

January 2008



News and Information for Foreign Services Employees and Families\*

## Singles Speak Out!

By Ann DeLong Greenberg

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We asked and you answered! The Family Liaison Office's (FLO) first ever survey of singles in the Department clearly struck a chord, as evidenced by the 973 responses received over a period of two weeks. The survey was designed by FLO's Crisis Management and Support Officer to assess singles' use of and satisfaction with Community Liaison Office (CLO) services at post and FLO services in Washington. We also wanted to get as much information as possible on the range of issues confronting singles at post so that we could provide detailed information to senior management in the Department. Comments covered a range of topics including aspects of people's social lives, to working conditions and administrative issues, to suggestions for how better to support singles within the Department.

For purposes of the survey, FLO intentionally used a broad definition of "single", which included anyone who is not married or anyone who has a long-term partner, is engaged, separated or separating (spouse or partner), divorced, or widowed. Demographic data from posts indicate the single population to be about a third of Foreign Service (FS) employees overseas. Of those who responded to the survey, 66% are female and 34% are male. Sixty-one percent are single, never married, while 23% are divorced. Eight percent have a long-term partner and 3% are engaged. The majority (61%) are between the ages of 30 and 50 years old and just over half have been with the Department for less than 5 years; 73% have been with the Department less than 10 years. Eleven percent of the respondents have an EFM accompanying them at post, while 9% are accompanied by a Member of Household (MOH). Nearly 86% of the respondents work for the Department of State and 5% for USAID. Like all of FLO's programs, the survey was open to anyone serving under Chief of Mission authority, so employees from the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, Health and Human Services, Homeland Security, Justice, Treasury and the Peace Corps also participated in the survey.

Singles were asked to name their three biggest concerns at post. The issue cited most often was the social environment, both inside and outside the mission, followed by the availability of recreational activities. Others

*(Continued on page 2)*

\* FLO programs and services are available to any American U.S. government employee who is serving, has served, or will be serving under Chief of Mission Authority and their family members or Members of Household.

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*The author is the former FLO Director*

## Changes in FLO

The Family Liaison Office is often a place of transitions, and the beginning of 2008 is no exception! On January 4, we said farewell to FLO Director, Ann Greenberg, as she left to begin her new career as a Foreign Service Officer. Then, on January 14, we are happy to announce, Leslie Brant Teixeira became the 10th FLO Director.

Prior to being named Director, Leslie Brant Teixeira had been the FLO Deputy Director since January 2005. Previously, she was CLO in London. Before working for the U.S. Government, she worked for over 17 years in a number of management and consultant positions for private sector, international, and non-governmental organizations.

A “Global Nomad”, Ms. Teixeira was born in Honduras, and spent many of her formative years there and in Afghanistan and El Salvador. She continued her global lifestyle as an adult, working and living in Honduras, Belgium, Italy, the United Kingdom, and the United States, and raising two global nomad children. She has also worked as a cross-cultural trainer and is the author of several articles on international mobility, including one on the impact of international mobility on families.

### Singles Survey (Continued from page 1)

mentioned security/safety, mobility, language and family (including elder care, parent, and children’s issues) as their biggest concerns. While some clearly were relying on the CLO and the Embassy to provide a framework for their social lives, others singles stated, “I don’t need an organized social life—I am capable of self-entertaining.”

Eighty-three percent said they participate in CLO activities at least some of the time. Welcome and orientation (the sponsorship program) and events planning were by far the two areas of CLO responsibility most utilized by singles. When asked which CLO activities they enjoyed most, about half cited organized travel and trips (including city orientations and weekend trips), while a quarter cited parties and social get-togethers, followed by holiday celebrations and shopping opportunities. Many singles appreciated the safety, comfort, and company provided by organized trips and this was an area where they would like to see even more opportunities.

When asked why those who don’t participate in CLO activities choose not to, many said CLO activities are too family oriented. Others cited time constraints or the fact that the activities were organized during work hours and therefore biased towards spouses, as reasons for not participating. Others indicated they had interests outside the Embassy and did not need CLO activities.

Most (55%) singles said they are not necessarily interested in activities designed specifically for singles, though they do appreciate adults-only events. As one person commented, “I’m not anti-kid, but it changes the dynamics of a group and the conversations when kids are present.” When asked what kind of activities they would be interested in, many indicated an interest in the types of activities already organized but with special consideration for single participation, i.e. shopping trips and events on weekends; adults-only events; more trips for singles who are not comfortable traveling alone; cultural events; mixers with local singles or singles from other embassies; and more community service opportunities. Sixty-four percent stated that they would be willing to help organize activities which were specifically for singles or adult oriented.

When asked about the Family Liaison Office, several people commented, “It’s not for me. Just the name *Family* Liaison Office indicates that.” Only 11% thought FLO was concerned or very concerned about singles. Interestingly, however, only a small percentage of respondents (13%) had ever used the FLO internet or intranet sites ([www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo](http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo)) for information but, of those who did, 69% said they found the information they were seeking. Fifteen percent had contacted FLO on MOH issues. Clearly we have some outreach to do to emphasize that FLO has always provided services and programs to the broad Foreign Service “family,” including the very important singles population. Although survey results

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### **Support Services: What we do....**

Foreign Service employees and family members coping with personal and community crises require a strong support system to face unique challenges associated with service overseas. Guidance and assistance is available from FLO's Crisis Management and Support Officer and members of the FLO support staff.

**All communications are confidential.** FLO's Crisis Management and Support Services staff has developed resources and expertise in supporting Foreign Service (and anyone under Chief of Mission Authority) families in the areas of: inter-country adoption; contingency planning; the death of a Foreign Service employee or family member; elder care issues; support for foreign born spouses; family members not on employee's official travel orders (Members of Household); post evacuations; and divorce and separations.

If you are a member of the Foreign Service or under Chief of Mission authority, we encourage you to contact the Family Liaison Office's Crisis Management and Support Services staff at [FLOAskSupportServices@state.gov](mailto:FLOAskSupportServices@state.gov) with your questions and concerns.

## **FLO Has a New Publication to Support the Foreign Service Family**

### ***The Foreign Service Family and Divorce***

This completely revised FLO publication is now available on the internet at: <http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c23129.htm>. The publication contains updated information on many topics and provides a number of new resources, as well as a real life scenario and statements by Foreign Service Employees and spouses who have experienced separation and divorce.

Divorce in the Foreign Service can often be more stressful and complicated than it is for individuals living in the United States. When one or both parties are assigned overseas, the lack of access to information can further complicate divorce issues such as domicile, child custody, visitation, support, and pension benefits. The topics in this publication have been selected to reflect the unique circumstances divorce presents to the Foreign Service family.

FLO hopes this information will be useful for employees and spouses as they navigate the difficult and painful process of separation and divorce. If you have questions about separation and divorce, FLO's Crisis Management and Support Officer is available as an information and referral source. Email: [FLOAskSupportServices@state.gov](mailto:FLOAskSupportServices@state.gov) ♦

### ***For Department of State Employees...***

### **Putting Your Parents On Your Orders**

We have had many requests from Department of State employees and spouses who are considering putting their parents on their orders. Employees at other agencies who are interested in getting parents on their orders will need to check with their own HR Offices. DOS employees should be aware that they will be required to complete a new OF 126 Foreign Service Residence and Dependency Report and supply required documentation proving that they have covered at least 51% of the parent(s) essential living expenses during the previous six months. This material should be sent to the employee's personnel technician, who will review it with the Career Development Officer and a small committee for approval. The request process and types of documentation required appear in CDA's Supplemental Information document. For a copy, please email: [FLOAskSupportServices@state.gov](mailto:FLOAskSupportServices@state.gov).

The parent does not need to be a U.S. citizen or hold a green card. Practice has shown that, in addition to the documentation, employee's who have covered essential expenses for *twelve months or more* and whose parent has lived with them continuously during this period have had more success than those who only have provided the minimum six months of support. FLO's "Caring for Elderly Parents" includes information on this subject and others related to elderly patents at: <http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c23133.htm>. ♦

## Yahoo Groups for the Foreign Service Community

There are now several Yahoo! Groups geared specifically to some of the unique needs and circumstances of Foreign Service employees and family members (and everyone under Chief of Mission authority). Subscription email addresses and group homepages are listed after a description of the group.

**FSParent** - This is a group for American Foreign Service parents (or anyone under Chief of Mission Authority) who would like to connect with other FS parents around the world to discuss raising children. [FSParent-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:FSParent-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)  
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FSParent/>

**FSSpecialNeeds** - This group was created to bring together Foreign Service families to share information, stories and ideas about educating children with special needs while serving with the U.S. Government under Chief of Mission authority. [FSSpecialneeds-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:FSSpecialneeds-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)  
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FSSpecialneeds/>

**FSAdoptiveParents** - This yahoo group is for parents, who *have* adopted children through inter-country adoption, and are currently or will be serving under Chief of Mission status. [FSAdoptiveParents-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:FSAdoptiveParents-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)  
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FSAdoptiveParents/>

**LiveLines** - Sponsored by AAFSW, Foreign Service Livelines is a forum for employees and family members connected with U.S. diplomatic missions abroad -- a place to ask advice, share experiences, and "network." [livelines-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:livelines-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)  
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/livelines/>

**FSYouth** - The Foreign Service youth group is a private forum for FS youth. [fsyouth-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:fsyouth-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)  
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/fsyouth/>

**AWALers** - Where are you from? Don't know how to answer that? Welcome to the Foreign Service Youth Foundation group - a place for teens to share experiences! AWAL stands for Around the World in a

Lifetime! Is that you?

[AWALerssubscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:AWALerssubscribe@yahoogroups.com)  
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/awalers/>

**FSIraq Yahoo Group** - FSIraq is a forum for the entire Foreign Service community, to discuss issues, share experiences, and exchange information about service in Iraq.

[FSIraq-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:FSIraq-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)  
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FSIraq/>

**HomeFrontUS Listserv** - HomeFrontUS is an online Listserv designed to support family members of U.S. Government employees serving overseas at unaccompanied posts. This free, easy-to-use listserv provides an arena for private e-mail dialog. Spouses, adult children, parents and siblings of employees posted to unaccompanied U.S. embassies and consulates are invited to join. If you are interested in becoming a part of this group, please contact the Family Liaison Office at: [FLOAskUT@state.gov](mailto:FLOAskUT@state.gov).

### What exactly is a Yahoo! Group?

**Yahoo! Groups** operate as both electronic mailing lists and internet forums — places where people with similar interests can hold discussions and post content. Group messages can be posted and read by email or on the Group homepage. Members can choose whether to receive individual e-mails, daily digest e-mails, or to read the posts at the web site.

As well as providing email relaying and archiving facilities for the many lists it hosts, the Yahoo! Groups service provides additional functions on the web site, such as voting, calendar systems, and file uploading. If you have never joined a Yahoo! Group, you may be surprised to discover that there is a group to meet every need or interest imaginable. You can even start your own. Go to: <http://groups.yahoo.com/> for more information. ♦

## Expeditious Naturalization Processing Times Have Increased

You may have seen recent news articles and press releases from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) informing applicants of a huge increase in naturalization processing times. You can check out the USCIS [advisory on processing times](#) (linked here) for more information. In July 2007, USCIS was inundated with submissions from applicants hoping to avoid the fee increase that took effect at the end of that month. The number of applications nearly doubled during that time period, creating increased processing times for regular naturalization cases. USCIS reports that processing times for those cases have increased from four to six months to an estimated 16 to 18 months.

There is some good news. According to FLO contacts at the USCIS Washington District Office in Fairfax, VA the number of *expeditious naturalization*, 319(b), cases did not increase

dramatically over the summer and processing times for these cases have not been severely affected. Processing times for our Department of State expeditious naturalization cases are currently averaging about five to seven months. While there is no guarantee that every expeditious case will be completed within this time frame, USCIS will continue to process all naturalization cases in as timely a fashion as possible. With any luck processing times for 319(b) cases will not increase much more in the coming months. As always, the best advice is to apply early!

For information about expeditious naturalization, or to begin the application process, please visit the FLO webpage at: <http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c1966.htm> or contact [FLOASKNATURALIZATION@state.gov](mailto:FLOASKNATURALIZATION@state.gov). ♦

## Communications and Outreach

### FLO Logo Contest

FLO would like to thank all of the talented artists in the Foreign Service family who submitted designs to the FLO logo contest. We received close to 30 original, interesting, and creative submissions and we were very impressed with the care and thoughtfulness that went into each submission. Our entire FLO staff spent a good deal of time evaluating the different -- and they were all very different -- designs and it was both fun and extremely difficult to come to a decision.

Almost every submission had some elements that we liked and felt reflected the values and messages important to FLO. We did not, however, find one design that we felt artistically captured all of the messages we are trying to get across: that FLO is a strong advocate for Foreign Service employees and families; provides programs and services that are tailored to meet changing Foreign Service family needs; defines

family very broadly; and works to empower Foreign Service employees and families in their lives overseas now and in the future.

In a serendipitous turn of events, we were recently and unexpectedly offered an exciting opportunity to be a part of a broader initiative to internally brand State Department programs and will be working with commercial designers to develop a logo that will be part of a much bigger FLO re-branding effort. We are very excited about this initiative and feel it is a great opportunity for FLO to re-market its programs so that you – employees and family members – get the most out of our programs and services.

We appreciate the time and effort that went into these designs and are thankful for the support these fine artists have shown to both FLO and the greater Foreign Service community. ♦

### **Education and Youth: What We Do....**

Families who raise their children in the Foreign Service face unique challenges -- frequent moves, changing cultures, transitions from one school to another, and a scarcity of educational facilities and services for special needs children. The educational and emotional development of children from mobile Foreign Service families is a Family Liaison Office priority.

FLO provides advice on appropriate schooling options, resources to make educated decisions, and support networks. In conjunction with other offices and Foreign Service organizations, FLO participates in programs and services for youth to assist them with issues of international mobility and re-entry to the United States.

Foreign Service families can contact the FLO Education and Youth Officer at: [FLOAskEducation@State.gov](mailto:FLOAskEducation@State.gov) for help and advice on: education options at posts overseas; U.S. and International boarding schools; Washington area public and private schools; online education (K - adult); the college admissions process; financial aid, standardized educational testing; children with special educational needs; and summer programs. Families overseas can also visit their Community Liaison Office (CLO) for assistance.

## **Summer Camps and Programs**

Even though summer is months away, it is not too early to consider summer programs and opportunities for your children since many programs have early deadlines and popular programs often fill up quickly. Whether you are looking for a parasailing camp in Hawaii, a community service opportunity in Ecuador, a pre-college anthropology course at the University of Pennsylvania, or a theater program in Switzerland, there is a wide range of summer programs that can be fun, enriching, and help your children to make informed decisions about their future. If you live in the U.S., check with counties in your area to see what summer camps are available – some programs may not be limited to county residents. Hopefully you can find just what you're looking for (or something you never knew existed!) on some of these websites below:

### **Peterson's Summer Camp and Programs**

<http://www.petersons.com/summerop/code/ssector.asp>

Allows you search by activity, location (both U.S. and international), category, such as day programs or special needs accommodations, keyword, and sponsor's name.

### **About.com's Summer Camp Resources for Washington DC, Maryland and Virginia**

<http://dc.about.com/cs/familyactivities/a/camps.htm>

Find information on summer camp fairs, programs at local museums, park and community center guides, and resources in magazines.

### **FLO's Washington Area Summer Programs**

<http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c24033.htm>

FLO's "Education Options for Foreign Service Family Members" has a section that contains guidance for parents on selecting a camp, listings of Washington area recreation and summer school programs, information on residential camps and alternate programs, job search agents, and information on international summer camps.

### ***IQ:Information Quest***

Intranet: <http://hrweb.hr.state.gov/prd/hrweb/er/worklife/dependentcare/ig/informationquest.html>

*IQ:Information Quest*, the State Department's LifeCare, program, is an information, resource, and referral service that offers support to employees and family members searching for ways to balance the demands of their professional and personal lives. *IQ:Information Quest* can develop a personalized list of summer camps for members. All permanent Department of State employees and their family members are eligible to use the service. *IQ:Information Quest* is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Other USG agencies also subscribe to LifeCare's programs - check with you work/life office. ♦

## Contests for Kids

There are a number of upcoming contests that Foreign Service children may want to enter. Let them know about:

### 2008 Young Diplomat's Essay Contest

The Foreign Service Youth Foundation is sponsoring the Worldwide Young Diplomat's Essay Contest, open to eligible high school and middle school youth. The first place high school winner receives \$1,000 cash and the second place high school winner receives \$500 cash. The first place middle school winner receives \$250 cash. Diplomatic Automobile Sales is providing the prizes for the winners. Winners also will be invited to the annual Youth Award Ceremony held in the summer. **Essays must be emailed or postmarked by April 15, 2008. If mailed, the essay must be received by May 1, 2008.** For more information please visit: <http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c24703.htm>

### 2008 KidVid Contest

All U.S. Mission kids between the ages of ten and 18 are invited to participate in the FSI Transition Center/Overseas Briefing Center's annual KidVid contest. OBC would like a DVD of your post from *your* viewpoint. There will be cash prizes offered to the top winners. **OBC must receive the DVDs by April 15, 2008.** For more information please visit: [http://www.fsyf.org/award/kidvid\\_rules.html](http://www.fsyf.org/award/kidvid_rules.html)

### 2008 Clements International Foreign Service Youth Award for Community Service

The Family Liaison Office is assisting the Foreign Service Youth Foundation (FSYF) in encouraging the nomination of candidates for the Clements International Foreign Service Youth Award for Community Service. The Clements Award honors teenagers who have demonstrated outstanding volunteer efforts overseas either in community service or in service to their peers while facing the challenges of growing up in an internationally mobile lifestyle.

Two first place awards for community service include a certificate of recognition for their volunteer work and a \$1,500 savings bond. All award winners will be invited to the Youth Awards

Ceremony at the Department of State to receive their certificates. The winners will be announced in late May 2008. The **deadline for receipt of nominations is Friday, April 25, 2008.** For more information please go to:

<http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c24723.htm>

### 2008 Foreign Service Youth Art Contest

Foreign Service Youth ages five to 18 are invited to submit flat art work for the 2008 Foreign Service Youth Art Contest sponsored by the State Department Federal Credit Union. Prizes will be awarded to winners in each age group. The theme for this year's contest is "My Life, My World, My Dreams." **Artwork must be received by April 30, 2008.**

For more information go to:

<http://www.fsyf.org/award/artContest.html>

## And scholarship opportunities ...

### AFSA Scholarship Program

The American Foreign Service Association (AFSA) Scholarship Fund offers undergraduate financial aid scholarships and high school academic and art merit awards for Foreign Service children. **Submission deadline is February 6, 2008.**

For more information please go to:

<http://www.afsa.org/scholar/scholarship.cfm>

### DACOR Scholarships

The Diplomatic and Consular Officers, Retired, (DACOR) Bacon House Foundation invites children and grandchildren of active or retired Foreign Service Officers to apply for scholarships and fellowships to study at The Hotchkiss School, a boarding school in Lakeville, CT, and Yale University. \$5,000 will be awarded to one qualified student currently enrolled at Hotchkiss and up to \$5,000 may be awarded to undergraduates at Yale. For more information on these awards, please contact Kaisa Helbin-Travis at: (202) 682-0500, ext. 17 or email:

[prog.coord@dacorbacon.org](mailto:prog.coord@dacorbacon.org).

### **Employment: What We Do....**

The Family Liaison Office has a dedicated team of professionals working to increase employment options for Foreign Service family members, both at home and abroad. They provide employment information geared specifically for Foreign Service family members.

The Employment Program Team can advise individual family members on overseas and Washington area employment issues, either in person or via email or phone. FLO assists family members looking to work overseas on the local economy or inside a U.S. Embassy or Consulate through such programs as the Global Employment Initiative (GEI). FLO staff also facilitate the negotiation of bilateral work agreements.

For family members seeking employment in the Washington D.C. area, FLO provides the Job Seekers Network Group (JSNG), employment orientation sessions, and distributes *The Network*, with job vacancy announcements and additional resources.

FLO coordinates functional training for Foreign Service family members and maintains information on training options. FLO provides leadership in developing new programs for home-based businesses and telework. FLO also continues to develop special employment initiatives to further increase options for family members seeking employment.

# It's a SNAP

By Aida Sacks

*Reprinted, with permission, from a November 2007 article in State Magazine*

A 2006 worldwide family member survey by the Family Liaison Office (*State Magazine*, July/August 2006) found family member employment is a vital recruitment, retention and quality-of-life issue. Foreign Service families are often dual-career, dual income couples who weigh the availability of continuing employment when bidding on overseas posts.

From its start in 1978, FLO recognized employment as a top concern. To promote family member employment, FLO negotiated bilateral work agreements to allow family members to work in the local economies of host countries. There are now 107 (Editor's note: 109 as of 1/2008) bilateral work agreements and 46 (44 as of 1/2008) de facto arrangements to allow local employment in nearly every country with U.S. diplomatic posts.

Currently, about 25 percent of all family members under chief of mission authority work inside the mission. Predicted budget restrictions in the future will likely impact the hiring of family members inside the mission, however.

### **Local Jobs Needed**

Therefore, employment options must be found locally, and professional training must be provided to family members not currently employed. The 2006 survey found that 75 percent of Foreign Service family members have at least a university degree; of these, half also have a graduate or professional degree in such fields as education, business, health and law. These professionals could work for local and global businesses, especially since multinational corporations and telework are expanding.

To boost family member employment, FLO created the global Employment Initiative/Strategic Networking Assistance Program in 2002. The program provides employment services and resources to 40 posts through 24 SNAP global employment advisers and serves nearly 9,000 family members and members of household. GEI/SNAP has successfully placed more than 1,200 family members in jobs around the world in industry, commerce, government, nongovernmental organizations and academia.

GEAs provide job placement, career coaching and leadership support and help with resume preparation, interviewing and job searches. A survey found that assistance in finding employment and supporting the employment needs of family members were the most important benefits GEI/SNAP

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*The author is the GEI/SNAP Coordinator in the Family Liaison Office*

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offers; 93 percent of GEI/SNAP users surveyed supported continuing and expanding the service and 70 percent said GEI/SNAP is very important when bidding on future posts.

FLO's Global Employment Initiative works at the headquarters level with multinational companies, NGOs and academic institutions to develop networking and identify employment leads. FLO has a no-cost partnership with Manpower Inc., which provides career development services and online training opportunities for family members worldwide.

### High Satisfaction

GEI/SNAP participants express high satisfaction for successfully sustaining and developing their careers overseas. The program has helped family members find jobs in their fields and establish home businesses globally. For example, GEI/SNAP recently placed a client with a multinational company at a six-figure salary.

Here are a few other GEI/SNAP success stories:

- On arriving in Panama, Charles Todd Apple met with FLO's SNAP coordinator, who noted his experience in music and theater and arranged a meeting with the director of the International School of Panama. Apple got a job as the director of the school's drama program and as a full-time teacher. The coordinator also managed to work in an agreement with the school on fulfilling Apple's Air Force commitment.
- A psychotherapist with 33 years of experience, Jim Collins attended a SNAP workshop on Web-based entrepreneurship and decided to extend the Internet-based counseling program he had developed. He now has clients around the globe.
- Victor Williams discussed his U.S. experience in selling vehicles over the Internet with Pretoria's GEA, who suggested using his experience to target the diplomatic community in South Africa. Williams created Douglas Diplomatic Services, which is named for his son and provides special deals and rates for the diplomatic community.
- In Lima, Christine Elsea Mandojana worked with SNAP to grow her business by offering free seminars on financial planning and taxes. Both seminars were well attended. Now SNAP is coordinating video teleconferences for her to deliver financial planning and tax presentations to the U.S. Embassy and Consulate in neighboring Ecuador.

### Success Breeds Success

As GEI/SNAP expands, so do its contacts. GEAs share their information and contacts with other GEAs and CLOs, and GEI/SNAP graduates share job leads with GEI/SNAP. As these networks grow, the opportunities for family members to find meaningful employment will grow. For more information about FLO's programs, visit its Web site at [www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo](http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo). ♦

CHART 1

Talent Pool of Foreign Service Family Members



■ High-End Executive Level  
 ■ Emerging Level  
 ■ Mid-Executive Level

CHART 2

Companies by Industry That Employ Foreign Service Family Members



■ Educational Institution  
 ■ Home-Based Business  
 ■ Consultants  
 ■ Locally Based Employer  
 ■ Multinational Corporation  
 ■ Foreign Government  
 ■ Local NGO  
 ■ International NGO

## Have You Been Assigned to an Unaccompanied Post? FLO Has Many Resources to Help You and Your Family

Taking an assignment at an unaccompanied post, or being assigned to a post that becomes unaccompanied, impacts the Foreign Service employees and family members in a number of different ways, both large and small. Unlike previous assignments, the employee will often find him or herself in a dangerous environment. The family will have to cope with everyday issues without the participation of the absent person. Children may act out their anger over the departure of one parent. Parents, siblings, or other family members of the employee may have their own concerns about the assignment. And this is just the beginning: returning home brings a different set of challenges.

Many of you now know that you will be serving at an unaccompanied post in the near future. As you prepare for this major change in your life, we want you to know that FLO is here to help with a number of services and a wealth of information for employees and family members before, during, and after an unaccompanied tour. Foreign Service employees and family members (including spouses, partners, parents, siblings, and children of all ages) dealing with personal concerns related to an unaccompanied tour may always contact FLO's Unaccompanied Tours Support Officer at: [FLOAskUT@state.gov](mailto:FLOAskUT@state.gov) for *confidential* guidance and assistance.

### *What we do....*

- **Information for decision-making:** FLO recently developed the resource “*A Decision Tree: To Help You Decide Where to Live During an Unaccompanied Tour*” to help employees and families with this very basic yet crucial question. Download the Decision Tree at: <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/94783.pdf>
- **Community Liaison Office Coordinators (CLOs):** At present, CLOs are providing services and support at eight unaccompanied posts. FLO is urging the remaining ten UT posts to establish CLO positions.
- **Support for Family Members:** FLO's Unaccompanied Tours Support Officer provides continual emotional and administrative support to *all* family members, including parents, siblings, and partners..
  - ▶ FLO advocates for changes to policy, regulations, and allowances, etc., based on reports from employees and family members.
  - ▶ *The Mental Health Network (MHN)* website and resources are provided to employees and family members throughout the duration of the separation.
  - ▶ Beginning February 1, family members may receive up to three face-to-face counseling sessions per presenting problem with a local mental health professional. Funding to expand the existing MHN contract came from the Cox Foundation.
  - ▶ Monthly *FLO/MHN e-newsletters* and *broadcast messages* are sent to employees and family members throughout the assignment.
  - ▶ *Noontime Networking Brown Bag Lunches* are held on a monthly basis (third Thursday of the month in the FLO Conference Room) open to employees, tandems, and adult family members who have or are currently experiencing an unaccompanied or separated tour. NOTE: the February 21 session will be held at FSI in Room C2107.
  - ▶ *HomeFrontUS*, an invitation-only listserv, is available to family members serving a separated

tour. This is a supportive e-community of people who are in similar situations.

- ▶ FLO's Education and Youth Officer provides information, resources, and guidance/referrals for any pre-existing or newly developed educational and/or behavioral issues. Long-term separation from parents, especially if coupled with anxiety, can have both immediate and delayed onset consequences for children.
- ▶ FLO's employment team provides job search assistance for family members, information on distance learning, career development, and functional training options.
- **Community Liaison Office Coordinators (CLOs) at post** provide support to families contemplating an Unaccompanied Tour and can facilitate participation in worldwide conference calls, Web casts and other events for the UT 'virtual' community.

An increasing number of employees assigned to Iraq are opting for a 12-month TDY tour, allowing their families to remain at the previous post (negotiated on a case by case basis). CLOs are encouraged to be aware of any employees leaving for or transferring from accompanied posts and to reach out to them and their families and offer support and information.

- **Certificates and Medals of Recognition** are presented annually to children of employees on unaccompanied tours (UTs) and the children are recognized as part of the Foreign Service Youth Awards Ceremony held in the summer. Requests for awards are honored year round. For more information Contact: [FLOaskUT@state.gov](mailto:FLOaskUT@state.gov) . .

### Contact FLO:

Employees preparing to leave for (or are already serving at) an unaccompanied post, are encouraged to visit the FLO website at: <http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c14521.htm>

Also download our brochure, "An Unaccompanied Tour: Learning to Manage a Temporary Separation" at: <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/46592.pdf> ♦

## Unaccompanied Tour Events

### Wednesday, January 23, 2008, 10 am to 11 am Eastern Standard Time: "Webinar" for Orientation Session on "Support Services for Employees and Families Separated by Unaccompanied Tours"

The Family Liaison Office (FLO) will conduct an interactive "Orientation Session" by simultaneous conference call and Web cast on **Wednesday, January 23, 2008 from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. Eastern Standard Time**. This program is designed for USG direct-hire employees on long-term TDY and permanent change of station assignment (present or future) to unaccompanied posts and their family members (Eligible Family Members and Members of Household). To participate (either in person in FLO's Conference Room, number 1239 HST, or remotely) please contact FLO's Unaccompanied Tours Support Officer **no later than COB, Friday January 18** at: 202-647-3179 or 1-800-440-0397 or email: [FLOaskUT@state.gov](mailto:FLOaskUT@state.gov) .

**Thursday, February 21, 2008 from 12:15 to 1:00 p.m. EST**, "Noontime Networking" will be held at FSI in Room C2107 (just off the cafeteria). This is open to employees, tandems, and adult family members (spouses, partners, parents, siblings, and adult children) who are preparing for, currently experiencing, or returned from an unaccompanied tour. ♦

## J. Kirby Simon Trust Welcomes Applications

The J. Kirby Simon Foreign Service Trust is a charitable fund established in the memory of Kirby Simon, a Foreign Service Officer who died in 1995 while serving in Taiwan. The Trust is committed to expanding the opportunities for professional and community service and personal well being of active-duty Foreign Service personnel and their families. The Trust's main activity is to support projects - initiated on a voluntary basis by members of the extended Foreign Service family (American and locally engaged employees and family members) - that seek, on a modest scale, to improve the health and welfare of people living in the host countries. Projects are usually conducted in cooperation with local charitable or educational organizations. Since its inception in 1997 the Trust has made eleven rounds of grants, more than 295 in all, to support projects based in more than 80 countries.

The J. Kirby Simon Foreign Service Trust commends all current and prior grant recipients on their commitment to voluntary community service. The Trust has announced that applications for 2008 grants will be accepted through March 1, 2008. Please go to the Trust's website at: <http://www.kirbysimustrust.org/> for more information. ♦

## New Retirement Article from the Career Transition Center

We've seen a lot of job seekers pass through the Career Transition Center (CTC) on their way to retirement. Many have been successful in finding their next place in the universe, but some of them get stuck for a little while in their search. They apply for lots of jobs, but never get hired.

So, we have been studying this phenomena, trying to figure out why some get stuck. The reasons are rarely obvious. They can have perfect resumes. Their career history can be impressive. Their qualifications and credentials can be more than adequate. What bogs them down while their colleagues move ahead?

This article will outline a few of the possibilities that have occurred to us, but we do so with a few reservations. First, in this article we are taking a rather light approach to a subject that can be very serious. So, here at the beginning we ask your forgiveness for our facetiousness. Sometimes humor makes a tough observation easier to take, but sometimes it trivializes

it. Please be assured that our intentions are definitely the former, not the latter.

Second, there are lots of reasons for getting stuck and the reasons are always very individual. We offer these possibilities for your consideration only. If you are stuck in your job search and one or more of these possibilities makes you cringe in self-recognition, then you might want to re-evaluate your job search strategy. You might even want to try one of the possible "remedies" we are suggesting to help get you unstuck. But again, solutions are unique to every individual. We would be happy to consult with you in person, via telephone, or via e-mail on finding a possible solution for you. To view the article written by Amy Pitts and the CTC Staff, go to:

<http://www.state.gov/m/fsi/tc/c19304.htm>.

To see other CTC articles, go to:

<http://www.state.gov/m/fsi/tc/c12131.htm> ♦

## An Important Message for Overseas Americans About Absentee Voting from the Bureau of Consular Affairs

All American citizens living abroad are reminded that 2008 is a general and presidential election year in the United States. Overseas citizens are eligible to participate in presidential and state primary elections, run-off elections, and special elections that occur throughout the year, as well as the general elections in November 2008.

We strongly encourage you to register to vote and/or request absentee ballots well in advance of the presidential and state primary elections, which will begin in January 2008, to ensure that you will receive all ballots for which you are eligible. Should questions or problems occur, you would still be able to address them in time to vote in the 2008 elections.

For more information, go to:

[http://travel.state.gov/law/info/info\\_2964.html](http://travel.state.gov/law/info/info_2964.html)

or visit the Federal Voting Assistance Program website at: <http://www.fvap.gov> ♦

*Singles Survey (Continued from page 2)*

indicate that many people see FLO as only serving a traditional, nuclear, State Department family, when we talk about the “Foreign Service family” in FLO, we are talking about a very broad and inclusive “family” that includes any American U.S. government employee who is serving, has served, or will be serving under Chief of Mission Authority and their family members or Members of Household.

Single parents (10% of respondents of which 80% are female; 50% are divorced; and 46% are between the ages of 40-50) had somewhat different concerns. Their biggest concern at post is the quality of education, followed by being a single parent, security issues, and the availability of recreational activities and childcare. Single parents tended to actively participate in and appreciate CLO-sponsored activities, especially those geared towards children. They were more likely to contact FLO for information on the CLO program, education and youth services, and MOH issues. Several suggested an online listserv for single parents.

Singles responding to the survey also provided comments on a number of administrative issues they face at post. The survey indicated perceptions on the part of some singles that: their needs and wishes are not considered when housing decisions are made; they are often the first to be called upon to stay late or work overtime; they are required to work disproportionately over the holidays; they are not given the same consideration as those with spouses and children during the bidding and assignments process; they are disadvantaged because they do not have help with administrative and personal tasks when they first arrive at post or when they depart post; and, while they believe that they often save the government money, they are not compensated for this. While not everyone would necessarily agree with these perceptions, we will be raising all of these concerns with management.

Additionally, some respondents expressed the belief that the Department actively discriminates against those with MOHs. Many complained of the difficulty living overseas with an MOH who is not entitled to the same benefits EFMs enjoy, including language training, visa support, paid travel, access to MED, inclusion in housing assignment decisions, and access to post facilities. A few mentioned that MOHs are sometimes not included in official or even community activities. Where not strictly prohibited by law, FLO and CLO our programs and services are always available to all family members, EFMs and MOHs. There was some acknowledgement of this amongst respondents, with specific thanks for MOH inclusion in programs like the Cox Professional Development Fellowships.

As part of the survey, FLO received many thoughtful suggestions on how we can improve our programs and services to singles. Some of these suggestions are already being implemented in FLO and at the Embassy level through the CLO program, though we realize we need to do a better job conveying this. We also got many suggestions for specific programs and activities, some of which can be easily implemented, that we have forwarded to CLOs at post. We know now that we need to work to design programs that are more sensitive to the needs of singles at post and better advertise those programs that are already available to singles. We also know that we need to advocate, where we are able, on behalf of our single population to ensure that administrative policies are not being implemented solely based on marital status. We thank all of you who participated in the survey for taking the time to give us such valuable feedback. We appreciate your participation and encourage you to continue this dialog with FLO. Be assured that this survey is just the beginning of what will be a continued FLO focus on the issues raised by singles. Please feel free to contact us with your questions, concerns, or ideas at: [FLO@State.gov](mailto:FLO@State.gov). ♦

## Click Your Way to FLO Resources



### FLO Homepage on the *Internet*

<http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo>

### FLO Homepage on the *Intranet*

<http://hrweb.hr.state.gov/flo/index.html>

*To assist families who may not have access to the State Department Intranet, FLO strives to put as many of our resource materials as we are able on the Internet. If you can not find what you are looking for, please contact FLO by email at: [FLO@state.gov](mailto:FLO@state.gov) or call us at: 202-647-1076 or 1-800-440-0397*

### Family Member Employment Resources

[\*The Network\*](#) – Receive DC area job postings via email and find other job search resources on the FLO webpage.

**PIT Buyback Program Guidance and Instructions** on FLO's Internet website:

<http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/62628.htm>.

**FLO Publications** on the Internet may be found at: <http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/rsrscs/pubs/>

### To subscribe to *Family Liaison Office FS Direct*:

**Internet:** <http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c9156.htm>

**Intranet:** <http://hrweb.hr.state.gov/FLO/FLOSubscription.html>

**Via AAFSW:** Visit the FLO area of the AAFSW web site at: <http://www.aafsw.org> and click on FLO newsletters.

**FS Direct** is also available for viewing on the FLO Internet web site at:

<http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/rsrscs/pubs/c5709.htm>