January 15, 2022

We are starting 2022 with a continued celebration of our amazing English Conversation Facilitators. Today let’s meet Robert Durant, whose professional background includes trading on Wall Street and Hong Kong, owning an art sales company in New York, and teaching English for over 12 years. Thank you Robert, for stepping in to facilitate while we have been virtual - we are lucky to have you as part of our team!

Tell us a bit about yourself, and what led you to volunteer with OISS?
As both a face-to-face teacher and an online English coach, working within the Yale community informs my teaching. The goals and challenges of students and their families help me to design a relevant and up-to-date curriculum.

What have you enjoyed the most about being an ECG facilitator?
I love learning about other cultures and getting a deeper understanding of people's perceptions and experiences as newcomers in New Haven.

What is one thing you've learned about our international community since you've been volunteering with OISS?
I've learned that cultural immersion, being unfamiliar with a new community, and being homesick can be more challenging than language issues.

Can you think of a specific conversation or experience that stands out while you've been volunteering?
It's hard to say. I am fascinated every time someone from another culture tells me something about the U.S. or about my own culture that I didn't know.

What would you say to someone who is considering joining our English Conversation Groups as a
participant?
Come join us, teach us a bit about your culture, and teach us a bit about ourselves!

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