



## March/April 2021

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

#### What to do?

Spring has brought blossoms to the trees and blooms to our gardens ... so much beauty all around. But Spring has also brought us a reminder that prejudice and bigotry are endemic in America. We see it in the trial of Derek Chauvin and in the increasing episodes of violence against Asian Americans. For those of us in CCIS who love having contact with internationals from all over the world, it is difficult to understand this level of hatred and bigotry.

At first I wanted to think that this problem was happening somewhere else, not in Palo Alto, but my friend's 40-year-old son was harassed just recently while jogging in the park. Someone yelled at him to "Go back where you came from." He's an Asian American, born and raised in Palo Alto. Sadly, Palo Alto is not immune to this kind of bigotry.

Just as we prepare for earthquakes or power shut-offs, we all should probably prepare for how we will respond the next time we see harassment. How we respond will depend upon the circumstances, but thinking about how to respond before we find ourselves thrust into that situation might be helpful.

In the case of the murder of George Floyd, all the bystanders could do was document it with their phone cameras. As we have seen, the evidence can be important later.

Sometimes we may be able to get help to stop the harassment or the violence by calling 911 or by asking other bystanders for help. Bullies will often leave when confronted by a group.

If the harassment has not become violent, we may be able to intervene by pretending to know the victim and saying something like, "Hey, old friend, long time no see. Do you want to get out of here and go get a cup of coffee?" If the victim takes the hint and leaves the scene with you, you might just find you have a new friend.

Sometimes we may only feel comfortable going up to the victim afterwards and saying how awful we feel that this happened to them. Whatever we feel we are able to do, it's most important to let the victim know s/he is not alone and that we don't condone what has happened.

Let's hope that by embracing those who are a little different from us, we can show those around us the value of diversity.

Fondly,  
Annette Isaacson  
CCIS President  
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### Friday morning coffee sessions continue to thrive despite COVID-19

**Friday Morning Coffee**, a joint program between The Bechtel Center and CCIS, has continued to be a source of information, inspiration and friendship. As with many programs, this was transferred to an online format. Ragna Kaehler, Program Coordinator for International Spouses, Partners & Families, hosts the Zoom sessions and coordinates the upcoming meetings. Gwyn Dukes helps facilitate from the CCIS side.

About twenty people, a combination of spouses and CCIS volunteers, participate each Friday morning. The online programs start with a short fun and informative presentation. Recent programs have covered April Fool's Day customs, inspiring and interesting women from various countries, holiday traditions, how to make chai masala and an explanation of Nowruz, the Iranian New Year celebration.

Ragna then divides the group into smaller breakout rooms so that people have a better chance to get to know each other. The smaller groups can practice their English and also learn about things to do locally.

Future topics for discussion are decided by the group at the end of each month for the upcoming month. The group also has a bulletin board of suggestions for local living on the Friday Morning Coffee invitation page found on the CCIS website.

The group is hoping to attract more international spouses, postdocs and researchers. It's a great way for internationals to meet others at Stanford, as well as CCIS volunteers.

Register to receive the Coffee Zoom link: <https://bit.ly/3snmpbR>

### Farewell to retiring CCIS Board members

The Board will be seeing changes in the near future. The three members who will be leaving are featured below.

We are so thankful for having wonderful dedicated members.

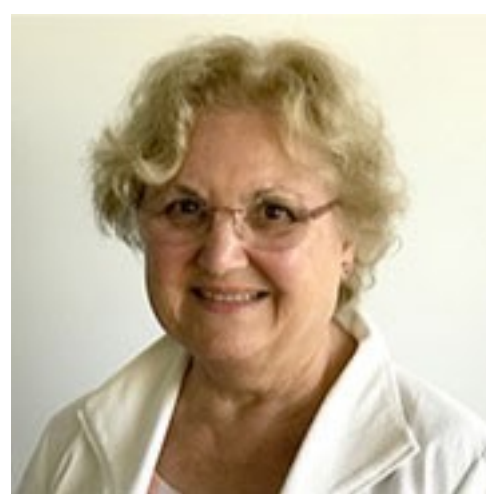
#### Raj Khanna

Raj has served on the CCIS Board since 2013, serving as our treasurer. Several of his friends are active members in CCIS programs and had heard great things about the organization. Because of his career in Corporate Finance, several members recruited Raj to join the Board. Raj came to the US as an international student and wanted to get involved and give back to the community.



Over the past eight years Raj states that he has "really enjoyed working with a group of wonderful CCIS Board members, Program Chairs, volunteers, Bechtel staff and the international students and spouses." He is proud of the fact that financially CCIS is a strong organization. In his opinion the Board has used the funds very wisely in the various programs that benefit the international students.

Raj has also worked with new international students as a Community Advisor so they can settle in at Stanford. According to Raj, "just spending half an hour can make a big difference to them." After stepping away from the Board he plans to stay involved with CCIS and the international students.



#### Carole Hessler

Having served on the CCIS Board for eleven years, Carole has developed a deep appreciation of the friendships she has enjoyed with other members as well as the international students and spouses. She has also enjoyed the relationship with the dedicated professionals of the Bechtel Center, which are very supportive of the CCIS.

During her time on the Board Carole has served as coordinator of the English in Action program, matching local volunteers with the internationals who wish to participate. She also served two years as vice-president. Carole states that she "has facilitated bonds of friendship and in doing so has fostered a better understanding of varied cultures and customs" for all involved in CCIS.

During the 1980's Carole and her family lived for two years in Tokyo. This opportunity broadened her outlook on the world. She proudly mastered the extensive transit system there, which gave her the ability to explore this large city.

The Board thanks Carole for the many hours she has devoted to CCIS.

#### Susan Hartenbaum

Susan has been active with CCIS since moving to the area ten years ago. She has been involved with the Meet and Greet, Homestay and English in Action programs. She "especially loved helping to get an international student settled and getting to be their 'American' family."



She served for a year as Secretary and another year as Membership Co-Chair. Although her time on the Board was shorter than most, Susan states "What I enjoyed most about the Board was getting to work with such an outstanding group of people."

Susan plans to continue with the Meet and Greet efforts and the English In Action programs. "I love being part of a community that is so international in its outlook."

### A word from the editor

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

Pamela Baird