

The KENT MEDALLION



Volume 1, Issue 2 F December 2004

Upcoming Events:

February 28-March 4 2004
Global Awareness Week

March 1, 2004, 2:00-5:00 p.m.
PBD Study Abroad Fair
2nd Floor Kent Student Center

March 3, 2004, 7:30-9:00 p.m.
PBD Awards Ceremony

PBD Leadership:

President:
Mr. Ted R. McKown, II

Vice President:
Dr. Kenneth Cushner

Secretary:
Ms. Louise Ditchey

Treasurer:
Dr. Charles Nieman

Advisory Council:
Dr. Larry Andrews
Dr. Jerry Feezel
Dr. Davina Gosnell
Ms. Marion Korloss
Dr. Don Williams

Awards:
Dr. Ruth Ludwick
Dr. Barbara Mims

Membership:
Ms. Louise Ditchey

Scholarship:
Ms. Carolyn Sampson
Dr. Larry Andrews

Communications:
Mr. Tom Welsh

International Resource Center Reflects Spirit of Giving

By Tom Welsh

Since the International Resource Center opened its doors last spring, dozens of international students have enjoyed a smoother transition at KSU. The Center, based at Allerton Apartments (810E), has organized donation drives and informational programs, while serving as a distribution center for goods needed by international students.

Deborah Campbell, a Bahamian native who spearheaded the drive to establish the Center, understands the challenges international students face here. Since 2001, she has dealt with the usual strains of adapting to a new culture, while pursuing a master's degree and raising a daughter.

Campbell is quick to point out, however, that she received invaluable assistance over the years from friends on and off campus. In May 2004, she decided to spread this spirit of kindness when she hit on the idea of a permanent resource center.

Throughout the summer, she discussed the idea with Ann Gosky, Associate Director of Campus Life; Brian Hellwig, Managing Director of Allerton Apartments; Dr. Charles Nieman, Director, International Student and Scholar Services; Debra Lyons, Administrator at CICP; and Ted McKown, Assistant Director of Admissions. Meanwhile, she enlisted the help of Susan Peach, a Kent State volunteer.

In August, the Center organized its first donation drive. "We were able to distribute welcome baskets to every new international student," Allerton's Hellwig said. "All of



Dr. Deidre Badejo and PBD Vice-President, Dr. Ken Cushner, converse at the Phi Beta Delta All-Member Reception that was held in September.

these items were the result of donations made to the Center by individuals and businesses in the Kent community."

In the same month, the Center sponsored an informational session at the University's DeWeese Health Center. "During the meeting, we discussed the needs of (international) children, and especially the costs and red tape involved in securing health care," Campbell said. "We also discussed the daily challenges international students face in seeking medical care."

She added: "Kent State University has become increasingly conscientious of the needs facing international students and their families. I'm happy to say that part of the reason I'm here at Kent State is, they don't just recruit international students and then forget them. People here at Kent really are concerned about our well-being, and that's an important difference."

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Phi Beta Delta is an international honorary dedicated to recognizing and to encouraging professional, intellectual, and creative achievement in international education and to promoting interdisciplinary contacts and exchange of knowledge. Through membership and awards the society recognizes the achievements of international students and scholars, United States students who have studied abroad, and faculty and staff who are involved in international affairs.

Studying Abroad Changes Perspectives

by Elaine Laps

Studying abroad is an experience that's challenging to put into words. Those who've attempted to answer the inevitable question: "What is the biggest difference between home and abroad?" sometimes find themselves rambling.

Yet, it seems this question frequently opens flood gates, as well. Students I've talked with have indicated studying abroad was the best move they ever made. Although their locations and coursework varied, their opinions were surprisingly consistent.

They all agreed that everyone should take advantage of opportunities to study abroad because the experience broadens horizons and changes perspectives.

Sarah Carano, senior international relations major, studied in Geneva, Switzerland, last year and returned a changed woman. "Studying abroad really made me a more independent person," she said. "I used to be afraid of the idea of moving far away and leaving everyone I love, but now moving is my top priority. I really want to move back to Europe only this time I think I'd like to go to Paris or maybe London."

Some of the insights students experienced about their own culture while studying abroad were unflattering, but they dealt with them nonetheless.

"The main thing studying abroad showed me about my culture is that Americans are completely ignorant of anything that occurs outside the country," Carano said. "They have no worldview. They see America as the best country in the world, and yet they know practically nothing about other countries and cultures."



Phi Beta Delta members (Dr. Rubin, Dr. Gommlich, and Mr. McKown) visit with a Bunkyo University professor in Hiroshima, Japan.

However, while studying in Northern Ireland, Mallory Sander, a senior political science major, had a different experience. She encountered a Greek student who said that he hated Americans.

Sander noted the student's opinion of Americans inhibited her from becoming friendly with him. By the end of the semester, however, the Greek student thanked Sander for helping him understand that images projected in the European media did not necessarily present a true likeness of Americans.

These experiences highlight some of the benefits American students stand to gain from studying abroad. But they also shed light on a parallel phenomenon.

As Americans gain knowledge about people living in other cultures, they also provide important learning opportunities for the many people they encounter in their travels.