

# EXCHANGE ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

For all alumni of U.S. higher education and  
U.S. Department of State educational  
exchange programs in Cyprus

*Changed jobs? Moved?  
Let us know!*

[FulbrightCy@state.gov](mailto:FulbrightCy@state.gov)

**Alumni Resources:**  
*Stay Connected!  
International exchange  
alumni*

[alumni.state.gov](http://alumni.state.gov)

*Do you have an exciting new  
project, or would you like to  
share your exchange  
experience with others? If so,  
let us know -we may feature  
you in our newsletter!*

## MentorTalks

*Got 15 minutes? Join us on  
#MentorTalks and you've got a  
mentor! MentorTalks is a new,  
interactive event that puts  
exchange program alumni in  
touch with extraordinary mentors  
on a wide variety of topics. The  
series can be found on Facebook  
@internationalexchangealumni.  
You can learn about each mentor  
and their career, and then ask  
them questions on their topic, all  
in 15 minutes.*

*On Wednesday, April 15, at 1:00  
pm EDT, Kunle Adewale, CEO  
and Creative Director of Tender  
Arts Nigeria and alumnus of the  
Mandela Washington Fellowship  
program, will share his stories  
and advice on how to use art to  
heal and improve physical and  
mental health. Kunle will also talk  
about his latest Arts in Medicine  
Project in response to the  
coronavirus, #ArtResponds.*

Dear U.S. program alumni,

What a different world we find ourselves in since the last edition of the alumni newsletter. These are extraordinary times that we are facing around the world. As we navigate these challenging days, weeks, and months ahead, I want to reach out to our alumni community with a message of gratitude and hope.

Each day that I read about great examples of Cypriots coming together and leading in the fields of science, education, healthcare, defense, and more. I am inspired by the work being done by many Cypriots, but I am particularly proud of the work of U.S. exchange alumni participants like yourselves. I know you are each doing all you can to support friends and family, to save lives, and to provide guidance and certainty in a time of great uncertainty. Exchange alumni are playing major roles in the fight against COVID-19, providing scientific expertise to Cypriot leaders and the general public. Our alumni are also ensuring that people are getting the facts (and not false information) about public health. And just as we are proud of our Cypriot friends who have studied in the United States, we are proud that the Cyprus Institute of Neurology and Genetics, an institution that was created through financial support from the people of the United States, is taking a leading role in immediately providing cutting-edge testing for the virus.

The knowledge you have gained from your training in the United States is helping our communities remain resilient today. Together, we will get through this. I wish you and your families good health, and I look forward to seeing you in person again soon.

Sincerely,

Judith G. Garber  
United States Ambassador to Cyprus



# Spotlight on Alumni

During this global health crisis, Cypriot alumni have been coming together to help, utilizing their skills and training gained through their training in the United States. Take a look!

## Dr. Leondios Kostrikis



Alumnus Leondios Kostrikis has emerged during this crisis as an important scientific voice to the public and the President of Cyprus. As a Professor of Biological Sciences and Head of the Laboratory of Biotechnology and Molecular Virology at the University of Cyprus, Dr. Kostrikis is one of the world's top experts in the field of AIDS research where he studies the relationship between human genetics, HIV infection and drug resistance. This expertise is now playing an important role in tracking the COVID-19 epidemic in Cyprus. He has appeared regularly on state television and is quoted daily in local newspapers with his expert opinions on tracking the progression of the virus in Cyprus. Starting his U.S. education with a scholarship through the Cyprus America Scholarship Program (CASP), Dr. Kostrikis received his B.Sc. (1987), M.Sc. (1989), M.Ph. (1990) and Ph.D. (1993) degrees from New York University, followed by post-doctoral research at the Aaron Diamond AIDS Research Center of Rockefeller University (New York). We are grateful for his continued work and life-saving contributions that will lead us through this crisis!

## Dr. Jale Refik-Rogers

Alumna Jale Refik-Rogers is using her leadership skills and scientific training in the fight against COVID-19 in the Turkish Cypriot community. She is a member of a Turkish Cypriot team established for COVID-19 and is also actively contributing to the work of the Bicomunal Technical Committee on Health. Dr. Refik-Rogers has kept the public informed on how to stay safe during this global pandemic, including sharing information on how to isolate oneself, the importance of social distancing, how COVID-19 tests work, where to go if you have symptoms, and providing scientific documents on COVID-19.

Over the last month she has appeared on many radio, TV and print media outlets in the Turkish Cypriot community to provide accurate information to the public, to share important World Health Organization guidelines and announcements, and hotline information for all Turkish Cypriots. Thank you, Jale, for your leadership and guidance during this challenging time!

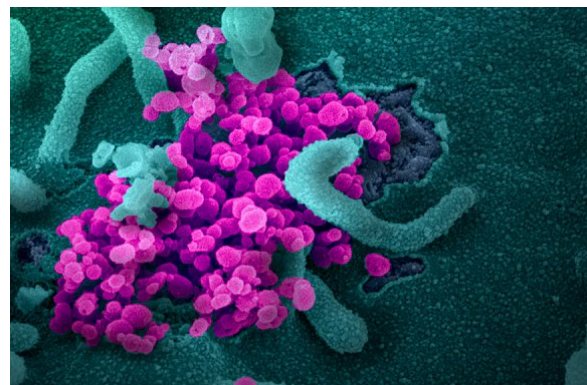


Dr. Jale Refik-Rogers received a Fulbright scholarship to study at the University of Maine at Orono, where she earned her B.Sc. (1998) in biochemistry with a minor in chemistry. She holds a Ph.D. (2006) in molecular biology from Cornell University.



## New Website to help Cypriots abroad

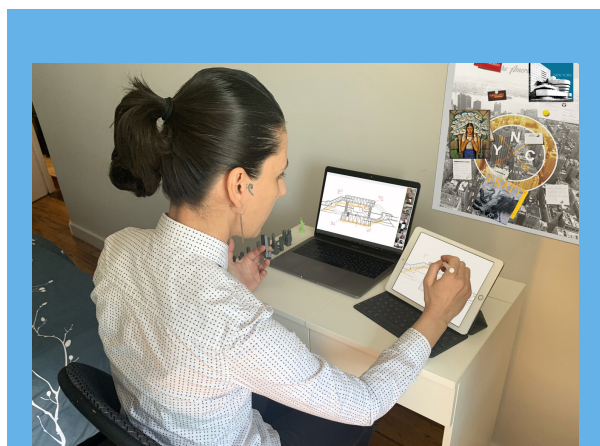
The Republic of Cyprus has launched a new platform for Cypriot national abroad, connect2cy. The online platform is designed for any Cypriot living anywhere in the world outside of Cyprus. This website is particularly helpful for anyone who has a child studying abroad and would benefit by being connected to the resources available by the Foreign Ministry or other networks in that country.



## CING leads the way in COVID-19 testing



The Cyprus Institute for Neurology and Genetics (CING) has been a national leader in the fight against COVID-19. To date, it has tested over 14,000 people in Cyprus for the coronavirus, giving Cyprus one of the highest per capita rates of testing in the world. We are proud that CING was established and supported by grant funding from the U.S. government's Agency for International Development (USAID) in the 1990s. Keep up the amazing work!



Fulbright Visiting Scholar Dr. Ceren Bogac teaching undergraduates at Pratt in Brooklyn, N.Y. during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Know young Cypriots interested in applying to U.S. colleges and universities? This is news you can use!

The Educational Testing Service (ETS) now offers home testing for the GRE and TOEFL exams for anyone around the globe due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and they have scheduled a series of informational webinars that you can join to learn more. Additionally, not all U.S. higher educational institutions require standardized tests, and the number of test option/flexible higher educational institutions is on the rise! To learn more about where to get started with finding the right colleges and universities in the United States, check out the "5 Steps to U.S. Study" tab on EducationUSA's website, or contact the EducationUSA office in Cyprus, StudyUSA.

Additionally, **take advantage of the extra time indoors** for some free practice material for U.S. higher educational institutions! Many U.S. institutions accept the ACT exam for undergraduate admissions. ACT also has its own free online practice academy, accessible here. Need more TOEFL practice? Check out this TOEFL MOOC on EdX. Know someone applying to MBA programs? Check out this official free starter kit practice exam.



## Fighting Back against Domestic Violence during COVID-19

Reports of the rise in domestic violence during global stay-at-home orders have many advocates worried. Patricia Martin, a U.S. Fulbright Scholar to Cyprus in 2014-2015, continues to be engaged in empowering victims of violence in this situation globally. Her “One Woman at a Time” (OWWAT) initiative has become a vibrant organization which helps victims of domestic violence gain access to the court system in order to seek protection against their abusers. While in Cyprus, she worked tirelessly on her project, which included teaching young law students at the University of Nicosia, working with the Supreme Court of Cyprus and the Family Court in Nicosia, and meeting with various NGO’s, officials, and other important figures to advance her organization. She also made frequent appearances on radio, newspapers and gave public lectures about her project, in both Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot communities of Cyprus.

On April 15, from 7:00-8:00 p.m., OWAAT will host a Zoom event to give first-hand tips for those experiencing abuse on how to self-help and legally protect against an abuser:

<https://cyprus-mail.com/2020/04/08/coronavirus-online-event-this-month-for-women-in-danger-of-domestic-violence/>

## The Danger of Misinformation During a Pandemic



CASP alumna Christiana Varda alerts all to the dangers of spreading misinformation, even unintentionally, during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to sharing information on the @mediawhatlab Facebook page, her initiative, MediaWhatLab, has been contributing to the crowdsourced **Coronavirus Tech Handbook**, a massive, global online project dedicated to aggregating and meaningfully organize novel information related to COVID-19. Christiana and her MediaWhat team are focusing their work on the Fighting Misinformation section, although they continually sort through links continually updated in other sections.

Christiana has been dedicated to educating young people about how easy--and dangerous--it can be to share misinformation through social media. Earlier this year she presented at a seminar which brought educators, civil society and academics together to raise awareness of media literacy practices in the classroom as well as provide teachers with tools and material they can integrate in their own lessons.

Thank you for keeping us all informed, Christiana!

