

## Volunteer sponsors critical to Army War College International Fellows Program

By Robert Martin, USAWC PAO 25 May 2021



*John Tisserand and his wife, Jeanie stand between Class Vice President and Bulgarian Lt. Col. Ivaylo Ivanov to right and Col. Brian Henderson, director of the International Fellows Program, and Ashlea Cordell - Lowe, Sponsorship Coordinator to the I*

For 66 international fellows in the Army War College resident class of 2021, it was their turn to thank the 86 sponsors invited to a thank-you event in Bliss Hall, May 20. Sponsors volunteer to make the fellows feel involved. They welcome the IFs and they recommend restaurants, dry cleaners, mechanics, town events and highlights of American life. Sponsors help find housing and a car if needed, share American history, culture, customs, holidays, and traditions, and serve as informal ambassadors of the United States.

It's not just the time that sponsors give," said Ashlea Cordell-Lowe, who recruits and coordinate sponsors within the military community and from neighboring civilian communities. "The sponsors' special touches and small acts of kindness make a world of difference and leave lasting impression on the fellows," she said.

"I have watched the program grow and adapt to the needs of the International Fellows," said Cordell-Lowe. "I am constantly in awe with the selflessness and tireless support of the sponsors."

As the Sponsor Appreciation event drew near, the war college wanted to do something special for John Tisserand and his wife, Jeanie, who have volunteered for 20 years.

Cordell-Lowe, With the help of the Current Taiwanese student went on the hunt to find the very first International Fellow he sponsored in the class of 1996.

After a few weeks of research to find Retired Sheau-Jung LU, eventually tracking him through a former employer in Prague, Czech Republic, and was able to make the connection. Wanting to be part of the surprise, Sheau-Jung LU created a very personal and touching video in which he reminisced about his time at the war college and his relationship with John and Jeanie Tisserand and their family.

Class Vice President and Bulgarian Lt. Col. Ivaylo Ivanov offered formal remarks of thanks.

"I hope the words of gratitude and honor I express on behalf of the International Fellows expand beyond the walls of this hall," said Ivanov. "I believe that for each one of us, one of the most precious memories that we will take back home will be the moments that we shared with our sponsors and their families," he said.

One of these families was the Maddux family: Jason, his wife, Lisa, and daughters Olivia and Veronica.

"We have learned so much about the world," said Jason Maddux. "Doing it as a family with my young daughters has exposed them to so many different countries, foods, and cultures.

"We have sponsored international fellows from Lebanon, Mongolia, Jordan, and Canada. Meeting the families and making bonds between the younger children have been great for our children.

“It is just very rewarding -- learning more about the world and learning more about the people in it helps bring us closer together,” said Maddux.

“We all realize that the heart of the sponsor program is tied largely to the volunteers that we have,” said Col. Brian Henderson, director of the International Fellows Program, as he greeted the volunteer IF sponsors. “The ability to bring international fellows into the community, expose them to U.S. culture and get them settled in, allows the students to focus on what they came here to do,” he said.

Interested in sponsorship? Reach out to [ashlea.r.cordell-lowe.civ@mail.mil](mailto:ashlea.r.cordell-lowe.civ@mail.mil) or phone 717.245.3937.

The following families were recognized for their service to the sponsorship program:

Five years:

Greg and Louise Capone

Robert and Demi Hauseman

Jon and Cheryl Kugler

Joe and Joan Leardi

Jason and Lisa Maddux Family

Karl and Wendy Bopp

10 Years:

Sultan and Robina Bhatti

Harold and Monica Cooney

Benjamin Ahles and Marilyn Murphy-Ahles

Tony and Maryann Araman

Linda Figueroa

Michael and Barbara Neiberg

20 Years:

John and Jeanie Tisserand

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