



# Open Doors Newsletter

## January, 2020

*"Gradually, one learns to stand in the sandals of the stranger and gain at least a vague sense of their feelings."*

*- Bob Luitweiler*



## Looking Ahead

As we enter the 71st year of Servas, it truly feels like time for new beginnings. Below is a sampling of some of what is to come in 2020 with US Servas.

- **Annual Conference:** Held this year in Black Mountain, North Carolina (just outside Asheville) **October 9-11, 2020** (more to come on this soon)
- **USA Host Listings** will be joining the International Site (Servas Online)
- **General Membership** will be coming, and is a great option for those who want to be involved, other than as a host or traveler.
- **Making Connections is gearing up** and longer stays are sought in NYC this March for the UN conference...
- **Servas Experiences** program is expanding nationwide
- And each office staff member is recruiting one friend to join Servas. You can too!



## EAGERLY SEEKING!

Volunteers for the below positions

### **Great Volunteer Opportunities Open Now:**

Shine with your expertise, learn something new, be included in a fun group: We have openings in various teams. Each committee consists of 3-10 volunteers with varying backgrounds and experiences, and they meet regularly by Skype or Zoom. Servas is run mostly by volunteers but assisted by 4 part-time staff. Most of us work from a distance but the office in Arcata, CA also welcomes volunteers.

### **Technology Chairperson**

Amazing opportunity to put your tech skills to work: US Servas is integrating with Servas

International's platform (ServasOnline)! We need you to be the new liaison with our worldwide Online team supported by the office staff and Tech Committee, engage with third-party vendors, and oversee the integration and related technology needs: our online payment system, membership database, US Servas website, etc. Familiarity with Drupal is a plus. This leader gets to take the torch of a hard-working team to the finish line!

### **Social Media Coordinator**

Feel great about being at your screen: Help volunteers in all our committees to improve their skills using social media. We need some tech training but also planning and coordinating of our activities so we may reach existing and potential members better without overwhelming them with repeat postings (or looking as if we were clumsy!). You would be part of the Communications group and work closely with the Marketing Lead person.

### **Marketing Lead**

Are you ready to share the excitement about our cause and our growing non-profit with the world? Servas is unique but not well known, and we must change that! Be part of the Communications group, one of our most active committees, and help them strategize about best media outlets, language and timing.

### **Are you skilled in peaceful communication?**

Our organization's structure is growing and changing, and it deserves some TLC: We would like someone to develop or adapt a communication policy for US Servas that reflects our common desire for peace and the acceptance of many differing views and opinions. If you are a nonprofit communications professional or have experience setting up such guidelines for organizations, your input would be very welcome!

### **Coordinators for Bylaws Revision**

If you like to apply your sharp, analytical mind for a good cause and enjoy language, you'll want to be here, at the center of where all parts of an organization interact. We would love to have you on this fairly new team that is just setting up its procedures. It's helpful but not required if you have a background in non-profit management, law or editing.

## **Fundraising**

You've been there, right: not enough money to implement great ideas, but you'd rather find solutions than complain? Whether you're an old pro wishing to be involved in a good thing or you want to learn this important skill, we would like your help. We have a Strategic Plan being implemented by experienced leaders and a whole new crop of volunteers with fresh ideas. This is an exciting time to reach out to high donors and foundations, and support members in organizing events. The fundraising volunteer will work directly with the Board Chair and the Office Administrator.

## **Organizers for Peace, Social Justice & Environment**

Brand new initiative in response to member requests: This group will work closely with our experienced UN representatives and our Peace & Social Justice Secretary. We are looking for 5 more volunteers who can communicate how social justice and environmental degradation are related to peace for the purpose of building a larger, active movement among our members. The goal is for Servas to partner with other organizations and become a stronger force for peace. The initiators of this committee have already attended UN conferences and been active in various ways, and we're excited to team up.

Find out more and read full descriptions on our website: <https://usservas.org/page/we-need-you> and email [Info@USServas.org](mailto:Info@USServas.org) with your interest.



## **Reflection & Summary**

### **Servas at the 68th UN Civil Society Conference By Jeanne Devine**

August 26 - 28, 2019, Salt Lake City, Utah

Forty Servas members from the US, Mexico, and France attended the annual UN conference of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Salt Lake City. They joined 4000+ people from 130 countries. Conference delegates affirmed that peace is a fundamental component of sustainable societies, and recognized the significance of youth participation. [Read the full summary](#)

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## Travelers / Hosts

### Etiquette & Ideas

By Tys Sniffen

Tips and ideas on best success for travelers, from a traveler and (now) host:

When I 'irst joined Servas in 2003 as a traveler, I had a very limited idea of the bene'its, or the culture. I simply liked the idea of not staying in hotels while traveling. So I got the host list of my planned trip and blasted out a simple email with my travel dates a couple weeks before I left. I probably just blind copied everyone. In English. Not surprisingly, I didn't get any responses. Since then, I've also been a host, and have seen every sort of traveler request possible, and I now realize that a more personal touch, that takes into consideration the way the host wants to be contacted, is better.

Here in US Servas, some hosts in heavily-tourist areas get bombarded with requests, and other hosts off the beaten path don't get much of any. We've heard

from travelers – and maybe experienced ourselves – about the frustration of sending out a request to stay and getting no response at all, not even a “no, we can’t host”. So, in this day of super-fast communication, where other sites and services can be set up instantly, how do we train our members to communicate – and respond – for the best success?

[Read the full article](#)

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## Diversity Dinners & Just Views

Two programs begun by member, Stephanie Downs Hughes, which can also be formed in your own community.

### DIVERSITY DINNERS

Here are just some of the types of diversity we seek to welcome and explore:

- Ages and Stages
- Heritages, Ancestries, “Races”
- Philosophies of Life, Beliefs, Religions, Faiths, Thought Processes
- Life Styles, Value Systems, Preferences, Habits, Choices
- Gender Identities, Gender Roles
- Interests, Talents, Specialties
- Work, Occupations, Volunteer Pursuits
- Politics, Economics, Governing, Activism
- Activities in Communities, Organizations, Identity Groups

Diversity Dinners Contact Information: Stephanie Hughes (630)420-4233



## JUST VIEWS

### **What's in the Name** – What our *Program Series Title* is Meant to Convey

*Views: Watching documentaries / films and then sharing ideas about the related crucial issues in them.*

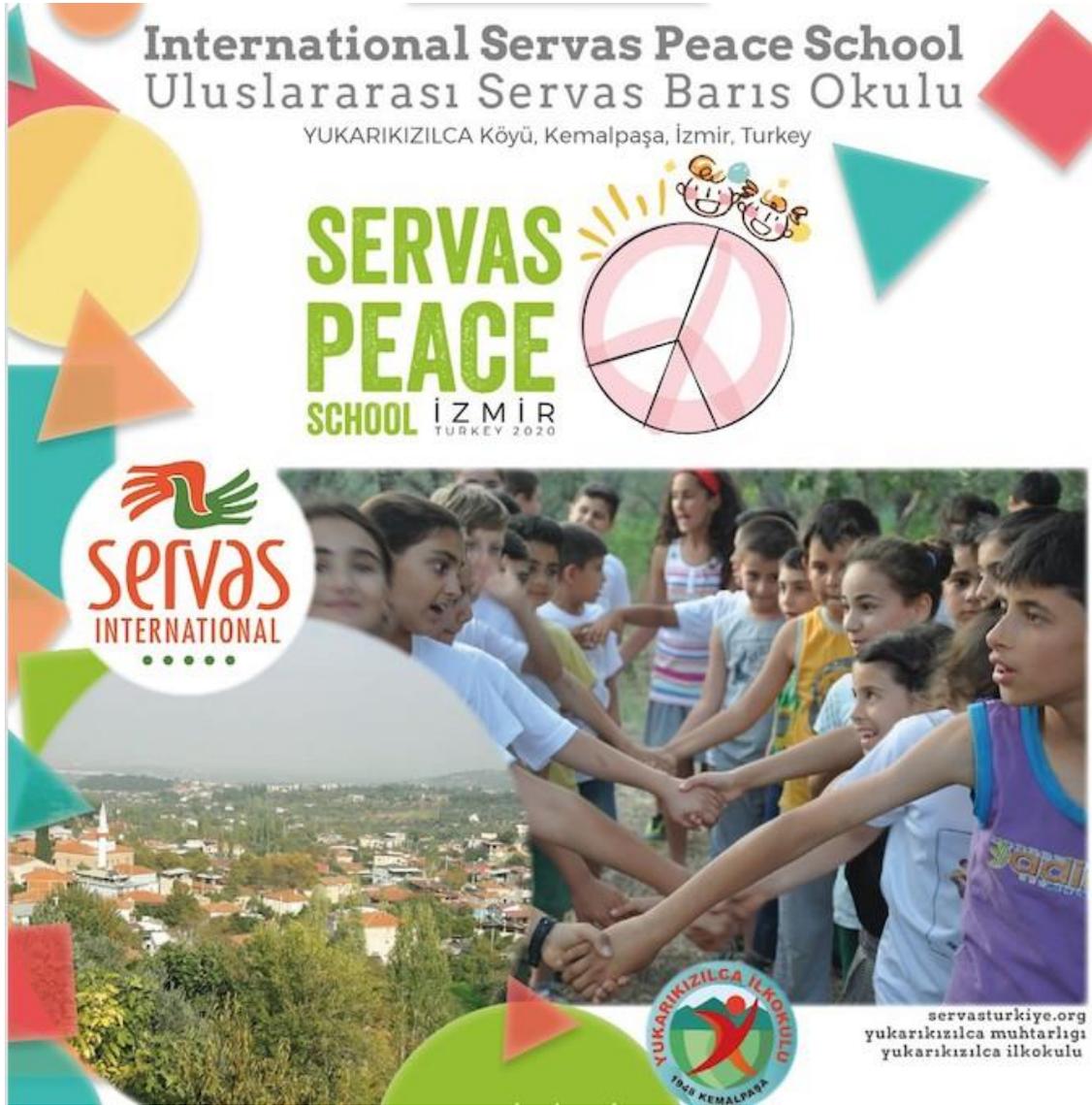
*Just: Asking and answering questions about justice -- what is fair or not and why.*

### **Principles** – What Just Views Is All About:

- A. Come for informative exchange, cooperative education, civil interaction on critical issues.
- B. Remember this is a nonpartisan, free and open public forum for adults (and teens with parents).
- C. Probe issues of justice—social, economic, environmental. Politics & religion may be discussed. (and much more...!)

-Stephanie [/sdownshughes@gmail.com](mailto:sdownshughes@gmail.com) 630/420-4233

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From Servas Turkey - a Peace School! Watch the trailer on Vimeo:

<https://vimeo.com/329567596>

## Peace School:

Dear Servas world,

I would love to invite you to volunteer for children in Izmir and Antakya, Hatay next summer. Servas Peace School takes place in two cities this year and I hope in more

cities and countries soon : )

For application:

<https://forms.gle/GenfDbhHbDXdk8ur7>

For details:

<http://atesnaar.blogspot.com/2019/11/servas-peace-school-in-izmir-turkey.html>

For the 11 year of peace school experience visit the page, please: Facebook; "Servas Peace School"

Hugs,

Mehmet Ates

Servas Peace School Coordinator

WANT TO CONTRIBUTE?

For newsletter deadlines, get us info by the last Friday of each month!

Send contributions to [Info@USServas.org](mailto:Info@USServas.org) with "for the newsletter" in the subject

## DONATE

