



# INTERNATIONAL HOUSE OF RHODE ISLAND

...through friendship, a world of understanding

## NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR - RISA GILPIN

I've been thinking about the fact that our wonderful International House of Rhode Island celebrates its 55th year of existence (and we hope you'll join us on May 4th for the celebration) and how innovative, relevant and necessary our mission of "promoting friendship, connection, learning, and global understanding by bringing people together from around the world for cross-cultural exchange," still is today. When Bili and Gil Mason chose, in 1963, to formalize the organization that had existed for several years out of their home, I believe they understood that this is a mission that will always be relevant and necessary. Providing a sense of belonging for folks who are far away from home, and those who open their hearts and minds to these visitors is critical to the spirit and creation of world peace. As unachievable as that might seem, we can never lose hope, and that is what this place represents - eternal optimism.

I think our students would agree - these motivated English Language learners come here with such positive and upbeat attitudes. Anna Deavere Smith, playwright and actress, captured this sentiment as reported in the New York Times, March 18, 2018 edition - "It wasn't just being visible to myself that made education intoxicating. It was paying attention to the world in the company of those who had different histories, and who followed different paths, that turned on the lights for me." Turning on lights, continuing to have hope, that is what we're all about here.

And also in this year when I keep pondering what would have happened if my hero Martin Luther King, Jr. had not been taken from us 50 years ago, Providence Journal reporter Mark Reynolds wrote in an article about King, "How does

a person love other people even when those people are strangers or enemies?"...Dr. King believed that "unconditional love" was the key to overcoming war and hatred and finding peace on earth. He believed that people everywhere were capable of it, as individuals and as groups. "I refuse to accept the view that mankind is so tragically bound to the starless midnight of racism and war that the bright daybreak of peace and brotherhood can never become a reality," King said when he accepted the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964. "I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality," he said.

King identified six types of love: utilitarian, romantic, a mother's and father's love, friendship, humanitarian and unconditional. The last one, also known as "agape," was the most important to King, who described it as "unmotivated, spontaneous, overflowing and seeking nothing in return." King called it the "unifying principle of life."

We talked about this concept of unconditional love in one of our sessions of the weekly Socrates Café (every Thursday at 2:00

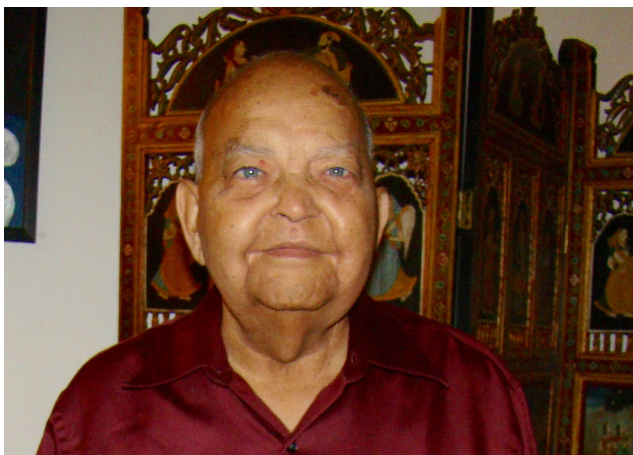


Risa Gilpin, Gladys Corvera Baker, Nancy Patino, Robertico Arias,  
Barbara Sturtevant, David Woolman, & Ina Wolman

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pm and open to all) here at International House and we determined of all considerations, this concept truly IS the key to overcoming hatred and finding peace on earth, and it is this principle that we promote and emphasize here at our wonderful warm, friendly and open-minded House. What a treasure to be able to actually encounter examples of this concept here on a daily basis. What could be better than gathering folks from around the world to test the value of these concepts and ideas?

Last November we wrote a letter in support of International House's first Student Council President Dr. Dharam V. Ablashi receiving an honorary degree for URI's 2018 Commencement. We were thrilled to learn that he will be receiving this high honor in Kingston on May 20, 2018. Renowned virologist and humanitarian who influenced the lives of thousands of people within the field of immunovirology research and beyond, Dr. Ablashi will receive an honorary degree of doctor of science. He is internationally known for his research on human and simian herpes viruses and the connection between viruses and cancer. While studying at URI in 1963, he helped found International House of Rhode Island and he remains actively committed to our organization. Dr. Ablashi represents such a perfect example of what we remain most proud of.



Dr. Dharam V. Ablashi

We have longed to reconvene a Student Committee here at the House, and, to that end three of our current English Language students have launched an effort to establish a student-led group. Anissa Zidi Doradoux (France), Natasha Bandeira (Brazil) and Zoey Liang (China) write: "During class, we are all curious about each other's cultural backgrounds, and we are lucky enough to enjoy this cross-cultural environment at the International House of Rhode Island. The point is to build on this appetite to learn about each other's culture and to help

the students to develop their skills. As a student we all come with the same purpose, to learn English, but also to express the different stories we carry with us. Those stories could be personal, professional, life-changing and most importantly is that through this channel we can feed our own personal story." We hope to see students organize activities that they really care about, and also are looking for participants to launch this effort into a regular activity at the House. If you are interested in participating please let us know and we will alert the leaders of the group.



Zoey Liang, Anissa Doradoux, & Natasha Bandeira

This year our terrific Volunteer Coordinator Gregory Waksmulski, working with Kathryn Wheatley, Program Director for RISD's Center for Student Involvement, brought three talented volunteers to our doors through their LACE (Leadership and Community Engagement) Fellowship program. The program is designed to build relationships with area non-profits through student placement and "making lasting contributions to a global society." We are so fortunate to welcome Sara Choi, Industrial Design (2020); Shreeya Rajgarhia, Industrial Design (2020); and Avril Teo, Architectural Design, (2019) to our House. All three selected International House as their top preference, and all expressed a desire to help our service reach more people through better design. Thanks to their effort and application of talents, they produced several manuals to aid in day-to-day operations. Information and resources regarding everything from teacher training to promotional campaigns are now collected in one place. Our interns from LACE also revised key visual materials used in our communications. Be looking forward to seeing in our new, visually appealing layouts to our monthly event calendars and in our foyer.

One of our long-time residents Vineet Venugopal (now DR. Vineet Venugopal) from India, left our House after living here for about 5 years. He is now a Postdoctoral Researcher at the State University of New York in Buffalo, NY. We miss his presence here at our House, but we're thrilled to know of and share in his success. He recently wrote this: "It's really interesting what I miss the most when I look back at Providence. I miss my couch in my room. My favorite position was lying on my couch with my feet next to the radiator and watching something on my laptop. I miss looking out from the kitchen window on a snowy day and watching the snow fall and accumulate over the parking lot. I miss the parking lot on a warm summers day. I used to pace around there at night and watch the starry skies. I miss coming down on a weekday and seeing Linda's smiling face - a constant presence over the years. I miss seeing you on Wednesday's and hearing about the house." We miss you too dear Vineet and wish you all the best!



Dr. Vineet Venugopal & Risa Gilpin

At this time, we take the opportunity to thank the Carter Family Charitable Trust for their generous donation of \$3,686. This will cover the cost of buying a new stove for our overworked kitchen (the igniters on our current stove have been failing due to the constant use for all of those nationality dinners and the weekly potluck luncheons, not to mention its age) and will also pay for the work that was needed on our boiler which backfired during the freezing cold weather in January. We truly appreciate this generous gift.

## UPCOMING PROGRAMS

**Friday, May 4, 2018, 6:00-8:00 pm** – 55th Anniversary Dinner – taking place at the Aspray Boat House, 2 East View Street, Historic Pawtuxet Village, Warwick, RI. Join in on an evening of celebration, on the water's edge, honoring international friendship and supporting global harmony. Musical interludes with Hugo Gonzalez, Czesare Santana and Friends; Dinner catered by Sazon Bandit, Chef Cristian Bueno, presiding. The menu, from the Dominican Republic, includes Spanish Appetizer platters (guava and cheese tequenos; chicken and cheese/beef empanadas); Garden Salad; Eggplant Napoleon; Spanish yellow rice; Grilled Chicken, Steak, and Vegetables; dessert – Tres Leches. Tickets are \$75.00; with sponsorship opportunities ranging from \$250-\$1,000 – thank you for helping to support our efforts by participating in this fundraising event!

**Monday, May 7, 2018, 7:00 pm** – French Club – Sarah Leser will speak to us (in French) about Paris and specifically the quarter of Saint-Germain-des-Pres and its history and legends. All levels of French speakers are welcome. Please bring a bottle of wine or snack to share if you are able.

**Saturday, June 2, 2018, 7:00 pm** – Spanish guitar concert with Mychal Gendron, classical guitarist, playing works by Latin American composers. For the opening Czesare Santana and Oscar Ballester will play instrumental versions of latin standards including boleros, folk and new songs. Tickets \$10 for International House members; \$5 for students; \$15.00 non-members.

**Friday, June 15, 2018, 6:00-8:00 pm** – Cena de Puebla - Dinner from Puebla – food from the Central region of Mexico - presenting a menu of Mestizaje - the fusion of Indigenous and European cultural cuisines. Menu includes Guacamole; Radish and Onion salad; Mole de Pollo (chicken mole); Mole de Se-

## MEMBERSHIP AND CLASSES

Help us to spread the word about our International House and its programs and classes. Membership is open to anyone interested in other countries and cultures. Call today and join our global family – 401-421-7181. Please become a member: \$30.00 individual; \$45.00 family. Join now and save on our events. Our ESL classes; foreign language classes and clubs welcome new students at any time in the semester. We offer sessions for Beginners, Intermediate, and Advanced conversation groups. Visit our website at [www.ihouserio.org](http://www.ihouserio.org)

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tas (Oyster Mushroom mole); Rice; Tortillas; Flan Dulce; Agua de Jamaica. Our Chefs are International House member Sara Dorsch, and student Andrea Colorado (from Veracruz, Mexico). Tickets are \$25.00 members; \$35.00 non-members; \$15.00 students

**July 2018** - Our newly formed Student Committee and the newly forming "Rhodes Island International Spouses & Partners Association" will combine efforts to organize a local hiking event in July - stay tuned and join us for some outdoor fun and socializing.

**Friday, August 17, 2018, 7:00 pm** - Robertico y su Alebreke concert - Robertico is a talented musician and master percussionist from the Dominican Republic. He worked with Wilfrido Varga's company, with David Byrne on his album "Rei Momo," with Los Hijos del Rey, and many more and has toured all over Europe, Asia, Africa and the American continent. He was an outreach instructor for the Rhode Island Philharmonic, and has been involved with other community programs. Alebreke plays Afro-Cuban music, such as rumba, son, mambo, salsa,

Latin jazz, bachata and merengue. Tickets, \$10.00 members and students; \$15.00 non-members

**Friday, August 24, 2018, 11:30 - 1:30** - International Student Orientation luncheon - 2 seatings - our annual event welcoming Brown University's new international grad students - please be in touch if you're willing to volunteer for this exciting event.



Jessica Novel, Hugo Gonzalez, & Oscar Ballester  
International Women's Day Concert

### Welcome to our new members!

Karen Rand Anderson  
Jelili Atku  
Armistead Covington  
Anissa Doradoux  
Barbara Kolb  
Victoria Richter  
Andrea Sarokin

Margot Schmid  
Deborah van Dam

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MAY - AUGUST 2018



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