

ASSALOMU ALAYKUM!

Jared and Emily's Fulbright Experience in Uzbekistan

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Chust

Jared's outstanding counterpart, Nurillo, from Namangan Institute of Engineering and Technology, has been an asset to us since arriving in Namangan. He was born and lives in Chust, a small town outside of Namangan City. Chust is famous for their metal working, specifically knife making. Nurillo's family kindly hosted us for a lunch and exploration of the town.



We sat around a traditional low-standing Uzbek table with quilts on the ground for chairs. Chefs from Chust are chosen to come to Namangan to cook for restaurants and fancy occasions because their palov, or osh, is known to be the most tasty, so naturally our national meal was perfectly delicious and enjoyed with great company.

Our Namangan English Speaking Nations Coach, Wendy, joined us and searched the market for the perfect knife until finally stumbling upon it after accidentally meeting with a metal worker in his shop!



Blades for shovels and hoes made in Chust by Nurillo's neighbor



Sumalak

Another traditional experience in late February and early March is Sumalak! It is almost like grits or pudding in consistency, made of sprouted early wheat, its juice, and oil. It is boiled and stirred in a huge outdoor cauldron for 10 to 12 hours and then left to simmer for another 12 hours over night, changing from a white to chocolate brown color with a sweetness despite no added sugar. Sumalak party attendees wish on stones that are stirred with the mixture for good fortune and no scorching.



Families, colleagues, and friends gather for an all-day party of eating, dancing, chatting, stirring, and eating some more. They joke that they only sit to eat once a day: sitting to eat in the morning and standing to finish in the evening. We attended two Sumalak parties, one of which was hosted by our self proclaimed Uzbek grandmother, Muborak. She is an experienced English teacher in Namangan who knows or has taught absolutely everyone.



Emily with Yana: Jared's host counterpart for Namangan State University and an Access English teacher, and Muborak: the party host and Namangan American Access coordinator.

Jared's Teaching

I teach at Namangan State University for five hours each week and spend most of my time teaching at my primary host institution, Namangan Institute for Engineering and Technology (NIET). There I host speaking clubs, English speaking office hours, and most notably, coteach an entry level SolidWorks Design class to engineering students with a focus on *English for STEM*.

Namangan's Best and Brightest

I am grateful to work closely with two individuals that are shaping the future of education in Namangan and Uzbekistan at large. Nurillo, a current Marketing PhD candidate, previously mastered his English (¡y Español!) in the United Kingdom after being awarded a Presidential Scholarship from the Republic of Uzbekistan to earn his Masters in Public Finance and Economic Management from The University of Birmingham. Akmal holds a PhD in Mechanical Engineering and recently spent time in Italy at The University of Pisa on a program funded by the European Union. In Italy, he further developed his research on the automation of the Uzbek Cotton Ginning machine.



Jared's counterpart, Nurillo, Jared, and the Uzbek SolidWorks instructor, Akmal



Jared with the Uzbek SolidWorks instructor, Akmal, learning about the Uzbek Cotton Gin

Emily's Teaching

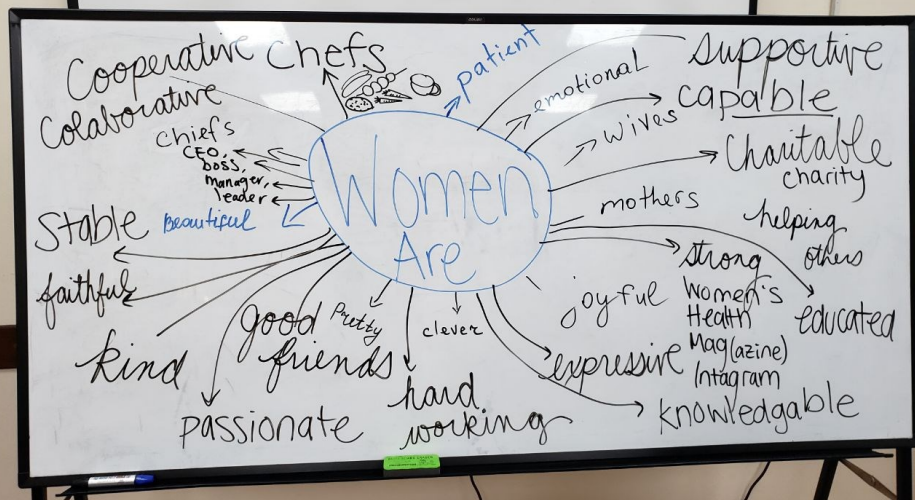
I teach at Secondary School #57, Namangan Engineering and Construction Institute (NECI), and the United States Embassy sponsored American Access Program for lower-income students.

I work with a total of 14 different groups including groups of teachers, professors, secondary students between 7th and 10th grade, university students, and a women's only group for ladies in STEM at NECI.

We celebrated International Women's Day on March 8th - a huge holiday in Uzbekistan. Because of traditional gender norms, I take every opportunity to advocate for women, encouraging them to continue their STEM education or pursue the necessary steps towards other dreams. It is important that this adds to, instead of replaces, their culture and traditions. For Women's Day, we talked about all the things that women are, demonstrating that women are capable of being what they want and do not have to be what they do not want.



Emily serving Secondary School #57's Director in traditional "kelin" or daughter-in-law fashion. She was surprised and delighted.



Women's Only group at Namangan Engineering and Construction Institute

We Moved!

As the weather becomes warmer, people move out of their heated apartments in the city back to their homes in the city surroundings or nearby villages. This gave us the opportunity to move into a new apartment that was closer to our work places. Now, we can walk to our institutes, schools, market, and even have “road” running nearby!

Q&A From Our Great Readers

Q: “Are the pictures of outside of buildings really all tile?”

A: No, there are many different types of buildings here. There is a mix of remnants from the silk road architecture and traditional beautiful tiles to Russian style buildings from Uzbekistan’s time in the U.S.S.R.

Q: “How similar/different are Uzbek and Russian? Is it difficult learning both simultaneously?”

A: Uzbek and Russian are very different languages, although in practice, Uzbeks use many Russian words in a “code-switching” language style. We took “survival” courses for both languages during the quarantine, but are now focused on Uzbek due to its dominance in Namangan. Inherently, learning Uzbek comes with learning many Russian words!

Q: “I want to know if they have ice-cream??”

A: Yes, they definitely have ice cream, including tiny stands on the side of the highway!

Uzbek Tili Tidbits

To’ydim = I am full (a very necessary phrase for all day eating parties)

Oshxona = Osh (palov) room, where you can order the best food for \$2

Bo’pti, hop, mayli = 3 ways to say OK. The more you say it, the more OK



Jared learning to sing a traditional Uzbek song with some kind hosts from NECI



Emily at our favorite restaurant, or oshxona, called Al Mashriq, for a perfect, sunny lunch on International Women’s Day. Our new apartment is walking distance from here!