

Cross-Cultural Friendship Partner Information Sheet

International Friendships, Inc.

International students are often very lonely and new students may need to get oriented to their new surroundings when they first arrive in Columbus. By inviting an international student to spend some time with you and/or your family and having fun together, the student will feel they have a **friend** here in Columbus. In return, you and/or your family will be enriched by learning about the students' culture.

How is this different from an English Conversation Partner?

The ECP program partners meet for an hour weekly or 2 hours bi-weekly for English conversation. Although this friendship will certainly benefit the student's grasp of English, this will not be the primary focus. In the Friendship Partner program partners meet monthly for at least 2 hours. The focus is to include the student in you and/or your family's activities.

What time commitment is expected?

We ask that you include your student in an activity that you and/or your family are doing at least once a month. The activity should be at least 2 hours long. However, if you would like to interact with your student more often, that is encouraged! It is also encouraged that you try to maintain the friendship for at least 6 months.

When would I be needed?

All year round! Most international students arrive in the fall, but we have requests for friendships throughout the year.

How will I and/or my family be matched with a student?

After completing a training and having a New Volunteer Application approved, we look at our list of students waiting for partners, and try to find a match with similar interests. The extent to which this is possible depends on who is on the list. If you are a single person, we would only match you with a student of the same gender and near your age. If you prefer a student from a particular country, cultural, or religious background, we will try to accommodate that if possible. The vast majority of students that request our services are from Asia- we almost never receive requests from Europe.

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How long is my commitment?

Since you are only asked to meet one time per month (minimum), we would like to see you continue your relationship with the students for at least 6 months. In an ideal situation a friendship would develop and last until the student or you move away from Columbus.

What if my student returns to his/her home country, or can no longer meet with me?

Then please let us know and we would be happy to match you with someone else!

Do these students speak English?

Yes, students must have a minimal grasp of English to be admitted to Ohio State. If they are the spouse of a student their English may not be quite as good. However, as you interact with the student and/or spouse, their knowledge of English will be improved. This would be a side benefit for the student and/or spouse!

What types of activities would be suitable?

If you are meeting with the student one-on-one, then just feel free to hang out – go shopping, take a bike ride, do some cooking, etc. If your whole family is involved, invite the student for a family birthday or cookout, or attend family sports game or concert. We have lots of other ideas, which we'll send along after you have been matched!

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