AEC Campout Changes the World (wink wink)

By Tiffany Edwards, AEC education program specialist & editor of AEC Newsline

Life here in the AEC never ceases to amaze me. Whenever I’m met with the basic question “What do you do?” I’m always at a loss for how to answer. I know people are looking for a neat and tidy response; “I’m an engineer, I’m a nurse, I’m a __________”, fill in the blank, but my experiences organizing activities for AEC students often defy description. I simply don’t have the vocabulary to put it into words. Our campout on June 21st was no different. The following Monday, a number of coworkers in the AEC asked me how it had gone. I thought about how to respond. It went well? It was fascinating? How could I answer? Sure we had the usual hamburgers and hot dogs, volleyball and soccer matches, hiking, swimming, and canoeing. But how could I put into words the real experience?

On his Facebook page, AEC student Hussain Bohuliga said “It was more than camping, it was a small adventure with new friends from around the world”. Bohuliga, from Saudi Arabia, had trekked off into the woods in search of lightning bugs with fellow AEC students Takuma Mukai and Ryosuke Kono, from Japan, while the rest of us stayed back at camp to make s’mores and tell ghost stories. And to dance. Saudi Arabian dances, Brazilian dances, Japanese dances. And to sing. As it turns out “What Does the Fox Say?” is one song that can bring together even the most divergent of cultures. Who knew?

(continued on page 3)
My Experience of Ramadan

By Yuki Oniwa

I wanted to try a new cultural experience. My Muslim friends told me what Ramadan was, but I thought I could fast for only one day. They cheered me on. They believed that I could make it. I didn’t know about Ramadan so much before I had tried it. The only thing I knew was that Muslims fast in the daytime. Therefore, I didn’t know how hard fasting was. Even though I tried it for only one day, it was very hard. I’m very impressed with my Muslim friends’ patience. Also I learned how poor people feel when they are starving. This Ramadan experience was meaningful for me to understand Muslim culture and the importance of food.

Yuki Oniwa is a student of Kansai University in Osaka Japan. His major is English. He is studying in the AEC and at KU for nine months.
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(continued from page 1)

When I went to bed at about 1:00 in the morning there was a rousing board game of Saudi Arabian origin going on. The competition between the Saudis and Brazilians was fierce. And when I woke up six-and-a-half hours later it was still going on.

We spent the morning swimming and canoeing, scarifying down donuts, and soaking in the first day of summer. “We went to swim and had a really fun time! We had a water battle, it was awesome! It was definitely one of my best experiences with this bunch of guys!” said AEC student Cooper Shi.

I spend my time here in the AEC observing and learning. Learning that Saudi kids will pull out a hookah at the drop of a hat. That Japanese kids love taking totally bizarre pictures. That camping is not a usual Brazilian pastime. That a pop song and roasted marshmallows have the power to melt away cultural differences and bring us all together, even if just for that few minutes. But we have that few minutes. That few minutes when we were all just people. My hope for you, and for me, is that we carry that moment into our futures. That we remember, before we judge someone, that while we all come from different backgrounds and cultural traditions, at our core we’re all just people trying to live our lives in this crazy world. And that we all know what the fox says.

From left: Cooper Shi (China), Takuma Mukai (Japan), Hussain Bohuliga (Saudi Arabia), Danilo Santos de Oliveira (Brasil), Ryosuke Kono (Japan).

Makers Gotta Make! AEC Students Visit Maker Faire KC

By Taisei Iizuka

Taisei Iizuka is a student of Kansai University in Osaka Japan. He is studying in the AEC and at KU for nine months.

Tiffany Edwards, other international students and I went to the Maker Faire Festival in Kansas City last Sunday. There were many awesome new technologies. The most interesting one was the 3D printers because I have never seen that in my home country of Japan. They make many kinds of shapes from plastic strings or a kind of ingredient called 3D ink. The process is also interesting. First, they melt the ingredient at the top edge of the printing device like a glue gun. Second, they make the melted ink into very thin threads and pile them up to make a shape. It looks like weaving. The show like a "coke fountain" was also amazing. Two men put Mentos candies into 108 bottles of Diet Coca Cola. I did not expect this, but the bottles popped and splashed much higher and sprayed everywhere so we almost got wet. This festival was really amazing entertainment. I want to go and see this again next time.

Taisei Iizuka with a Storm Trooper and a free box of Twinkies at Maker Faire.
Great advice from a colleague to all students:

Focus intently on learning how to write well! Read good books and articles and emulate in your own writing what strikes you as elegant, compelling, and persuasive. Nothing will indicate to others your level of education, your seriousness, and your devotion, than well-crafted prose. Often one hears that in the digital age—the age of texts, tweets, posts, and e-mails—, elements of writing such as style, syntax, and grammar no longer matter. This is completely flawed logic. In a world in which we communicate more often with more people through the written word, your first (and lasting) impression on an employer, donor, colleague, professor, et al. is solidified most commonly in your writing. Learn how to use commas, semi-colons, subjunctive verbs, conditional clauses, etc. You’re spending at least four years earning a college degree; however, the inability to write well can undermine that entire investment. Learn to write elegant, concise, and persuasive prose, and you’ll succeed not only in college but in any career you choose.

Dr. Michael Thomas
Concordia University, Portland, OR

AEC Welcomes Fulbright to KU

By Marie Osterhaus, AEC Education Program Specialist

Welcome to our newest arrivals who are part of the short-term Fulbright Pre-academic program! 26 students from over 17 different countries will participate in a summer preparatory program at the AEC before venturing off to other universities across the country to complete a master’s, doctoral or research program. It is an honor to have these bright and talented students, each with his or her unique area of interest, study at KU. I am so excited to get to know the members of this group, and can’t wait to teach them everything there is to know about being a Jayhawk!