



Welcome to CCIS monthly newsletter!  
 Our goal is to provide news, program updates, and stories about life in the U.S. to international graduate students, post docs, visiting scholars, and their families at Stanford.  
 Please let us know if you would like to write an article for a future newsletter.



### MASQUERADE POTLUCK DINNER

By Ilona Poliszczuk

The Carnival in Rio de Janeiro is the most famous in the world. For five whole days, people celebrate life and burst with happiness when dancing samba, singing, spending time with friends and family and simply having fun. It's also a very good occasion to wear colorful clothes, accessorized with sequins or feathers and a mask!

To celebrate this wonderful time of the year, our dear friend Sarah from Brazil decided to organize a Masquerade Potluck Dinner. The Assembly Room was decorated with swirls and golden curtains and samba music buzzed in the background. Everyone brought a delicious dish to share with others: amazing bread from Jana, delicious Alfajores de Maicena from Enrique, and delightful äplermagronen from Sheila (to name a few). We spent this charming evening chatting with friends about our families, customs in our countries, and experiences abroad. The warm atmosphere of the Brazilian carnival party let us create new, stronger bonds with each other.

I'm so grateful to everyone who helped us to prepare the party and clean up afterwards! Enrique, it was so kind of you to take care of capturing our memories by taking photos.

Thank you Sarah for sharing this beautiful tradition with us, letting me be a part of it, and for being such a warm-hearted friend to everyone!



### THE FEAR OF LIVING IN CALIFORNIA WITHOUT FRIENDS

By Sheila Hofer

I guess all of us were in a similar situation. We were looking forward to the move but slightly scared that we were going to be alone, not completely alone as most of us moved with a partner and some with kids, but sometimes you just need someone else to talk to.

Coming from Switzerland, where it is really hard to make new friends after a certain age, and not being the most social person, I was prepared to face a difficult time. As I wanted to at least try, I forced myself to go to the spouse coffee even though I didn't really like the idea of it.

As soon as I arrived, I realized how wrong I had been. People were directly coming to talk to me. I didn't even have to be particularly sociable, because people were asking me so many questions and were actually interested in my background. The best thing was that most people were in the same situation as me; they had just arrived, had no clue how this country worked, and had thousands of questions. I really enjoyed going to the coffee.

After some very intense first weeks, I was in the position of becoming a welcoming and informative person. This is when I met my first close friend. We noticed that we had encountered the same problems, which I had managed to solve some weeks earlier. We also figured out that we both love cats, so we started to show each other our cat pictures and didn't stop talking for more than an hour.

At the next coffee, I was looking for her. I must say, I am very bad at recognizing faces and remembering names - a very bad combination. I started to talk to someone, knowing that she might be the wrong person! She was, but she became my close friend number 2! Step by step our group started to grow.

Now here we are, celebrating Christmas, New Year, and life together and not "alone" as we feared.



### EXPLORING NEW OPPORTUNITIES AND IDEAS

By Veronica Gonzalez

Moving to a new country is not always an easy thing to do. A few months ago, I moved from Mexico to the United States; even though they are right next to each other there are a lot of differences between the countries. My husband had already been in the US for a year so arriving was a really big adaptation I had to go through by myself. I am going to list a few things that helped me adapt to my new life.

First, be open about new ideas and things that you might not have done before. For example, I started going to the Stanford climbing wall and have met great new people through that. Now I have a new hobby, something different that gets me out of my routine and into a great mindset.

Second, I joined a book club! Bechtel offers great programs and different activities. I love to read and decided to join the book club. This is great because it gives me the opportunity to keep doing what I love and sharing my thoughts with others. The other members are also from different countries, so we can share our thought and opinions.

And lastly, Bechtel Coffee on Wednesdays. I have met great new people through these coffees. It's a great time for me to go and talk to people that are doing different things and catch up with them.

I know everyone's journey is different and for some it's easier than others, but I believe that with the right community, opportunities and goals it can make the transition something to enjoy and be grateful for. I look forward to continuing to meet new people and exploring more of what Stanford has to offer.



Stanford Climbing Wall

If you enjoyed this newsletter, please feel free to share this link with your international friends at Stanford so they can receive it too.



CCIS this month is edited by Kirsty Lienard and Kate Khatseyeva.

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