

# THE CENTER REPORT

*Fall 2017*



Ecumenical Center and International Residence

*An Intentional, International,  
Intercultural, Interspiritual,  
Living Learning Community*

**The ECIR will soon be changing  
its name to International House  
Ann Arbor**

## Inside this Issue:

**Page 2:** Meet Our Team

**Page 3:** Remembering Roger Pohl

**Page 4:** Community Engagement

**Page 5:** ECIR: Past & Present

**Page 6:** GEU Program Update  
Giving  
Wish List

## YOUR SUPPORT, YOUR PROGRAMS

Donors and volunteers support the educational programs offered to our international residents and non-residents. Your tax-exempt contribution supports our GEU Program.

DONATE BY PHONE (734-662-5529),  
CHECK PAYABLE TO ECIR, OR  
ONLINE AT [www.ecir.org](http://www.ecir.org).



## Residential Diversity

This fall, the ECIR welcomes 49 residents from 15 different countries. Representing a wide variety of academic disciplines, our residents create a unique, culturally diverse, and multinational living environment. It is important to mention that many of our students identify with more than one nationality. We would like to extend a warm welcome to our new residents and sincere greetings to our returning students.

The ECIR continues to attract students from diverse national and religious backgrounds, stimulating a growing desire for cross-cultural connection and global diversity within the university and beyond.



# Meet Our Team



**Jessica Greenfield**

*Program Manager*

I received my Master's in Social Work from U-M in 2013 and have been with ECIR since early 2014. And how the time is flying! It's often said that if you find a job you love, you won't "work" a day in your life. And that saying rings true for me. Coming to ECIR every day is like coming home. My heart is so invested in this center and our mission and I am so thankful to be here.

**Shih-Ya Chang**

*Program Assistant*

I am a first year graduate student from Taiwan at the U-M School of Social Work. My study focuses on community development that bridges majority and minority populations. I enjoy diversity and multicultural environments. I have lived in China, USA, and have done short-term volunteer work in Israel, Guatemala, and Kenya. I am grateful to be a part of the ECIR family.



**Jonathan VanTreeck**

*Office Assistant*

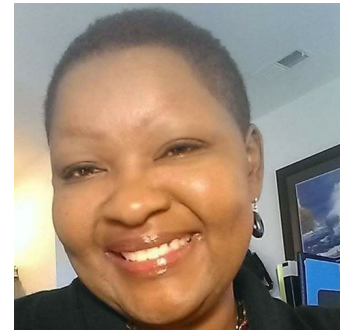
I am a first year graduate student at the U-M School of Social Work with a focus in global social work. In July 2017, I returned home after serving 26 months with the Peace Corps in Ecuador. I am interested in grassroots community development overseas particularly in Latin America. I joined the ECIR team this fall because I am eager to stay involved with and support the international community on and off-campus.



**Colleen Towler**

*Program Assistant*

I am a second year graduate student in the School of Social Work at U of M. I am focusing on Community Organizing and Community & Social Systems. I am passionate about global social work, using dance and other artistic mediums to create social awareness, program development and implementation to meet the needs of diverse communities. I am grateful to be at the ECIR and have the opportunity to engage with residents and staff to learn about many cultures, lifestyles, and religions.



**Angeline Smith**

*Accountant*

I am an Accountant and the Managing Member & CEO of Angeline & Associates, LLC. I have been offering financial management support to nonprofit organizations for over twenty years. ECIR has been my client for several years now and I am grateful to be exposed to such a kind and supportive environment. I take pride in the work that I do to support nonprofit organizations because I understand the importance of their missions to our communities. And ECIR is no exception in this regard.



**Stoney Griffin**

*Building Manager*

My experience at ECIR has been very fulfilling in several ways. I've met many wonderful people from all over the world. I also have been able to sharpen old skills and learn new ones. It makes me live up to the title of a book that my son used to read when he was 4 years old, "My Dad Can Fix Anything."



# Remembering Roger Pohl

## *Honoring a leader's legacy within the ECIR community*



Former ECIR director (2000-2009), Roger N. Pohl returned to the spirit world on August 20, 2017, after a decade of struggle against several autoimmune illnesses. Roger passed away on the 51<sup>st</sup> anniversary of his marriage (1966) to Joanne Kuhnle. Roger and Joanne were the proud parents of a daughter, Amy, and a son, David.

Roger had a positive impact on the development of ECIR during his 9 years as director. Working in a cross-cultural and interfaith context with University of Michigan students from around the world was, he often said, the culmination of his vocational journey. He maintained his deep commitment to community organizing, social justice, and peacebuilding by developing an array of service learning programs, many of which are still offered to the global community today. An excellent administrator, Roger provided leadership through many important changes including a capital campaign to renovate apartments and expand common spaces in the Center. Concern for the sustainability and future of

The Roger Pohl Program Fund was established at his retirement and continues to support ECIR programs today. For example, a group of ECIR residents and friends of the Center will be serving the unemployed, hungry, and homeless of Toronto, Ontario in March, 2018. Service in the context of cultural learning expressed the heart and hands of Roger's passion for community, justice, and peace around the world.

Curious from an early age, Roger's passions included bird-watching, literature, hiking, camping, travel, politics, and social transformation. Graduating from North Park University with a BS degree in pre-med, Roger pursued an M. A. in literature at Indiana University and a Master of Divinity from Yale University. Roger was more comfortable exploring the questions and living the mystery of life than he was with rigid answers or with developing an explanatory theory of everything. Taking the words of Jesus seriously — “for God so loved the world” — Roger believed that his faith was expressed in exploring the political, ethical, environmental, economic, and community concerns of a diverse and changing world. Even so, Roger remained committed to his Christian faith and his ordination, serving as a minister and lifelong member of the United Church of Christ, serving congregations from St. Louis, Missouri to Lansing, Michigan.

In addition to his commitment to service learning, Roger held a deep respect for the good in all cultures and religious traditions. He reminisced often about the transformative sabbatical experiences he shared with Joanne teaching on the island of Mindanao, Southern Philippines (1981-1986) and of serving in Zimbabwe and in Zambia (1995). He described these experiences as being the most personally transforming and spiritually grounding of his entire life. And it was these experiences which informed his passion for the international, intercultural, and interreligious mission of ECIR. For over 35 years, he led groups from congregations and universities on service learning and cross-cultural experiences across the US, the Philippines, Honduras, and Brazil.



*Roger helping serve food at an ECIR community event*

Even though Roger's vision, leadership, and friendship will be missed, his legacy will continue through the organization's mission and GEU Program.

Contributions to the Roger Pohl Fund in Roger's memory and in support of ECIR programs are welcomed.

— Bruce Martin, Director

# Community Engagement

## Detroit summer trip



This past summer, on Saturday, July 1, ECIR residents and friends journeyed to Detroit, Michigan for a day trip to explore the city and some of its culture. Aside from their arrival flights landing in the Detroit airport, most residents and friends of ECIR do not get a chance to explore the city. When asked for suggestions for potential day trips organized by ECIR, Detroit regularly comes up. In the past, ECIR has visited the Eastern Market, the Detroit Institute of Arts, Campus Martius, the River Front area (everyone is always amazed at how close Canada is), and more.

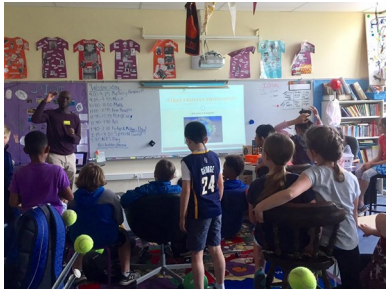


On this particular trip, we explored Belle Isle, had some delicious barbecue at Red Smoke BBQ, and then ventured to the Detroit Historical Society, which at the time, was displaying a powerful exhibit about the Detroit riots that happened in the late 1960's. Looking forward, ECIR is hoping to visit Detroit again this upcoming December so that residents can see the city's massive Christmas tree and ice skating rink that opens up around the holidays!



— Jessica Greenfield, ECIR Program Manager

## First Fridays Friendship



Elementary schoolers, while not fully educated in the nuances of diversity discourse, are impressionable and therefore vulnerable to prejudicial and fear-based messages about relating to the 'other'. One meaningful solution to the eradication of prejudicial social mores is to bring a broad and deep education of intercultural understanding to our impressionable youth. **First Fridays Friendship** is an original ECIR program that connects American elementary schoolers with volunteer resident scholars to facilitate an education-based exposure of his/her foreign culture. This intercultural and intergenerational program facilitates a dynamic examination of diversity, inclusion, and the power of choosing understanding over fear. In May, Kwame from Ghana visited Burns Park Elementary 4th graders to give an interactive presentation on Ghanaian culture. We look forward to our next

Friendship exchange in November when two residents from Spain will visit Burns Park, and hope to soon implement this program every First Friday!

— Kelsey Dovico, Chair of GEU Task Force

## Spiritual Community Visit

ECIR organizes a series of programs called spiritual community visits that are intended to give students and scholars the opportunity to learn and observe different faith communities in Ann Arbor as well as surrounding communities. These programs are integral to ECIR's mission to build peace and understanding among people from different cultures and faiths.

Most recently, ECIR traveled to Canton, Michigan to learn about and observe Sikhism at the Gurdwara Sahib Singh Sabha of Michigan. A Sikh friend of the center, Ripudaman S., organized and facilitated this visit for ECIR. Attendees shared two delicious vegetarian meals with the Sikh community provided for free by the Gurdwara. We also had the chance to observe and learn about Sikh prayers that were sung aloud in Punjabi and translated in English on a digital screen.

ECIR organizes different spiritual community visits every month. Later this semester, visits include the Zen Buddhist Temple and the Quaker Friends Meeting House.

Would you like ECIR to visit your spiritual community? We would love to come! Email me at [jgreenfield@ecir.org](mailto:jgreenfield@ecir.org).

— Jessica Greenfield, ECIR Program Manager



*Pictures from the Gurdwara visit*



# ECIR: Past & Present

## Alumni Spotlight: Baga



Baga (1982): second row, checkered red shirt.

Paul Bagavandoss ("Baga") is originally from India and lived at ECIR for eleven years. During his time in Ann Arbor, he earned his Master's in Anatomy & Cell Biology and his PhD in Reproductive Endocrinology. In addition, he earned his post doctorate training in the Physiology department and lectured Anatomy & Physiology. Baga also liked to fish and bird watch. Here is a brief overview of his time with us.

### ***Why did you choose to live at ECIR? How long did you live there?***

My brother, Daya, was already living in ECC, as it was known then, when I came to Ann Arbor. So I joined the international community at ECC.

I lived there from 1978 to 1990, when I left for Kalamazoo! I was first a graduate student, then a postdoc, and lecturer during the time. I think I may have lived there longer than any other foreign student!

### ***What is a positive memory you have while living at the ECIR?***

Like everyone else, we were all close to Rev. Dotson and Shirley Lewis. My fondest memories are the potluck dinners and associated presentations on global issues by invited scholars. The annual fall weekend getaway to Tecumseh was very enjoyable, including boating, playing volleyball, and singing campfire songs.

### ***What words of advice would you give to a new resident?***

ECIR really became the window through which I began to see the world differently. I had roommates from Europe, Africa, South America, and Asia. The world was not so globally connected in the 70s and 80s. Like everyone else, I came to the U.S. with a very narrow view of the world as an Indian. But living with students from many different countries was a real eye-opener about the diversity of cultures in the world. I encourage the current students to make an effort to meet resident students from different countries than their own and form close relationships and learn from each other. There are not many places like ECIR, which can bring a world under one roof.



Baga (2017) at an ECIR potluck!

## Celebrating a Life

**Doris Evelyn (Reed) Rumman** passed away on October 11, 2017. She was married in 1955 to Wadi S. Rumman, a UM Prof. of Civil Engineering from Palestine. They have two daughters, Mary and Linda.



Doris's interest in the world became her lifework—pursuing peace, justice and world understanding. From 1949 to 1957 Doris served as the Protestant Counselor for International Students in Lane Hall at the University of Michigan before ECIR became the Ecumenical Campus Ministry. At this time, Ann Arbor hosted more international students than any other community of its size in the country. She arranged visits with American families, opportunities to speak at local churches, and assisted in their search for a faith community. She was committed to being a friend and servant to students of all faiths and cultures.

Throughout her life, Doris continued her three loves—students, all things ecumenical, and international—through Church Women United, the Ecumenical Campus Center (which became ECIR), and the ecumenically-based School for Ministry in addition to currently serving as Lay Leader at First United Methodist Church and as a member of the Detroit Conference Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns.

In 2001, the Ecumenical Campus Center (now ECIR) presented Doris with an award in recognition of more than 50 years of faithful service. **Upon her wishes, and in lieu of flowers, the family has asked that contributions be made payable to ECIR in Doris's name.**

<http://obits.mlive.com/obituaries/annarbor/obituary.aspx?n=doris-evelyn-rumman&pid=186962963>



DORIS REED RUMMAN AND WADI RUMMAN

# ECIR: Past & Present (cont'd)

## Global Engagement for Understanding (GEU) Update

When we walk in the shoes of another, we tap our common humanity and expand our worldviews. Taking this walk is impossible, though, without first removing our own shoes. Global Engagement for Understanding (GEU) — a 130 year old program at the Ecumenical Center & International Residence (ECIR) — shows us how. In the process, we learn to respect, engage, and understand ourselves, others, and our shared place in this world making life vibrant and peace possible.

To date, thousands of students have lived at ECIR and countless others passed through. Now they span the globe. The program's social impact lives in the transformational stories of former and current residents, friends of ECIR, volunteers, partner organizations, and their beneficiaries (please read "Alumni Spotlight: Baga" on page 5 for more reference).

GEU's mission to develop our capacity for global understanding in a world sorely needing it succeeds by converging three components: **Residential**, **Educational**, and **Social**.

The **Residential** Program is foundational. It brings students/scholars from far and near, of diverse backgrounds, into an intentional living learning community. While all cultures are honored and nurtured, global understanding is grounded in the willingness and commitment of these residents to "take off their shoes."

The **Educational** component organizes events and speakers into four themes: Culture and Spirituality, Service and Leadership, Justice and Peace, & Community and Politics. These areas allow residents and *non-residents* to merge personal and professional interests, behold conflicting worldviews, share/integrate ideas, and develop into future global citizens and leaders.

The **Social** component includes classes (yoga, baking, dance, crafts, etc.) for all ages and a Global Café. By inviting local youth, students, seniors, teachers, and civic, business, and religious leaders into the House, GEU gives everyone a chance to take off their shoes, grow, and glo. Join us.

*GEU Certificates can be earned through the Residential, Educational and/or Social components of the program.*

## Wish List

There are many ways to give to ECIR and help the community! If you are interested in donating items, please contact ECIR at [infor@ecir.org](mailto:infor@ecir.org). Here are some examples of possible donations:

- |              |                   |                 |                                |
|--------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|
| - Microwaves | - Vacuum cleaners | - Dining Chairs | - Mattress Covers (twin, full) |
| - Table saw  | - Love seat       | - Bicycles      |                                |

All new or used items (in good condition), as well as cash, are tax-deductible gifts in support of our mission.

## Giving

By combining our donations, we advance our vision to expand our Center, to extend our program as a living, learning community promoting understanding and peace between diverse peoples and cultures of the world." -Bruce Martin, Director

Options are available if you wish to donate. We accept checks or credit cards, one time or monthly contributions. You may choose to include ECIR in your estate plans, make donation using stocks or securities, or utilize a matching gift program with your company or organization.

For more information, please visit our website, [www.ecir.org](http://www.ecir.org)

**Visit us on Facebook and Yelp for photos, stories, and updates on our residents! Be sure to give us a "like" and share our posts with your friends and family.**

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/ECIR.ORG/>

**Yelp :** <https://www.yelp.com/biz/ecir-ann-arbor>

**ECIR needs you! Are you interested in being part of our program committee? Available to drive or participate in ECIR events? Email us at [info@ecir.org](mailto:info@ecir.org)**

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