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International Hospital Program pioneer honored

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Tuesday's City Council meeting in Edwardsville marked a special occasion for Joyce Schrader.

Schrader, an early member of the International Hospitality Program at SIUE, was the recipient of the first-ever Partnership of Excellence award that's sponsored by the Edwardsville SIUE Community Destination Group.

"On behalf of the members and the friends of the International Hospitality Program at SIUE, I'm honored to receive this award," Schrader said. "Grateful thanks go to all the families and individuals that have made **IHP** the success that it is, and to the Edwardsville community for their support."

SIUE Executive Director of International Affairs Mary Weishaar presented the award.

"I'm honored to be here tonight to honor one of our lovely community members that has helped with the partnership," Weishaar said. "The International Hospitality Program at SIUE is an organization which has grown and evolved since its inception in 1969. At that time, some university professors recognized that the increasing numbers of international students arriving to attend the university were experiencing many challenges with the differences in language and culture."

Schrader and her late husband John became members of the program in the early 1970s.

"We were looking for an opportunity for our three children to grow up knowing they were part of this global community, and together part of this world," Schrader said. "**IHP** was a way for our family to discover that the local is global, the global is local."

Like any good host family, the Schraders invited a number of international students into their home over the years to make the transition to the United States easier. They allowed them to have a family away from home.

"It's estimated that as many as half of the current international students in the United States have never been invited into an American home or have known an American outside the classroom," Schrader said. "That's not so at SIUE."

In return, Schrader said her life, along with her family's, was made richer.

"Our lives have been shaped and enriched greatly by the years of hosting international students," Schrader said. "One of the earliest memories that my oldest son has is that he recalls when he was 8 playing chess with one of the wives of the students from Saudi Arabia. Neither the wife nor (my son) could speak the other language, but they were able to communicate enough to play a great game of chess."

"We will always remember the Thanksgiving dinners, trips to the pumpkin farm, sightseeing in St. Louis and trips to the grocery store, of course, going to yard sales looking for furniture to furnish off-campus apartments and New Year's Eve parties."

Schrader recalled a New Year's Eve party, when the international students were snowed in and stayed overnight. Schrader and her husband prepared a hefty breakfast the next morning for the group.

"Time doesn't allow for me to share with you all the wonderful stories that we can write a book about in exchanges of friendships that each host family can share," Schrader said.

Former international students still visit Schrader, including a couple that will be coming in from Sri Lanka at the end of the month.

Edwardsville Mayor Hal Patton applauded Joyce and her late husband for all the work done in the program.

“Joyce continues to devote most of her time, talent and resources to smoothing the lives of international students so that they can focus on successful completion of their academic programs at SIUE,” Patton said. “As a past president of **IHP**, she continues to be a part of the leadership team for the organization, mentoring new **IHP** leaders and encouraging new host families. Her enthusiasm for the organization is reflected in her presence at the welcome table for almost every **IHP** reception where she makes sure to create connections between host families, international students and SIUE leaders.

To learn more about the International Hospitality Program, visit www.siu.edu or contact SIUE International Services at 650-3785.

Currently, **IHP** is in need of small desks and chairs, small kitchen tables and chairs and either a bassinet or pack-and-play.