Welcome,

On August 11th, ten intrepid voyagers arrived in Nashville, TN to begin a journey of professional development, mutual exchange, and leadership growth. They come from different places and different experiences, but together they are enhancing their expertise in the fields of education, public policy, and public administration.

As part of our community, you have played an important role in the Fellows’ growth as they adjust to a new environment and begin their lifelong Humphrey journeys as Change Agents. The scholarly discussions, adventures around Nashville, and even trips to the grocery store will have a lasting impact on each Fellow. Please know that you are making a difference in the Fellows’ lives and how they see their place in Nashville, in their home community, and in the world. We hope you continue with us on their journey as their anchors on shifting seas. From all of us in the Humphrey Program – thank you!

Sincerely,

The Humphrey Team
Nancy, Cynthia, Anna, & Kalyn
Journey with the Fellows on the Good Ship Humphrey

Each of the Fellows has left behind a family, a job and a life they’ve built. It is a major transition to leave a place of comfort and journey to a different world. Our Fellows have shared thoughts about what this new beginning means to them.

Olto Thomas
Papua New Guinea

“I started the journey to this land as a complete stranger. Just before loneliness and fear creep in, to take the good things away from me, my angels turned in giving me so much care and love. Friendship families, Ambassadors, Fellows, Nancy, Humphrey Team, Vanderbilt University staff and students. You all have shared with me the experience of my lifetime, which I will never forget. This love has given me a new perspective to see strangers. I believe the love I received in America, is worth being shared with anyone around me and in particular my own people in Papua New Guinea. Wherever we are, this contagious love will make this world a better place for everyone.”

Wellington Oboh
Nigeria

“The City of Nashville has become my place of abode in the last few months; Peabody College, my point of call almost every day. As a Hubert H. Humphrey Fellow, meeting hundreds of friends and caring professionals in America for the first time has been a life changing experience. Within Peabody’s conducive atmosphere, we are working through culture shock with other fellows and strengthening bonds of friendship that will outlive our Humphrey year. I feel supported from all quarters - the Humphrey friendship families, Humphrey AmbassaDores, and the Humphrey Team at Vanderbilt. For me this program is the experience of a lifetime.”

Khan Zada
Pakistan

“First of all, when I reflect upon the many things for which we can be grateful, we are reaffirming that lesson learned in Humphrey Program, both as individuals and as a group, we are incredibly interdependent. When I contemplate those who have contributed so that we could enjoy these experiences; we have – sense of belongingness, interdependence, and learning, to name three key ones - it is not possible to reconcile the debt we owe to Vanderbilt and Nashville community. Though I’m taking this time to reflect on what I’ve learned during the last three months, I’ve learned how to learn, unlearn, and relearn; volunteered with Nashville community, attended social and academic events on and off campus. Our wonderful Friendship Families, AmbassaDores, Advisors, Professors, Peabody leadership, friendly university staff, active and dynamic Humphrey team and wider Nashville community, a big thank you from Humphrey Fellows!”
When I return back to my country… I held workshop about the education in America, talking with colleagues in all the district in Palestine about the year I spent in Nashville. As a science teacher supervisor … [I] apply lots of ideas I get through the year I spent in America, such as teaching methods, evaluation, critical thinking, problem solving, doing research, making decisions … But the biggest thing is … always I believe that respect and love will lead to peace. This is what I find in America, different religions, ethnics, values and attitudes, … but with respect and love we become friends till now we communicate through Facebook, Viber, email. This give me more self confident in my [beliefs] which reflected on my behavior, attitudes, and values through my connection, communication, with colleagues, school principals, teachers, and students, parents, and community. Lots of things to talk about that inspire me and influence my life and work, but the most thing influence my life is my sister and friend (Aurora my host family in Nashville the great woman I met).”

“I went back to my job in CADER (ChangeAgent in Arab Development and Education Reform): … [I] designed and led the work on the production of a post Bachelor program for principals (diploma degree in collaboration with Yarmouk university in Jordan). … It attracted around 1000 principals to register in during those years. … We worked … on major literacy and math programs, and with UNICEF on training teachers and educators who work with the Syrian refuges in the camp schools and the host community schools. Projects we work on are recognized as successful: some through researched evidence based information and some through results and indicators we look for in schools and classrooms. I am happy and satisfied and miss the days of Peabody and owe the program and the university a lot in my success and personal development.”

“Being a Humphrey fellow definitely changed my life. I thought everything back home would be the same, but I was completely wrong. As some of you may know I started working at my school in a new project. Since we had a lot of books stored in shelves, I decided to look for some volunteers and small funding to open a school library. Fortunately, the principal has given me lots of support and some people helped me organize the books in shelves …Teachers and students are very excited about this new resource we will have for them. Since we do not have funding to pay a librarian, I am planning so far to volunteer myself some days a week. My life seems to be so busy and different now. And there are more challenges to come… I hope to be strong and wise enough to make the right connections. Projects need funding and in my culture volunteering is not something you can expect from people. Changing that mindset is a huge challenge!!!”
Friendship Families Spotlight:

Wilson Laine

Wilson has been an AmbassaDore and Friendship Family over the years; he works for Caterpillar Inc., and has been a great asset to his Fellow, Wellington Oboh.

Pallu Reddy

Pallu has had some wonderful escapades this semester with her Fellow, Gabriela Zazpe, and Gabriela’s roommates, including a recent trip to Cheekwood Botanical Gardens. As a returning Friendship Family, we love having Pallu aboard!

AmbassaDore Reflection:

“Being a Humphrey Ambassadore is one of the highlights of my Peabody College experience. Through my activities with my Humphrey Ambassadore team, consisting of Fellow Leila Afkhami and student Caroline Martin, I learn from each of them while we mutually support each other in professional and personal growth. The bonds that are created through this program will undoubtedly remain long after we leave Peabody and I am thankful for the opportunity to be part of such an incredible experience!”

– Lin Chang, IEPM 2016
On-Campus Supporter Spotlight:

Professor Claire Smrekar

As well as coming as a guest speaker for Humphrey Seminar, Claire is an advisor to Fellow Olto Thomas. The Fellows found Claire’s lecture on the ecology of urban schools enlightening and informative, giving context on the history of school structure in Nashville as well as how that history has informed the status of today’s urban schools and future policy.

Professional Partner Spotlight:

Volunteer State Community College

Vol State, our associate campus, is a wonderful addition to our Humphrey program. The Fellows greatly enjoyed our fall visit, which included a conversation with the President, a comprehensive explanation of the historical and current context of the U.S. community college system, and a discussion of Vol State’s role in the local community.

Thank you to our Fall Guest Speakers & Site Visit Hosts!

Andy Van Shaack  Eakin Elementary
Claire Smrekar  Hillwood High School
Jason Grissom  Nashville Chamber of Commerce
Kate Costin  Oasis Center
Lee Ann Lannom  STEM Prep Academy
TFLI  Volunteer State Community College
Vanderbilt Institute of Global Health
Humphrey Ahoy!
What’s new with the Humphrey Crew?

And they’re off! The Peabody Paddlers had beautiful weather and a great crew at the 2015 Cumberland River Dragon Boat Festival in September.

Humphrey presents:

In October, Humphrey Fellows Gabriela Zazpe, Soe Than, and Leila Afkhami gave a Peabody International Lunch Series (PILS) presentation on Teaching English as a Foreign Language.
Thank you from the bottom of our Humphrey Hearts

If you have a great story to share with us, please contact Cynthia Feng
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