



INTERNATIONAL HOUSE OF RHODE ISLAND

...through friendship, a world of understanding

NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR – RISA GILPIN

“I believe that imagination is stronger than knowledge. That myth is more potent than history. That dreams are more powerful than facts. That hope always triumphs over experience. That laughter is the only cure for grief. And I believe that love is stronger than death.” - Robert Fulghum

Aaah bittersweet, bittersweet – as I contemplate my retirement I think of this place with extreme love – this notion of Robert Fulghum’s of hope triumphing over experience, of laughter as the cure for grief and of love being stronger than anything is precisely the collective element that compels me to move forward now and ever, and this work here at our International House of Rhode Island is a reflection of that sentiment.

I will miss the daily interaction of this beloved community – the funny, the sad, the energizing, the connection of human spirit whether good, bad, ugly or sweet – it’s all part of the belief that peace is an achievable goal if only we could all meet each other on the solid ground of being human and wanting the best for our families, friends, and community. Sounds so simple, even though we know it’s NOT simple... and this place is a good place to start making the choice towards this goal.



Donata Gollin & Risa Gilpin

One of our wonderful students who recently returned to her home country of Italy wrote a beautiful testimonial – these words are truly the reason that our House feels so worthy of respect, and an example of the impact we have in our world.

Donata Gollin, who lives close to Vicenza in Italy, and was here for reasons related to her husband’s work writes:

“This opportunity came in a completely unexpected way, the idea of living for a while in a beautiful American city gave me a lot of joy and excitement but, at the same time, the very basic level of my English, and the fact that during the day I would always be alone worried me.

Shortly before the start, looking on the internet, I saw that in Providence, not far from where I was going to live, there was a place called ‘International House of Rhode Island’ where foreign people could meet.

I arrived in Providence on a Wednesday evening and on Thursday morning, I went immediately to the House where I instantaneously found welcome, friendliness and availability. This reality was a great surprise for me...I was immediately impressed by the vitality, the grit and passion of the staff and volunteers. Having lots of time available I took advantage of all the opportunities that were offered, so I took part in all the conversation groups, at the ‘potluck lunch’ on Thursday, and at individual meetings with the tutors.

In conversation groups I met people from all over the world. Little by little, the doors of the world opened up for me and those that, until that moment, were for me only small fragments marked on the globe, places of which I had only heard or read in books, had a face, a history, a tradition, a language, were people like me

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looking for friendship. On Thursday, during the potluck lunch those fragments on the globe became food, sharing, pride, tradition and mutual help.

When I did my individual lessons, I met generous and passionate volunteers. One of them tried to understand what my interests were, to be able to document and to have interesting ideas for conversation for me, another gave me a book for children to read, and as my pronunciation was not very good, recorded her voice while she was reading a chapter for me, so that I could listen many times and play the sounds correctly. Another has opened the doors of her house to me, she shared her passion for painting with me and before I left for Italy, she painted for me two images that reproduced places I had visited.

I think that the International House of Rhode Island is a 'model' of integration between different cultures, and a model of active aging, an example of civilization, of a profound sense of 'service' to the community and to people. An example to follow and replicate all over the world.

The three months I spent in Providence flew, I consider them a gift that made my life, I never felt alone and I brought home an amazing experience."

Donata has so obviously grasped her lessons and writes so beautifully – it's actually a bit difficult to describe the impact we have in our world, but these words really go a long way to articulate our contribution to global harmony and even world peace. We have had 93 applications for the Executive Director position here and I am confident that we will find a passionate, compassionate, and stunning leader who will launch us into our next stage of service and sustainability. Having purpose in this life is fundamental, and International House's purpose and mission are compelling and fundamental to living a fulfilled life. I am so glad to have been part of this outstanding organization and look forward to continuing my connection here – I will miss everyone!

And speaking of missing everyone – I will miss EVERYONE who enters our doors and feel so connected to the lively people who inhabit this place. I especially wish to call out our talented Staff members – John Walker, Development and Financial Manager, and Linda Breslin, Administrative Coordinator. This is, as you know, a small independent non-profit and we all must pull together to make everything run smoothly and seamlessly

– this always means stepping outside any perceived job description in order to rise to every occasion, and rise they do! It's been a true pleasure working with this engaged team – thanks to their steadfast belief in our mission of "promoting friendship, connection, learning, and global understanding by bringing people together from around the world for cross-cultural exchange." I also wish to thank our wonderful Board of Directors, Bili and Gil Mason, our Founding Directors; Robert Vachon, Chair; Jenny B. Andersson, Treasurer; Gylean Trabucchi, Secretary; and members Christina Bonnell, Herman Chenwi, Bonita Daly, Stephen Lister, Henry Majewski, Jason C. Preciphs, Esq., Joseph R. Scott, Jr., and Eberhard von Heyden. Also our revolving group of tenants (now from Cameroon, Italy, Russia, the Czech Republic, Turkey, and China) who are always at the ready to volunteer for our events, and of course our large dedicated group of volunteers – here to teach, tutor, cook, work events and bring their own sense of global harmony into our House, along with the students who find friendship and warmth within our hearts and souls. THANK YOU, THANK YOU, one and all!



John Walker & Linda Breslin

UPCOMING PROGRAMS be sure to check our website for updates on programs (things do change) – also see our Facebook page (International House of Rhode Island) to find images of our events. We send e-mail updates to our members – if you are not receiving these, please let us know so we can adjust our mailing lists...

Summer Hours Begin June 1, 2019 – we will be open from 9:00 am-4:00 pm through August

Friday, May 3, 2019 – 6:00-8:00 pm – Our annual **World of Thanks Tribute** to **Henry Majewski**, for his philanthropic passion and dedication to the mission of International House; and to **Irene Capotosto, Joan Kenower, and Angie Margiotta**, for their length of service and mentoring achievement in our global community. Tickets are \$50.00 per person; with sponsorship op-

opportunities available - \$250 - Bronze; \$500 - Silver; \$1,000 - Gold. Dinner is by Rasoi Restaurant, featuring regional cuisines of India. Help support our wonderful House and all its activities. We send you a World of Thanks!

Saturday, May date TBA, 7:00 pm - Con Raices Latino Americanas/With Latin American Roots, presents **Czesare Santana** (singer song-writer, originally from the Dominican Republic) - New Album/CD Release Party. Tickets, available at the door, are \$10.00 for members/students; \$15.00 non-members.

Friday, June 7, 2019 5:30-8:00 pm - Adventure Awaits - Join us for a reception to bid farewell and happy retirement to our beloved Executive Director **Risa Gilpin**. Please consider donating to International House of Rhode Island in Risa's honor TINYURL.COM/IHOUSEDONATE (remember to include the "I" before House)...

Friday, June 21, 2019, 7:00 pm - Gained in Translation - an evening of musical treats from around the world. This group's new program features an expansive repertoire of familiar jazz and pop songs musical pleasures shared around the world - performed in 6 languages from stars like Sinatra, Dionne Warwick, Lady Gaga, Aznavour, Piaf, Jobim, Los Panchos, Brel, Trenet, and more. These great and often familiar songs transport us through their native French, Portuguese, Spanish, Yiddish, Italian and Russian languages performed by the soulful voice of Victoria, and interwoven in English by Maurice. Musicians include **Chris Brooks** on lead guitar, **Maurice Methot** on guitar and vocals, and **Victoria Richter** on vocals and accordion. Tickets are \$10.00 for members/students; \$15.00 non-members.

Saturday, July date TBA, 7:00 pm - Cecilia Zabala Argentinian guitarist, singer, composer Cecilia Zabala was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina in 1975. Throughout her career, she has expressed her musical creativity using her guitar and her voice, creating original compositions that blend sensitivity, emotion, technique and intuition. Her music draws on a rich mixture of influence, from Argentinian folklore, the contemporary language of jazz, tango, and Brazilian music. Tickets, available at the door, are \$10.00 for members/students; \$15.00 non-members.

Friday, August 23, 2019, 2 seatings - 11:30 am; 1:30 pm - International Graduate Student Orientation Luncheon - help us welcome the new class of Brown graduate students at our annual luncheon - we serve about 300 international students lunch each

year to let them know that we are a resource for them during their time spent in Rhode Island. Join us to help serve and welcome this new group to our fair city. We need about 12 volunteers (6 for each session) - please be in touch by e-mail to linda@ihouser.org or by calling us at 401-421-7181 - it's always a pleasure to meet these motivated students.

Weekly/Monthly Programs -



Risa Gilpin, Theodore Nichols, Sophia Ouellette & Mikaela Gilpin

Potluck Lunch - every Thursday at 12:30 pm - everyone is welcome - bring a dish to share with others (homemade or store bought) - great opportunity to meet folks from around the world and engage in lively conversation.

Socrates Café - every Thursday at 2:00 pm - gathering where people from different backgrounds get together and exchange philosophical perspectives based on their experiences, using the version of the Socratic Method developed by founder Christopher Phillips - particularly fun here as we have representatives from around the world.

French Salon de Conversation - Mondays from 9:30-11:00 am - with instructor Aida Sahakian - practice your French conversation - mid-level and beyond...\$15.00 for members

Italian Avanzato - Mondays from 3:00-4:30 pm - with instructor Dedda DeAngelis - Italian conversation - mid-level and beyond...**beginning in June class will run from 2:30 -4:00 pm** \$15.00 for members

French Club - first Monday of each month at 7:00 pm - the group takes a break during the summer, so the **May 6, 2019** will be the last meeting of the season until September. Come together for a presentation in French and a chance to share con-

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.ihouser.org

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versation and refreshments (please bring a bottle of wine, or light refreshment to share, if you are able – Merci!)

RIISP (Rhode Island International Spouses and Partners Association) luncheons – third Tuesday of each month at 12:30 pm – a monthly gathering with a talk presented by a representative from different countries. Please bring your own lunch, dessert will be provided.

Welcome to our New Members:

Danilza Alcantara	Carmen O. Giraldo
Kyooyoung Bae and	Luz M. Giraldo
Younghwa Ahn	Donata Gollin
Danny A. Bass	Tiffany Gomez Castillo
Robert Beirne	Maria Camila Gomez
Carlos A. Cardenas	Emanuel Gominho
Denia Carisi	Berenice Gonzalez
Giuliana Castro Barreto	Hannah Goodwin-Brown
Peifen Chen	Baktygali and Zbaida Kumatov
Johnathan Conant and	Leonardo Landinez
Vanessa Corbera	James Madison
John W. Edwards II	Heiny Maldonado
Julia and Rob Emlen	Marie McCarron

Cristiane da Costa Mendes	Nini Stoddard
Yohara Mendez	Kai Tang and Lei Lu
Sevda Ozcanli	Alejandra Tobon
Carmen Paulino	Romina Vaccarezza
Anna Pavani	Wendy Van Orden
Moyses N. Leal Quintero	Mario Vargas
Anabela Moto Ribeiro	Thomas Winkler
Steven Ricci	Xiaobo Wu
Shari Risi	YuJin Yang and
Rosemary Q. Rosales	Chang Woo Jeon
Melanie Sepulveda	Wanlu Yu
Marouane Sihamida	Wei Zhang
Terence Shipp	Li Zhao

Planned Giving

Please be in touch with us to discuss a possible bequest/ planned giving contribution to our House. Please call John Walker here, or send him an e-mail at john@ihouser.org - thanks for considering International House of Rhode Island as a recipient of your bequest. With all the building projects underway, your assistance is even more critical than usual – Thanks so much for your support!

STAFF: 401-421-7181

Risa Gilpin, Executive Director
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John Walker, Development &
Financial Manager john@ihouser.org

Linda Breslin,
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MAY -AUGUST 2019



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