Student Accepted by “Teach for America” in Hawaii

Student Chas Zachar was recently notified that he is among the 10% of applicants accepted into Teach for America, a national program that recruits teachers to work in underserved areas.

This fall he will head to the Big Island of Hawaii to co-teach high school classes in science, math, and English, with a special focus on supporting students with mild to moderate learning disabilities.

“I chose to apply to Teach for America because I was looking for four different things: I wanted an immediate job, I wanted to travel, I wanted to continue my education in graduate school, and I wanted to give back,” he said.

Teach for America offers all of those. Even as he’s teaching, he will be enrolled in a partnering graduate program. At the end of his two-year commitment, he will have finished or will be close to finishing a master’s degree in education.

He said that it’s also competitive to get placed in Hawaii.

“Having MUM on my resume makes me stand out,” he said. “There’s been a movement toward different ways of educating. The core principles of Consciousness-Based education are becoming more mainstream and accepted.”

He also credits the strong training he had at MUM, including the fact that by his sophomore year he was already getting experience in the classroom.

“I got a lot of hands-on learning, and that made me a solid teacher,” he says. “I give all credit to my MUM professors.”

Student Film Wins Four Awards at Iowa Motion Picture Event

A short film by Gregor Kresal, a student in the David Lynch MFA in Film, won four awards last month at the Annual Iowa Motion Picture Awards, including the top award for cinematography and three Awards of Achievement for editing, soundtrack, and long-form live-action entertainment.

Mr. Kresal’s film has also won a host of other awards at international film festivals.

Shot in Iowa, Slovenia, and France, and titled 8 ½ Circles, the film is a psychological drama that tells a story about a professional mountain climber whose dreams become increasingly disturbing. He is so completely focused on his next expedition to Muztagh Tower, a sharp 23,622-foot-high mountain in Pakistan, that he loses interest in day-to-day life.
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In a series of chaotic events that unfold over three weeks during an expedition in August of 2008, his life turns upside down.

Mr. Kresal says that his film, which is a fictional treatment based on his life story, is about why he stopped mountain climbing after being a professional for 25 years. During that time he lost 25 friends in the mountains.

The first 10 days of filming took place in and around Fairfield in April of 2015. In August he and his crew then went to Slovenia for another week of difficult and dangerous filming in the mountains. They then traveled to the high-altitude glaciers around Europe’s highest mountain – Mt. Blanc, in France – where they filmed for another two days.

“The practice of Transcendental Meditation has been very helpful in discovering and reconnecting with my personal story,” Mr. Kresal said. “It uncovered many suppressed feelings I had not dealt with because of the trauma I experienced due to losing so many friends.”

He also said the David Lynch program played an important part in the success of 8 ½ Circles by connecting him with a great crew to work with. The film uses actors from around Fairfield and from Slovenia, as well as Joey Maida from California in the lead male role.

Mr. Kresal is currently in a pre-production phase of turning his 32-minute film into a full-length feature.

His awards include the first prize at the Alpi Giulie Cinema in Trieste, Italy, the Seven Summits Award at the Mountain Films Awards, the Award of Excellence at the Headline International Film Festival, and Platinum Winner at the International Independent Film Awards.

His film was also selected as a semifinalist at Los Angeles Cine Fest Festival and received another four nominations (for best picture, cinematography, editing, and student film) at the Top Indie Films Festival. It has also been officially selected to be a part of more than 10 other festivals in countries around the world, including Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, The Netherlands, Bulgaria, Romania, and the U.S.

The Review

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FROM THE FOUNDER

“T he improvement of social relations depends upon a willingness to adjust to different natures and varying circumstances within society. Social relations improve by developing the qualities of mind and heart in individuals.”

— Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, Science of Being

Noted Expert on Ecological Design Teaching Permaculture

Sustainable living students studying permaculture design this block are fortunate to have a nationally known expert on ecological design as their teacher: Phil Hawes, who is most well known for his role in the Biosphere 2 project in Oracle, Arizona.

The purpose of the Biosphere was to explore how a closed ecological system could be created, with the idea that such a system could then be used for human habitation in outer space. It has also served as a means to study the interaction of biomes, agriculture, and humans.

Dr. Hawes was the architect of record for the project for eight years.

In the course on permaculture design, he’s teaching students to rethink and redesign every aspect of human endeavor in terms of sustainability. The course involves architecture and building, agriculture, energy, city design, economics, water, and the aesthetic integration of all of these in human settlements.

Dr. Hawes has a long list of achievements in these areas, ranging from natural building and sustainable community design to spacecraft design and a Mars sphere container for studying how to live and work on Mars.

He also developed a concept for an ecovillage with a population of 5,000 that would serve as an example of the environmental architecture and techniques that can be used to organically integrate with the surrounding ecosystem.

His teaching experience includes the

San Francisco Institute of Architecture, where he designed their master’s and doctoral programs in ecovillage design.

“We are very excited to welcome such an expert in both hands-on learning and professional mentorship,” said Heather Walden, administrator for the Sustainable Living Department.

Early activities in the course included redesigning the area in front of the Sustainable Living Center and visiting large food forests in Wisconsin.

Co-teaching the course is Scott Vlaun, a permaculture designer, climate activist, and executive director of the Center for an Ecology-Based Economy in Norway, Maine. “It’s been an honor to co-teach the course with Phil,” he said. “Permaculture is a broad discipline, and I think the students have appreciated the breadth of knowledge we bring, from agro-ecosystems to sustainable structures and energy systems.”
PhD Student Earns Certification in Accounting

Wan Han, a doctoral student in management, recently passed the Certified Management Accountant (CMA) exam and was honored last month as one of two outstanding CMA students at a meeting of the Des Moines chapter of the Institute for Management Accountants.

The certification covers business analysis, management accounting and reporting, strategic management, financial planning, control, and decision support.

Originally from China, Ms. Wan has earned an MBA degree in MUM’s Accounting Professionals program, has passed the CMA exam, teaches as a graduate instructor, and is now approaching the dissertation stage of her PhD.

Chamber Singers to Offer Spring Concert June 3 & 4

The Chamber Singers of Southeast Iowa will present their annual spring concerts, “Love, Lament, & Laughter,” on Saturday and Sunday, June 3 and 4, at 8:00 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church, 200 South Main St.

The concert will include a variety of springtime love songs – love of community, family, and each other, and especially romantic love. This exploration of timeless stories of the heart will be punctuated with lively humor and the toe-tapping rhythms of contemporary works.

The program, all in English this year, ranges from madrigals to text settings of Shakespearian songs, folklore of the British Isles, and poetic texts, each offering a unique vantage point on life and feeling.

With four-part to eight-part settings, the music provides a springtide of song, from love lost to love regained, with plenty of musical merriment throughout.

Business Student Wins Toastmasters Award

MUM business student Logan Harty received the Best Table Topics Award for his impromptu talk on “Favorite Places in Nature” at the April 18 meeting of the Fairfield Golden Toastmasters Club.

Mr. Harty attended the meeting with classmates from Professor Jane Schmidt-Wilk’s Business Communication Skills course. Of the eight impromptu talks that evening, five were given by students.

A video of the event is available on the YouTube channel Golden Speakers Toastmasters Club.

Seinfeld to Headline Lynch Foundation Fundraiser June 5

An extraordinary lineup of celebrities will again appear at a Washington, DC fundraiser to support the efforts of the David Lynch Foundation to bring the Transcendental Meditation® technique to veterans and at-risk youth.

Those scheduled to perform at the “National Night of Laughter & Song” include comedians Jerry Seinfeld, Jay Leno, and Margaret Cho, and musicians Kesha, Ben Folds, Angelique Kidjo, and Sharon Isbin. Hosting the event will be actors Hugh Jackman and Deborah-Lee Furness Jackman and journalist/author Katie Couric.

The benefit will be held at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC, on Monday, June 5.

Proceeds from the event will support the Washington Initiative of the David Lynch Foundation to provide the Transcendental Meditation technique to veterans and at-risk youth in the Washington, DC area.

For more information, see www.davidlynchfoundation.org/DC-Gala.

Photo Exhibit

Now in the gallery in the west entrance of the MUM library: an exhibit of photos by Andy Cozzens, Jim Fairchild, David Fitz-Randolph, and Bill Graeser.

MUM Online

Register Now!

World Religions and...

Maharishi Vedic Science

This non-credit online course taught by Evan Finkelstein begins Sunday, June 25, at 7:45 pm with a free webinar.

For information or to register, go to www.mum.edu/mum-online/noncredit-courses. Or email de@mum.edu.
**Alumna to Show Film at Cannes Film Festival**

Agnes Baginska, a graduate of the David Lynch Graduate School of Cinematic Arts, will be screening her 30-minute movie *Last Tree Standing* on May 26 at the Cannes Film Festival in France that’s attended by industry professionals.

Her film will be part of the Short Film Corner, which features short films with artistic values. Having one’s film screened at this venue in Cannes increases the chances that it will be selected by other international festivals as well as making it available to everyone attending Cannes.

Unlike most other festivals, Cannes isn’t open to the public. The workshops and screenings are attended by executives, buyers, distributors, agents, and investors.

Ms. Baginska said that the theatrical screening for *Last Tree Standing* will take place in a Marche du Film screening room in the Palais des Festival, where films are shown on a large screen with a surround-sound system.

_Last Tree Standing_ is a fairy tale set against a dystopian backdrop that follows the story of a young girl named Lexie (played by Maharishi School student Sage Jarmosco), who befriends a magical creature who is half-man, half-tree.

Taken for a freak, the Treeman (played by Lou Bolster) is captured by Lexie’s keeper Killian (Steve Kennevan) to be sold to the ministry that buys such mutations. Intrigued by the strange creature, Lexie slowly discovers his story and despite the threat of her hostile keeper, she embarks on a dangerous mission to free the Treeman.

Ms. Baginska had intended to develop a different idea for her thesis film, but the image of a half-man, half-tree came to her and wouldn’t leave. Puzzled, she talked to David Lynch, who described a process she could use to let the new idea emerge.

She realized it would be expensive to produce for a student film, but a successful $13,000 Kickstarter campaign allowed the project to go ahead.

Photo credit: Zachary Peel-McGregor