

# Participant News

Spring 2009

## DO YOU KNOW...

Which capital city is also the headquarters for NATO?

- a) Frankfurt
- b) Munich
- c) Florence
- d) Brussels

Afrikaans, English and 9 Bantu languages make up the 11 official languages of which country?

- a) S. Africa
- b) Nigeria
- c) Mozambique
- d) Ghana

Unscramble these cities:

- a) RIAMDD
- b) ASTGNOLA
- c) TEMMARADS

Answers on page 4

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## Foreign Perspective on Historic Day

WASHINGTON — **Charlotte Junius**, a German student interning in Washington, saw something she did not quite expect during the inauguration of **President Obama** in January. Near her vantage point, in the shadow of the Washington Monument, she was surrounded not only by hundreds of thousands of American citizens but also a healthy dose of foreign visitors, all packed onto the National Mall to witness history. “I was impressed by the large number of international people coming together here,” said Junius, who attended Eastern Kentucky University for her bachelor’s and will pursue her master’s degree at the University of Kent, in England. “I was standing in a big group



of people from my home country of Germany, the Netherlands and France. It is good to see so much interest in American politics from those outside of its borders.”

Junius, intern at the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, lives about a mile and a half from the White House in the International House — an independent residential commu-

nity with about a hundred students from more than 40 countries who are either studying or working in the city. Other international students from the house, who braved the crowds, took less notice of the revelry and were more impressed by the solemnity of the occasion itself. **Abraham Akoi**, a Sudanese-born student pursuing a master’s degree in government from John Hopkins University, was struck by the peacefulness and joy of the ceremony — two qualities he said are sorely lacking today in his war-torn country. “The peaceful transfer of power in America is amazing to witness,” said Akoi.

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## Don’t Forget SEVIS Validation!

International J-1 visa participants are required to confirm their arrival at camp or whatever Host Site for which the visa was granted. This is called **SEVIS validation**.

SEVIS is the **Student Exchange Visitor Information**

**System**, created by US Homeland Security following “9-11” and is designed as a tracking system for exchange visitors.

Each J-1 visa participant has a SEVIS number and it appears on the DS-2019

form.

Once at the US host site, all participants should go to the International YMCA’s web site and click on the link for SEVIS validation:

[www.internationalyymca.org](http://www.internationalyymca.org)

# Get A Social Security Card

*All J-1 participants are provided with instructions and a letter of introduction to the SSA with the DS-2019 packet*

All J-1 visa participants, Camp Counselors, Work & Travel, Trainees & Interns should apply for a social security number once at the US host site. It is true that J-1 visa participants will not receive any benefits from Social Security. However, all employers need their participants to have a SS number for payroll, tax purposes and they are needed to open bank accounts and, in some cases, to obtain a driver's license.

The Social Security Administration (SSA) uses Homeland

Security's SEVIS system as its primary data source to verify legal entry into the United States and, in conjunction with travel documentation, to verify the immigration status of non-citizen Social Security number (SSN) applicants.

You MUST wait several days after arriving on site to apply for the SSN, as it takes time for Homeland Security information to reach the Social Security Administration.

All J-1 participants are provided with instructions and a letter of introduction to the SSA with the DS-2019 packet shipped by FedEx.

Helpful information on this and tax-related questions are also in the [Participant's Handbook](#), and on the web site:

[www.internationalymca.org/ICCP/TAX.SHTML](http://www.internationalymca.org/ICCP/TAX.SHTML)

Once on site in the US, participants can call the International YMCA with any questions:

**TOLL FREE 1-888-477-9622**



*"I fell in love with this exchange program and had one of my best and great experiences working at a camp with people from different backgrounds and different cultures."*

## From a former ICCP participant...

Travelling to a foreign country is one of my great hobbies. However, I never thought about travelling and working in a team at camp until my first experience in 2008 in the USA. I fell in love with this exchange program and had one of my best and great experiences working at a camp with people from different backgrounds and different cultures. I shared mine with them as they shared with me. I learned a lot from other people, but also about myself and it helped me develop

many other skills .

ICCP gave me that opportunity and I want to thank them and say *HAPPY ANNIVERSARY*. They are bringing together people from different cultures to know better each other and help them to integrate and interact socially. This mutual acceptance of all these cultures will bring peace and love in the world.

Keep going ICCP and bring more youth because they are the future leaders of the world. They have to know many things before

starting "caring and responsibility" in their own countries. Only great people can carry great things. This is great and you are the best.

Best Regards,

Demba SALL, Senegal



(Demba was at Camp Horizons, CT, in '08 and will return in 2009 for another summer!)

## Traveling Outside the US After Arriving?



**Don't wait until the last minute—you MUST plan ahead!**

J-1 visa participants wanting to leave the US and return, after arriving in the US on a J-1, must plan ahead.

In order to return to the US, the DS-2019 form MUST be "signed for travel" by an authorized member of the International YMCA's staff. To

accomplish this the original DS-2019 needs to be sent to the International Y by the host site, with a letter stating the J-1 participant is in "good standing" and has permission to leave the US for the period specified in the letter. The letter, and the DS-2019, should be sent with a self-addressed, post-

age pre-paid envelope included in an envelope addressed to:

International YMCA  
5 West 63rd Street—2nd Floor  
New York, NY 10023

This also applies to camp counselors leading out-of-US trips, i.e. canoe, backpacking trips, outside of the US.

## From Camp Counselor to National Office!



David Salazar, now a member of the staff in the national office of the YMCA of Colombia, was an ICCP participant in the US twice: at YMCA Camp Indian Springs in Florida in 2006 and, in 2007, at the YMCA of the Rockies' Snow Mountain Ranch in Colorado. In a recent letter to the International YMCA, he remembers both as great experiences.

At Indian Springs, he recalled how people were so helpful and tolerant of his efforts to improve his English skills. "I didn't understand that much at first and there were really nice people that helped me a lot," he says. Also a great memory was being selected to lead a cabin of deaf campers for a week. He added, "it was

the best experience I had, to have the opportunity to share with them and play together at camp."

At Snow Mountain Ranch, David worked as a lifeguard, was trained in water rescues, CPR and First Aid. "It was an exhausting and intensive training but I learned a lot," he said.

One memory from that summer stands out as being "kind of scary" at the time. "I was guarding the pool when suddenly an infant got shocked inside the pool, his mom just ran out the pool screaming for help, I did the procedure and helped to bring her son back to life!!! It was such a experience; we all got really happy and, after a couple weeks, the mother called camp and thanked us again for helping her!!" Today, Salazar is in charge of promoting YMCA programs in Colombia, including the ICCP program, and helps with training ICCP participants which, he says is the favorite part of his job. He notes, "it is amazing to share with new participants all

my experiences and make them feel as excited as I was the first time!"

Alviero Valencia, the national General Director for the Federation of YMCAs in Colombia, is also a former ICCP camp counselor!

Another former ICCP counselor, and now General Secretary of the YMCA of Spain, is Juan Simoes Iglesias.



If you are a former ICCP, Work & Travel, Trainee or Intern, we would love to hear from you. Please send us your stories, photos, and an update of where you are now and what you are doing.

Email us:

[ips@ymcanyc.org](mailto:ips@ymcanyc.org)

### Happy Birthday ICCP!

ICCP is celebrating 50 years of bringing the world to children at US summer camps!

We would love to hear from past participants, telling us where you are and what you are doing now.

At what camp were you placed? What was your job? What do you remember most?

Please take a minute and let us know.

Contact us by email

[ips@ymca.org](mailto:ips@ymca.org)



## Foreign Perspective on Historic Day *continued from page 1*

All of the international students who spoke of their inaugural experiences said they have met American students who are both more and less engaged in American politics than they are. Because they are in Washington, they tend to interact with

many who care deeply about governmental issues, but each has had brushes with apathetic students, too. "My family is very excited about me being here," Junius said. Also, my friends are all very excited. They all know it's a historical

event. It's great to be here."

**NOTE:** *J-1 visa participants will find that, even with a new US president, opinions and thoughts about US policies and practices continue to be varied among US citizens! This is just one reason that life in the US is so special and interesting!*



**REMEMBER:** *Your J-1 visa is a cultural exchange visa. You will learn about US culture but don't be shy to share*

### ATTENTION TRI-STATE AREA (NY-NJ-CT) PARTICIPANTS: VOLUNTEER FOR THE AIDS WALK!

Be part of the YMCA's AIDS Walk Team: It is so easy and only takes 2 minutes to sign up. Visit [www.aidswalk.net/newyork](http://www.aidswalk.net/newyork)

Choose a) REGISTER TO WALK b) JOIN A TEAM c) TEAM YMCA OF GREATER NEW YORK - #0164...you are on the team! The first 250 registered walkers that show up on the day of the walk will get a very cool YMCA SHIRT!!

**SUNDAY, MAY 17, 2009**



**INTERNATIONAL YMCA ~  
Serving the World Since  
1911**

[www.internationalymca.org](http://www.internationalymca.org)

**In the US  
Call TOLL FREE  
1-888-477-9622**



The YMCA operates in 130 countries around the world; the International YMCA recruits program participants from nearly 70 of them! How many countries can you identify from the flags pictured above? For help:

[http://www.allstates-flag.com/flags/world\\_flags.htm](http://www.allstates-flag.com/flags/world_flags.htm)

- Quiz Answers from Page 1**
- **Brussels is also HQ for NATO**
  - **South Africa has 11 languages**
    - **MADRID**
    - **SANTIAGO**
    - **AMSTERDAM**

**International Staff Teach and Learn  
and Have Lots of Fun Too!**



**Support Staff play key roles in offices, kitchens, and with maintenance.**



**Lasting friendships!**



**At camp, it's all about the children!**