



FALL 2008

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## STATE ALUMNI MEMBER OF THE MONTH - CENTRAL ASIA

*"I try to do my best in conducting various community development and youth learning projects."* - Dayanch Hojageldiyev Ashgabat, Turkmenistan.

Dayanch Hojageldiyev—UGRAD\* alumnus 2004-2005 became the State Alumni Member of the Month for November 2008. This title is awarded to the most active alumni of any U.S. Department of State exchange program worldwide.

Dayanch Hojageldiyev is an alumnus of the Eurasian Undergraduate Exchange Program (UGRAD) and an enthusiastic organizer of community service projects in his hometown, Ashgabat, Turkmenistan. During the 2004 academic year, Dayanch traveled to the West Coast to study sociology at Washington State Univer-

sity, in Pullman, Washington. "My exchange year in the United States gave me a great chance to learn and witness how people could make a change and improve things around them," Dayanch says. And upon his return to Turkmenistan, he actively applied his newly honed skills to foster civil society development.

Dayanch had a lot of great ideas for community projects but was unsure about how to make them a reality. He turned to his friends at the U.S. Embassy and elsewhere for guidance and sponsorship. According to Dayanch, "It wouldn't have been the same success without the constant care of the U.S. Department of State. I value the support provided by the people who work at the U.S. Embassy in Ash-



Dayanch Hojageldiyev

gabat and its Public Affairs Section, International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX), and American Councils for International Education (ACCELS)."

Dayanch got underway when he was awarded two Project Smile grants, which is a program that funds community development programs led by

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## IT'S BEEN MADE! - U.S. ELECTIONS 2008

**Elections in USA** are an important event not only for Americans but people of goodwill throughout the world. Choosing the president America determines the policy on which the further development of mankind will depend. For this reason Charge d'Affaires of the U.S. Embassy in Turkmenistan, Ms. Sylvia Curran hosted a reception in the «Ak Altyn»

hotel. On November 5<sup>th</sup> 2008, representatives of political and business circles, community activists gathered to observe the process of elections of the U.S. President live.

The solemn meeting began before sunrise at 7 a.m. In a warm atmosphere of trust, every guest was offered with rich breakfast and a cup of hot

tea and flavored coffee. Special efforts were made by the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy in Ashgabat.

The event visitors collected periodicals, books, special issues of booklets on elections in English and Russian languages.

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alumni of programs sponsored by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. Project Smile focuses on community service activities that benefit children and elderly people.

Dayanch used the first Project Smile grant to organize a geography club named "Young Explorer." Through this project, he gathered a group of local middle school students and made a series of interactive world geography classes. Some of the questions that children raised about the United States were surprising. One student asked whether it was possible to take a bus or a train to travel from Turkmenistan to the United States. After a few classes on geography, the students learned how to use compasses and enjoyed guest speakers who shared their experiences living in different countries in the world and knew the answer to that student's question about the distance between Turkmenistan and the U.S.

Later, Dayanch was awarded his second Project Smile grant to coordinate several performances to benefit World War Two veterans and other elders. He organized a group of kids to do some chores for elders and talk with them about their experiences. At a social function, war veterans spoke about their war experiences. He also arranged a field trip for young people to Geokdere, a local countryside resort, and Geoktepe Fortress, sites that are symbolic of Turkmen people fighting against Russian invaders.

To continue his commitment to community service, Dayanch won a small alumni grant to organize the first Model United Nations (MUN) Club in Turkmenistan. Through his work with Model UN, Dayanch helped youth learn about issues affecting many



**U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Officer, Mr. A. Paul (right), awarding D. Hojageldiyev (left) with STATE ALUMNI Member Diploma**

countries. He has taught the Model UN participants how to focus on international issues and how to debate. Through this, students have learned about the interests and values of other countries. In October 2008, Dayanch and two other Model UN Turkmenistan Club members participated in the International Model UN conference in Odessa, Ukraine, promoting the Club and the Model UN action in Turkmenistan. Dayanch's efforts won him the award as the Best Speaker of the conference.

Dayanch is a strong supporter and organizer of alumni activities in Turkmenistan and is a founding member of the Ashgabat Alumni Association. Through MUN, Young Explorer clubs, and other projects, he creates opportunities for youth to learn about their communities and the wider world, to develop skills

they would not otherwise have the opportunity to develop, and to spend their time in a positive, creative, and supportive environment. In his community service work, he serves as a role model for youth and members of the wider community. These activities extend the lessons Dayanch learned through his UGRAD exchange to teach youth participants the knowledge and skills needed to foster and nurture the development of civil society in Turkmenistan.

*\* Established by the U.S. Congress in 1992, the UGRAD program aims to promote cultural understanding by increasing Eurasian diversity on college campuses throughout the United States.*

**Contributed by STATE ALUMNI staff**

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**Cont. from page 1**

Each participant received DVD videos of pre-existing technologies of election campaigns accompanied with subtitles in Turkmen.

In the hall of the hotel, there were two large screens broadcasting the process of voting in different states of the USA. All participants could take a picture with photo figures of the presidential candidates Obama and McCain.

Meanwhile, organizers followed the planned program activities. Presentations were made by Consul Joseph Chamberlain on "How American Citizens Vote from Overseas", Public Affairs Officer about «The Electoral College», and Charge d'Affairs with Presidential election remarks.

After, all participants turned

to the TV screens. The primary voting results showed a clear superiority in favor of Barack Obama, he got 388 votes. It's been finally made: people of different nations greeted new U.S. president-elect Barack Obama. Everyone was really touched by the speech that president Obama made after.

Along with the American voters, the Ashgabat meeting participants could secretly "vote" in the mock election cabin and confess who of the current pretenders they preferred for the White House. This kind of opinion poll was provided by the staff the U.S. embassy in Turkmenistan. Once the result was announced the audience exploded with applause: there were 62 votes given for Obama compared to 8 votes given for



**USG Alumni at the U.S. President Elections Watch**

McCain. Thus in Turkmenistan the percentage of people willing for Obama appeared to be even more than the one in America.

We asked some visitors about their opinion of the election in blitz-interview with our newsletter.

In particular, Dayanch Hojageldiyev, UGRAD'05 alumnus said: "What I really liked about this event is that there were a lot of visual

materials, live broadcast of elections, and, I guess for the first time, an informal poll. This is impressive, and I hope will turn into a tradition". Zeynepbibi Agamamedova, IV'05 alumna: "That's my first time participating in the event like that. And I am very interested. I voted for Obama and got a sticker with his name for memory".

**Learn more online: [America.Gov](http://America.Gov)**

**Contributed by S. Chuli-Kuli**

**ROUNDTABLE ON ELECTIONS 2008**

The meeting on this issue was held in the Public Affairs office, where alumni had a number of questions for the US Embassy's Cultural Attaché Peter Galus. Here we acquaint you with that discussion.

**Sona Chuli-Kuli: How does the electoral system in the US work? If you could describe the basics of the electoral system in 2 or 3 words.**

**Peter Galus:** US elections are democratic, every citizen has a right to select his or her representative. November 4, 2008 we will have a general election of the USA President. Americans will go



**USG Alumni interviewing Mr. Galus**

to vote for President of the US and senators, congressmen and women. And any local initiatives on the ballot. It is a big election. But people elect not only the presi-

dent; 1\3 of senators are up for selection every 2 years, every member of House of Representatives is running then locally in that state, country or city people are

also voting.

Every 2 years we have a federal election. We expect a good turnout, a lot of people are expected to vote.

Every time we have a presidential election, more and more people vote. This time we expect a very high turnout; also, current president George W. Bush is no longer on the ballot, as the US Constitution limits the number of times a person may be elected to the post of President.

A lot of people are interested in debates.

**Cont. page 4**

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Every election, around 80 million Americans watch debates; in our section, we have records of past debates that we can provide. We believe that democracy is one of the best ways to govern, and it is something we would like to promote in Turkmenistan. Democracy lets the people decide who will govern.

For these elections we have two candidates for the Presidential post: one from the Republican Party, and one from the Democratic Party.

**Ayna Palvanova: In your opinion, who will become the new President? And whom will you vote for?**

Voting in America is anonymous: in American culture we don't generally talk about whom we vote for, either in the office or in schools. Generally, we may discuss this among friends, but otherwise we do not really say whom we voted for until may be the end of elections. To answer your question, I am still undecided. I like something John McCain is saying. He is an action-oriented person, he believes in the American leadership and influence in the world. Some people disagree with that position, but that is fine. Barack Obama has a different philosophy: he believes in receiving information, and in listening.

Imagine a radio transmitter, and a receiver. One likes to transmit signals, and the other receives. This is the basic way to describe the general philosophical differences between these two candidates when it comes to foreign policy.

Who will win? Right now Barack Obama is in the lead according to national polls. This does not mean that he will win. The American electoral system is based on something called the Electoral College. When you vote for the president in America, your vote goes to someone called "elector", and this elector will vote for a presidential candidate in Congress. Electors gather and vote based on proposals of votes each candidate receives. The candidate with most votes wins.

The Electoral college does not count direct votes. In fact, when people vote, they are actually voting for somebody in the middle. Each state has the names of the electors, and the number of electors is based on the population of the state. In California you have 44 electors, in New York 37, 15 in Michigan. For example, there are 30 million people in California. If at least 51% of that population votes for Barack Obama, then he will win all the elector votes of the state. Then the representatives of that state will participate in a special convention, where all of them will vote for him. That is the most complicated thing in our Constitution, and it is that way because the founders of our nation did not trust the average people to elect the president; they wanted the representatives to make the final choice.

**Who is choosing those safeguards?**

People will choose the representatives. Today those representatives are required to

vote based on the majority of that state, in the past they were not what they are today. However people do not directly vote for president. What happened in 2000 is that President George Bush received fewer of popular votes, but he got the majority of votes at the convention of electors, that's why he is president. On the November 4 two main candidates are running for the president at election: J.McCain and B.Obama as leaders of main parties.

People will also go to ballot box to go for local issues. If you are unhappy with management of city, state, country, you can vote for somebody new, you can remove that person from office, it is power of the people they are accountable for, in some systems there is no accountability and we think accountability is good.

**Akmyrat Tuyliyev: What about other candidates, now everybody is talking about McCain or Obama, I like more Hillary Clinton. How the parties choose their leaders?**

Republicans and Democrats have dominated electoral politics since the 1860s. This unrivaled record of the same two parties continuously monopolizing a nation's electoral politics reflects structural aspects of the American political system as well as special features of the parties.

The standard arrangement for electing national and state legislators in the United States is the "single-

**Mr. Peter Galus**

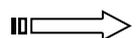
member" district system, wherein the candidate who receives a popularity of the vote wins the election.

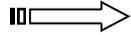
Unlike proportional systems popular in many democracies, the single-member district arrangement permits only one party to win in any given district. The single-member system thus creates incentives to form broadly based national parties with sufficient management skills, financial resources, and popular appeal to win legislative district pluralities all over the country.

**Dayanch Hojagyeldiyev: Who is providing the money for organizing the elections?**

This is a good question. We have federal election commission, and this commission is receiving money from the federal budget and there is election in every state and states actually run the election with guidance and money from federal government.

Where from the federal budget? It comes from taxes, customs, trade, business profits from bonds, duties on imports, income taxes. I've heard that there is a law in constitution about income taxes, which they take it anyway.





There is no provision in income taxes in our constitution, and that's why money is taken from your salaries for the government and for almost 160 years in America

there was no income tax, and it was based on import customs, trade, business. But it was decided that the government needs, the revenue was not enough, an income tax law was passed

and people pay more and they got security, they've got medical insurance and that was sort of deal for F.Roosevelt, "the new deal".

*Contributed by S. Chuli-Kuli*



## UGRAD ALUMNA MAKES DASHOGUZ CHILDREN SMILE



**Leadership Skills and English Camp 2008**

The Project Smile 2008 "Leadership skills and English Camp" led by Viktoriya Frolova (UGRAD'08 alumna) took place at the Alumni Resource Center of

Dashoguz city on August 11-14. Twenty children from families with disabled parents participated in the project for three hours every day. The age of participants varied from 8 to 16 years. During the camp days children were given an opportunity to meet each other through games, create their first nametags, learn about American culture and traditions as well as get ac-

quainted with the opportunities provided by American Corner in Dashoguz. Additionally, children were taught basics of English language, such as alphabet, self-introduction and conversation between people in various situations. After, all children watched cartoon in English language which encouraged them to start learning this language. On the final day of the project

all of the participants divided into teams and prepared different kinds of skits using English words and dialogues they have learned during the Camp. Afterwards working in teams children drew posters that reflected all days spent in the Camp. There was a small pizza party and the award ceremony at the end of the Camp.

*Contributed by IREX staff*

## ALUMNI THANKSGIVING EVENT

On the evening of November 28, alumni of U.S. exchange programs with their friends and families gathered for celebrating Thanksgiving event. The U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Section, ACCELS, IREX organized event was held at "Nissa" hotel, and was a potluck. Andrew Paul, Public Affairs Officer



**USG Alumni Gather for the Thanksgiving Potluck**

introduced Ambassador Miles to guests, and Mr.

Miles gave a speech about the role of alumni of U.S. exchange programs in the development of civil society. Ambassador's speech was followed by opening remarks of Andrew Paul. The FLEX alumni made a presentation about the Thanksgiving holiday and about American culture. The presentation

was followed by the "Thanksgiving day" movie. Fulbright Program Specialist Deborah Norland gave a speech about the Thanksgiving Holiday and traditions of the celebration. Alumni had an opportunity for networking and introducing American culture to their friends and families.

*Contributed by S. Chuli-Kuli*

## MEMORY DAY—SEPTEMBER 11TH

On September 11<sup>th</sup>, the PAS of the US embassy in Ashgabat organized a memorial meal dedicated to the 9/11 tragedy event. 65 alumni of different US exchange programs attended this event. Before this event, in the

Public Affairs section conference hall, there was a movie screening "United 93" for alumni and Information Resource Center visitors. The Public Affairs Officer, Andrew Paul, gave opening remarks and officially wel-

comed the alumni and other attendees to the event. He mentioned that this memorial meal was in memory of the victims of this tragedy, which happened seven years ago in New-York, USA. This terrorist act changed

life in the US and throughout the world.

The alumni had an opportunity for networking and sharing their opinions and impressions.

*Contributed by S. Chuli-Kuli*

## TURKMEN ALUMNI COMMUNITY PAGE ON STATE ALUMNI WEBSITE

Greetings from the U.S. Embassy in Ashgabat Public Affairs Section. My name is Guncha Komekova, your alumni coordinator. I am pleased to announce the Turkmen Alumni Community, a brand new resource for you to connect with other State Alumni members of Turkmenistan.

The official launch of the Turkmen Alumni Community comes with perfect timing as we celebrate Turkmen UGRAD alumnus Dayanch Hojageldiyev's honor as the November 2008 State Alumni Member of the Month. Dayanch served the Turkmen alumni community by mentoring prospective exchange participants, founding the Ashgabat Alumni Association, and creating the first Model United Nations Club in Turkmenistan.

Please take a moment to introduce yourself, share your exchange experience, and tell everyone what you are doing now in the Turkmen Alumni Community lounge: <https://alumni.state.gov/turkmenistan/news/discussions/discussions/general>

This community was created for Turkmen Alumni networking, sharing Alumni news, and participating in discussions. Also there are features for job and grant opportunities,

alumni gallery, and announcements. I believe that this tool will be useful for you to cooperate with Turkmen Alumni Community.

I would like to introduce you to some of methods on how to use this tool:

### Posting an alumni news article (with photos) in the Turkmen Alumni Community

1. From the Turkmen Alumni Community homepage, click on the "Alumni News" box <https://alumni.state.gov/turkmenistan/news/alumninews>

2. Click on the link "post a news article"

3. Type or paste (from Microsoft Notepad) news text into the body field, and type your title into the title field

4. Type the text you want to appear in the digest view into the bottom field

### Uploading photos and adding captions

\* To upload photos, click the "browse" button and select the image(s) in JPEG format that you would like to accompany the article

\* To add captions to your photos, click "preview" to make the caption fields appear

\* Type your photo captions, then click on "save" to complete the article

plete the article

### In the main State Alumni news gallery:

1. From the State Alumni homepage, click on the "Alumni News" box <https://alumni.state.gov/news2/alumni-news?func=add;class=WebGUI::Asset::AlumniNewsPost::Thread>

2. Click on the link "post a news article"

3. Type or paste (from Microsoft Notepad) news text into the body field, and type your title into the title field

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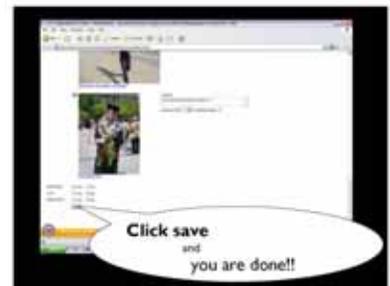
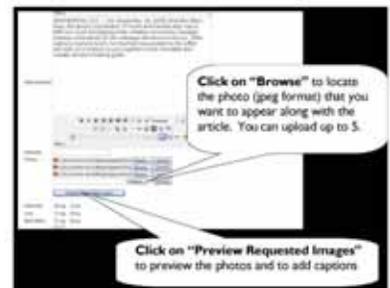
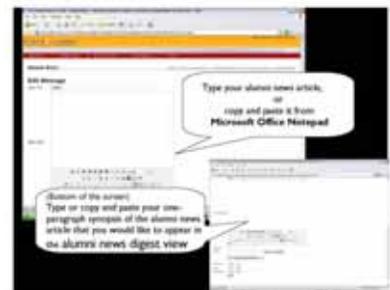
\* Type your photo captions, then click on "save" to complete the article

I hope you will enjoy sharing your alumni outreach with Turkmen Alumni Community

Sincerely,

**Guncha Komekova**

Alumni Coordinator - Turkmenistan Community Manager



## FOR SUPPORT OF THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF TURKMENISTAN

As part of a long-term cultural cooperation between Turkmenistan and the U.S. on October 16 the U.S. Embassy in Ashgabat held an award ceremony of annual «Ambassador Fund for Conservation of Cultural Heritage» grants program and a presentation of two projects for 2008-2009 year.

U.S. Charge d'Affaires in Turkmenistan Sylvia Curran congratulated the winners. Ms. Curran noted that the U.S. Embassy finances the restoration of historical monuments in Turkmenistan since 2001. During that time, 9 projects funded by more than 250,000 US dollars. All projects performed in conjunc-

tion with governmental agencies such as the Institute of History under the Cabinet of Ministers of Turkmenistan and the National Directorate for Research, Study and Restoration of Historical and Cultural Monuments.

Some of the projects sponsored by the grant program included renovation of the

mausoleum of Sultan Tekesh in Kunya-Urgench, the Mosque of Sayid Jamal Al Din located in the east of Ashgabat, Ak-Saray Ding tower in Dashoguz, excavations in the ancient city of Margush, and others.

This year's projects include a initial conservation and renovation of the Ismamut Ata mausoleum located in Dashoguz velayat; the archaeological survey and work on the mosque-

mausoleum of Mashat-ata (Shirkabir) in the ancient Dehistan on the territory of Balkan Region. This unique monument of 10<sup>th</sup> century representing the oldest Muslim mosque remaining on the territory of Turkmenistan is located in the west in the Balkan Region, home of the great Turkmen poet of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Makhtumkuli. It is still the most visited place because of the grave Ali bim Sukkari

"We are grateful to the Ambassador's Fund for the understanding of the issue and support for preserving the rich cultural heritage of the young independent state" - M.Aydogdyev, the Director of the Institute of History under the Cabinet of Ministers of Turkmenistan, said.

Contributed by S. Chuli-Kuli



Annually Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation sponsors over 180 projects worldwide

## FLEX ALUMNI ORGANIZE HALLOWEEN PLAY



On October 31, FLEX alumni organized a Halloween Charity Night at the Turkish Cultural Center in Ashgabat. An hour-long event aimed on fundraising money for the Abadan town orphanage. Sponsors of the project were American Councils for International Education (ACCELS) and Turkish Embassy.

The preparation started a month earlier. Five FLEX Alumni: Aylar Batyrova, Rovshen Chariyev, Mikhail Chariyev, Jennet Jumayeva, and Orazjema Hanayeva, led by the FLEX Alumni Coordinator Ayna Palvanova became the main facilitators of the event.

One of the main components of the Halloween Charity Night was the Hal-

loween Play that involved various dances and other activities to entertain public. Alumni had to find and choose people to be in the dancing crew.

On October 5, a casting was held at ACCELS in Ashgabat. Young people were invited to show their talents such as dancing and singing. Afterwards, 15 selected dancers were practicing 3-4 times a week and preparing for the main event. The choreographers were Ayna Palvanova and Nasiba Mangliyeva. Costumes were made individually by participating volunteers and thus no funds were spent on them.

The program of the Charity Halloween Night included Thriller Dance, "History of Halloween" presentation, musical "Old Mr. Clay", games for audience (Mummy contest, balloon-poking contest), song "Keep Going", and the highlight of the program - "Disturbia" Dance.

Moreover, the audience had a chance to wear Halloween dresses and try lots of sweets and candies.

Jennet Jumayeva, Orazjema Hanayeva, Sona Apbasova and about 10 other participants of the Halloween pro-



Thriller Dance by FLEX Alumni and American Corner Volunteers

Right after the performance guests were given an opportunity to take pictures with Halloween decorations and dancing cast: and were asked to make donations for the Abadan town orphanage.

The Halloween Charity Night raised substantial amount of money. In November 2008, FLEX alumni, Aylar Batyrova, Rovshen Chariyev, Mihail Chariyev, Akmyrat Tuyliyev,

ject went to the Abadan town orphanage with treats for children that were purchased for the money raised at the Halloween Charity Night, and winter clothing that was collected at American Councils in Ashgabat during a Clothing Drive.

Contributed by ACCELS staff

## THE VOICE OF FULBRIGHT ALUMNI — HIATAL HERNIA & GERD: CURRENT

Following the information of the previous issues of our newsletter, we continue acquainting you with the scientific researches and discoveries of the alumni. This time we would like to draw your attention to the investigation of Fulbright alumnus'07 O.Ponyatov. We are looking forward for your feedback.

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The development of instruments and technology allows physicians to investigate hiatal hernia (H.H.) more attentively. Specifically with regard to components of H.H., important actions and interpretations are governed by conscious values.

There are two major problems concerning H.H.: the causes and risks for H.H. on one hand which includes life-style, regional traditions, ethnic manifestation, age, gender issues and definition of H.H. on the other hand.

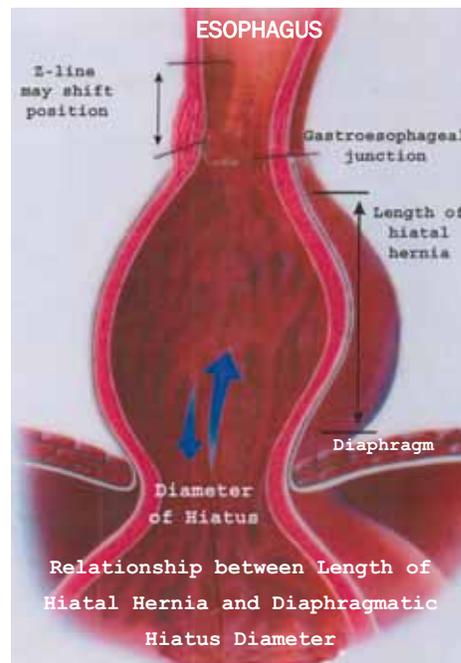
Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD)- the most

common reason why the patients come to the gastroenterologist. GERD may be manifested as typical (heartburn, regurgitation, dysphagia) and atypical symptoms (coughing, globus sensation and foreign body feeling). This considerably decreases the quality of life and predisposes to such serious diseases of esophagus like as dysplasia, (including Barrett's esophagus (BE)) and esophageal cancer.

In BE, some of the lining of the esophagus is replaced by a type of tissue similar to the intestine. The exact causes of BE are not known, but it's thought to be connected to the same factors that caused GERD.

The reason some people develop GERD is still unclear. However, research shows that in people with GERD, the LES relaxes while the rest of the esophagus is working. Anatomical abnor-

malities such as H.H. may also contribute to GERD. The H.H. occurs when the upper part of the stomach and the LES (lower esophageal sphincter) move about the diaphragm, the muscle wall that separates the stomach from the chest. Normally, the diaphragm helps the LES keep acid, bile from rising up into the esophagus. When the H.H. is present reflux can occur more easily. H.H. can occur in people of any age and is most often a nor-



mal finding is otherwise healthy people over age 50 and female during pregnancy, and who uses contraception, daily power-lifting, wearing tie, corset or that constrict the neck, chest or the stomach. Most of the time, the H.H. produces no symptoms.

Thus, GERD is commonly due to transient or permanent changes in the barrier between the esophagus and the stomach. Summing up the current studies have demonstrated that GERD can be due to incompetence of LES, transient LES relaxation, impaired expulsion of gastric reflux from esophagus, or H.H.

**Ponyatov O., Boveliyev B., Chuli-Kuli S., Muravenko A.**

## FULBRIGHT ALUMNA OPENS RESOURCE CENTER FOR BUSINESSMEN

In October 2008, Fulbright alumna Maral Meredova gathered representatives of different International and national organizations, alumni, and entrepreneurs at the presentation of one of the U.S. Embassy's most successful grant projects. Ms. Meredova organized the first U.S. Government (USG) programs' alumni resource center for businessmen in Ashgabat. The presentation took place at the resource center in the

building of one of the center's partners - "Soltan Dag" educational center. Other partners of the project were the Turkmen Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs and the private company "Bilgirje".

The main goal of the new resource center is to lead series of trainings on Business education. Center's professional teachers and USG programs alumni will conduct lessons and give knowledge on

developing a small business, economics and law basics, tax assessment, management and accounting, as well as English language and Internet basics that is required for establishing and maintaining partnership relations with International colleagues. Trainings are open for current entrepreneurs, as well as those who wish to start their own business.

Project coordinators plan to involve international specialists in the trainings. More-

over, first trainings of the center will be led by Ms. Sh.Henderson, a Business English teacher from the United States. She is staying in our country with an American educational exchange program. As the program manager, Maral Meredova noted that the initiative of creating the resource center for businessmen was predetermined by the

leader of our country Gurbanguly Berdimuhammedov who prioritized development of small and medium businesses.

The center has all of the advanced technology, as well as computers connected to Internet. The education in the center is available in two languages – Turkmen and Russian, letting more audience have

the opportunity to become students of the center.

Today the resource center works only in Ashgabat; however, very soon there will be other similar centers in every region of Turkmenistan. Overall, the future network will become a national school for businessmen in our country.

## MODEL UNITED NATIONS IN TURKMENISTAN

In 2008, Dayanch Hojagyeldiyev – the leader of the “Young Explorer” youth club – with the support of U.S. Department of State, Peace Corps in Turkmenistan, and Russian Far East MUN Club, launched the first in Turkmenistan Model United Nations Club. Initiated in Ashgabat, the MUN-Turkmenistan Club gathered a number of students and recent graduates to prepare for the upcoming MUN conferences in Turkmenistan and abroad.

In the beginning of 2008, D.Hojagyeldiyev decided to expand the work of already existing “Young Explorer” club and create the first in Turkmenistan Model UN club. For a long time, Model UN as imitation of United Nations work and a great tool of involving youth in discussion of global issues was very popular among teachers and students at schools and colleges all over the world. At the U.S. schools, for example, there are special MUN classes where students practice their critical thinking and public speaking skills during discussion of various acute issues, and express their opinion. With the help of the Russian Far East Model United Nations Club and Peace Corps volunteers in Ashgabat, Hojagyeldiyev managed to develop working plan for the Turkmenistan MUN club. With the financial support of ECA Small Grants program administered by IREX, in March 2008, the first in the country Model



Model UN Club in Turkmenistan by UGRAD'05 Alumnus Dayanch Hojagyeldiyev

UN club started its work. After competitive selection, 20 active and inquisitive young people took part in the program of trainings and seminars on leadership, public speaking, debate, critical thinking and many others. Classes were conducted by professional trainers Peace Corps volunteers. During weekly meetings the MUN team tried to talk over different subjects and discuss various issues. Students also studied the United Nations work structure, practicing and simulating work of its agencies. At the end of September

2008, the team led the first Turkmen MUN club Model UN conference in Ashgabat. Model UN club invited guest-speakers – representatives of different organizations, including the United Nations.

In October 2008, with the financial support of the U.S. Department Alumni Outreach Grants Program, three representatives of MUN club in Turkmenistan participated in the international Model UN conference in Ukraine. During the international forum, Hojagyeldiyev showed his best and received a certificate as the best speaker.

## MODEL UN IN TURKMENISTAN GOES INTERNATIONALLY—ONUMUN 2008

On October 24-26, 2008 members of the Model UN club Turkmenistan took part in the 7<sup>th</sup> Odessa National University Model United

Nations Conference in Odessa, Ukraine. With the support of the U.S. Department of State and the leader of the Model UN club,

Dayanch Hojagyeldiyev, the “honorable delegates” from Turkmenistan: Akmyrat Tuyliyev, Ayna Palvanova (FLEX'08) and Dayanch Ho-

jagyeldiyev (UGRAD'05) visited a three-day students forum to supplement their Model UN skills.

*Cont. from page 9*

First you might ask: "What is Model United Nations?"

MUN is a UN like conference, where young people get together think on and try to help to solve global problems that we all have on present day. There are 4 committees, and this year they were: Security Council, Human Rights Council, World Bank and Black Sea Economic Cooperation. There is one chairperson on each committee (it's like a president of the committee), who has a neutral position in the conference. And of course there are several delegates; each of them is representing a certain country and its position. After each committee discusses their subjects and gets a certain decision, all 4 committees write a resolution that is later sent to the real United Nations, for the further examination.

ONUMUN came to be a very diverse conference! All of

the participants were almost from all over the World: from Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia, Moldova, and Russia to Germany, Austria, Czech Republic and Nigeria! Everyone was very different from each other and at the same time similar in some way. The conference program included some fun part. During one of the evenings about a 100 of conference participants gathered for the International Culture Night. Students from different countries represented their home cities and traditions, national dresses and dances. Many presenters treated International Culture Night participants with national food and drinks that were common for their culture. Everyone enjoyed the Night and found many new friends from far countries.

The experience from ONUMUN was very important for all of the participants. One didn't just find good friends

or didn't only learn more about the country he/she was representing, but the main point was to involve the youth into very serious problems in politics, human rights, environment, etc. This conference was a good practice for the future generation in making the future World better. The "delegates" had a great chance to learn and consolidate their skills in public speaking, critical thinking and being active. These are qualities of leaders, and our World and future are in their hands.

As members of the Model UN Club in Turkmenistan believe, the ONUMUN 2008 is the first in a row of many international events that the Turkmen MUNers will attend in order to promote the MUN movement in our country and exchange experiences with international counterparts. Hopefully, in near future there would be a chance to organize a confer-



**Turkmenistan Model UN Representatives during the ONUMUN Opening Ceremony**

ence like ONUMUN in our place too.

For more information about Odessa National University Model United Nations and final papers of the ONUMUN 2008 visit [www.onumun.org.ua](http://www.onumun.org.ua).

*Contributed by Akmyrat Tuyliyev, FLEX'08*

**Model UN Club in Turkmenistan is always open for new members and volunteers. For any questions or comments, please, write to [mun.turkmenistan@gmail.com](mailto:mun.turkmenistan@gmail.com)**

## ALUMNI SUCCESS STORY



*"Community Connection Program helped me to develop my business", - Serdar Choudyrbayev, alumnus of the Community Connection Program, 2006.*

In 1997 Serdar graduated from the Management Department of Turkmen Agri-

culture Institute. He began his carrier in a private enterprise, "Ecology", his father's enterprise that produces Turkmen carpets. Serdar advised his father on the new direction - production of cheese. In 1991 they received a loan of \$137,000 from the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development for running a cheese-making business.

They rented the space in

their home village of Gubadag in Dashoguz and bought new equipment. But cheese wasn't made right away. For 2 years they had serious problems with marketing. Finally Winrock Program in Turkmenistan offered them to follow the advice of an American specialist. Several consultants came over for 10 days to work in the small business "Peynirchi", a word that

means "Cheese-maker". Half a year later they came back to look at the results.

Step by step their business developed. Today, father and son are amazed by their own results. If in 2000 they sold 400-500 kilograms of cheese, now they make and sell the same amount per day!

My view on the development of business definitely changed after my trip to the

USA with the Community Connection program in 2006, – says Serdar. – In Michigan we were studying issues of support for small businesses. The trip helped me to get additional knowledge on how to lead work in a company effectively. I finished the Institute of Agriculture in Turkmenistan, with a specialization in Management. It was very useful for me to visit American businesses, talk with the specialists, and make new business contacts that we will continue working with in future.

We have looked at many private businesses, especially the famous Coca Cola Company, the Planta Moren, and Ford. The main lesson that Choudyrbayev learned after visiting the US is that you shouldn't chase after huge companies, but start your business from the smallest steps and always remember the laws of economics. Then, success is guaranteed. After coming back, Serdar started working on widening the family business. He bought one more building located in the Goro-gly etrap of the Dashoguz



Serdar Choudyrbayev and his Family Colleagues

velayat. He also dreams about a mobile compact shop so he can reach different corners of our country. It is difficult to always find the fresh and tasty “Yayla”

cheese that is produced by his company because it never stays long on the shelves. And this is a result of a successful business.

*Contributed by Sona Chuli-Kuli*

## AFTER ALL...

### UPCOMING EVENTS: ST. VALENTINE'S DAY



Sure, you can wait to the last minute and buy one of those pre-made Valentine's cards but in a recent survey, the majority of women said that a hand-made card is more romantic than any expensive store-bought gift for February 14.

We browsed Internet for some hints that you might

find useful for the upcoming Day. Below is one idea for the “V” card. You can find more at [www.theromantic.com/](http://www.theromantic.com/)

#### KING OF MY HEART

submitted by: Denise Afssa

I recently made my new husband a hand-made Valentine card. I used pink construction paper like we

used in grade school, oh the memories!

Adding a round white doily with a bright red heart shaped doily inside was a special, old-fashioned touch. I was giddy with the joy of making the card for him! My husband is Egyptian, so I put a stamped picture of King Tut inside the heart, and wrote, KING OF MY HEART

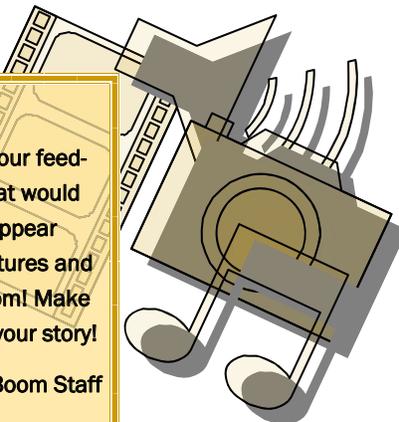
on the top!

I put bright red lipstick on, and for a special, personal touch kissed the card a few times, so my 'kiss' would remain for him! I added stencils of hearts and wedding rings, as well as stamps of Cleopatra (me!) and some other meaningful things for him. Signing it, \_\_\_\_, your loving wife.

#### Dear Alumni!

The Alumni Boom editorial staff needs your feedback as well as your media materials that would support our work and make the pages appear more vivid to you. Please, take more pictures and get more notes to be sent to Alumni Boom! Make your fellow alumni learn about you and your story!

Alumni Boom Staff



Zimbabwe introduces the \$50 billion dollar bill, which buys a loaf of bread. According to today's estimates the \$50 billion note will trade at \$1.25 US dollars on the black market and have enough purchase power to buy just two loaves of bread or three newspapers.

**DEAR ALUMNI!**

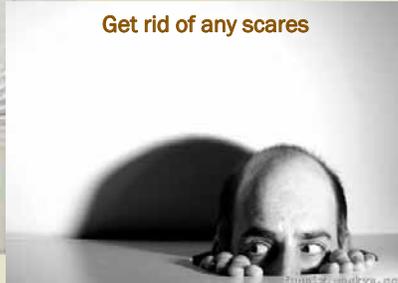
**THE EDITORIAL BOARD OF THE ALUMNI BOOM WISHES YOU HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

**In 2009 we want you to:**

**Have some time off the routine work**



**Get rid of any scares**



**Keep the World peaceful**



**Find time for fun**



**And never feel lonely...**



**HAPPY 2009!**



**AMAZING STORIES**

**From a letter...**

I am a medical student currently doing a rotation in toxicology at the poison control center. Today, this woman called in very upset because she caught her little daughter eating ants.

I quickly reassured her that the ants are not harmful and there would be no need to bring her daughter into the hospital.

She calmed down, and at the end of the conversation she happened to mention that she gave her daughter some ant poison to eat in order to kill the ants.

I told her that she better bring her daughter in to the ER right away.

**Girl, 13, sends 14,528 texts in a month.**

Greg Hardesty of Silverado Canyon, CA-USA, told the New York Post his 440-page cell phone bill revealed his daughter Reina had sent an astonishing 14,528 text messages.

**A 107-year-old Chinese woman** who was afraid to marry when she was young has decided to look for her first husband and hopes to find a fellow centenarian so they will have something to talk about, a Chinese paper reported.

Wang Guiying is worried she is becoming a burden to her aging nieces and nephews since breaking her leg when she was 102 and had to stop doing chores like washing her clothes.

"I'm already 107 and I still haven't got married," the Chongqing Commercial Times quoted her saying. "What will happen if I don't hurry up and find a husband?"

