

International Friends

IFRIENDSTUCSON.ORG

Tucson, Arizona

CONNECTIONS

SUMMER 2021

EVERY STUDENT NEEDS A SENSE OF HOME, WHEREVER THEY ARE FROM.



CELEBRATING NEW BEGINNINGS!

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INTERNATIONAL FRIENDS BOARD MEMBERS

- Patricia Gilman, Co-Chair
- Randy Spalding, Co-Chair
- Pam Obando, Secretary
- Robert Woerner, Treasurer
- Gaurav Deshpande, Community Member
- Jody Friend, Community Member
- LuAnn Haley, Community Member
- Pamela Harlan, Community Member
- Rachel Ivanyi, Community Member
- Michelle Morden, Community Member
- Shermaine Owens, Community Member
- Momoka Sugimura, Student Representative
- Ye Zhang, Student Representative
- Francisco Villegas, Student Representative
- Siyu Wang, Student Representative
- Youhao Wei, Technical Advisor
- Sylvia Ahanonu, ISS Liason

Cover Photo:
Pat Gilman, Siwei
Alice Wu, Ben
Chrysler, and Paul
Minnis, with Siwei's
parents in China
joining via Zoom.
Paul and Pat host
Siwei, and Siwei and
Ben got married in
their backyard on
June 6, 2020



Wenhao Chang
participating in a
saguaro fruit harvest

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SUCCESSES

by *LuAnn Haley*
IF Board Member
and host



“I cannot thank my students enough for their kindnesses during their stays in Arizona, as well as afterward when they have settled into their careers. I would like to share some of the comments from my students so you too can see how awesome they all are.”

-LuAnn Haley

Although this year has been challenging for all, the pandemic has caused me to reflect on my 20 years as a host and Board member for International Friends. In doing so, I have grown to appreciate all the joy and knowledge of other cultures that my international students have brought to my life. Although my students have often expressed their gratitude for our time together when they were in Tucson, I believe that I have gained far more from my international student family than those more than 30 students have received.

Additionally, it is important to recognize that my relationship with the international students does not end when they depart from the U of A. I have been a guest at their graduations, met their families from their home country, attended their weddings and have become “Auntie” to their children. Dennis, my partner, and I have also been guests of the students when we have travelled to visit them in various cities in the United States as well as in their home countries.

Preetha Chatterjee, India, U of A 2005-2007, Master of Science in Computer Science, currently Director of Engineering Core Services for Outreach 1.0 in Seattle Washington, married to a professor at U of W and mother of twins.

“I feel lucky to have been connected to you {LuAnn} and owe so much to the International Friends group in Tucson. When I talk about my immigration experience with my friends at work, I call you out as the person who grounded me and helped me to get over my homesickness for India. Those weekend trips meant so much to me and I cherish my memories of Tucson.”

-Preetha Chatterjee

Janhavi Sabnis, India, U of A 2009-2011, Master of Science in Computer Science, worked as an engineer for Intel in Portland and currently is married and living in Austin TX.

“The International Friends program was one of the top highlights of my time in Tucson, since I got to meet one of the most caring people, LuAnn. As an international student, you are trying to figure out a new country, new school, and new friends, which can be daunting. But having my host there made this journey so much easier. This program has given me more than just an amazing experience during Grad school, it has given me two loving, wonderful people I get to call my friends!”

-Janhavi Sabnis

Royan Tuscano, India, U of A 2017-2018, Master of Science in Computer Science, now a computer engineer in the Bay Area.

“I got to meet you and Dennis in the program and you two became our family in USA. You both were very welcoming and it was nice to know that someone cared for us and were looking out for us. It also helped me to learn more about American culture and I always looked forward to the American Holidays as I got to enjoy it in traditional American way. Moreover, I also had the opportunity to meet new people at the international student parties that we attended.”

-Royan Tuscano

Shweta Narkhede, India, U of A 2018 to 2020, Master of Science in Hydrology and Civil Engineering, married and living in Dallas TX and works as a water resource engineer for Stantec.

“Being a part of the International Friends group helped me get to know students from different countries, culture and disciplines and the other host families. You and Dennis are family to me away from my family. Most important of all, I had that feeling of comfort, care and warmth from you when I needed it the most. Especially in the hard times when I was missing my family being away from them and when academic pressure was too much, spending just some time with you, either for short grocery shopping trips or for delicious dinner used to cheer me up! Dennis is the most lively and cheerful person I have ever met; I used to feel rejuvenated after meeting you two to start off the week freshly.”

-Shweta Narkhede

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SUCCESSES

Mujtaba “Zak” Mohiyuddin, India

Master of Science in Systems Engineering and Engineering Management 2016. He lived in Tucson, AZ until early 2020 and now lives in Canberra, Australia. He works with a small Australian company as the Lead Systems Engineer.

“Being a part of the International Friends group really gave me a family away from my family back in India. I went to grad school at the U of A, 2015-16, and was paired with LuAnn and Dennis in my first semester at school, and we have been in touch ever since.”

Most of us students come from very different backgrounds and cultures - I have found International Friends (and particularly my host family) to be such incredible people to learn that positive vibes transcend cultural divides; this brings great energy and opportunities to share, to grow and learn from -- all while doing things we enjoy, in my case hiking or eating food! We have been on numerous hikes across Tucson together, have gone on countless dinners, and met with more international friends, host families and students alike. It has been an absolute pleasure to listen to their stories and experiences, their knowledge about Tucson or the entire US in general.

I was fortunate to stay in Tucson for three more years after college because I got a job there. Although I now am in Australia, we still keep in touch over emails and photos sent in snail mails and the occasional phone call. I wish them and all of our International Friends the very best for everything ahead!”

- Mujtaba Mohiyjddin



From the left: Mujtaba “Zak” Mohiyuddin, Maja Subelj, LuAnn Haley, Dennis Haley on top of Wasson Peak, Tucson, AZ

Maja Subelj, Slovenia, U of A in 2016, Graduate work in Epidemiology in 2016, now a medical doctor in Slovenia.

“Having a host family and getting to know Dennis and LuAnn made my stay at the U of A wonderful as I felt I had a family to lean on while there. Also, I cherish my memories of my time in Arizona as those memories help me to get through stressful times as a medical doctor in Slovenia.”

- Maja Subelj

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SUCCESSES



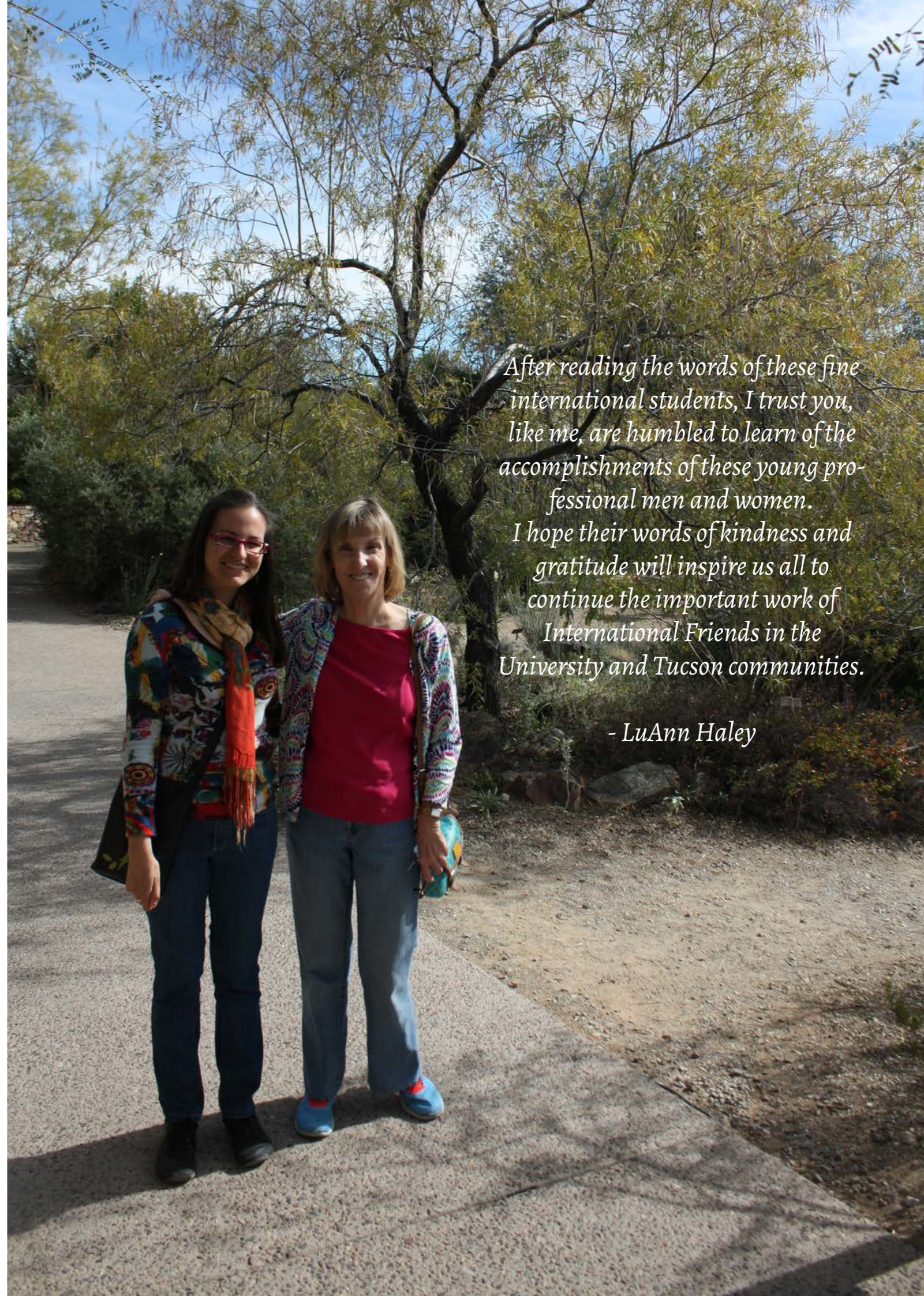
Attending Antonia Blanco Arroyo's solo art exhibition

Antonia Blanco Arroyo, Spain, Ph.D. in Art History 2013

"As you know, you and Dennis have become two wonderful friends for me and Ramón. I am very lucky to have you and Dennis in my life since 2013. My research stay in Tucson wouldn't have been so happy and special without you both. I have no words for thank you for everything. Making new friends like you makes me think a better world is possible. Of course, I truly appreciate we have kept in touch since 2013. Receiving letters from you is great, and I will never forget your visit to Seville in 2017. Sharing my artwork with you was very important for me.

Now, I am working on new artwork, and keep teaching at the University of Seville. I have a Ph.D. in Fine Arts with an International Mention from the University of Seville in 2015, and I got the Extraordinary Ph.D. Award in 2017. And I must say that the artistic research stays I have developed in the United States of America, at the Center for Creative Photography of the University of Arizona, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, the Nevada Museum of Art, and the University of California, Berkeley, thanks to scholarships funded by the University of Seville, have enriched my life and professional career. I am very interested in experimentation, which helps me understand the aesthetic and the narrative of nature. Seeing and perceiving are very personal to me, so my main goal is to understand landscape through creation. Teaching, research and creation enrich each other. Finding the balance to work on all these activities is the challenge."

-Antonia Blanco Arroyo



After reading the words of these fine international students, I trust you, like me, are humbled to learn of the accomplishments of these young professional men and women. I hope their words of kindness and gratitude will inspire us all to continue the important work of International Friends in the University and Tucson communities.

- LuAnn Haley

**Join us in honoring
some of our recent
University of Arizona graduates!**

*Henry Van
Master of Science
in Computer Science*



Weipeng Ben Lew
Ph.D. in Planetary Sciences



Hsuan-Mao (Raymond) Jian
Master of Science in Optical Sciences

Boshen (Ryan) Yang
Master of Science in
Materials Science and Engineering





Kriti Sharma
enjoying Tucson
Mountain Park



Boshen (Ryan) Yang and Ben
Yang hiking in Madera Canyon

HIGHLIGHTS FROM IF STUDENT ACTIVITIES



Front to back: Yahya Ahmet, Caglar Erteber,
Dilan Erteber, Sue Ann Breems, David Breems



Sojal Mahajan headed to
Boston in June for his
new job

*The next IF Fall
Picnic is tentatively
scheduled for
Saturday, October 24th!*



Halloween fun with the Veneklasen family



Akane Sawasato, Bachelor of Science in Pre-Med, celebrating her graduation on a sunset ride at Tanque Verde Ranch



Student Representative Board Members Ye Zhang, Momoka Sugimura, and Francisco Villegas sharing information about International Friends at the Grad Info Fair, 2021

SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL FRIENDS

International Friends recently added a SUPPORT button to our website.

While the University of Arizona grants an annual modest stipend to IF, this amount does not cover all of our expenses. Our board... all volunteers...contribute both time and money to help sustain our organization. Last year, we made an end-of-the-year appeal and received generous donations from many current and former hosts. Notably, Deb and Jim McLaughlin made their donation in honor of long-time board member and former board chair LuAnn Hawley in recognition of "all that she has done for the community."

What does IF need money for? Generally, most of our expenses are annual ones, but we regularly have to make new one-time purchases. Last year, for instance, we had to replace our old defective sound system with a new efficient one. And as International Friends grows and the numbers of students we serve increases, so do our expenses.

Can we count on you for your support? Please donate online today!

DONATIONS to International Friends currently fund the following:

- **Food and supplies** for IF events such as welcome lunches and fall and spring picnics
- **Brochures, guidelines, business cards, banners, and other printed materials**
- **Rental of sites** for our Welcome Lunch, planning meeting, and special events
- **Website and listserv costs**
- **Student prizes** given at our picnics
- **Miscellaneous expenses** such as misting fans, and hand sanitizer stations

WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT INTERNATIONAL FRIENDS?

www.ifriendstucson.org

**Public Facebook Group
International Friends @ Tucson, AZ**

Interested in writing an article for the next IF newsletter, providing photos, or want to be showcased in the Artist Spotlight?

Please submit your ideas to the IF Newsletter Editor and Designer Rachel Ivanyi, Board member and host rivanyiart@gmail.com



Akane Sawasato, Bachelor of Science in Pre-Med, celebrating her graduation on a sunset ride at Tanque Verde Ranch



Looking for information about events and things to do around Tucson? Check out www.visittucson.org

Craig and Rachel Ivanyi celebrating their son Jordan's birthday with his friend Daniel, and Yunjia Yang and Min Jung Baek

CONNECTIONS

International Friends Newsletter



International Friends

Tucson, Arizona

“Our goal is simple but important. We bring people together to share their cultures, interests, and life experiences. International students and local hosts are matched with the intent of them meeting at least once a month during the school year for socializing, activities, and fun.”

International Friends, Inc.

International Friends is an all-volunteer organization that brings together international students attending the University of Arizona and Southern Arizona residents.

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