



VIA Enters 2023 in Anticipation of 60th Anniversary

HIGHLIGHTS

Rikuzen Takata Project

This past summer, VIA resumed our in-person programming with the Rikuzen Takata Project. In partnership with Rikkyo University, students from the US, Japan, and Hong Kong were invited to participate in a seven-day joint program dedicated to understanding disaster recovery and working with the community in Rikuzen Takata, a city that was devastated by the 2011 Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami.

This special program, which began its collaboration in 2015, was led by VIA Program Director Yuki Ueda and Rikkyo University Professor Akiko Takai, who also serves as the Deputy General of Save the Children Japan.

With a shared agenda on the United Nations' Global Goals for Sustainable Development (SDGs), the participants connected with the Rikuzen Takata



Akiko Takai



Yuki Ueda

community through immersive team activities, workshops with guest speakers, and site visits to areas that were still affected by the 2011 events.



How to Support

As we move forward to resume our in-person programs, the Rikuzen Takata Project and other similar in-person partnership programs will look to continue each year. If you would like to support, please visit viaprograms.org/donate. Your support will provide opportunities for young leaders to experience a transformative journey of cultural exploration through VIA.



VIA MOMENT

The Rikuzen Takata Project was my first in-person program in about three years. I was a bit nervous about leading a group of students in an area that I was unfamiliar with. These are, of course, the same anxieties that our participants had as well. So I told myself what I told them: it's natural to be nervous, and don't get caught up in the mistakes that you will eventually make; focus on the ways that we will grow and learn. One of our participants reflected on how he was often outcasted at school, but that he felt welcomed and celebrated for his lovely uniqueness at VIA. Although he had always been secure in his own identity and convictions, what he was missing was a community of "his people" where he felt he could belong. His experience resonated with me so deeply, because that has been my own experience within the VIA community - a place accepting of people who have always been told they are misfits. I'm grateful to have found VIA before I believed that narrative too deeply!

—Yuki Ueda, VIA Program Director

Next30 Central Asia Program with Meridian International Center

Throughout the summer, VIA collaborated with Meridian International Center to host young leaders from Central Asia who were part of the US State Department sponsored **Next30 Program**.

The Next30 Program brought three cohorts of emerging leaders from Central Asia to the US on a study tour to share their accomplishments, success stories, and contributions and identify their vision for the future of Central Asia. The participants included innovators and experts from Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan in the fields of business, media, culture, technology, and civil society.

Cultural exchanges are a powerful way to connect people and build mutual respect between countries. Programs like Next30 are crucial diplomatic tools that increase cross-cultural understanding and demonstrate shared values, creating space for discussion and dialogue between different countries and cultures.

During the portion of their visit hosted by VIA, the participants had an opportunity to explore Silicon Valley through a series of discussion seminars, educational workshops, and immersive hands-on experiences.



Above: The Next30 cohort visits KTVU Fox News in Oakland for a morning broadcast and a personalized tour from Emmy Award-winning reporter Jana Katsuyama. Right: Executive Director Kazutoh Ishida leads a design-thinking workshop with the Next30 cohort.



Check in with our VIA Global Community Fellow!



Betty currently works with VIA's partner, Shonan Shijuku, in Osaka to support youth social impact leadership and community development activities.

"I'm thankful for how this fellowship has granted me abundant time in a spacious, beautiful home in a warm community and the freedom to plan, experiment, and reflect in my life works. I've continued hosting the workshops in city library that use various arts (recently scriptwriting, improv, songwriting) to promote expression, confidence, communication, and English practice. I also worked with a local arts studio/atelier Atorie Subaru in their Utsuwa Marche, a yearly arts event targeted to open up creative experiences for local mothers and their children.

I hosted a workshop that used collage to decorate mirrors, with the concept of repurposing existing elements and envisioning oneself within nature.

I've also been collaborating with a local food company, Glow Foods, to organize a mural painting event in December for their new containers, with a focus on making mural-painting activities accessible to children, seniors, and disabled participants.

Nevertheless, from my time here I have taken away an invaluable insight that all communities I belong to and join are constantly connecting and growing and that there are unlimited ways to combine personally meaningful individual specialties with others in the community to form collective visions and vibrant movements. I feel confident in my developed ability to weave such collaborations between the international communities I belong to in future pursuits."

—Betty Nguyen,

VIA Global Community Fellow 2022

How to Support

The VIA Global Community Fellowship (GCF) is a multi-year program working directly with partner community organizations and schools. Fellows get hands-on experience learning how organizations in Asia are using creative and innovative methods to address critical social challenges. The GCF program is currently operating in Thailand and Japan, with active plans to expand in Asia. VIA is open to potential partners to support the growth of the GCF program. For opportunities, please contact our Strategic Relationships Director at wallace@viaprograms.org for more details.

If you would like to support, please visit viaprograms.org/donate. Your support of this program will provide opportunities for young leaders to experience a transformative journey of cultural exploration through VIA.



Let's Check in on Our Social Impact Accelerator Leaders!

Updates from Ryan, VIA ACCL Social Impact Leader



Ryan Chan Pyae Kyaw
Founder of
Sone See Yar Academy,
Myanmar

Sone See Yar Academy is an educational platform that allows university students in Myanmar to continue their education using technology at a low cost, as well as technical support for teachers who

want to start their own online classes. Sone See Yar Academy launched just before the COVID-19 pandemic but due to economic and political instability, the academy shifted to an online platform so it would be more accessible for Burmese students, and for teachers and professors to earn extra income by applying their knowledge and skills in creating their own online courses.

Sone See Yar Academy will enable CDM (Civil Disobedience Movement) students to continue their education with the aid of technology at an affordable price. This project will provide a platform and technical assistance where teachers can get a chance to open their own online classes on our platform.

In the next 12 months, we are planning to open up to 20 classes for more than

1,800 students, while offering teaching positions for more than 30 teachers to join our platforms. In addition, we are planning to organize at least 10 events in 6 months and training workshops for both youths and teachers to educate them on today's global trending topics, to promote self-study, and self-learning strategies for Burmese students.

How to Support

The Social Impact Leadership Accelerator is a 6-month team-based training and project development course for social impact leaders who are looking for tools, structure, and support to turn their big ideas into a sustainable project. If you would like to support, please visit viaprograms.org/donate. Your support of this program will provide opportunities for young leaders to experience a transformative journey of cultural exploration through VIA.

From In-Person to Virtual



The Benefits of Transforming the EHC Program to a Hybrid Program

Medical Programs Director
Lina Yamashita, PhD

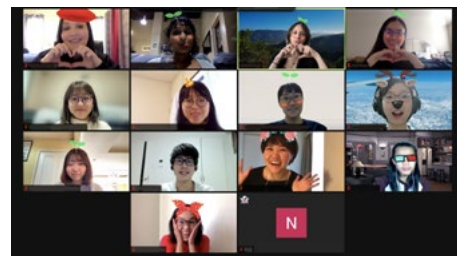
I'm excited that we will resume our Exploring Health Care (EHC) program in person next summer! I admit I have been pleasantly surprised by how much I have enjoyed the virtual EHC programs which we have run during COVID. I used to think that virtual programs were "less than," and could never compare with in-person programs. Now that I have successfully wrapped up the fourth virtual EHC program, there are some real advantages to the virtual programs, such as lower cost, the ability to invite guest speakers from anywhere, and far less complicated logistics.

The exciting aspect of this past spring and summer program was the diversity of the participants. Going virtual allowed us to reach parts of the globe with our program that we were unable to in the past! We had participants from Japan, Myanmar and for the first time in the history of EHC and VIA, we had 5 participants from Zambia. The diversity enriches the program for everyone, myself included, and I hope that this continues

to be an element of the EHC program moving forward. Most importantly, genuine connections do form in the virtual space. I'm proud to say that every single participant in the spring 2022 program indicated in their program evaluations that the program exceeded their expectations.

I would like to acknowledge the EHC fellows from this past year for their contributions to the program: Abby Alvarez, Rebekah Colacot, Vanessa Chhoa, Min Htun Myat Wai, Musonda Sakala, and Yuri Sugawara.

I look forward to growing this program and extending its outreach by utilizing the advantages of both virtual and in-person programming. Next year, we will continue our virtual programming along with our in-person EHC program during the summer.



How to Support

The VIA Exploring Health Care (EHC) Program will provide both **virtual** and **in-person** options this upcoming year. If you would like to support, please visit viaprograms.org/donate. Your support of this program will provide opportunities for young leaders to experience a transformative journey of cultural exploration through VIA.



Updates, Comments, and Reflections by VIA Alumni

Dan Bernstein

Hong Kong Volunteer (1966)

In retirement I continue collaborations on teaching and learning at the National University of Singapore. VIA opened my eyes and heart to Asia.

I have been recently reflecting on my early life and on the people who guided and helped me. My interactions with Dwight Clark were at the top of the list. First I went with him and a group of students to the central valley of California, learning about migrant labor communities. Then a summer in Asia learning and living with students (HK '66), and there were many visits after that, including around my two years of service as a CO. Knowing and being around Dwight made my whole life different, and better in more ways than I can describe.

Gay Urness

Korea Volunteer (1967)

55 years ago, at the end of my Freshman year, I was rather lost BUT I heard about a trip to teach "conversational english" in South Korea. That was a small part of a great trip during which I learned many things about people and it led to many other trips around the world. THANK YOU VIA.

Mary Zurbuchen

Indonesia Volunteer (1971)

The new year marks the 50th anniversary of my departure to Indonesia as a VIA volunteer in Bali!! The experience changed my life, my career, and my vision for the future of international collaboration. Thank you VIA, now and always!

Earl Fong

*Taiwan Volunteer (1971),
Korea Volunteer (1974)*

It's been fifty years since I was in Taiwan with VIA - so wonderful to see the organization is alive and well.

Liz Eshleman

Korea Volunteer (1977)

Thank you for the beautiful work you do to help our world connect.

Sukie Jackson and Bob Tanabe

Indonesia Volunteer (1977)

Thank you for providing constructive and positive leadership through the pandemic. We are so grateful to have and have had VIA in our lives. VIA's work is so important and relevant. Thank you for everything you do.

Mike and Carol Danaher

Indonesia Volunteer (1978)

It's fantastic that students from Myanmar can attend. They will indeed add much to the program.

Don Flickinger

Indonesia Volunteer (1978)

Good luck posting more and more VIA Fellows back in Asia!

James Lee

Korea Volunteer (1983)

Thanks to everyone at Via! Keep up the great, important work.

John Affeldt and Karen Hoy

*Indonesia Volunteer (1984),
China Volunteer (1996)*

Keep going strong Stalwarts!

Paul Gellert

Indonesia Volunteer (1987)

Leading the Global Studies program at my university, I often find myself harkening back to the immersive and respectful approach to other cultures, societies, and politics that VIA promotes. Keep up the good work!

Rafael Reyes

Indonesia Volunteer (1989)

I'm working for my local clean energy provider running programs for electric vehicles, solar power and other clean energy. Working on learning a little piano while we've been stuck at home during the pandemic! And trying to help get good people elected.

Stacey Laumann

Japan Volunteer (1989)

I work on affordable housing for the Community Land Trust of West Marin.

David Cline

Indonesia Volunteer (1989)

Amazing work that VIA continues to do, especially in these times when we all need to be working together.

Kate Dunham

*Taiwan Volunteer (1989),
China Volunteer (1990),
Vietnam Volunteer (1998)*

I always remember how VIA changed my life as a young woman.

Robert Franks and Anna Wetterberg

*Indonesia Volunteer (1992),
Indonesia Volunteer (1995)*

Still mostly working from home but hoping to reschedule our canceled 2020 Indonesia trip soon. Glad to see VIA's programming starting up again!

Andrew Lewandowski and Kim Yap

Vietnam Volunteer (1993)

Thanks for the great work that you continue to do and for the impact that you have had on our lives!

Haruka Yamashita

China Volunteer (1996)

Thank you for making a difference!

Phillip Hsu and Shih-Ying Hung

ALC (1998-2000), ALC (2000)

Glad to hear that VIA is still doing good work around the world despite the challenges of the global pandemic. Thank you for being a positive force for global cooperation and promotion of cross-cultural understanding! We need more of this now than ever.

Danni Redding Lapuz

Staff (2006)

Great job navigating COVID and bringing your innovative vision forward in new programming and online engagement activities. Kudos!

Ting-Ju (Sophia) Tai

AUSL (2011), ESI (2012)

To another year of inspiration and growth!

Cira Ortiz

Staff (2016)

I hope everything is well and that things continue to go well for everyone at VIA. (^_^)

Myint Mo Thant Thant Zeya Tun

ACCL Social Impact (2021)

I'd like to say that everyone in VIA is doing a wonderful job contributing to many communities. Keep up the good work guys!

Meet Our Newest Staff at VIA!



Anna Hardy

Anna Hardy joined the VIA team in July 2022 as our new **Director of Finance & Administration**. After getting her degree in Music and Business Management, Anna began her career in public accounting for people working in the entertainment industry but, after working with a grass roots, community-based youth organization in Boston, she decided to use her

financial powers for good. For the past fifteen years she has been dedicated to building efficient, collaborative systems and processes that support international organizations. She's especially focused on scalability and creating flexible models that can be used for real-time assessment and strategic planning.

A background in music and writing helps her approach projects with a creative mindset and she enjoys being part of the team when it comes to innovation and creation of new programs. She's looking forward to working with VIA as international travel resumes and helping to support our continued growth.

Favorite place you've traveled to:

I love driving and I've driven different routes across the US over a dozen times. I love the different landscapes and local roadside attractions. My favorite was always the giant dinosaurs in the California desert and now I live near them so I can see them whenever I want.

Favorite food and hobby:

Definitely pizza. I could eat it every day and when I have cold pizza in the fridge for breakfast the next day I always say it's like Christmas Eve. As for hobbies, I really love to write. I've self-published one of my novels and I'm having a children's book illustrated right now that I'm hoping to put on Amazon by early next year. I've never made any real money but I like that some of my stories are out there.



Wallace Wong

Wallace Wong joined the VIA team in September 2022 as our new **Strategic Relationships Director**. Growing up, Wallace's grandmother often spoke to him in a mix of Cantonese, Putonghua, and Bahasa, which inspired his passion for people, language and culture. In college, Wallace joined several exchange programs in

Poland, mainland China, and the Dominican Republic, motivating him to continue his career abroad after graduating from UNC Chapel Hill.

Since then, Wallace has spent the past decade in various leadership positions developing community programs and creating cross-cultural opportunities for diverse youth and adults. In addition, Wallace has led humanitarian service projects for nonprofit organizations and educational institutions in Shanghai, Hong Kong, Thailand, Nepal, and Indonesia. Wallace also currently serves as President of the Hong Kong American Football League.

Favorite place you've traveled to:

One of my favorite places I've ever visited is a beautiful city in the Philippines called Iloilo City. The vibrant culture, amazing food and Spanish influenced architecture is astounding. Just a short boat ride from Iloilo is a small island called Guimaras which is also well-known for having the sweetest tasting mangoes in the world.

Favorite food and hobby:

I love to cook and eat. My first job was working at a Japanese American fusion restaurant which developed my passion for Asian foods and blending the cuisine with Western influences. I also can never turn down a fresh oyster.

Kristy Ishii



Kristy Ishii joined the VIA team in October 2022 as our newest **Program Director**.

Growing up in rural Salinas, CA, Kristy was immersed in sports

(softball, volleyball, and soccer) and academics. Through sports, she developed a strong affinity for collaboration and community. At UCLA, she was introduced to the Japanese language for the first time, and this sparked her desire to work and live as a bi-lingual professional in Japan. She started

her professional journey as a Japan Exchange & Teaching Program Assistant Language Teacher in Gunma, Japan, then transitioned into full-cycle recruitment for bilingual talents in Tokyo & Osaka. For four years, she was an active member of The American Chamber of Commerce in Japan and served as the president of the Japanese American Citizens League Japan Chapter in Tokyo for three years.

Upon returning to the US, Kristy struggled to find any external help with her repatriation journey, so she brought all of her past experiences together (recruitment, teaching, community building) to help people like herself create a strategy to find a purpose-driven career. She creates customized programs for clients in both the Americas and Asia. She is a certified coach and graduate of the Institute of Coaching Mastery (Santa Monica, CA), and continues to provide workshops that relate to career transitions and mindset coaching.

Favorite place you've traveled to:

When I was 24, I set out on a mission to learn more about my identity as a 4.5 generation Japanese American. After graduation, I was selected to join the JET Program in Japan. During my Christmas vacation, I flew to Kagoshima, Japan, to meet my grandma's only remaining cousin connection in Japan. Despite it being our first time meeting, Hoshie took me to see my grandmother's old home and elementary school, and the photos of our family in Japan. It was such a life-changing experience and helped me find peace in my identity as a Nikkei.

Favorite food and hobby:

I love kimchi, seafood, and Japanese nabe (hot pot). My favorite hobbies are journaling, hot yoga, playing beach volleyball, and watching the sunrise while on a run outside.

VIA Fall Reunion 2022



The VIA community gathered on Sunday, October 23rd during this year's Stanford Homecoming Weekend for hugs and greetings, caught up with friends and family, and shared stories and memories.

Remarks were made by VIA Founder Dwight Clark and Executive Director Kazutoh Ishida, who provided updates and news on VIA.

"It was so exciting to hold a reunion in person for the first time in three years. I very much enjoyed meeting supporters and VIA alumni from different programs and years ranging from the '70s to the 2000s."

—Kazutoh Ishida, VIA Executive Director

Those that couldn't make our in-person reunion at Stanford joined our VIA Virtual Reunion in late October, which was just as popular! VIA friends from all over the world joined in to connect, reminisce, and celebrate.

We hope to see you at our next reunion!



VIA begins 2023 with excitement in anticipation of its 60th Anniversary

Next year, VIA will be celebrating sixty years of changing lives, strengthening communities, and connecting cultures. More details on this special occasion to be announced. Stay tuned!

How To Support VIA

Our work is made possible through generous contributions from our alumni and friends in our community. Below are some ways that you can support VIA. A gift of any amount will support our work and elevate hope for the people and communities we serve. If you have any questions about making a gift to VIA, please contact info@viaprograms.org.

- Make a **one-time or a recurring monthly donation** online from www.viaprograms.org/donate.
- **Mail a check** made out to Volunteers in Asia to P.O. Box 1314, Palo Alto, CA 94302.
- Make a **stock donation** or a gift through a **donor-advised fund**.
- Have your company **match your charitable contribution**. You can check to see if your company offers matching from viaprograms.org/donation-match.
- Include VIA in your will and **leave a legacy gift** so that VIA can continue to provide rich cross-cultural experiential experiences in Asia and the US for future generations!
- **Shop online** at smile.amazon.com/ch/94-1622372. (Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of eligible purchases to VIA at no extra charge to you!)

