

My Experience at PEN-International Summer Leadership Institute



By Elena Iskandarova

First Day of Trip - 08.08.08

- The NTID/RIT students, staff and I originally met at the boarding room in Rochester, New York. I felt the flight was shorter than I imagined because the Continental Airline company has provided some leisure activities for me to keep enjoying the trip. Front of my seat, there is a Touchscreen TVs with free 16 movies, 21 games, short shows, and 21 artists and I watched the movie “Iron Man” on it which was good. Also, we were provided two kinds of meals.



Landed in London!



- We got on this nice bus for a two and half hours trip to East Sussex, England from the London Gatwick airport. It was really nice to see the views of almost all green fields and beautiful English houses.





- It was my first time to see seat belts required to wear in a bus because I don't see any of them in buses in the United States. There were blue stickers on the middle of bus windows saying "Seats belts must be worn." I truly felt safe and wore the seat belts after reading the sticker.

Vehicles in England



- Amazingly, there are a lot of small cars, such as Geo Metro in England and they save money on gas. The reason for the existence of these cars is because the gas price is about 12 dollars per gallon there. I think people living in USA are lucky to have the gas price that is one third of what is in England. I hope that some of them including me may consider about getting small cars in the future.

Sunday, August 9th



Lectures, presentations, workshop and leisure activities were taken at this Herstonceux Castle.



We ate the meals at this cafeteria for the whole week.



A red telephone booth is one of well-known things in England right next to the castle.

A Very Old English Pub



The pub was an off campus and we tried English beers and had a good time before the program began the next day.



Simple and Sweet Dorm Room



- I slept in a single room at the Bader Hall for the week. The moment I entered the room, I quickly like the room because it has convenient and simple things college students would need for. For instance, the room has a lamp attaching to the wall above the bed, a desk lamp, two book shelves, and a gray board with color tacks.

First Day of the Program



Japanese students and interpreters



Russian students and interpreters



Chinese students and interpreters



From left to right in the center picture: Mr. Bill Clymer, Mrs. Patricia DeCaro, Dr. Denise Kavin, and Dr. James DeCaro. They all developed plans and the program for Summer Leadership Institute. The book Dr. Kavin holding was a wonderful program book that contained useful information about staff, schedule, presentations, and workshop activities in four different languages which are Chinese, English, Japanese, and Russian.

Tour at Herstonceux Castle



Victorian Hall



Beautiful and tall bushes of garden are inside the castle

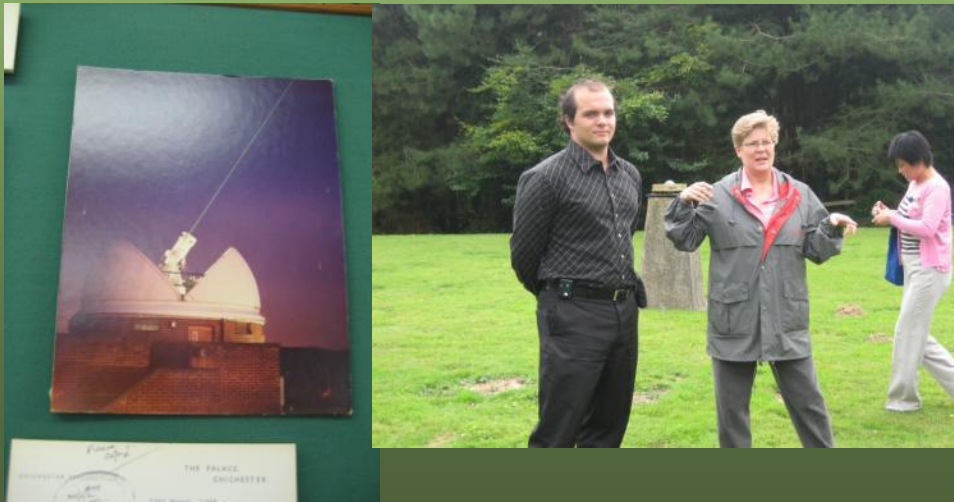


In past years, owners and residents of the castle entered and hid in the small door. Strangers and invaders would think that it was just a wood wall.

Tour (cont'd)



Christian is a tour guide and was a student at the International Study Centre at the castle. He explained students about the satellite center and how it works. I found it interesting because this building uses the laser to point at a moving satellite. I had seen the blue laser targeting a satellite somewhere in the sky every time I walked to the Bader Hall (dorm building) from the pub at the castle during nights. Christian also stated that the basement of the Bader Hall used to be a military base before the building of Bader Hall was built. The military base is not in use anymore.



Tour (cont'd)



Sometimes brides and grooms attended their wedding ceremonies at the beautiful castle. The man named Bransgrove in the photo above made a wedding cake that is a miniature replicate of Herstmonceux castle for a couple who was getting married. The couple decided not to eat it and they gave it to a museum instead.

Hidden Dungeons in the Castle



In past, some people and prisoners were put in two dungeons at the castle as part of their punishments. In the rightmost picture showing the man who was front of a door that leads to a small room with a dungeon. The dungeon was discovered a few years ago because many people overlooked it since the huge stone was covering the dungeon. Also, there is a second dungeon in the lecture room that has a lined square on the floor.

Opening Ceremony at the Pub



We played darts. Mr. Alim taught Russian and Japanese students, and me on how to calculate players' scores for the game. I was Katie's partner for the dart game and didn't win the game. The darts was a fun game. I felt more welcome after playing games and chatting with International students.



We played a pool game with the Russian student named Elena.



Some students and staff were chatting, eating food, and having some wine and beers.

“Life Experiences: The Making of Deaf Leaders”



Dr. Alan and Vicki Hurwitz shared their life experiences and how they became successful leaders. Here are a few main points of their presentation:

- Alan was involved with many organizations such as Goldstein Club and Boy Scout

- One of his quotes was “Work not for one person, but for everyone”

- Also, he stated that sharing experience and influence helps others become future leaders

- Vicki implied that she joined in different organizations and held different positions regardless of how prominent it is in the organization, became a successful leader.

- This statement means anyone is encouraged to hold different positions, despite that they have different background and experience, can still become a successful leader in the future.



Eating Lunch Together



“Conflict Response Modes”



Mrs. Patricia DeCaro and Dr. James DeCaro gave clear examples of Avoidance (walk away), Accommodation (give up), Compromise (preferred interests), Competition (grab), and Collaboration (negotiation) for solving the problem situations as a leader.

After listening to their presentation, I clearly understood the difference of concepts between compromise and collaboration. Compromise is when two persons must agree on a common ground that may not be in their best interest. This is unlike for collaboration in which both interests are preferred for both parties. A leader who uses the collaboration style tends to be admired and liked by others.

Birthday for Staff Leader



Mrs. Cassie Franklin, who was a staff leader for University of Wisconsin students, was surprised that the PEN-International team decided to have a cake for her birthday.

Cultural Diversity



Mrs. Patricia and Mr. Alim gave a presentation about cultural diversity. I enjoyed learning four countries' responses to pictures that represent culture because they are different based on their knowledge. The main point of this workshop is that we should be aware of other countries' cultures and adjust ourselves and respect them whenever we work together globally.



Each student shared their homeland group's thought about the culture of picture. For example, Chinese student's response stated that the man wearing the green cap announcing his wife has an affair.

Student Cultural Night (Japan)



Japanese students introduced one of their fun games called “Fukuwara” that means lucky laugh. A person is blindfolded and puts parts of a face to a paper to match with the face. After putting parts, the face can look either funny or right. That was why it is said lucky laugh.

Student Cultural Night (cont'd)



Another game Japanese students started called “Ninin Baori”, that is, two persons coat. A person is behind other giving food to that person. It was funny to look how the student behind the person did not function naturally.

Group Pictures ☺



One of My Favorite Pictures



We were excited to take pictures of us and places.
Russian students created that we should act like these
in the pictures.

Program Development and Leadership

This presentation by Dr. Mayumi Shirasawa inspired me. Dr. Shirasawa is a considerate and persistent leader for deaf persons. Here is a summary of main points:

- She analyzed deeply how her strategy can be fit in University system that has a unchangeable strict policy.
- The strategy was to set a networking support service at a University in order to collaborate with other Universities.
- New support service called Network Post-Education was established by Shirasawa and later with the help of others.
- She learned so much that “Lack of Awareness” was not helpful to make a change for deaf community, so she put her effort for awareness.
- She wrote a support guidebook that explains deaf people’s accommodation and how to set up support services.



Student Cultural Night (USA)



We, NTID/RIT and University of Wisconsin students, presented about five regions of the United States and their interesting facts. Afterwards, we gave American candies, red, blue, and white bead bracelets, pins, silicone bracelets, and so on to International students, interpreters, and staff. They really like them. Also, we shared peanut sandwiches with them. In addition, with the cowboy custom, I danced cowboy. I think students and staff enjoyed watching it. Lastly, we and International students played a jelly game that is similar to elephant; however, the middle person pointed at shakes her/his body and the left and right persons sign a bowl with two hands with other hands between the center person. Some people laughed at how funny different middle persons shake their body.

Student Cultural Night (China)



Traditional Chinese dance



Peacock dance



Like "Warrior" Chinese dance

Gratitude



The Chinese group's grateful and gave their painting to the Nippon Foundation for their sponsorship to bring them come to the Summer Leadership Institute.



The red necklace was given to each International group's staff leader. It brings happiness, lucky, and health. It was made by one of Chinese students named Yang Cui.



The red souvenir was given to the PEN-International team for Chinese group's appreciation of the team's hard work and development program of Summer Leadership Institute.

Cultural Group Picture ☺



Trip to London!



Some of us slept in the bus because we woke up so early at 5ish am. We were excited to travel to London. My friends Anastasia, Yang, and I were chatting about lives in Russia, China, and United States when we were on the two and half hours trip. I really felt the trip was one hour. When we arrived in London, we stopped chatting and started taking pictures of places. ☺

Views of London



London (cont'd)



There are so many black taxi cars like this in the picture in London. It is like an old-fashioned car but the appearance is very cool. Taxi cars have swipe systems that are designed for credit/debit cards to pay for taxi services. Also, some taxi cars have spacious rooms with two row back seats.



The house behind us was England Diana Princess's "second" home. We took a picture of us with the Japanese group.



Westminster Church



St Margaret's Church is next to the Collegiate Church of St. Peter at Westminster.

The Collegiate Church of St. Peter at Westminster.
Diana Princess and her ex-husband Charles attended
this church for their wedding.

Random Tour



English Police were friendly to allow us to take a picture with them. 😊



Clock tower "Big Ben"

Back to East Sussex



We chatted together again in the bus on the way back to the castle. Yang, Anastasia, and I were laughing so hard about one funny Russian sign. I wished the trip was longer for us to chat more.



The Russian group invited all of us to eat sweet pie and drink tea with them. We had a good time telling question and answer jokes.



After drinking tea, we played Elephant and telephone games. Telephone game was so much fun and they enjoyed it. Some students acted a specific animal and other people interpreted it wrongly to others. I kept laughing how they behaved animals in funny ways. We stayed up until 2ish am.

Setting Goals



This presentation about setting goals is very important and helpful for International students and me because they help us plan to achieve our goals as a leader. Here is a procedure on how to reach goals:

- Establish a goal
- How to achieve the goal?
- What resources are needed?
- When should the goal be reached?

Role Modeling and Volunteerism



We did activities to help us understand what role model means to us. For example, the picture shows that we were writing a lot of characteristics that a role model has.



Student Cultural Night (Russia)



The Russian performed a Russian dance.



All of us were dancing together.



Group picture of Russia and USA.

Transition After College



The presentation by Mrs. Cassie Franklin is essential for graduates. It is about seven things to be expected after completion of college education by a deaf or hard-of-hearing person.

Identity	Values
Communication (accommodations)	Knowledge of Rights and Responsibilities
Support System (family, friends, advisors)	Intra and Interpersonal Skills
Education and Goals	

Random Pictures



Closing Ceremony and Certificates



All International Participants



Closing Ceremony (cont'd)



The man with the green sweater is a director of the International Study Centre at the Herstmonceux Castle. He told us an entertaining ghost story and at the same time he showed us that a decorated curtain on the wall almost fell down. He believed that no one could do that since it is too high for people to reach and it was a ghost who caused it to happen.

Another Surprise Birthday



The Japanese student was surprised to see a cake and each of four International students signed Happy Birthday in their own languages. He was thrilled about it.



Dr. James DeCaro gave him a medal saying “The Greatest Person”. It seems that it was one of his best days in life.

Special Thanks to Interpreters



They are hard working interpreters for International students.

Closing Ceremony at the Pub



Flew Back to Rochester, NY ☹️



Unforgettable Memory



- During the Summer Leadership Institute week, I learned how to be an advocate for deaf causes internationally. Also, I learned how to be a leader and work with international people in an effective way.
- I would like to say thank you very much to the following list: The Nippon Foundation, PEN International team, and all individuals who were involved in the event.