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INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP PROGRAM

WHAT IS IT?

The WMU Haenicke Institute for Global Education’s International Friendship Program (IFP) is an initiative that connects international students with the Kalamazoo community. The IFP is designed to assist international students in transitioning and learning U.S. American culture as well as engaging the local community with the world.

WMU international friends (international students) and community friends (local community members) are paired by IFP and are expected to interact once per month from September through April. The International Friendship Program (IFP) is NOT a live-in or homestay program.

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

All participants must be at least 18 years of age.

Community Friends
Community friends can include but are not limited to:
• Couples or single adults
• Retired adults
• Families with children
• Single parents
• Current WMU students

International Friends
Eligible international students and scholars include:
• Degree-seeking students and family*
• International scholars and family*

*Children of international friends may participate with a signed consent form.
INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP PROGRAM

WHAT ARE THE EXPECTATIONS?

Community friends are NOT expected to pay for international friends while attending joint activities.

Friendship pairs meet at least once per month.

Participants will not attempt to proselytize to their own religion.

Community friends do not offer housing.

Friendship pairs are respectful of cultural differences.

Friendship pairs espouse international understanding as a lifelong goal.

NOTE:
Community friends should not help with immigration, academic, financial, health, employment or significant adjustment issues. If assistance with these issues is necessary, please contact WMU International Admissions and Services at oiss-info@wmich.edu.
INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP PROGRAM
WHAT IS THE PROCESS?

- Review program description and handbook.
- Complete international friend or community friend application.
- Complete liability and consent forms.
- Get matched by WMU Haenicke Institute for Global Education.
- Attend Orientation and Fall Match Mixer to meet your pair and learn more.
- Engage in cultural sharing activities!

For the 2019-2020 academic year, community friends should apply by no later than August 11 at 11:45 p.m.
INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP PROGRAM
HOW DOES MATCHING WORK?

MATCHING
After the application has been completed, the Haenicke Institute for Global Education matches international friends with their community friend.

Matching is conducted based on preferences indicated in the application questions.

Note that every preference is rarely matched. Preferences may be prioritized in the order indicated to the right.

Preference 1:
Gender and family preferences

Preference 2:
Lifestyle preferences

Preference 3:
Career mentoring

Preference 4:
Length of stay and interests
IMPORTANT DATES 2019-2020

Community Friend Orientation
*(community friends only)*
Thursday, August 15
Noon to 1 p.m.
Faculty Dining Room, Bernhard Center

International Friend Orientation
*(international friends only)*
Online

Fall Match Mixer
Friday, August 23
11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
Valley Dining Center

Program Wrap-Up
Wednesday, April 8
Noon to 1 p.m.
To Be Announced (TBA)
HELPFUL RESOURCES
CONVERSATION STARTERS & ACTIVITY IDEAS

Conversation Starters:
• What are your hobbies?
• What is your hometown like?
• What is your favorite food?
• Do you like to travel? Where have you been?
• What are your life goals currently? What is your dream job?
• What is the funniest/scariest/most exciting thing that happened to you?
• What makes you happy?
• What is your family or support system like at home?
• What is/are your favorite ______?
• Are you involved in a campus club?
• Who inspires you?
• What do you like most/least about America?
• What is an important holiday for you?
• What is your major/minor?
• Are you a morning or night person?
• What do you hope never changes?
• What languages do you speak? Can you teach me how to say ____?
• Would you rather......?
• What is a U.S. American experience you crave?

Activity Ideas:
✓ Celebrate Holidays
✓ Cooking
✓ Hobbies
✓ Sporting Events
✓ Farmer’s Market
✓ Museums and Zoos
✓ Local Events
✓ Gathering & Parties
✓ Travel
✓ Fishing
✓ Beach
✓ Theatre or concerts
✓ Fireworks
✓ Pumpkin Carving
✓ Lunch or Coffee
✓ Shopping
✓ Local events
✓ Games
✓ Career Shadowing
✓ Swimming
✓ Kayaking

Example Events and Activities in Kalamazoo:
Art Hop
Farmer’s Market
Balloon Fest
Sunflower Festival
Geek Fest
Color Run
Turkey Trot
Zoo Lights
Bronson Park Tree Lighting
International Festival
Maple Sugar Festival
Luminary Festival
New Year’s Fest

We recommend the calendars provided by WMU Events and Discover Kalamazoo!
HELPFUL RESOURCES

CULTURE SHOCK: STAGES, SIGNS, RECOMMENDATIONS

Culture shock is a feeling of disorientation experienced by someone who is suddenly subjected to an unfamiliar culture, way of life or set of attitudes. It is a normal process, and shouldn’t be ignored. International and community friend should be aware of common signs of culture shock.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Signs (Common Reactions)</th>
<th>Recommendations for International Friends</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Honeymoon</td>
<td>First contact with the new culture</td>
<td>Excitement, curiosity, slight anxiety</td>
<td>• Find other people to interact with. Focusing on another person can help relieve loneliness.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Surround yourself with familiar things from home (food, music, TV shows, etc.).</td>
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<td>• Slow down and relax to allow your emotions to catch up.</td>
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<td>• Develop daily patterns and routines to increase your sense of familiarity.</td>
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<td>• Call or Skype friends and family in your home country.</td>
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<td>• Express yourself! It is okay to laugh, cry, sing, pray, draw, etc.</td>
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<td>• Find ways to practice your English skills.</td>
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<td>• Express how you are feeling to your friends and family. They can help you.</td>
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<td>• Be patient with yourself. Culture shock happens to everyone and does eventually pass.</td>
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<td>• Take care of yourself by eating well, getting enough rest, and exercising.</td>
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<td>• Speak with a counselor at Sindecuse Health Center.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Initial Confrontation</td>
<td>First intensive interaction with the culture; must solve some basic survival problems</td>
<td>Surprise and confusion; concern that we don't have an answer for new problems; can’t understand why our own behavior doesn’t produce the desired results; puzzled about others’ behavior</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjustment to Crisis</td>
<td>Ongoing confrontation with the new culture; problems intensify</td>
<td>Becoming judgmental about new culture; feelings of anxiety, embarrassment, frustration, anger; confusion about own identity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recovery</td>
<td>Accommodation with the new culture replaces confrontation; sense of belonging to culture emerges</td>
<td>Regain confidence; feeling that the culture is understandable; very positive sense of personal accomplishment; enjoy many aspects of this culture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HELPFUL RESOURCES

IMPORTANT DIFFERENCES TO KEEP IN MIND

Weather: Michigan winter for some international students/scholars can be a difficult adjustment. There are many ways that community friends can help their international friend: shopping for winter clothes, insulating housing, finding heat sources, talking about resources for seasonal affective disorder, and planning fun winter events.

Language: Miscommunication is unavoidable and it is important to be calm and patient when it occurs. Try asking questions when you are not sure. Please feel comfortable practicing English with your community friend. Community friends should also be interested in learning at least a few phrases in another language.

Timeliness: Every culture has a different concept of time. In some cultures being 30 minutes early is appropriate, in others being 30 minutes late is acceptable. In the U.S. it is best to meet on time. If in doubt, ask your community friend what time you must arrive to the event.

Religion: It is important to remember that you do not have to attend a religious event if offered. You can join if you feel comfortable, however, you should not feel forced. Religious discussion might happen and if it does everyone should try to keep an open mind and respect each other’s beliefs.

Gifts: In the U.S., it is alright to accept a gift or invitation on the first offer. Of course, it is acceptable to refuse expensive gifts if you do not feel comfortable accepting. For smaller gifts, such as food or drinks, be sure to accept if you are interested as your community friend may not ask again. Small gifts are a common sign of friendship in the U.S.

Paying: It should not be expected that the community friend will pay for events or meals that you attend together. Although, if the community friend offers to pay it is okay to accept. Be sure to thank your community friend if they pay for something.

Conflict: Everyone should be open-minded and flexible. If you feel disrespected it might be a cultural misunderstanding. Stay calm and ask questions. Intercultural relationships take effort. We are all learning. In the case that an unresolvable conflict occurs, contact WMU International Student Activities at intl-activities@wmich.edu or (269) 387-4853.
HELPFUL RESOURCES
GUIDE TO DRESSING FOR MI WEATHER

**Fall**
Average temperatures:
- September: 13 to 24 °C
- October: 6 to 17 °C
- November: 0 to 9 °C
Enjoy spending time outside in the cool weather by wearing the following:
- Jacket or Windbreaker
- Scarf
- Socks
- Long Pants
- Closed-Toe Shoes (sneakers, boots, etc.)

**Winter**
Average temperatures:
- December: 9 to 1 °C
- January: 9 to 1 °C
- February: 7 to 2 °C
- March: -3 to 8 °C
Enjoy spending time in the cold, snowy weather by wearing the following:
- Winter Coat
- Gloves
- Winter Boots (waterproof)
- Long Pants (thermal)
- Sweater or Sweatshirt
- Long Socks

**Spring**
Average temperatures:
- April: 4 to 18 °C
- May: 9 to 22 °C
Enjoy spending time outside in the cool weather by wearing the following:
- Jacket or Windbreaker
- Scarf
- Socks
- Long Pants
- Closed-Toe Shoes (sneakers, boots, etc.)

**Summer**
Average temperatures:
- June: 15 to 27 °C
- July: 17 to 29 °C
- August: 16 to 28 °C
Enjoy spending time outside in the warm weather by wearing the following:
- T-shirt
- Tank Top
- Shorts
- Sunglasses
- Beach Bag
- Sandals

INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP PROGRAM
INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ACTIVITIES | 3110 FAUNCE STUDENT SERVICES
INTL-ACTIVITIES@WMICH.EDU | (269) 387-4853
WMICH.EDU/INTERNATIONALACTIVITIES/FRIENDSHIP
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Is this a homestay program? No, the international friend will not live with the community friend.

Is the community friend financially responsible for their international friend? No, there is no financial responsibility. It is expected that each party will pay for their own expenses. A community friend may offer to pay for an activity, though this should not be expected.

How often should the international and community friend meet? It is expected that international and community friends will meet at least once per month, though they may meet more often if desired.

What if my international or community friend does not respond or declines invitations? Try asking again! Keep in mind your friend has other responsibilities and may be busy or just missed the invitation. If invitations are continuously declined, please contact WMU International Student Activities at intl-activities@wmich.edu.

Can a community friend be matched with more than one international friend (if desired)? Yes! It is possible that more than one international friend is paired with one community friend. Some international friends may prefer to do events together, though you may also meet separately.

Is the community friend responsible for transportation? No, the community friend is not responsible for transportation. However, a community friend may provide transportation if they offer to do so. We recommend discussing this with your international friend.

How can I keep in touch with my friend between meetings? Call, text, email, social media, video chat, etc. We highly encourage keeping in contact between meetings!

What should I do if there is an emergency? In case of serious emergency, please call “9-1-1”. Keep in mind that all international friends are required to have health insurance. In the case of less serious emergencies, please contact International Student Activities at (269) 387-4853 or email intl-activities@wmich.edu.

What if I no longer wish to participate in IFP? That’s okay, this is a voluntary program. Please be sure to contact WMU International Student Activities (intl-activities@wmich.edu) as soon as possible so that your friend may be rematched.

What if I have questions or concerns about my friend? Please contact WMU International Student Activities at intl-activities@wmich.edu if you have any questions or concerns.
CONTACT US

International Student Activities
3110 Faunce Student Services, Mail Stop 5246
Western Michigan University
1903 W Michigan Ave
Kalamazoo MI 49008-5246 USA

intl-activities@wmich.edu
(269) 387-4853