Hi everyone, I hope you and your family are doing well during this Shelter-In-Place period. So much has changed around us and in our world within the past one month! It’s my hope that this pandemic will subside soon and we all will come out of this difficult time with greater resilience and also a deeper appreciation for what is truly important in life.

Here in EIA, one thing we have implemented is an ONLINE registration process. Scholars/Students from UC Berkeley and volunteers can now register for EIA and arrange to meet virtually with their partners. We are delighted to know that many of our EIA partnerships are still going on over the phone, Skype, Zoom, Google Meet, WeChat, Line, and other social media platforms! This shows not only we can learn technology (even at an old age), but that this proverb is true, ‘When there is a will, there is a way.’ (see page 2 for photos)

Another way we are applying this saying is that EIA will continue to hold, but just a little differently, our favorite event of the year, **ANNUAL EIA SPRING POTLUCK**! We will have a chance to meet one another over zoom and share with one another the uniqueness of our culture. If you are interested in joining or participating, please go to page 5 for more information! I look forward to seeing you all there. See you ZOOM!
Less than a year ago Karen and I came on board to do the job of Coordinator for the much-adored EIA program. Tough shoes to fill! Elly's name is on everything! And she is missed.

When someone like Elly leaves a program after so many years, changes may seem strange, even perhaps difficult, but they are inevitable. We have tried to make the transition smooth and as unnoticeable as possible, wanting involvement in EIA to remain a positive and enjoyable experience for all. It has been our goal to meet as many volunteers as possible because they are the lifeblood of our work.

We love it when you drop in to say "Hi" or to request a new partner. The flow of partners requesting opportunities for English conversation has been steady most of the year, and we appreciate those who have sent friends our way to join the program. There's no better recommendation than a personal one!

At Christmas time we had an appreciation luncheon for volunteers, staff, and partners. It was colorful and people contributed generously and deliciously, especially Larry Diamonds and Felix Tsai who not only brought A LOT of food, but started setting up from 9am in the morning! Karen and I are grateful to you all who have helped us keep the EIA program going. We are having a great time! A more wonderful collection of committed women and men we couldn't imagine in another workplace. The Y Staff, our exceptional interns, so reliable. We are now excited to finish out the year til summer, and then make plans for next Fall.
"I would like to express my gratitude to YWCA for organizing this wonderful program and giving chances for foreigners to meet Americans. And I also thank my partner for his great attitudes, efforts, and careful considerations for me."
- J. Lee

"I am so pleased with my four "students" and thank EIA for beginning this volunteer experience available to me several years ago. IT IS JUST SO POSITIVE and REWARDING!"
- A. Millikan

"I appreciate my partner because we are similar in age, and we always have a common view and understanding of life. He invited me to join his celebrations with friends, such as thanksgiving and Christmas day, which made me feel not lonely in US. I am thankful for EIA because EIA is active in organizing activity of our e-corner. Even in adverse environment such as Covid-19 pandemics, we can still keep e-corner activity going as usual, which enhances my confidence in mastering English. I think I am lucky to choose EIA, which is trustable."
- H. Wu

"I wish to thank my exceptionable partner Ann, who has helped me a lot in my oral English, as well as for in my understanding of the American culture."
- B. Zhang

"My partner is from Zurich, Switzerland. She came here with her fiance who is a visiting scholar at the Lawrence/Berkeley Lab for past 3 years. I chose her as a partner in that she put "hiking" as a hobby on the application! So we and her husband have done many hikes in the the Bay Area. They, along with their parents, came to our family holiday gatherings and parties. What a pleasure it was to have met them and to share in our cultures! Hopefully someday I will be hiking the Swiss Alps with them!"
- T. Smith

"I appreciate my partner because she’s a helpful and responsible person. She feels like family and a long time best friend. Thanks YWCA for assigning me a such wonderful person."
- T. Mersha

"This was an amazing experience! I’m grateful to have been in this program."
- T. Chen

"My partner is a very nice person. She made a lot of delicious desserts and brought them to me, invited me to her house for Christmas, celebrated my birthday, and took me to her church services. Although she is younger than me, she takes care of me like my sister, which makes me feel warm. I am thankful EIA for helping me find such a good Partner, with her help, my English has improved a lot."
- M. Li
EIA PHOTO ALBUM

HOLIDAY POTLUCK LUNCHEON 2019
Zhian and Bing with EIA volunteers George and Ann

EIA volunteers eating with friends from Argentina, China, and Korea

Laura with her EIA friends at her home

EIA volunteers having a family dumpling-making party

Jenny with her EIA friends at Tasty Pot

Cal celebrating Christmas with his EIA friends Bo and Qing

Going Away Party for Airi and Cixiao with Ann

Do you have pictures? EIA would love to feature them on our next newsletter!