



KENT STATE  
UNIVERSITY

Gerald H. Read Center  
for International and Intercultural Education

## Did You Know That Gerald H. Read Center for International and Intercultural Education... ?

**Did you know that** the mission of The Gerald H. Read Center for International and Intercultural Education is to serve as a catalyst for the advancement of international and intercultural education?

**Did you know that** The Gerald H. Read Center for International and Intercultural Education was founded through an endowment established by distinguished Emeritus Professor Gerald H. Read in 1987?

**Did you know that** Gerald H. Read was one of the first American scholars to bring Soviet and Chinese educators as visiting scholars to America in 1957?

**Did you know that** in Fall 2015 The Gerald H. Read Center for International and Intercultural Education hosted 20 visiting scholars from five countries as China, Turkey, Jordan, Spain and Italy?

**Did you know that** in Spring 2016 the Gerald H. Read Center for International and Intercultural Education will host over 40 visiting scholars? In addition to our current scholars, 19 other secondary school teachers on ILEP program from nine different countries arriving to Kent State University.

**Did you know that** over the past 10 years, The Gerald H. Read Center has brought two million dollars of external funding through grants such as the International Leadership in Education Program (ILEP) funded by the U.S.

Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, and Martha Holding Jennings Grants?

**Did you know that** Linda Robertson, Director of The Gerald H. Read Center has lived and worked abroad in Germany, Turkey and Australia, and visited 42 countries of the world?

**Did you know that** The Gerald H. Read Center offers Study Abroad programs: Human Development and Family Studies (Ireland), Global Tourism (Uganda), Educational Psychology, Relational Learning in Education, Design and Delivery of Study Abroad While Studying Abroad (Italy), Global Deaf Awareness (Mexico), Global Understanding of Autism (Brazil), Casino

Management and Trade Show Operations (Las Vegas, Nevada), and Consortium for overseas Student teaching (COST) to 16 different countries?

**Did you know that** over the past decade 30 Kent State faculty members and a number of graduate students have visited and conducted professional development at Kent State Koleji in Turkey?

**Did you know that** The Gerald H. Read Center contracted exclusive agreements with International Baccalaureate (IB) schools to offer graduate credit for professional development? These agreements make Kent State University the only place in the world to issue such credit.

To learn more visit: [www.kent.edu/ehhs/centers/ciie](http://www.kent.edu/ehhs/centers/ciie).  
You are welcome stop by our office anytime in 215 White Hall.



### Women Only Coffee

**October 9, 2015  
3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.  
Women's Center**

The Gerald H. Read Center in collaboration with Women's Center & Student Multicultural Center will offer the Women Only Coffee to bring culturally diverse women together and create a community to support both spouses of international students and scholars as well as the Muslim women on campus. Due to the religious or cultural practices of some female students we have on campus, we wanted to offer the Woman Only Coffee event to include as many female students as possible. The Women Only Coffee will allow women to share their cultures and experiences over a cup of coffee.

### The Gerald H. Read Distinguished Visiting Scholar Lecture Series Kick-Off

*Join our visiting scholars' presentations  
on their research and unique experiences*

**October 14, 12.00 pm– 1.00 pm  
and**

**October 21, 12.00 pm– 1.00 pm  
Room 200 White Hall.**

## An International Student Feels Lonely



**Abe's Post at Kent State Student Center**  
Photo by Shakhnoza Yakubova

Both college and graduate school experiences often become way more challenging for international students compared to their domestic peers. Studying outside of their home country, away from their families and friends, often in a foreign language whether it is their second or fifth language, never gets easy for these students.

Abe's post left us wondering how many other students were out there who never felt comfortable to share how lonely or left out they felt as an international student. When a student shared Abe's post on Facebook, dozens of people immediately contacted him offering their friendship. "I am thinking to myself why are all those kind people hiding?!" says Abe with a smile. "Why is it so hard to make friends here?"

Abe, **Ibrahim Alobailani**, is an international graduate student from Saudi Arabia. He is pursuing his master's degree in Translation Studies. Abe came to Kent State in Summer 2015 for English as Second Language (ESL). In Fall 2015 he started his graduate program.

"When you are at the ESL program you can hardly make friends because of your limited English" explained Abe. He found his peers often busy and preoccupied with their graduate school life. To make friends, Abe chose to live on campus. Unfortunately, to him many did not seem to show interest maintaining friendships. "People make me happy" said Abe, who grew up with nine siblings. "Since my family is not here, my friends are my family" he shared.

As of Fall 2015, Kent State University serves as a home for 3002 international students from 110 different countries. Of this total, 883 are newly enrolled students who are experiencing cultural adjustment, homesickness, and challenges in academic life. Many are seeking friendships like Abe. Each student may experience transitioning to the U.S higher education and culture differently, yet commonly known challenges include homesickness, cultural adjustment, language barriers, loneliness and isolation among many others.

Kent State University provides supportive services for its international students. The Office of Global Education, Division of Student Affairs, Division of Graduate Studies, Student Multicultural Center, The Gerald H. Read Center and others are dedicated to assisting international students with their well-being and success at the university.

Abe's story makes us realize the importance of finding a home away home for international students. His story also caused us to examine other possible ways we can assist international students.

### Quotes from Abe's Friends

**Tessa Benedetti**, ESL Instructor, Kent State University from the United States: "He's a sweetheart. I saw his ad earlier in the summer and have been talking with him. It's easy to talk with him!"

**Samuel Boateng**, a graduate student in Ethnomusicology, from Ghana: "I think Abe is very courageous. I wouldn't be able to put this [Abe's post] anywhere and yet I went, or perhaps still go through this"

**Sai Aaresh**, a graduate student in Software Development, from India: "I feel Abe is a cool guy and well mannered person on that day at the event he needed to leave early yet he didn't go without saying good-bye to you. I said go and tell her that you need to go but he said I don't like to interrupt someone when they are having a conversation. This small incident made me realize how much he cares for other person's feelings and time."

**Michael George**, an undergraduate student in Environmental Biology, from Ohio: "I believe that one of the reasons international students feel left out is preconceived ideas on both sides. We must look past social and cultural differences to break down the barriers that separate us. If we want to truly help others, extending our friendship to those who feel left out is one of the best ways we can make a difference."



**Pictured from left to right: Shakhnoza Yakubova, Sai Aaresh, Ibrahim Alobailani, and Pramodar Yalamanchili.**  
Photo by Abdoulaye Fall