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WMU Global Learning Team
Haenicke Institute for Global Education
intl-activities@wmich.edu | (269) 387-4853
International Friendship Program Overview

What is it?
The Diether H. 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 staff 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 be:
- WMU Students
- WMU Staff
- WMU Faculty
- WMU Retirees

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.

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International Friendship Program Overview

What are the expectations?

1. Friendship pairs meet at least once per month.
2. Friendship pairs espouse international understanding as a lifelong goal.
3. Friendship pairs are respectful of cultural differences.
4. Community friends are NOT expected to pay for international friends while attending joint activities.
5. Community friends do not offer housing.
6. Participants will not attempt to proselytize their own religion.

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 Student and Scholar Services at oiss-info@wmich.edu.
International Friendship Program Overview

What is the process?

1. Review program description and handbook.

2. Complete international or community friend application & liability and consent forms. Applications and deadlines available at wmich.edu/internationalactivities/friendship

3. Attend International Friendship Program Orientation hosted by the Haenicke Institute for Global Education.

4. Attend Fall Match Mixer and meet your friend! Food provided by the Haenicke Institute for Global Education.

5. Engage in cultural sharing activities once per month!

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International Friendship Program Overview

**How does matching work?**

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.*
# Important Dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>International Friend</th>
<th>Community Friend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Application Deadline</td>
<td>Aug. 8, 2022</td>
<td>Aug. 12, 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Orientation</td>
<td>Aug. 16, 2022</td>
<td>Aug. 17, 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9 to 10 a.m. EST</td>
<td>12 to 1 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Webex (virtual)</td>
<td>Location TBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International friends only</td>
<td></td>
<td>Community friends only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall Match Mixer</td>
<td>Aug. 30, 2022</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12 to 1 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Location TBA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>food provided</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Wrap-Up Mixer</td>
<td>March 8, 2022</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12 to 1 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Location TBA</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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Helpful Resources

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?
Helpful Resources

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 Activities & Events in Kalamazoo Area
Art Hop  
Farmer’s Market  
Balloon Fest  
Sunflower Festival  
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!

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Helpful Resources

Culture Shock: Stages & Signs

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 friends should be aware of common signs of culture shock.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Signs (Common Reactions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Honeymoon</td>
<td>First contact with the new culture</td>
<td>Excitement, curiosity, slight anxiety</td>
</tr>
<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>
</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>
</tr>
<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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Helpful Resources

Culture Shock: Recommendations

- Find other people to interact with. Focusing on another person can help relieve loneliness.
- Surround yourself with familiar things from home (food, music, TV shows, etc.).
- Slow down and relax to allow your emotions to catch up.
- Develop daily patterns and routines to increase your sense of familiarity.
- Call or Skype friends and family in your home country.
- Express yourself! It is okay to laugh, cry, sing, pray, draw, etc.
- Find ways to practice your English skills.
- Express how you are feeling to your friends and family. They can help you.
- Be patient with yourself. Culture shock happens to everyone and does eventually pass.
- Take care of yourself by eating well, getting enough rest, and exercising.
- Speak with a counselor at Sindecuse Health Center.
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.
Helpful Resources

Important Differences to Keep in Mind

**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 the WMU Global Learning Team at intl-activities@wmich.edu or (269) 387-4853.
Helpful Resources

Guide to Dressing for Michigan Weather

**Fall**
Average temperatures:
- September: 12 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:
- Hat
- Jacket or Windbreaker
- Scarf
- Gloves
- Long Pants
- Boots
- Closed Toe Shoes (sneakers, boots, etc.)

**Winter**
Average temperatures:
- December: -5 to 2 °C
- January: -4 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
- Hat
- Scarf
- Long Pants
- Long Boots
- Winter Boots (waterproof)

**Spring**
Average temperatures:
- April: 4 to 15 °C
- May: 9 to 22 °C
Enjoy spending time outside in the cool weather by wearing the following:
- Jacket or Windbreaker
- Scarf
- Shoes or Raincoat
- Long Pants
- Boots
- 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
- Swim Suit
- Sunglasses
- Sandals

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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 the WMU Global Learning Team at intl-activities@wmich.edu or (269) 387-4853.

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.
Frequently Asked Questions

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 community 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 the WMU Global Learning Team at intl-activities@wmich.edu or (269) 387-4853.

What if I no longer wish to participate in IFP? That’s okay, this is a voluntary program. Please be sure to contact the WMU Global Learning Team as soon as possible at intl-activities@wmich.edu or (269) 387-4853 so that your friend may be re-matched.

What if I have questions or concerns about my friend? Please contact the WMU Global Learning Team at intl-activities@wmich.edu or (269) 387-4853 if you have any questions or concerns.