

E-NEWSLETTER ISSUE 5 • SEPTEMBER 2024

THE ART, SCIENCE AND FUN OF BUILDING COMMUNITY

Official Newsletter of the Bulgarian Fulbright Commission



Fulbright Bulgaria's mission includes "building a community... committed to contributing to a just, prosperous, and peaceful future for the peoples of the United States and Bulgaria." In this edition of our newsletter, we demonstrate how our Fulbright scholars are doing just this: strengthening their local communities as well as Bulgarian-American partnerships through diverse projects ranging from shared scientific research to creative theater and debate performances. Professor Katerina Zlatkova-Doncheva of Veliko Tarnovo University shows how science and practice can work hand-in-hand to support individuals with disabilities and their families, while Professor Julie Kiernan of Salem State University shares how she engaged audiences as different as Roma youth in Bulgaria and US military veterans in theater projects to support both social change and personal growth. Of course, Fulbright community building is not limited to individual grants or the academic year – once again, Fulbright Bulgaria and its partners took advantage of the summer break to offer two summer camps for Bulgarian high school students, one on media literacy and journalism and the other on debate and critical thinking. These camps not only offer fun ways for young people to learn new skills, but also create cohorts of students with shared interests that strengthen Fulbright Bulgaria's professional and personal communities of the future!



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BULGARIAN GRANTEES

How Science and Practice Can Go Hand-in-Hand

By Dr. Katerina Zlatkova-Doncheva, associate professor in Special Education and head of the Pedagogy Department at the University of Veliko Tarnovo and a Fulbright scholar at Michigan State University in AY 2023-24. She is a passionate advocate and researcher on best practices in the field of educational inclusion, and her mentoring program for youths with intellectual disabilities has won awards from Veliko Tarnovo Municipality and the Bulgarian Ministry of Labor and Social Policy.

“It was a great honor for me to be a part of the team and the academic community of Michigan State University in East Lansing as a Fulbright Visiting Scholar. I had dreamed of dedicating myself to pure science for some time, and as a Fulbrighter, the dream came true. I embarked on an incredible research journey in the world of Special Education.”

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“Real changes in the system occur when the researcher is on the ground, working closer to practitioners”

DR. KATERINA ZLATKOVA-
DONCHEVA,
FULBRIGHT VISITING
SCHOLAR AY 2023-24



U.S. GRANTEES

Different Yet the Same: Theater as a Medium for Social Change and Personal Growth

It is well known that immersing oneself in diverse perspectives fosters understanding, compassion, and the ability to relate to the experiences of others. Theater, with its profound capacity to convey messages to audiences, can significantly enhance a community's sense of empathy.

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Who Has More Fun, Journalists or Debaters? See the Arguments and Decide!

Summer would not be complete without sleep-away camp, which combines learning and personal development with intense new friendships and tons of fun. Fulbright Bulgaria was glad to bring this time-honored tradition to dozens of Bulgarian high school students in our traditional media and debate camps.

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