Semester Sum-Up: Fall 2012

It was an exciting semester at Foster International. As we entered our 29th year as an LLC, we started looking ahead at our landmark 30th anniversary. But this foresight did not prevent us from having a great Fall 2012 semester. Caleb Kurowski replaced Nicholae Cline as the office assistant. We started off the year with a cook-out mixer with the Global Village. We collaborated with the GV on more than one occasion – we co-sponsored a GV-FIN Olympics and visited Marengo Cave together (which is featured in this issue of Gone Native).

Other events included movie nights hosted by the RAs; two Culture Nights, one focused on West Africa and put together by several residents, the other a discussion of the American Indian struggle in the U.S; and of course the big Q-100 Poster Session at the end of the semester, which brought all residents together in a grand evening of food, socializing and a raffle!

We also saw quite a few guests come and go from the Guest Suite. Michael Curtin, a professor in global media, led an intriguing discussion on media globalization and cultural homogenization; Yanua Ovares, a Costa Rican professor of special education, enlightened us on her work with prison youth; and Joyce Nyairo talked about day-to-day life in her native Kenya.

FIN also had an Artist in Residence in October. Mbala, a graphic artist, musician and poet from Jamaica, put on events showcasing his many skills, and even imparted some wisdom at mask-making workshops and jam sessions. In anticipation for what next semester holds, see below for some upcoming events.

Upcoming Events

- **January 9: Three Kings Day**
  Join FIN resident Jimena Esparza as she shares a holiday from her Mexican culture, Three Kings Day. For many Christians, this holiday marks the end of the Christmas season and the "12 days of Christmas". Come celebrate this holiday in the Mexican tradition with Rosca de Reyes, a baked good, and hot chocolate.

- **Date TBA: Indian Culture Night**
  Some of our Indian residents are putting their heads together to create an Indian Culture Night for FIN. Food will certainly be provided, and other activities exploring Indian culture will enlighten us at this event in the Spring Semester.

- **Thursdays at 9pm: FIN E-Board Meetings**
  Want to know what going on at Foster International? Interested in proposing an event, a trip or something else? Feel free to attend the weekly E-Board Meetings, scheduled for next semester for Thursdays at 9pm.

- **March 30-31: Spring Trip to St. Louis, Missouri**
  The location for the FIN Spring Semester Trip has been decided… and we’re going to St. Louis, Missouri! Sign up for the trip, which is preliminarily scheduled for Sat. March 30 – Sun. March 31, will begin in the Spring Semester. St. Louis has a lot to offer – The Gateway Arch is one of the most recognizable monuments in the United States, and is a dedication to westward expansion. Cahokia, a World Heritage Site located 15 minutes outside St. Louis, was the home of an ancient American Indian civilization and home to some of the largest earthen mounds ever discovered. St. Louis also has a beautiful downtown spotted with parks and historical grounds, and City Museum, an innovative experiential museum based in an old shoe factory. Please consider joining us for our spring adventure!
Exciting Events at FIN!

FINers had a lot of fun participating in a variety of events in the Fall 2012 Semester. Some students wrote about their experiences. Here’s a look at the semester, from the residents’ perspectives:

Marengo Cave Adventure
by Zachary Bowman

During Fall 2012, a group of FIN residents, along with Global Village residents, took a short trip to just south of Paoli, IN. Their destination? The Marengo Cave System. This underground adventure took residents walking, climbing and crawling through at least a mile of cave system, deep below the earth’s surface. The entrance of the cave appears as a hole in the side of a hill, just off of a tiny country road. As you walk deeper in the entrance, the light grows dimmer and the ceiling creeps toward your helmet, prompting you to switch on your headlamp. After passing through an old, rusty iron gate, you are officially in the cave. The next hour and a half to two hours are filled with adventure, as you climb over massive slabs of rock, crawl through narrow spaces too low for you to even crouch, and wade through an underground creek with water up to your waist.

The fun doesn’t stop there though - after experiencing total darkness, (the guide has everyone switch off their headlamps) you get the chance to encounter the local wildlife. You may stumble upon a nesting bat, or a crawfish as big as your hand in your journey through Marengo. As you head back to the entrance of the cave, you get the chance to take the final test of will: crawl through a 500 foot tunnel that is two feet in diameter, with water that fills half of the space. Mind you, this water is also borderline freezing, so if you can conquer the claustrophobia, you must also conquer the cold. The tunnel spits you out, wet, muddy and freezing, back at the entrance. Salvation. You can see thin beams of light streaking the walls of the cave, and you realize you’re back to the entrance. The warmth of daylight seeps through your sopping wet clothing, reminding you of one thing: you have beaten Marengo cave. This experience was one that all residents absolutely loved, and will probably never forget.

Planning an Event: West African Culture Night
by Fatou Bah

Living in FIN has many memorable memories. But the one that stands out to me is when some people and I decided to put together a West African Cultural Night in less than a week. We decided that this was possible but we had to work super hard to get it accomplished. The night before the event we had the guest suite and it was time to cook. I remember us cooking for several hours having a great time. We talked about our time in Africa as children and how much we miss it, discussed our favorite West African dishes, and we also learned some new food recipes from each other. The day of the event was amazing; even though we ran a little late everything came out better than expected. The posters we put up for the different countries we came from were beautiful, the food was smelling delicious, music was at its best, and all of us dressed up in our colorful, traditional garments. Swarms of FINers came to support us and had a good time. They enjoyed the music, dancing, food, and the cultural learning about new places. The day of the event was probably the most fun I had in FIN so far, because it took all of us to put together in a very short amount of time and took FIN to make it a successful.
Jammin’ With Mbala, FIN Artist in Residence

by Caleb Kurowski, FIN Office Assistant

On a Monday like any other, I suddenly found myself in the presence of a tall Jamaican man, sitting in my office across from me and making a drum beat with his finger tips on an upside-down aluminum bowl. That was how a week of fun and learning with FIN artist-in-residence Mbala began for me. Besides hanging around in the office, Mbala also spent a lot of time in the ground floor lounge making masks or jamming with whoever walked by and wanted to play around.

Mbala had an almost child-like spirit about him. He wanted to turn every moment into a jam session. We let his creative juices run at several scheduled jam sessions, starting with one at the Global Village on Monday. Every time it looked like the session was over, Mbala would bring it back to life by introducing a new beat, or an entirely new genre – blues, rock, jazz, whatever you like.

After a performance at Collins LLC Tuesday and another jam session at FIN on Wednesday, Mbala spent the weekend revealing another side of his multi-faceted artistry: Mask-making. On Friday, Saturday and Sunday, Mbala showed students how to mold a mask to the shape of their face and, after a day of drying, how to decorate it. He even made one himself (pictured left), which we will be hanging up in a glass case in the lounge.

Lessons learned: Anything can be a musical instrument. Mask-making isn’t as hard as it seems once you know how to do it. Life doesn’t have to be taken so seriously.

Right before he left, Mbala told me a story about a time he was husking in Jamaica. Two girls, one teenaged, another younger, came up to him. The younger girl danced her heart out with no shame, while the older girl sat back in reservation, afraid of not conforming to social behavioral norms. The underlying question was: Which girl would you like to be? Mbala made it an easy choice.

Gone Native

Mbala was a multi-instrumentalist, and made many of his own instruments. October 2012

Artist-In-Residence January 2013: Patricia McKee

Patricia McKee is a PhD candidate at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California. She has worked as a theater professional, acting and directing, for twenty years. Her main interests include the intersection of religion and drama in England, 1567-1642, but she also has a broad background in religion and art, and has taught courses on religious imagery, performance and history.

McKee will be directing a production of Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf? at the Waldron Arts Center here in Bloomington. The production will feature Bloomington actress Diane Kondrat, who is appearing in her final performance in Bloomington before moving to Portland, Oregon.

McKee will be putting on several workshops throughout January on acting and theatre. Her production will be open to FIN students free of charge on Wednesday, January 23 and Thursday, January 24. We plan on going out for dinner and seeing the production. Keep posted for more details.
Celebrating 30 Years of Foster International LLC

Geez we’re getting old! Next year, Foster International will celebrate 30 years as an Living Learning Center. Here’s a look back at some of the great moments at FIN in our long history, since 1983!

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