

## **International Friendship Family**

To equip, empower, and mobilize Christians  
to cross cultural barriers with the love of Christ.



**Collegiate Ministry Department**  
**Georgia Baptist Mission Board**  
**Duluth, GA**

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In partnering with Campus Ministers, we are obligated to protect their relationship with the International student as well as the college International Student Affairs Office. These entities operate under the NAFSA code of ethics and we must honor that code as well. (see page 7). Be careful to guard the International student's relationship with the Campus Minister and don't do anything that would cause a breach in that relationship. Always be honest with the student about the event you invite him to attend and make sure he/she knows what to expect.

# Introduction

In our churches we often hear about missionaries who go to far away places. However, one of the greatest opportunities to reach the nations with the good news about Jesus is very close to home! Students from all over the world come to the U.S. to study. Georgia is home to approximately 17,000 International college students. Many of these students are curious about American culture and greatly desire the opportunity to make American friends. Most are intelligent, eager to learn, and appreciate hospitality offered by Americans. A high percentage of these students have never experienced the love of Christ.

Loneliness is one of the most common emotions felt by International students. Having left family and friends, they arrive in our country to find our culture unfamiliar and often overwhelming. This is a very important period of time from a ministry point of view. When needs are high, the door is open for developing genuine friendships. Basic needs such as grocery shopping and transportation often become obstacles for the International student. Meeting those needs and extending a friendly welcome can mean the difference between a negative and positive American experience.

Statistics show that fewer than 30% of International students studying in the US will ever be invited into an American home during their stay in this country. Sadly, most return to their homeland with their perception of America based on what they have seen on television and on the streets and college campuses. We can help students encounter people who care for them and who exhibit Christ's love.

God is calling us to "reach the world here at home." We hope many church members will be part of the Friendship Family program, which will connect them with international students who are studying in Georgia.

For more information, contact your local BCM Campus Minister or Georgia Baptist Collegiate Ministries at 770-936-5248.

*"And if a stranger dwells with you in your land, you shall not mistreat him. The stranger who dwells among you shall be to you as one born among you, and you shall love him as yourself; "*

*Leviticus 19:33-34a NKJV*

## About the Ministry

*"And if a stranger dwells with you in your land, you shall not mistreat him. The stranger who dwells among you shall be to you as one born among you, and you shall love him as yourself; "*  
*Leviticus 19:33-34a NKJV*

### WHY?

- Obedience: Matthew 28:19; Acts 26:18
- Because God has brought the world to our doorstep and we must be good stewards of the opportunity to reach the nations for Christ
- Because over 70% of International college students are never invited into an American home
- Because International students who come to Christ can take the gospel back to their homelands and impact unreached areas that are not readily open to the gospel
- Because by building relationships with Internationals, we broaden our world view and enrich our own lives

### HOW?

- By making yourself available to become friends with an International college student
- By opening your heart and your home to share American culture with Internationals who may otherwise never experience it
- By including Internationals in holiday celebrations, family activities, church activities, and everyday life experiences
- By working with Campus Ministers and local churches to meet needs and provide assistance through the local Baptist Collegiate Ministries

### WHO?

- Every believer who understands the responsibility that is ours to reach the nations
- Christians who want to make a difference in the world
- Churches and individuals who are serious about sharing Christ with the nations

### WHERE?

- In your community, in your home, and in your church
- On college campuses all over Georgia

### WHEN?

- The time is **NOW!** Matthew 9:36-38

# Hosting International Students

## Getting Started

If your church is interested in hosting International students, here are some things you will need to do in preparation:

- **Pray** ~ commit to the Lord the process and each family and student who will be involved
- **Involve Church Staff**
- **Choose a Friendship Family Coordinator** ~ responsibilities include:
  1. Enlisting Friendship Families
  2. Distributing Friendship Family applications and using them to match families with students
  3. Working with the local BCM Campus Minister to locate interested students
  4. Providing culture training for Friendship Families (contact your local BCM Campus Minister for more information.)
  5. Keeping in touch with Friendship Families, encouraging them to connect well with their student(s)
- **Host family application process**
  1. Each potential Friendship Family will need to complete and submit a Friendship Family application (sample copy included in this manual)
  2. Each International student will need to complete and submit an application (sample copy included in this manual)
  3. The Friendship Family Coordinator will match up students and families based on application information
  4. The Friendship Family Coordinator will contact each family with information about their assigned student. Be sure to provide contact information (email address, phone numbers etc.) for both the family and the student
  5. The Friendship Family Coordinator will keep the Campus Minister updated on the progress of the program.

# Friendship Family Tips

\*adapted from Intervarsity

Next to getting an education, the greatest desire of most Internationals is to make at least one close American friend. However, few are successful, and most never get inside an American family's home. Friendship Families have excellent opportunities to fulfill this desire. Research shows that the most important resource for the adaptation of Internationals to the U.S. is an American friend or family.

The most critical period is the first three months after their arrival. If such a relationship is not established with Americans in the first three months or year of a student's arrival, they will develop or find an ethnic or international subculture group, because they did not find an American friend when they needed one. Once this happens, whether naturally or by necessity, the felt need for an American friendship disappears. The International then usually becomes increasingly entrenched in the external aspects of an American lifestyle, while becoming much less open to Americans, their values and beliefs.

Of course, International students are not the only ones who benefit. The inherent rewards of international friendships to Americans and their children are many. One gets to see the world (current events, politics, distribution of wealth, war, family, relationships, values and beliefs, etc.) through the eyes of a different culture. This can affect one's ministry priorities, use of resources, career goals, choice of friends, and even day-to-day lifestyle as one is exposed to the variety in God's world and begins to act on God's intentions for it. Further, being a host family is a wonderful way to experience the joy of being a servant for Christ's sake, which Scripture says is the only road to blessing and life (Mark 8-10).

## Understanding International Friendships

International students have three role needs that host families can help them meet:

- The Student role - Internationals are very intelligent, but often are under pressure from governments and family to excel, are stunned by U.S. competition, and struggle with language. They need encouragement, without having their time monopolized.
- The Friendship Family role - Internationals need and desire to share what their country and culture are like and to clarify misconceptions. Inquire and listen without being proud or judgmental.
- The Tourist role - Internationals need and desire to see and learn about our country and culture. You are an expert!

## Code of Ethics

Because you will be working with Universities, you will need to honor the code of ethics concerning religion and International students. NAFSA:Association of International Educators, has established a code of ethics that most universities are bound to adhere to. These are practical guidelines that make sharing with Internationals easier and less threatening for them. The guidelines provide common ground for defining appropriate and inappropriate behavior for religious discussions or activities.

### Article 10, The NAFSA Ethics Program, p. 11

- a. Make certain that organizations providing programs for foreign students and scholars have clear statements of purpose and responsibility, so that all parties can know what is expected of them.
- b. Accurately portray their services and programs, making clear the identity, the intent, and the nature of the sponsoring organization and of each particular event and service.
- c. Provide appropriate opportunities to observe and join in mutual inquiry into cultural differences...The organization should make clear that surreptitious, deceptive or coercive proselytizing is unacceptable.

### Simply put:

- a. Always be open and honest about the nature of your event. If you invite the student to an event where there will be a Bible study or religious emphasis, be certain the student understands this up front and has an opportunity to decline. Don't hide the fact that you are Christian, but never trick a student into attending a religious function.
- b. Make sure the event matches what is advertised. This is particularly important for group events, but also applicable to inviting the student to church. Be sure to explain what they should expect if they attend.
- c. Be open to discussions, but gentle in sharing your religion. Never criticize or belittle the student's religion. Never imply that his religion is inferior or "wrong". Refrain from being aggressive in evangelism, but let your genuine love for the student draw him to Christ. Never use devious or misleading dialogue or coercive language or behavior.

## Appendix A: International Student Application

Today's Date	Home Country		
Name			<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female
How long will you study at your current University?		Area of Study	
Date of Birth	Age	Date of arrival in USA	
Are you married?	If married, is your family coming with you?		
If YES, please list names(s), relationship and ages of children (if applicable)			
Current mailing address		Permanent mailing address in home country	
_____		_____	
_____		_____	
_____		_____	
Phone number		Cell Phone Number	
eMail address			
When is the best time to reach you by phone?		What languages do you speak?	
Do you have any allergies		Please list any food you cannot eat	
Do you smoke?	Do you have a car?	Do you plan to get one?	
List your talents and hobbies			
Please tell us about yourself! This helps us to make a better match. This will help us to find a better friendship partner for you.			
I give permission to have this information released to my friendship partner and volunteers in the International Student Friendship Program.			
Signature		Date	





Special Thanks to:

Elaine Brown, First Baptist Church, Lilburn

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