



NEWSLETTER

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Global Connections and Exchange Program for Tajikistan

Global Connections and Exchange Program for Tajikistan has established 24 Internet Learning Centers (ILCs) in secondary schools across Tajikistan. The program's main goal is to increase global dialogue and educational opportunities by installing modern computer equipment with Internet access in schools, and developing training and learning projects for teachers and students.

Tajikistan Global Connections and Exchange Program activities include:

- * Teacher training on using computers and the Internet in classroom teaching;
- * U.S. school partnerships on civic education projects, teacher and student exchanges;
- * Public access and programs for community members and disadvantaged groups;
- * Development of sustainable practices for schools and communities.

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Welcome, Shartuz and Panjakent ILCs!



Susie Chang and representative of Hukumat of Shartuz school cut the ribbon for the opening of the new ILC

We are happy to announce that two more Internet Learning Centers (ILCs), the first located in Shartuz, a community in the southern Khatlon region close to the Afghan border, and the second in Panjakent of the northern Sugd Region, have joined the Global Connections and Exchange Program in Tajikistan!

On Friday, May 12th the new ILC in Shartuz at School No. 1 was officially opened. School No. 1 has an active student population and very involved Parent Committee which provides much needed support to the school and its various programs.

The opening ceremony was enjoyed by students and teachers of the school, representatives of the local Hukamat, Education Department, Parent Committee, and Relief International – Schools Online. After speeches given by the representatives about the importance of the center and the benefit of collaborative relationships between Tajikistan and the U.S., the center was opened with ribbon-cutting and demonstrations by students working on the computers.

On May 18, the second new ILC was officially opened in the Panjakent Internaut Lyceum, which is a private boarding school catering to special needs students. Orphans are among the student population and welcomed in the school, and approximately half of the students, who are from low-income households, receive partial or full scholarships to attend the school.



Representatives of the U.S. Embassy and Panjakent School with students at opening ceremony

The U.S. Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission Tom Armbruster, U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Officer Jon Larsen, Head of Education Department of Panjakent Boboev K. Sh., Head of Hukumat of Panjakent Samadov Sh. D., Deputy of Parliament from Panjakent Kamolov J.A., students and teachers from the school, and Relief International – Schools Online all joined in the celebration of the new ILC.

After speeches given by the representatives about the significance of the ILC and Global Connections program, the center was officially opened with ribbon-cutting and a visit in the center. Tom Armbruster and Jon Larsen joined in a discussion with students of the school about the meaning of the center to the youth, their goals for the future, and cultures of the U.S. and Tajikistan. For many of the students, it was their very first beginning of friendships with Americans.

We are very excited to have the Panjakent Internaut Lyceum and Shartuz school No. 1 join the RI-SOL Tajikistan GCEP team!

Isfara ILC Opens Doors to Diplomacy

Congratulations to the Isfara ILC team - winner of a Doors to Diplomacy Gold Award! Doors to Diplomacy is a competition sponsored by the US Department of State to recognize the student-created Global SchoolNet Web project that best teaches others about the importance of international affairs and diplomacy.

Four students from the RI-SOL ILC in Isfara - Naimjon, Mukhlisa, Abdurahim and Zafar - with guidance from ILC Manager Ibrahim Rustamov, created a website on Tajikistan Arts and Culture because "the main thing is to learn Internet by way of introducing ourselves to the world and present information about the richness of our country."

While working on the website students used their knowledge and skills which they developed through our ILC clubs such as Web Design, Art and Photography, English Club and of course, Youth Leadership Club. Students from other ILCs supported the Isfara team by giving them useful ideas and comments on how to make the web site better and create a web masterpiece.

Congratulations to the Isfara ILC team for a fantastic website and for contributing to cross-cultural understanding and international peace! We join you in celebrating this great accomplishment.

Their Doors to Diplomacy website: Tajikistan Arts and Culture, can be viewed at <http://www.tajik.jino-net.ru>



Young web designers and active students of Isfara ILC worked together to create DTD website

The Tajikistan Global Connections and Exchange Program for Central Asia is a project of Relief International - Schools Online's Global Citizenship & Youth Philanthropy Program and has been made possible with major funding from the United States State Department Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and the Global Catalyst Foundation

Youth Leadership Clubs in May

May is the last month of the academic school year for all the schools of Tajikistan. This month all students, especially those from higher grades, were busy preparing for their annual examinations. Despite this fact, members of the Youth Leadership Clubs (YLCs) did not forget about their community and continued to conduct different community service projects this month.



Young leaders of Vose visit veteran of WWII

One of the most important and historical holidays in May is the celebration of Victory Day – this year was the 61st anniversary of victory over fascism on the 9th of May. Our youth remembers and respects people who participated in World War II and sacrificed their health and life to protect the freedom of our motherland. To congratulate and thank veterans of WWII some youth leaders visited them at their homes and spent time with them. Other leaders decided to invite participants of WWII to their ILCs and conduct festive performances in honor of veterans. Every YLC would meet these elders, giving them a hearty welcome and presenting them with different gifts. This was a great opportunity for young leaders to learn about the deeds of heroes and lives of people during that horrible and unforgettable war.

Another interesting and useful activity conducted by YLCs was helping younger students to get ready for their examinations. The 25th of May is the last day of instruction for schoolchildren, so after that day students have to pass exams on different subjects. YLCs provided assistance to younger students who had difficulties with certain subjects. First YLC members announced their assistance project, and then gathered students at their ILC to hold a tutorial class for them.



Senior students help younger pupils to prepare for their final exams

YLCs also conducted discussions between students of higher classes and their teachers. They talked about different issues such as: Is it important to continue education after the completion of secondary school? Why? What are your plans for the future?

This activity was really important, because some graduate students who didn't want to continue their education and believed that it is not an important issue in their life. But points of views of other fellows about the importance of higher education changed their minds and finally they came to one conclusion: higher education overall is important for all!

To sum up discussions about the importance of further education, students and teachers had a chance to participate in an online forum and exchange their ideas and opinions about education in Tajikistan and abroad with students from other Tajikistan ILCs, and share useful information about national and international institutions of higher education and discuss their future plans.

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Media of School Communities

This month GCEP students participated in this school year's final partnership activity about *Media*. By means of this lesson students acted as journalists and publicists creating interesting articles and giving the latest news and events happening in their school communities.

One of the main and common events in May and June for schools of the U.S. and Tajikistan as well as other countries of the world is school graduation. On the 25th of May all schools of Tajikistan celebrate the "Last Bell" – the last day of study for graduates. On this day the whole school including teachers and parents, congratulate 11th grade students on this special event and wish them success in their future university and adult life. Graduates prepare farewell performances, and thank their teachers and parents for their patience and support. At the end of the performance one of the 1st grade students, together with a graduate, perform the last ring with a hand bell. This moment brings tears to those who leave school, which has been their second home for many years.



The last bell at a Tajik school

This year graduation day for Delano High School will happen on the 2nd of June. "Graduation is one of the ceremonial events that recognize seniors that have completed their four years of high school. It is the most anticipated event for parents to show off their child's accomplishments and that of their own. All graduating seniors must dress in a navy blue cap with a class tassel on it and a gown. From graduation, seniors are now able to move forward into the future and bring themselves a step closer into adulthood" – reported senior students in their newsletter.



Graduation ceremony at a U.S. school



Graduates of Kayrakkum School No. 14

Besides this common event our ILCs and partner schools had other interesting news to talk about.

Fayzabad school is proud of its 5th grade student Ehson Saifuddinov – a very young boy who is talented in the subject of physics. Though Ehson studies in the 5th grade he is able to understand and learn curriculum for 10th-11th grades and perform successful experiments in physics. This year Ehson participated in the contest of physics model creators and was awarded 2nd place. Teachers and students of Fayzabad school hope that Ehson will become one of the well known scientists in the field of physics in the nearest future.

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One of the active project group students of Khorog ILC, Shahnoza Ashurmamadova, became a student of Bishkek University. Along with 30 students of Khorog region, Shahnoza participated in the selection process and successfully passed three steps of the contest and now she is preparing to be a university student!

Our students show their abilities not only in science but also in sports. Schoolboys and schoolgirls win the best places in volleyball, basketball, Greco-Roman wrestling, chess and table tennis and represent Tajikistan in other countries such as Iran, Turkey, and Italy.

Kathryn Leslie, a student from Oroville High School in Oroville, Washington says: "Sports are important to the students at Oroville High School, because in a small town there isn't much to do during the school year. When the students are in school the only thing there is to do is go out for a sport to keep students out of trouble after school. The sports we play here at Oroville High School are Baseball, Boy's Basketball, Girl's Basketball, Cross Country, Football, Golf, Soccer, Softball, Tennis, Track, Volleyball, and Wrestling. Oroville is known for their 2004-2005 Boy's Basketball Team who made it to State Competitions".



Nurek girls participated in table-tennis competitions in Iran and were awarded 3rd place

Young journalists of Gissar ILC reported that the 3rd of May for their school was a very happy day. The Ministry of Education and the Hukumat of Gissar city donated two brand new computers and a printer for School No. 2 in addition to those which the school has due to the GCE Program.

The May *Media* partnership activity helped students to develop their journalism skills through the research they conducted in their school community. With the *Media* activity students learned to write interesting articles about their school community and had the opportunity to read about what is going on at their partner schools. Students saw differences and similarities in their schools, and understood the importance and power of media in our communities.

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