



## YES Alum Selected for Prestigious Writing Program





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Fares Amer (YES alumnus 2013-2014, Jordan) was accepted to the International Writing Program. The program is offered through the University of Iowa with funding from the United States Department of State.

The University of Iowa Writer's Workshop is a prestigious creative writing program and has a highly selective application process. Graduates of this program include Pulitzer Prize winners, six recent U.S. Poets Laureate, as well as numerous winners of the National Book Award, MacArthur Foundation Fellowships and other

A component of the International Writing Program is to share the voices of those from regions of the world in which literary and free speech are restricted

Amer chose to apply for this program after spending an academic year in Ames, Iowa under the Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study (YES) program.

"It is both ironic and heartwarming that [the program] happens to take place in Iowa," said Amer. "During my YES program interview, when I was asked why become an exchange student, I answered saying: to develop myself as a writer."

Amer was motivated to improve his writing while studying in Ames. He offers advice for potential host families.

"Through hosting you are changing your student's life, steering it into a world of opportunities. And, you are creating this beautiful, lifelong bond. Get excited about your relationship with your student, and enjoy the experience, because it will come to an end."





Amer's story features a young Syrian refugee fleeing his home. According to Amer, one million refugees are currently living in Jordan. He describes daily int refugees as the inspiration of his story.

The story also holds personal significance for Amer, as his own grandfather was a refugee from Palestine over fifty years ago.

"I believe storytelling is my own personal way of offering help," said Amer. "These stories deserve to be told and heard."

Read his story: [Eye Sea](#).

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Amer was recruited by the American-Mideast Educational and Training Services, Inc (AMIDEAST), the recruitment organization for the YES Program in Jorda

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