



# LEADERS TO FOLLOW

## Hosts of the Century



Boyd Fink, Alex Solovyev, ILI English Language Program graduate Sergey Kondrenko, and Kit Fink at Sergey's graduation in the Fink home in Arlington, where so many ILI program participants found a warm welcome.

Since 1993 **Kit and Boyd Fink** of Jacksonville have been involved with the *Business Leadership Forum: USA* and

*American English Language Immersion* programs of the International Leadership Institute, hosting more than a dozen European program participants for their American homestays. Currently they are hosting our first Ukrainian participant, Sergey Kondrenko (see *Update*, p. 2).

Kit and Boyd have found this experience to be rewarding and meaningful. In fact, Kit and Boyd have had so much fun hosting that they've written a book about it, titled *Hands Across the Ocean*. Currently the book is in the process of being published.

We asked Kit and Boyd to tell us what they enjoyed about hosting European program participants. Here are some of their thoughts and ideas.

Ring in the New Year—better still, the new century, brings to mind a quote from the Hebrew prophet, Isaiah:

*See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up. Do you not perceive it?*  
Isaiah 43:19

As the whole world moves into a new century, the opportunity for redefinition is easy to grasp. The Institute is taking this time to renew and refresh its mission and vision.

Future issues of *Leaders to Follow* will provide insights and details of new programs, ideas and projects.

### Q.: Why have you found hosting participants to be such a rewarding experience?

**A. BOYD:** I get real pleasure from trying to explain my country to these visitors and I also know it helps me better understand what the world is all about. Gaining a new friend from a very different background, with a different way of thinking enriches our lives and gives us an opportunity to be of help to someone who is in need.

We are trying to help them understand what's required for the free enterprise system we have in this country, since learning about the American economic system is part of the program. Yet the impact of the program goes beyond just doing business or learning English. We have all been enriched from many aspects of this program, and feel our lives have been touched in many ways

**KIT:** My hosting participation dates back to my Texas years, when I hosted a German student. I also hosted an Arab student who had spent the previous four years in the U.S. but had never been invited into an American home; he was understandably rather bitter about the U.S. It was then that I decided to make my contribution to building a more peaceful world by helping foreign students gain a better attitude toward our country.

My first time hosting visitors from a communist country was in the late 1950's, when I hosted a Hungarian exile (his friend practically lived with us as well!).

Seeing both these young men become successful in the U.S. business world, I thought it would be wonderful to get involved in the Institute educational programs, working with program participants from the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and other east central European countries. I wanted to help them understand and even use their opportunities in the United States to the fullest.

Since we began hosting with the Institute, we've had some great times, with harmonicas, guitars, turkeys, and tennis games—not to mention swim parties, going to the zoo, cars that wouldn't start and late-night discussions about God.

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The International Leadership Institute is an American-based firm dedicated to assisting people from former communist countries in their on-going transition to open, democratic societies.

The Institute emphasizes the restoration of moral, spiritual, social and educational values which have been harmed by totalitarian rule. These values, we believe, will enable Institute program participants to live successful lives in freedom.

## Hosts of the Century—continued

### Q.: Is there anything that stands out in your hosting experience so far?

**A. BOYD:** When we started to take part in the *Executive Education Programs for Central European Professional Leaders*, we never thought we'd visit any of our guests in their own homes. We just enjoyed having them in our home, taking them out on the boat and entertaining them with our friends. Little did we know that one day we'd have the most interesting time of our lives . . . when we went to Europe and visited with our visitors! We've been twice so far, and both times the experience was unforgettable. That's why we wrote a book about it.

**KIT:** We and our friends gave many parties for the program groups which were here. Our home became one of their favorite hang-outs. We hosted executives and students, male and female, enjoying all of our visitors in special ways.

But what stands out for me is our wonderful times with executive participant Jozef Frco of Slovakia, our dear and much-loved friend. Jozef started our close American friend, Rosie, on the path to recovery from a crippling disease. I never thought such a miraculous healing could come through the program. It was as if the hand of God was directly involved in this wonderful healing.

### Q.: What would you most like to see accomplished through the Institute programs for European executives and students?

**A. BOYD:** Kit and I would like to continue to keep in touch with all our former guests and the other friends we've made through the programs. We want them to get the maximum impact from the programs, by remaining in contact with their American friends

**KIT:** We would like to see matters of faith and the spiritual dimension of life as an integral part of the programs. One of the original program goals was to help European participants regain their Christian heritage, which was cast aside during the years of communism.

The impact of the program goes beyond just doing business or learning English. I would be remiss if I did not say, "We loved them all!"

*The Institute would like to thank Kit and Boyd for their kindness and generosity in hosting so many program participants, and for articulating so well the surprising and rewarding aspects of bringing European participants into their home and their lives.*

*For more details on hosting opportunities, contact the Institute.*

## Institute Update

- ⇒ **Sergey Kondrenko**'s six-week custom-tailored program has a happy ending. His program included Your Career Passport, preparation for the TOEFL exam and an internship. Sergey's long-term goal is to attend university in the United States; his TOEFL preparation and exploration of Florida universities helped him decide his goal is realistic. His one-week internship with Jacksonville-based Sportsmania was so successful that he will be staying on for a second, internship-based program with the Institute.
- ⇒ *Congratulations to Sergey, and thanks to all his hosts—Alex and Galina Solovyev, Melissa and Ashley Brown, Sandy and Charley Waters, Kit and Boyd Fink and Lisa and Vince Debban. Special thanks to John Smith of Sportsmania.*
- ⇒ 1993 Language program graduate Pavla Salacova of Kladno, Czech Republic has completed her 4-year degree at High Point University in North Carolina. She is currently working in Kissimmee, Florida with both DisneyWorld and the county courthouse. We are proud of Pavla's determination and persistence!
- ⇒ Martin Kodrle of Jablonec, Czech Republic is in touch with Institute officers regarding the Czech-based firm Colorbeton's interest in taking on an American partner.
- ⇒ Institute former intern Noah Shepherd was recently promoted to Project Manager at Macaluso & Associates architecture firm in New York. 1996 intern Melissa Shepherd just returned from a semester's university study in Ghana, Africa.