



May 2008

## Monthly Newsletter



Cultural Envoys Marie Morrow (left) and Colleen Cintron (right) dance with Kosovo traditional dance ensemble, *Shota*. Photo: Aferdita Krasniqi, Embassy Pristina. May, 8, 2008.

### U.S. CULTURAL ENVOYS COLLEEN CINTRON AND MARIE MORROW CHANGE PUBLIC IDEAS OF CONTEMPORARY DANCE IN KOSOVO

During their two week-long visit in Kosovo, Cultural Envoys Colleen Cintron and Marie Morrow worked with various dance groups in Kosovo: traditional folk dance ensemble "Shota" and the National Theater of Kosovo Ballet Troupe in Pristina; Artistic Dance company "Art Design" in Gjakova; and the folk dance group "Mladost" in Strpce. The Cultural Envoys showed new techniques of contemporary dance to the Ballet troupe (whose repertoire is mostly classical ballet), guiding them through the creation of their personal/individual original dance. After 10 days of close cooperation and hard work, the Cultural Envoys and the Ballet Troupe held a "Contemporary Dance Dialogue Show" at the National Theater of Pristina on May 3, their last day in Kosovo. The "dialogue show" broke the clichés of contemporary dance in Kosovo and gave a new perspective of this style in Kosovo. Over 300 people, including the new Minister of Culture of Kosovo, attended the

show. The Cultural Envoys' two-week stay, as well as the "Contemporary Dance Dialogue Show" received Kosovo-wide media coverage. The Cultural Envoys, U.S. Embassy staff and Ballet Troupe dancers gave interviews to the major Kosovo newspapers, TV and radio stations about their collaboration. The National Theater Ballet Troupe learned a completely new style and technique of the contemporary dance from Colleen and Marie. They were so impressed with the experience and the work they developed that they will continue showing the "Contemporary Dialogue Show" after Cultural Envoys leave Kosovo. The Ballet Troupe hopes to bring Colleen and Marie to Kosovo again to develop more styles and techniques and do a full show. Additionally, it is very meaningful for the groups outside of Pristina, particularly the Kosovo Serb dancers (who receive almost no visitors) to dance with the Cultural Envoys. The Embassy's work to promote the arts in Kosovo helps build a flourishing civil society in this developing democracy. Exchanges between American and Kosovar artists help to promote long-term collaboration and mutual understanding.



Professor Mike Medley (right) hears Kosovo English teachers' thoughts about the Civil Rights Movement. Photo: Laura Hochla, Embassy Pristina. May 15, 2008.

### ENGLISH LANGUAGE SPECIALIST MIKE MEDLEY HELPS TEACHERS BUILD COMMUNITY IN THE CLASSROOM

During his two-week program in Kosovo, Mr. Medley worked with English teachers in six different municipalities, including a two-day, intensive writing workshop in Pristina. Mr. Medley guided teachers through content-based language lessons so they could experience ways to use the English language to bridge divides, resolve conflicts and encourage self-reflection and forgiveness. Using classroom techniques like group and pair work, free-writing and music, teachers explored topics like the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commissions and the American Civil Rights Movement.

Mr. Medley's teacher training workshops, funded by the Support for Eastern European Democracy (SEED) program, promote interethnic understanding via effective classroom teaching. Additionally, by improving English language instruction, these workshops facilitate Kosovo's economic development.



Professor Jerome Aumente (fourth from right) with workshop participants. Photo: Nori Haxhibeqiri, Embassy Pristina. May 16, 2008.

## U.S. PROFESSOR TRAINS JOURNALISTS ON MACROECONOMIC REPORTING

With Support for European Democracy media training funds, Embassy Pristina brought Distinguished Professor Emeritus from the State University of New Jersey, Jerome Aumente to conduct two seminars for 16 economic journalists and editors during the week of May 12th. The Kosovo Media Institute, a local NGO focused on media training hosted the classes. Professor Aumente worked with print and broadcast journalists on ways to more effectively explain general economics and macroeconomic issues specific to transitional democracies, to readers with a limited understanding of economics. Working with small groups, Professor Aumente sparked lively discussions on issues unique to Kosovo: the lack of a Central Bank, limited reliable statistics, no stock market, hidden unemployment, and remittances. Drawing from concrete examples of reporting in Kosovo and the world, the Professor asked participants to suggest story ideas, and gave them concrete advice for improved reporting and writing. Professor Aumente also gave an interview to the weekly economic supplement (the only such publication in Kosovo) of Kosovo's top circulation daily, Koha Ditore.



USAID Administrator and Director of Foreign Assistance, Henrietta Fore addresses students interested in new Fulbright scholarship opportunity. Photo: Laura Hochla, U.S. Embassy Pristina. May 17, 2008.

## U.S. EMBASSY LAUNCHES STUDENT FULBRIGHT SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM WITH THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

During the visit of USAID Administrator and Director of Foreign Assistance, Henrietta Fore, the U.S. Embassy signed an agreement whereby the Kosovo Ministry of Education will fund--and the Embassy will administer--two Fulbright student grants for Kosovars to earn master's degrees in the United States. The grants will fund study in fields key to Kosovo's development: Public Administration, Economics, Computer Science, Energy and Mining. The student Fulbright program is currently the only degree-earning program for Kosovo students facilitated by the Embassy, and is the result of close cooperation between the Public Affairs Section and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology of Kosovo. The students selected will be the first Kosovo student scholars from the newly-independent Republic of Kosovo. Kosovo University students attended the signing ceremony in the National and University Library on May 17th, which was heavily covered by Kosovo-wide print and broadcast media.



Dr. Bodai describes the U.S. Breast Cancer Stamp to a group of women from Mitrovica. Valdete Idrizi, EUR winner of the International Women of Courage Award, sits immediately to the left, and PAO Karyn Posner-Mullen sits on his other side. About 24 women of all professions and ethnicities were invited: Serb, Albanian, Turkish, Ashkali and Roma. Photo by: Merita Musmurati, U.S. Embassy, Pristina.



## KOSOVO, MACEDONIA, ALBANIA: MEDICAL DIPLOMACY CROSSES BORDERS, MAY 19-27, 2008

Strategic Speaker, Dr. Balazs "Ernie" Bodai, breast cancer surgeon and creator of the fund-raising U.S. Breast Cancer Research Stamp, spent May 19-27 in Kosovo, Macedonia and Albania as part of Embassy Pristina's "Balkans Breast Cancer Initiative" (BBCI). Organized as a broad partnership encompassing the Embassy, USAID, the Ministry of Health, the National Institute of Public Health, the Telemedicine Center, medical experts and the sole breast cancer NGO in Kosovo, the BBCI's goal is to raise breast cancer awareness, reduce cultural taboos on the subject and reach out to women of all ethnicities and religions in the region, emphasizing that cancer knows no borders. Embassies Skopje and Tirana enthusiastically welcomed Dr. Bodai, where he received an overwhelmingly positive reception and a great deal of media coverage. A DVC with Embassies Podgorica and Zagreb (while in Skopje) expanded his reach.

In Kosovo, Dr. Bodai had an equally intensive slate of meetings and media encounters, in which he discussed breast cancer in the region and the issuing of a fund-raising breast cancer stamp in Kosovo. The Director of the Postal Service confirmed that Kosovo will issue the Stamp on October 18, 2008, to coincide with the first-ever Breast Cancer Awareness Walk. Media interest was very high, and Dr. Bodai appeared on a weekly TV health show, had full-page stories with photos in two papers, was covered on both the Albanian and Serbian language wire services, and was highlighted on the evening news two nights in a row. On his final afternoon in Pristina, Dr. Bodai gave lectures to two audiences of patients, survivors and medical experts. Utilizing a partially ECA-funded facility, the Telemedicine Center, Dr. Bodai's lectures were viewed simultaneously in two other cities in Kosovo, allowing women from more rural areas to participate in the Qs and As.



Dr. Bodai describes the breast cancer stamp to an audience of medical experts and patients in Pristina, Prizren and Skenderaj utilizing the technology of the Telemedicine Center (inaugurated by ECA in September 2007). Photo by: Merita Musmurati, U.S. Embassy, Pristina.



Mitrovica Mayor, Bajram Rexhepi, greets Dr. Bodai and Valdete Idrizi before the presentation. Photo by: Merita Musmurati, U.S. Embassy, Pristina.

Dr. Bodai also visited Mitrovica as a guest of Valdete Idrizi and her "Community Building Mitrovica" NGO. Valdete is the EUR winner of the Secretary's *International Women of Courage Award*, and invited Serb, Albanian, Turkish, Ashkali and Roma women to attend Dr. Bodai's roundtable on breast cancer, which counted 24 women of mixed ethnicity. Valdete concurred that she will add this issue to her programming agenda. One of the women, wheelchair bound, and a member of the NGO "*Handicapped in Kosova*" vowed to attend the Walk in October and race faster than anyone in the room!



Prizren ACCESS students admire each others' work. Photo: Laura Hochla, U.S. Embassy, June 3, 2008.

### **MULTI-ETHNIC ENGLISH CLASS EXPRESSES CHANGE THROUGH PHOTOGRAPHY**

On June 3rd the Prizren ACCESS English class, taught by English Language Fellow, Kirsten Mashinter, put on a photography exhibition of their original work showing how they, as young people, are different from previous generations. The multi-ethnic class of Albanian, Bosniak, Turkish and Gorani students conveyed change, adversity and progress through photos of themselves, their peers and their families.



Kosovo playwright, Jeton Neziraj speaks with young Kosovo actors. Photo: Aferdita Krasniqi, U.S. Embassy, June 4, 2008.

### **YOUNG PLAYWRIGHT TALKS WITH YOUTH ABOUT HIS WORK WITH KOSOVO SERB ARTISTS**

On June 4<sup>th</sup>, Kosovo U.S. Alumni (KUSA) hosted a talk by KUSA member and local playwright, Jeton Neziraj for a group of young actors in the Pristina American Corner. Newly appointed as the Creative Director of the National Theater, Jeton discussed the challenges of trust in working across ethnic lines, as well as the strong, positive connection of making art together. Students asked about the challenges of acting and theater in Kosovo, and about Jeton's plans to revive the National Theater.