



MADONNA UNIVERSITY

# International Newsletter

## Make It a Great Year!



Welcome back to our new semester!! I hope all of you had a very interesting and safe winter vacation. Last year, we had many events that were organized by ISO (International Student Office). Of the students who joined our last Coffee Time on November, we celebrated two students' birthdays. One of them has already returned to his country, Lebanon. As international students, we always have beginnings and endings, so coffee time is a really good opportunity to make new friends and to make long lasting



friendships. We also had a field trip to Erwin Orchard to pick apples. Moreover, our last event was a bowling party. There were three winners, and we had a very fun time. Some international students already went back to their countries and started to resume their lives in their home countries, but I believe they will never forget the time they spent with us at Madonna. Although we part from some friends, we also make new ones. I would

like you to join our events. These will provide you with great opportunities to meet people and have good times of your own. The first event of this year is a Coffee Time on Friday, January 18th at 1p.m. I hope the event will be a good start for our winter semester. In addition, one of our big events called "The International Festival" is going to be held on Wednesday, February 13th. This is the time to meet people and learn about their cultures from all over the world. Come and be part of this interesting event. We welcome you to join us! Let's make it a great year!!!

• *Written by Soei Gen*

## The Courage to Serve

**"You will find meaning only by sharing in the responsibilities, the dangers, and the passions of your time."**  
- President Lyndon B. Johnson



A recent Madonna University graduate, I am now doing a year of National Service as an MCC (Michigan Campus Compact) Americorps \*VISTA at Madonna University in the Office of the First-Year Experience. Throughout my time as a Madonna student I encountered several people whose deep passion for serving others was truly contagious. These brave individuals truly inspired me and gave me the will and the courage to serve. As a result I was blessed with the benefits of many enjoyable and meaningful service opportunities, and the knowledge that comes from valuable life experiences. As a student I performed service in a variety of different ways, including serving meals in soup



kitchens and a homeless shelter, and participating in alternative spring break trips in Chicago, IL; Kingstree, South Carolina; and the Appalachian Mountains, KY. I met many new friends on these trips. I also learned important leadership lessons and skills. The service projects that I worked on and assisted with taught me to be more responsible because I knew that other people were depending on me for help. These life experiences showed me how important it is to listen carefully when others speak, and to communicate better. However, one of the biggest rewards I have gotten from doing service is truly a sense of personal fulfillment, because I believe that I am doing work that can make a difference in the lives of others. In finding the courage to serve I also found a greater sense of purpose for my life. If you would like to find out more information on how you can get involved in service to the community, including the MLK Day of Service and Alternative Spring Break Service Trips, please feel free to contact me. Thank you.



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• *Written by Mary Therese La Palm*

## The Mongolian New Year



Tsagaan Sar is the Mongolian New Year festival and is usually celebrated at the same time of the Chinese New Year celebration. It is a historical and traditional holiday that

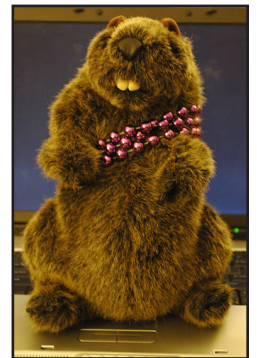
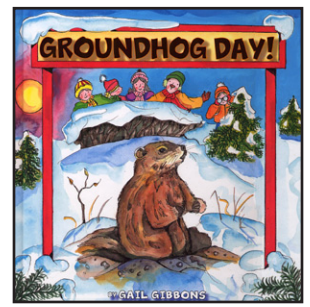
marks the beginning of Mongolia's new year, and is also a time for families and friends to gather together and exchange gifts. The day before the celebration of the Mongolian New Year is called Bitun. That day is known as the celebration day of winding down the old year. On that day, all the debts and major issues of each person is to be fully settled. Bitun is also the day in which families and friends gather in homes that were scheduled for the celebrations. Upon gathering, the eldest man of the home is greeted by each invited individual. During this greeting ceremony, family members hold long pieces of khadag (colored cloth). After that ceremony, the gathered eat steamed buuz, dumplings, and roasted lamb, and drink airag (fermented horse =milk). They also exchange gifts during this time. On the next day, which is the first day of the New Year celebration, families, friends, and neighbors go around to wish each other a Happy New Year, as well as to exchange more gifts. During the evening of that day, they gather at scheduled homes once again to enjoy an even bigger feast than on the previous evening.



• *Written by Joel Rivera*

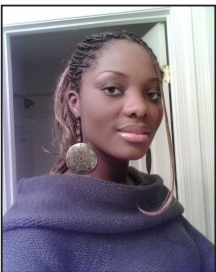
## Groundhog Day

February 2nd is Groundhog Day in America. A funny holiday where the weather is predicted for the following six weeks by... a groundhog: Punxsutawney Phil. People actually rise early to watch Phil, the world famous - and America's official - weather predictor of the day. This celebration was introduced by German settlers in the eighteenth century as Candlemas Day, when the future weather was predicted by the sky and a groundhog. A shadow being cast when the groundhog emerged from his burrow was considered sunshine. This meant there would be six more weeks of bad weather. No sun or shadow meant spring was near. The Europeans had a poem for this day. "If Candlemas be fair and bright, winter has another flight. If Candlemas brings clouds and rain, winter will not come again." It is also described in a song "For as the sun shines on Candlemas Day, So far will the snow swirl until May." The celebration originally began in Europe during "Imbolc," the mid-point between the winter and Summer Equinox. Every year on February 2nd people rise to watch Phil to see if he will see his shadow. The first official celebration was in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania, in 1886. In 1887, the celebration was moved to Gobbler's Knob where Phil is placed under a warmed, artificial tree-stump from which he will emerge for the official ceremony. Although Phil is the official American weather forecaster on February 2nd, many cities have their own official groundhogs as well.



• *Written by Seung Hyuk Baek*

## International Student of the Month



The racial diversity of Madonna University gives its students the opportunity to learn more about each other's background and experiences. This is seen as Njabi Anyoh Fombad, an international student from Africa, shares her experience from the moment she came to the United States of America.

Generally known as Anyoh, she left her country of Cameroon and traveled to the USA in January 2007 to major in pharmacy, where she took the prerequisites at Madonna University. Anyoh found life very interesting from the time she came to the USA. Receiving a warm welcome and smiles from people she never even knew made her more comfortable with the environment. "I never experienced culture shock because the American culture was similar to that in the different countries I have visited," she says. She has made many friends and educated most of them about life in Africa. She discovered that most people have a different view of Africa and therefore deals with the weird questions always asked by saying: "There is no single person in Africa who permanently lives on a tree with the monkeys. Even the homeless live on the streets but not the trees. Moreover, Africa is not all about what is seen on TV. It is much more than that!" Already in her last year for the prerequisites, Anyoh has come to discover the difference between studying in Africa and the USA, and has adjusted to it. However, it is sad to think about graduating this year, as she will miss her friends and school in general. "I will keep in touch with my friends and always give thanks to Madonna University for the moral enrichment. Out of sight is not out of mind," she says.

• *Written by Njabi Fombad*

## Free English Supporting Program

### 1. Conversation Club

• 2:30 - 4:00 PM (Friday), Room 2423

For more information, contact with

**Marian Gonsior** (mgonsior@madonna.edu.)

**Hadeel Hermiz** (hhermiz@madonna.edu)

### 2. ESL Class

• 2:00 - 4:00 PM (Every Sunday), Ward Evangelical Presbyterian Church

For more information, contact with

**Joy Cho** (scho@madonna.edu)

## International Festival

*International Cuisine, Performance, Arts & Crafts*

February 13, Starting at Noon, Take 5 Lounge (\$5.00 at the door)

For more information, contact with

**Grace Philson & Joy Cho (734-432-5791 or 5763)**

## Tax Workshop

February 22, Starting at 10:00 AM, Room 1213

## Newsletter Members

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