



CCIS volunteers continue to serve international graduate students, visiting scholars and their families at Stanford University. Read about some of our programs and events!



## “Notes at the Top” Annette Isaacson President

### Things Are Looking Up!

Two weeks ago, my walking partner got her Covid booster shot and suggested I get mine. I went to my local CVS drugstore, a five minute walk from my house, and got my booster shot the very next day! How easy was that!!! With vaccination rates in San Mateo County over 74%, in Santa Clara County over 72%, and on Stanford Campus at 97%, I am feeling very encouraged. I hope you are, too.

I've been meeting with my new EIA partner on my deck. We discovered we both like to cook. So far JooYoung has shown me how to make marinated cherry tomatoes (from our garden) and yummy garlic bread with mayonnaise, whipping cream and honey, her secret ingredients. Since she has a three-year-old child, I showed her how to make "playdough." We made it pink, her daughter's favorite color. Paul and I also had our Virtual Welcome Partner, Marie, over for dinner. It's wonderful to be able to do some of the things we couldn't do in the midst of the pandemic.

A big shout out to all the CCIS volunteers who are teaching English classes over Zoom again this year, to all the Friday Morning Coffee volunteers that are continuing to support the international spouses/partners through this wonderful program, and to all the English In Action partners that are meeting with their international buddies. Applications are now being accepted for SEF grants; tell any international spouses you know. A big thank you to the CCIS Board for making it possible for us to carry out the mission of CCIS.

If you haven't yet renewed your CCIS membership, you can do so by going to <https://ccisstanfordu.org/data/MembershipApplication.php> and updating your information. Having accurate information helps us out a lot.

**Thanks for being a part of CCIS and supporting our International Community at Stanford.**

With gratitude,  
Annette

[president@ccisstanfordu.org](mailto:president@ccisstanfordu.org)

### Longtime supporter of CCIS passes away



**Karen Sortino**, a mainstay in CCIS for decades, has passed away. Her lively, energetic spirit and keen interest in other cultures was a treasure for CCIS and international students and postdocs at Stanford. Karen had a generous and outgoing nature. She loved sharing her home and life with the internationals she met through CCIS and Bechtel. Every year she invited the students from her English class to her home for a lovely gathering, and arranged for her husband, Frank, to entertain by playing his saxophone.

For many years Karen taught CCIS English classes and worked closely with MaryAnn Saunders as the co-chair of the English classes. She organized meetings of the English teachers over lunch in her garden. This gave the volunteers a chance to meet the other teachers and share best practices. She also helped MaryAnn to organize in-service training sessions for the volunteer English teachers, often held at the I-Center. In fact, Karen was still teaching English classes until a year before the pandemic. Karen took a personal interest in her students, inviting them to her home where they enjoyed informal conversation and viewing her collection of Native American baskets. Always an educator, Karen introduced her students to CCIS and often invited them to attend CCIS annual meetings. She also often brought a student to the CCIS Holiday Luncheon so they could get a sense of how our volunteer organization works.

She and Betty Britton founded the Playgroups in 1962. Playgroups was a weekly program that paired young mothers from the local area with international spouses with children, for outings to local parks. The CCIS moms would pick up the international moms and children and take them to a local park or playground. The mothers developed friendships and shared tips about living in the Stanford area. They learned about each other's cultures while the children played together. Many lifelong friendships were formed in the Playgroups. Some of the partners are still in touch, and have hosted their international counterpart's children and even grandchildren when visiting the Bay Area.

In addition to these major contributions, Karen served as co-president of CCIS. Karen was also a journalist and held a second degree in volunteer administration. She worked with the Alzheimer's Association for many years in this capacity.

More about her life can be seen in the obituary: <https://www.paloaltoonline.com/obituaries/memorials/karen-sortino?o=7008>

Submitted by Gwyn Dukus

### Jeff Greenwald selected to be CCIS Board Secretary

The CCIS Board is pleased to announce that Jeff Greenwald has been selected to serve as Secretary. He takes over from Sandra McKay.

Jeff Greenwald is a graduate of Stanford University (BA in Economics, 1975 cum laude) and also a graduate of UCLA (MBA in Arts Management, 1977). He studied internationally at Worcester College at Oxford in England and also at the University of the Negev, in Beersheva, Israel. He is married (for over 40 years) and has two grown daughters, both married, and is grandfather to three.



He worked at high technology companies in the Valley including IBM, Hitachi, and Sun Microsystems.

Jeff also created several startups, including one that went public on a European stock exchange. He focused for nearly two decades on how file storage is used at Media companies that deliver video and pictures over the Internet. These companies have unique requirements for broadcasting, editing, streaming, duplicating, backing up, and searching file storage.

He serves as a Regional Councilor at Foresters, a Canadian insurance company whose philanthropic endeavors in the US involve giving to communities and people who are less fortunate, need, unemployed, homeless, or have life challenges. His community work includes developing funding, in-kind resources and help at local food kitchens, job recruiting centers, homeless shelters, and community agencies. Jeff focuses on delivering help in East Palo Alto, Sunnyvale and San Francisco.

Jeff also teaches 3rd grade youth at Congregation Beth Am in Los Altos Hills and 8th grade at Temple Etz Chayim in Palo Alto. He enjoys meeting regularly with his EIA partner from South Korea.

We're so excited to welcome Jeff to the CCIS Board!

### Looking to volunteer?

**English in Action** (EIA) is a unique program that pairs international graduate students, scholars, post-doctoral researchers and their spouses with community volunteers for weekly meetings to engage in English conversation and become familiar with American culture.

Weekly meetings of one hour or more can be in person (for fully vaccinated people); however, video conferencing is also an option if you're not vaccinated or if you cannot meet in person. Partners who share similar interests, occupations, educations, and gender are matched.

EIA partners often become lifelong friends.

Stanford expects a very large number of Internationals for the 2021-22 academic year. EIA is actively recruiting volunteers. Please consider this exciting opportunity to broaden your perspective and to make new friends. For more information see: <https://ccisstanfordu.org/english/englaction.html>

### A word from the editor

As the newsletter editor, I hope you will enjoy learning more about what's happening at CCIS. Your feedback is welcome—send an email to [notes@ccisstanfordu.org](mailto:notes@ccisstanfordu.org).

Pamela Baird