

J-1 Journeys

JANUARY 2013

VOL 2 ISSUE 1



2012

IEC Annual Photo Contest

In this issue: **Photo Contest** on pages 1-8, **Emergency Phone Numbers** on page 9, **J-1 in America Happy Hour** on page 10 and **City Weeks** on pages 11-12. Happy reading!

First Place Winner



Sharon Panackal

Entrepreneur from India training in business as a J-1 Intern in Seattle, WA at Starbucks Corporation

CATCHING UP WITH SHARON

on her emerging passion for photography, her love of fish and chips, and following her dreams.



Sharon Describes her Prize-Winning Photo:

"On the day after the completion of my internship at Starbucks, and the day before I was to leave Seattle for India, I stood on the bridge I-90 under the blazing summer sun, marveling at the Blue Angels flying in breathtaking formations.

While the Thunderbirds were proving what can be achieved with unity and effort, I took this photograph with my jaws literally dropping, realizing that it was one of the most amazing sights I would ever experience in my life.

During the two months I spent in Seattle, I lucked into many first time situations ranging from cooking to hiking on snow; and, watching the Blue Angels fly in various patterns that day was an incredible windup to all those new experiences."

What was your reaction when you learned that your photo won the contest?

It means a lot. To win a contest for me is kind of like finding out that I am on the right track. Once I went to Starbucks, I met many people in the creative studio. I spent one day every week with creative studio team members. They knew I liked photography, so they took me out to the Olympic Sculpture park in Seattle, encouraged me to take photos and gave me feedback. I spent one day [of her internship] with creative studio team members. They told me that I could get a Master's degree in photography. I hadn't considered that option until then, although I was passionate about photography. This is really rare in my country. The idea of a professional photographer for common people is that of someone who has a studio and takes photos for marriages and other such functions. People don't think about the wide possibilities of photography such as photojournalism, landscape or travel photography.

What did people back home think of your idea to pursue a Master's in photography?

When I first told my family, they didn't like the idea. I think my mother still doesn't like the idea, but my father is kind of supportive. In my society, almost all parents want their kids to be engineers or doctors. Becoming a photographer is really rare. There were 44 students in my high school graduating class, and out of those 44, four of them study in my university. The other 40 stayed in India, and we four went to Bangladesh. Only those four are not taking either medicine or engineering. Engineering is kind of a status issue.

How has it been to return to Bangladesh from Seattle?

I think the biggest difference living in Seattle made for me was to encourage me to smile at strangers. In India and Bangladesh, we don't smile at people we don't know. In the US people would approach us and were very friendly.

Other than noticing Americans' friendliness, how else have your impressions of the US changed?

This was my second time in the United States. I spent one month in Stanford University in 2011. When we hear of the United States we think of tall buildings; busy people living a busy life. But there is such greenery! People took time to talk to us and hear about our experiences.

Were most people you met in the US familiar with Bangladesh?

I don't think they particularly know about Bangladesh. Maybe that's why they were eager to talk with us!

Now that you've completed your program, what advice would you give to new J-1s?

I would ask them to travel around even if they are alone. There might be times they would get lost, but having GPS and people to talk to are helpful. Walk around the city and understand how helpful people can be. There were times we were completely lost and there were people there to help us. It was fun for me; we could just go around and ask anyone about the place and then we would find our way.

The exposure that I had to that city and Western notions enriched me to take the path I am taking. People where I am from usually listen to parents and relatives and become what their relatives want them to become.

I don't want to become a person just to fulfill the expectations of my society. I want to live my life according to my wish. The courage that I have to take decisions for myself comes from Western notions and professors that I have at university. Most students at my university want to be independent and do things the way they want to do them, according to their wish. Once they are out of university it is hard to follow their dreams, but I hope everyone will.

Before I submitted the photo, I went around asking friends from university, and partners from Starbucks [to give their opinions]. It's not like you are just sending without giving the photo much thought. It felt like the first step I was taking towards what I really want to do with my life.

What was your most memorable experience from your time in the US? What do you miss?

The food! Fish and Chips! We were planning to go eat fish and chips before we left, but we were too busy. I really miss the food. My friends say, "It's good to leave something in a city that would encourage us to go back."

So, do you have plans to go back to the US?

I am not a person who usually plans for things. Whatever comes my way, I just grab the opportunity. If I get an opportunity I will go back.

THE END



From: Italy

Training Location: New York

Field of Training: Management,
Business, Commerce, and
Finance

Valentina Donini

Second Place Winner

“I took this photo during a wonderful weekend in Chicago (the windy city) and you can see it from my hair!!!”

Third Place Winner

Vojislav Vlaslic

From: Serbia

Training Location: Pittsburgh
Field of Training: Sciences and
Engineering Occupations



Vojislav Vlaslic took the photograph above of the West Wendover, Nevada desert during his exchange program in the United States. He has enjoyed traveling during his time in the US, and he also submitted photos from Princeton, New Jersey and Wisconsin for the photo contest.

Here are some more photos we like:



WHO: J-1 exchange visitor Duncan Williamson

WHERE: Jamaica Pond, Boston, MA

WHO: J-1 exchange visitor Lukas Nick

WHERE: Ocean Beach in San Francisco, CA

Photo by: Hoa Truong

This picture is also featured on the back page.



WHO: J-1 Exchange visitor Ravikumar Channaraju

WHERE: Westford, MA

Click this link to watch the video of some submissions to the IEC Annual Photo Contest 2012:

<http://animoto.com/play/gOunWddlvpOP1RqFJXtxCg>



WHO: J-1 Exchange visitor Sebastien Mas

WHERE: Rockefeller Center NYC

WHEN: Election Day 2012

WHO: J-1 exchange visitor Nuti Swathi

WHERE: Boulder, CO.

How does this photo represent your life in the US?



“Before coming to the US I had some preconceived ideas about Americans from films and television programs. However, after meeting them I realized that the American society is enormously diverse and complex. I was never greeted by a stranger in my country but here I receive so many Hi’s and Hello’s all day.

Like the photo, I was in the dark before and thanks to my trip I can now see the light behind the darkness and LOVE from the Americans. Thanks to all my American friends. :-).”



WHO: J-1 exchange visitor
Devashish Sharma

WHERE: Twin Peaks in San
Francisco, CA.

Photo by: Brody Peace.

**How does this photo represent
your life in the US?**

It depicts the excitement of
living in a free and culturally
rich city like San Francisco.

WHO: J-1 exchange visitor Aran Clayton

WHERE: Times Square, NYC

**How does this photo represent your
life in the US?**

During my trip I had the luxury of
having an internship whereby I got
to travel America. 28 universities, 15
states and 4 months later, my
accent is a mess and my food
tolerance has risen, but the
variation of American culture from
coast to coast is astonishing.



Save These

Important Emergency Phone Numbers:

Emergency: 911

Poison emergency: (800) 222-1222

If you have a smartphone, add some emergency apps, such as an emergency radio, first aid instructions, or the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) app from www.fema.gov/smartphone-app. Subscribe to FEMA texts here: www.fema.gov/text-messages.

In order to make it easier for emergency workers to find your Emergency Contact in an emergency, add your Emergency Contact into your cellphone address book with the name “ICE” or “In Case of Emergency.”

Don't forget to prepare for an emergency the old-fashioned way, too! Carry a card in your wallet that lists your name, allergies or medical conditions and the phone number of your emergency contact.

We are not doctors, but please let us know if you have faced an emergency. Call us here: (202) 507-7500



A black and white photograph of the Statue of Liberty, showing her head with the crown, her right arm raised holding the torch, and her left arm holding a tablet. The background is a dark, textured grey.

You're invited!

CONNECT with other J-1s living in the Greater New York/New Jersey/Connecticut area and **SHARE STORIES** with the International Exchange Center staff at our first **MEET UP** of the New Year, hosted by [The International Exchange Center](#) and the [American Council on International Personnel](#) in Manhattan, NY!

Please RSVP* to

J1Program@immcouncil.org

so that we can get an idea of how many people are coming.

DATE&TIME:
Friday, 1.18.2013
6:00 – 8:00PM

LOCATION:

Jack Doyle's
246 West 35th Street NY,
NY 10001 ([MAP](#))
(www.jackdoylesnyc.com/)

J-1 IN AMERICA
HAPPY HOUR

*RSVP is a French phrase, "répondez, s'il vous plaît," which means "please reply."

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON



Look out over the entire city from the top of the world famous Space Needle.

Visit the Seattle Public Library, not just for the books, but for its bold, modern architecture.

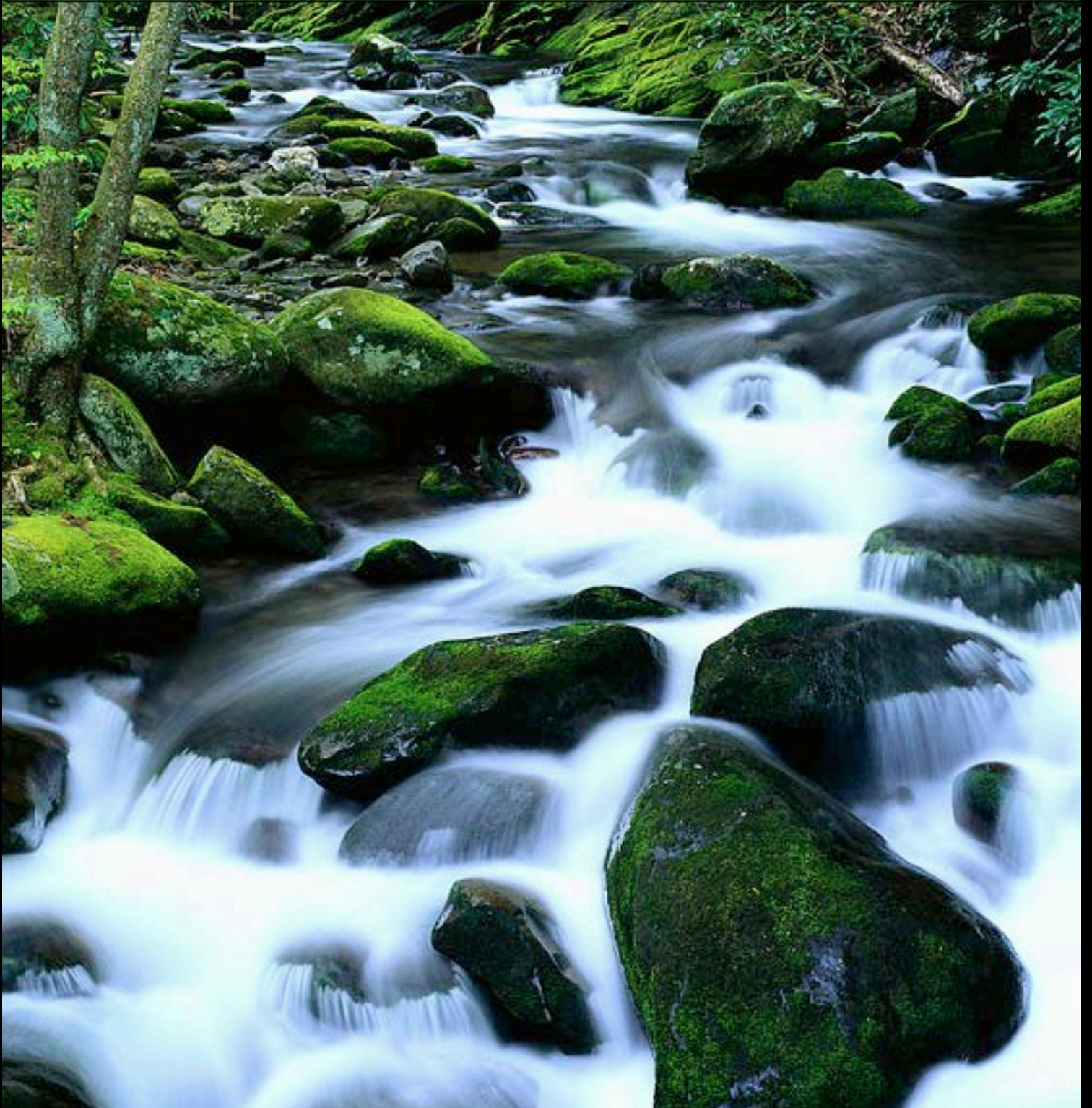
Love rock and pop music? After the Space Needle, check out the nearby EMP Museum.

Take the 35-minute ferry ride to Bainbridge Island to explore local art galleries.

Pike's Place Market:
The best place to pick up trinkets and fresh fish.

Check our [Facebook page](#) for more travel tips!

Great Smoky Mountain National Park



The Appalachians are home to rushing streams, lush forests and a unique brand of American folk music. The Great Smoky Mountain National Park is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and the number one most visited national park in the United States.

Check our [Facebook page](#) for travel tips this month!

THANKS FOR READING J-1 JOURNEYS!

Let us know how your exchange
experience is going...

CONTACT US:

J1program@immcouncil.org

202-507-7500

www.internationalexchangecenter.org



**INTERNATIONAL
EXCHANGE
CENTER**

AMERICAN IMMIGRATION COUNCIL

Find us on Facebook at

www.facebook.com/internationalexchangecenter

Mailing Address:

THE INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE CENTER

AMERICAN IMMIGRATION COUNCIL

1331 G STREET NW, SUITE 200

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005

USA