“Здраво!”

“Welcome” in Macedonian!

As an interviewer for the Alumni Schools Committee you represent a long and distinguished tradition of volunteer “ambassador” service to Yale.

You serve as representatives of Yale to each succeeding generation of students, inspiring those who, in turn, would be best inspired by the institution that we love.

We are calling on you in a different role to serve as inspiration.

Welcome to the inaugural program of the “Yale Alumni Schools Ambassadors” – an opportunity for dedicated volunteers to travel abroad – and in the US – to inspire the next generation of students to continue their education, to consider the opportunities of a liberal arts education, and yes, to aspire to attend great institutions like Yale.

This is a program jointly sponsored and supported by the AYA and the Admissions Office. We need talented and committed volunteers to extend our outreach in areas where we do not have sufficient alumni volunteers to advance our cause, or the staff resources to develop and maintain key relationships.

Although many areas of the world are under consideration, our first YASA delegation will travel to the Balkans, a region still rebuilding from war, and because of that a region where students are not often exposed to the extraordinary resources of US institutions that could serve them well. There are many talented students who would benefit from hearing about a liberal arts education in the US – and the process of how they could make that dream happen.

In the best tradition of Yalies “giving back,” our ambassadorial role will be more than that of serving as an advertisement for Yale; it will be about promoting the important role of a liberal arts education and the many opportunities that exist in the US.

We plan to visit the beautiful Balkans in a meaningful way that will best allow you to meet the people and help the students of three countries – Albania, Macedonia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. You will be the “field team” for liberal arts education and the US college experience. The fact that Yale alumni would be on such a mission to promote these values will speak volumes about our values – willing to serve the needs of promising students and American university interests at large, doing so not merely in our own self-interest.
Yale Alumni Schools Ambassadors in the Balkans 2015

On this trip, we will work closely with trusted educators and counselors in each country and, in particular, those who manage EducationUSA. This US state department supported program runs “advising centers” – mostly located in US embassies or consulates – that collaborate with a host of in-country partnering institutions including Fulbright commissions, cultural centers, foreign NGOs, universities, and libraries. We will also work with the United World College in Mostar. The UWC is a system of schools in twelve developing regions around the world attracting the best and brightest students to a precollege international baccalaureate program – students who are among the best candidates for Yale.

This promises to be an exceptional experience for you – our alumni schools volunteers – AND your family and friends.

While we will of course be spending time in workshops and mentoring, there will also be considerable sightseeing, some arranged specifically for traveling family members. Some of the highlights:

- **Ohrid, Macedonia** (the Jerusalem of the Balkans) – its orthodox monasteries and medieval Old Town make it a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- **Tirana, Albania** – an evening of authentic Albanian cuisine and folk song
- **Budva, Montenegro** – an elegant coastal town with small churches from the middle ages nestled between buildings of the Venetian renaissance.
- **Dubrovnik, Croatia** – once a popular bathing resort in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, it has kept its flair. It boasts some of the best preserved medieval ramparts, and an Old Town with cobbled streets, churches and squares. It also is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- **Pocitelj, Bosnia and Herzegovina** – a tiny medieval town near the Neretva river that takes you back to the Ottoman Empire.
- **Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina** – the 16th century Old Bridge is an icon of Islamic art and architecture in the Balkans. Mostar boasts many beautiful catholic churches and mosques, with yet again a UNESCO World Heritage Old Town.
- And all the Turkish baklavas and coffee you can eat and drink!

**Itinerary** (Tentative as of November 4, 2014)

Day 1 – Wednesday, May 6

Depart from US and fly overnight to Skopje, Macedonia.

Day 2 – Thursday, May 7 - Skopje (D)

Arrive at Skopje.
Transfer to Hotel Solun. [http://www.hotelsolun.com](http://www.hotelsolun.com)
Time to walk around town in the afternoon.
Join the delegation for a Welcome dinner at a traditional Macedonian restaurant.
Overnight in Skopje at Hotel Solun.
**Day 3 - Friday, May 8 – Skopje (B, L, D)**

Working morning in Skopje with preparation for meetings. We will discuss how to present the concepts of a liberal arts education and the opportunities for higher education in the United States. After lunch in local restaurant, we will enjoy a guided tour of the city. Afternoon meeting arranged by EducationUSA. Friends and family will have alternative options during the YASA programs, such as exploring the town’s “čaršija” (bazaar) known for great silver jewelry and interesting Ottoman antiques.

Dinner at the hotel.

Overnight in Skopje at Hotel Solun.

**Day 4 - Saturday, May 9 - Skopje-Ohrid (B, L, D)**

After breakfast, we will have a morning transfer ride from Skopje to Ohrid in South Macedonia with scenic stops along the way. Ohrid was once known for having 365 churches, one for each day of the year. Visit gorgeous and arcane orthodox monasteries, the Old Town with a medieval core, and enjoy this jewel on the banks of lake Ohrid in Macedonia, a UNESCO site.

Dinner at a local restaurant serving traditional Macedonian dishes.


**Day 5 - Sunday, May 10 - Ohrid-Tirana, Albania (B, L, D)**

Morning transfer ride from Ohrid to Tirana, the capital of Albania, with scenic stops along the way.

Lunch and guided tour of Tirana. Tirana has many museums and galleries to offer. Famous landmarks are Et’hem-Bay Mosque and the 35m high Clock Tower built in the 19th century.

Afternoon at leisure.

We will visit Lundra village, just a short way away from Tirana, to enjoy an evening of world famous Albanian folk song with its variegated and rich tradition and authentic cuisine.

Overnight in Tirana at Hotel Dynasty (http://www.hoteldinasty.al).

**Day 6 - Monday, May 11 – Tirana – Budva (B, L, D)**

Morning session in Tirana with EducationUSA and their guests. (Alternative for family and friends.)

Late morning transfer towards south Montenegro, with lunch on the way.

Arrival in Budva, “jewel of Montenegrin coast”, where small churches from the middle ages are nestled between Venetian designs from the early renaissance.

This elegant coastal town is one of the oldest cities of the Eastern Adriatic.

Dinner and overnight in Budva.
Day 7 – Tuesday, May 12 – Budva – Dubrovnik, Croatia (B, L, D)

Drive to Kotor for a tour of this UNESCO World Heritage Site, heart of the stunning Boka Kotorska Bay. After the visit, enjoy the scenic coastal drive to Dubrovnik (2h ride) and lunch in Dubrovnik.

Dubrovnik peaked in the 15th and 16th century as a maritime trade city, and again as a resort in the mid-19th century, when the grand Hotel Imperial was built here during the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Its city walls are thought to be some of the oldest and best preserved medieval ramparts, and the Old Town’s cobbled streets, churches and squares are a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The view from the city walls over these spiky bell towers and red tiled roofs is one of a kind.

Dinner and overnight at Dubrovnik Palace (http://www.adriaticluxuryhotels.com/en/hotel-dubrovnik-palace/)

Day 8 - Wednesday, May 13 - Dubrovnik-Mostar, Bosnia (B, L, D)

Visit Pocitelj, a miniscule medieval town near the river Neretva and UNESCO World Heritage Site, on the way to Mostar, home of United World College. Pocitelj takes you back to the Ottoman Empire. In this quiet and half-forgotten space, Ottoman mosques are side by side with Venetian building designs, all sheltered by a medieval city wall and tower. We have a guided tour and lunch in Mostar. The Old Bridge in Mostar, built under Ottoman rule in the 16th century, is an emblem of Islamic art and architecture in the Balkans and is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Afternoon meeting with United World College, a liberal arts secondary school that prepares students from all over the world for university. Alternate activity for family and friends.

Dinner and overnight in Mostar at City Hotel Mostar (http://city-hotel.ba/index.php/en/)

Day 9 – Thursday, May 14 – Mostar – Sarajevo (B, L, D)

Enjoy some free time in the morning to explore Mostar on your own. Transfer to Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina, with lunch on the way. Guided tour of Sarajevo and rest of afternoon at leisure – for example to explore the oriental old town that was renovated after the damages of the war, to enjoy the wonders of Sarajevo’s „čaršija“ (bazaar) and have some coffee with baklava pastries, or visit the National Museum. Dinner and overnight Sarajevo at Hotel Art (http://www.hotelart.ba/index.php?jezik=eng)

Day 10 – Friday, May 15 – Sarajevo (B, L, D)

Morning session with EducationUSA. Lunch in a local restaurant. Afternoon at leisure – time to pack for next day’s departure, and more time to explore the town. Farewell dinner in a traditional restaurant. Overnight in Sarajevo at Hotel Art.

Day 11 - Saturday, May 16 – Sarajevo – home (B)

Transfer to Sarajevo airport. Zbogom! (Good bye in Bosnian, of course)