Dear MaFLA members,

May holds some wonderful moments – prom, blooming gardens, manageable temperatures, my classroom door painted (see above) – and, yet, we have to say goodbye to our graduating students and those lost to gun violence. An article I read indicated that the killer struggled in school to make friends and he was discriminated against due to his family’s socio-economic status, two elements that we, as Massachusetts language teachers, can work to minimize. As we teach our students interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational skills, we support them in communicating about themselves and their cultures, listening to other ways of being and doing, and informing audiences of important information. We have the power to equip the next generation to accept all, to withhold judgment, to build bridges, to break down walls. The empathy and courage we build could positively change somebody’s world.

On to MaFLA news. Our May board meeting focused on redefining our board structure to be more sustainable. Did you know that the current path to presidency is four years long, including running an entire conference and once the president’s term is complete, they are off the board? We recognize that running a conference and being a president require different sets of skills that not every leader is comfortable with. We are also looking to change the makeup of committees, spread out the opportunities to direct PD, and make mentoring part of the cycle. We will be bringing this and our Strategic Plan to you at the Fall Business and Awards Luncheon at ACTFL: make plans to attend!

Summer is a time of personal rejuvenation, so to end on a personal note, I’ll share with you how I will be filling my bucket. First of all, I am part of a sailing team. Nothing makes you a better teacher than learning a new skill! Our boat, Tonga, has won some races but more importantly, we have built a gender-balanced team of folks who support and respect each other. Additionally, my husband and I will be traveling to Europe for a wedding then tagging on a few days to explore Normandy and Brittany. I may have called it a graduation celebration for him, but I’ll definitely be taking cultural notes to bring back to the classroom! Lastly, I have a summer bucket list, an idea from my niece. On it are things like outdoor movies, rooftop dinner, picking strawberries, and taking the dog for ice cream. I hope that you, too, find both planned and spontaneous ways to recharge this summer.

Beckie Bray Rankin

MaFLA Leader in the Spotlight

This month, Liliane Duséwoir is in the spotlight. A Belgian teacher of French and Spanish, Liliane works at Boston University and focuses her own studies on gender-based language, which will be the subject of one of her presentations this summer as she leads the French strand of this summer’s Immersion in August. Liliane is also an active member of our Communications Committee and has worked with the Coordinator on exciting news ideas to better support you, our members. Getting to know Liliane is a treat; her joy and enthusiasm for altruism, travel, and connections leaves you with a smile and something to think about.

Upcoming Events

Forty folks just finished their OPI Familiarization Workshop Training and over one hundred are headed to Westfield State for our annual Proficiency Academy. Registration opens soon for the Summer Immersion in French & Spanish! ACTFL registration is open! Your MaFLA membership gives you the ACTFL member rate and so much more. Check out the State Education Website for upcoming modules for the new Framework in October!