

# HOMER INTERNATIONAL GUEST SPEAKER SERIES



CHINA NORWAY JAPAN MONGOLIA SOUTH AFRICA TAIWAN GHANA SWITZERLAND



GUATEMALA HUNGARY CANADA MALAYSIA EL SALVADOR SLOVAKIA GERMANY



FRANCE KENYA INDONESIA VIETNAM NETHERLANDS ERITREA BRAZIL LIBERIA



MEXICO FINLAND ROMANIA SOUTH KOREA INDIA



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# Teacher and Student Feedback



## Student Comments

"It helps to make you realize that though countries are very different, they can also be very similar in certain ways."  
Hannah C.

"She related things to me and told us real life stories. She didn't spend too much time on statistics. I liked how she tied totally unfamiliar things to things I know. Africa has always felt foreign to me, so I never really absorbed the information, but she helped me really understand South Africa... Before these presentations I wasn't sure I wanted to travel all that much. Now, I'm trying to figure out when I'll have enough time to see all the places I want to visit."  
Elaina J.



"This presentation was pretty interesting. I enjoyed how he related some experiences to his childhood. The presentation related to how we talked about mother countries in Global class as well as colonization. Also this helped me understand their culture better. A great presentation filled with knowledge."  
Katie S.



Guest Speaker Ji-Hye Park, South Korea

"Giving a speech in your Global History class was one of the most excellent experiences I had in the States. I felt very privileged (I brag about is sometimes...)"

## Teacher Comments

"The experience was helpful because it provided information that I did not know myself. A real live presenter can address individual questions adjusted to fit a group's interests and knowledge, unlike written information. Students could compare the countries to each other and our country."  
Barb Closson, Smith Elementary School

"The question and answer format works really well in an educational setting. Students can ask questions that help them understand. Most rural NY students will rarely travel outside the US. This is a great opportunity for them to learn from other cultures. Any augmentation to the Global curriculum involving first hand knowledge of other cultures is a great asset."  
Jim Baldwin, Homer High School

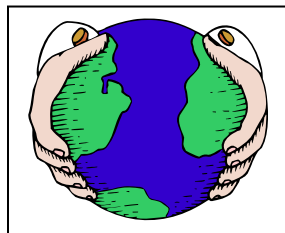
“Thanks for giving me the opportunity to talk to these students, I enjoyed it. I like the whole small class atmosphere and working with high school kids. I definitely would like to give another talk next year.” Chin-Chen L., Taiwan (Cornell University)

“This was a colorful, hands-on presentation. It was fun. I liked her outfit and the food was nice. She touched on things we studied in Global and expanded on them. She made India seem more personal. She gave us real life information that I can relate to.” Elaine J.

“People that come in and talk to us make you realize there is more than one way to do things and one way is no better than the other. There are so many things different between America and most of the world.” Elaine C.

## **Information for teachers who may be interested in started a similar program**

**TEACHERS:  
ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A GUEST SPEAKER  
WHO COULD OPEN UP NEW WORLDS TO YOUR  
STUDENTS?**



As part of a grant from the Cortland-Homer-McGraw Teacher Center, I put together a list of resources for teachers interested in guest speakers from foreign countries or people who have extensive knowledge about foreign countries. Among the guest speakers are members of our community, Rotary and EF high school exchange students, area teachers and professors, SUNY Cortland international students, visiting international professors at SUNY Cortland and international students from Cornell University.

## **How can I use this in my curriculum?**

### **IF YOU ARE A:**

**FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHER**, you will enjoy having a native speaker who can converse in the foreign language you teach.

**SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHER**, you can add enrichment to your study of history by inviting someone into your classroom who can share pictures, stories and music from other parts of the world.

**ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER**, you have many ways you can incorporate guest speakers into your curriculum. For example, Kindergarten teachers might want to invite a guest speaker from Japan for “J” week or a speaker from France for “F” week. Third and sixth grade teachers may want to invite a speaker during a unit of study on foreign countries/cultures. All grade level teachers might enjoy spending part of a day introducing a foreign language to elementary school students. The international students at SUNY Cortland are particularly interested in teaching young students about their home country and language.

**ESL TEACHER**, you can have your students meet with other people in our community who speak English as a second language.

**TEACHER OF OTHER DISCIPLINES**, there are international scholars in a large variety of disciplines who may have expertise in your curriculum

### **Suggestions for getting the most out of the experience**

- Be specific about what you want from the experience. Do you want a lecture followed by a question and answer period? Do you want the speaker to bring in objects from other countries? How will they be displayed? Do you want the speaker to teach some key phrases in their language?
- You will probably have to arrange for transportation for the students to get to your school. Contact the guest speaker and see what timeframe, format and transportation accommodations will be mutually beneficial.
- Verbal and written ‘thank yous’ are appropriate. Many of these speakers come from cultures where small token gifts are given in appreciation. Baked goods,

children's artwork and written thank yous from the children would be appropriate but use this as a teachable moment for your students. Explain the custom of giving gifts and have them come up with creative and inexpensive gifts of appreciation. These speakers are donating their time, how will you show your appreciation for this?

- The turnover rate for international students is high. Some only study in the US for a semester. Be mindful of the schedules of the college students. They may or may not be available over holiday vacations and will not likely be available during midterm and final weeks of each college semester.
- Language barriers: Some guest speakers will be more proficient in English than others. Tactfully get a sense of this when you contact a guest speaker. Speaking to a classroom full of American students in English, which is not the native tongue of many of these guest speakers, can be intimidating. How will you accommodate any fears or frustrations over the language barrier? Perhaps an international student might want to invite a friend (American or another student from their country) to accompany them. Be open to this.

## Contact

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*I would like to thank each of the people who have served as guest speakers in our classrooms. I would also like to thank the Center for International Education of the State University of New York at Cortland, <http://www.cortland.edu/cie/> as well as the outreach staff at the Mario Einaudi Center for International Studies at Cornell University. <http://www.einaudi.cornell.edu/>*