.

Sponsoring Agency and Administrative Practices

Expected practices of host sites:

- Understand that the governmental purpose of the J-1 visa program is for cultural exchange and implement that philosophy.
- Understand and comply with regulatory opportunities and limitations of the J-1 visa programs.
- Establish a strong relationship with sponsoring agency and meet financial obligations to them.
- Complete SEVIS validation for arriving staff promptly according to sponsoring agency procedures.
- Assist international staff in obtaining a Social Security card.
- Provide appropriate wages and access to money owed. (Note that checks are hard for internationals to cash (Offer help with that process!))
- Provide worker's compensation insurance according to requirements of state regulations.
- Develop and implement a crisis plan for dealing with injury to, arrest, or death of an international.
- Develop and implement policies that include immediate notification to sponsoring agency of any personnel action including a change of location/site within the organization, or any emergency situation with international staff.

Exemplary practices of host sites:

- Feature cultural programming in the organization.
- Show international programs and staff in marketing materials.

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**FOR
PERSONAL
CONTACT
WITH STAFF,
USE THE Y'S
TOLL FREE
NUMBER:
888/477-9622**



International Cultural Exchange Organizations (ICEO) Meet

Under the auspices of the American Camp Association (ACA), the J-1 visa-sponsoring ICEOs meet annually to discuss relevant issues, trends, and other topics related to the cultural exchange programs offered. The group met in Indiana in November. In addition to the International Ys ICCP program—International Camp

Counselor Program—representatives from Camp America, BUNAC, CCUSA, Camp Leaders, InterExchange and NY's JCCs attended also.

The agenda included discussion on ways international staffing at summer camps can impact ACA's "20/20 Vision" goal to have 20M children at

summer camps by 2020. The group will be working to develop a statement articulating the values of camps having international staff, including preparing youth to live in a global community requiring international relationships, cultural understanding and global citizenship.

There are some 65M children in the US and, currently, close to 15M attend summer camps. The positive impact of a summer camp experience on campers' personal growth and development has been well documented by the ACA.

International Y Staff Travels

Best Practices continued

Three of the International YMCA's professional staff recently visited seven countries, strengthening relationships, visiting embassies, and interviewing prospective participants.

Sandy Mitchell, CEO, went to the Dominican Republic. There, she met with US embassy officials, **Andres Fortunato**, CEO of the Y of the DR, and toured Y facilities and programs in action.

Scott Curry, Director of International Exchange Services, recently spent two weeks in Peru and Colombia conducting orientations, visiting YMCAs, and making site visits. In Lima he participated in orientations for our Summer Work and Travel participants recruited by Universal Student Exchange (USE). He also spent considerable time at the YMCA in Lima visiting various sites that are part of our Global Teens program and led an orientation for Summer Work and Travel participants recruited by the YMCA.

In Colombia, Scott visited the Bogota YMCA and the office of Federation of YMCAs. A trip highlight was a visit to Camp



Sandy Mitchell with **Don Andres** in the Dominican Republic

Bochica, a potential Global Teens site in 2009. Scott and Alveiro Valencia, General Secretary of the Colombian Federation of YMCAs, also visited Popayan in southern Colombia and interviewed applicants for the International Camp Counselor Program.

Visits to Chile, Paraguay, Argentina and Brazil were made by **Rayda Marquez**, Associate Director of International programs. Time was spent in Chile at YMCAs in Santiago and Temuco, in Paraguay at Asuncion, and in Brazil at Buenos Aires and Sao Paulo. In Santiago, the therapeutic riding program, operated in collaboration with the police and Army who lent their horses for the program, was discussed in terms of the potential to recruit ICCP staff for special needs camps in the US.



Scott Curry (l) with **Alveiro Valencia**, **Nisma Castañeda**, and **David Salazar** in Colombia at the Federation of YMCA's

Hiring Process

Expected practices of host sites:

- Define and articulate why the camp wants to include internationals on their staff (other than filling vacancies).
- Interview a potential applicant by phone prior to hiring.
- Be thorough in evaluating candidates and selecting staff.
- Spend as much time in the hiring process as you do with American staff.
- Show honesty in matching candidates' skills and interests with their needs.
- Provide clear expectations of staff while at camp.

Exemplary practices of host sites:

- Define & articulate how inclusion of international Staff fits into the site's philosophy.
- Avoid stereotyping nationalities by demonstrating a willingness to hire international staff from all countries and use them in all positions.

Prior to Arrival

Expected practices of host sites:

- Talk to the staff member by phone or e-mail before their departure to your site.
- Provide advanced information by mail or e-mail including policies, handbook, organizational chart, map, weather, what to bring, camp Web site, orientation/training schedule, job descriptions, camper or customer profile, rules and regulations, mission/purpose, time-off policies, transportation-to-town options, e-mail of mentor/buddy, local attractions/local community info, etc.
- Present a realistic picture of the site and establish expectations, i.e., help with understanding of rural community differences, sleeping accommodations, typical menus.

Exemplary practices of host sites:

- Provide opportunities for effective networking with former international staff in their country, e.g., share e-mail addresses of former international staff.

In the next newsletter, we will present "Best Practices" for welcoming your international staff member.

INTERNATIONAL YMCA

Serving the World

Since 1911

A Branch of the YMCA of Greater NY



The Y's Strong Kids Campaign had \$107,000 pledged in 2008 for scholarships to International YMCA program participants!



We hope you will consider a pledge for 2009. For more information and to make a pledge, go to this link on the web site:

<https://ycom.ymcanyc.org/netdata/takedon.maclpledgeform?inpBrn=85>

International Y Program Updates

Global Teens has received over 50 teen applications for "early bird" consideration for the 2009 season and 28 group leader applications. Interviews are being conducted currently and selections will be announced by the end of 2008. Deadline for applications from teens is January 23, 2009.

Go Global is placing participants for the 2009 season. If you know of any adult interested in serving at a YMCA or another NGO overseas, please let us know!

ICCP is ready for 2009! Register now & view staff apps!

YMCA Study Tours will be announcing two trip destinations and dates shortly... look for information in our next newsletter!

Did you know that....

... **ICCP** celebrates 50 years of serving US camps (and the world!) through the International Camp Counselor Program?

...the **Work & Travel** program has summer and winter options to bring qualified full-time students to camps, conference centers, hotels, restaurants and amusement park sites in support staff roles, i.e. kitchen, office and maintenance?

...there is *no fee to the US host site* to participate in the new 12-month Australian student work & travel program?

...**Global Teens** involves US teens in international travel for leadership development?

...the **Go Global** program places skilled Americans, 18+ years old, at YMCAs around the world to fully immerse themselves in the culture of the host country while assisting the Y in that developing country toward self-sufficiency?

For more information, go to our web site:



Season's Greetings and Best Wishes from all of us at the International YMCA!



(l to r) Maja Gustin, Lori Tay, Edward Ansong, John Hedbavny, Tatyana Sosonkina, Judy Gomez, Shane Lavin, Kelvin Eng, Dianne Carty, Ronald Yan*, Teresa Tirado, Amarilis Soler, Scott Curry, Krystal Dean*, Lourdes Lliguichuzhca, Liliya Serebrinskaya

Missing: Kalisma Alayon, Chad Hiu, Olga Lacayo, Rayda Marquez, Sandy Mitchell, Sumita B. Slevin, Rengin Isik*, Rona Ranjas*, Imade Idusuyi*, Jagriti Bawa*, Abby Cartwright*

* Volunteers & Work-Study Students



And a **HAPPY NEW YEAR!**