

*Experience, Knowledge, and Friendship*

# Friendship Family

## Information Packet

# Friendship Family Program

## What is the Friendship Family Program?

Friendship Family is a program that connects international students with local St. Thomas families. Founded on the conviction that we should learn from each other, the program provides cultural experiences for community members and helps international students experience true Minnesota culture in American families. Our goal is to make the St. Thomas community a home away from home for international students.

This program matches international students (undergraduate or graduate) studying at the University of St. Thomas with a local friend (a family, couple, or individual).

Participants can make special requests about matching preferences, but keep in mind our main goal is to have all students who have applied matched with a family.

Friendship Families applying for the fall are matched for one academic year and are invited to join OISS for cultural events and activities throughout that year. Friendship Families are expected to invite their student to family events and outings at least once a month. In addition, there are OISS and St. Thomas events that Friendship Families can attend with their student. The program does not require a lot of extra time and effort; rather Friendship Families welcome their student into normal family activities.

## About St. Thomas's International Students

the University of St. Thomas has more than 600 students enrolled in 5 ( (te40)-8 (de3.5 (r)3g21 (s)3.5

## Expectations & Guidelines

Local Families participating in *Friendship Family* are expected to:

maintain regular communication with the ir student throughout the year: return phone calls, emails and other forms of communication in a timely manner

## What Should We Do Together?

Possible activities to engage in as partners:

Invite your student over for a family dinner

Invite your student to a family activity, such as attending a child's sporting event or school play

Invite your student over to watch a movie or big game on s4 Tm4 (a)1-0 0 14.8</MCID 14 >>E

# Program Details

Initial Matching

## First Steps

### *Arrival*

- x Encourage your student to call or email home and/or contact family/friends in other places.
- x Jet lag: For those who have traveled abroad, you know that jet lag can be difficult to overcome. Be flexible with your student and accommodate their jet lag during their first week here.
- x English fatigue: some students may get tired of listening and speaking English all the time. Be understanding and try not to overwhelm them on arrival.
- x Diet changes: ask the student about food preferences and dietary restrictions before preparing food for them.
- x Relationships take time to build. Be patient in getting to know your student, and always let our office know if you have any issues.

### *Establishing a Sense of Place*

- x For those who are matched with a student who is brand new to the area, it's nice

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# Stress Periods of International Students in College

September	October
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>x Homesickness</li> <li>x Honeymoon Stage... Students find cultural differences intriguing. They are still protected by close memory of their home culture.</li> <li>x Value crisis... students are [redacted] ns of conscience over values and social expectations. Conflicted about how to handle cultural differences.</li> <li>x Feelings of inadequacy and inferiority develop because of the discrepancy between high school status and grades or between home country's education vs. US system.</li> <li>x Students may feel confused and vulnerable.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>x Freshmen begin to realize that life at college is not as perfect as they were led to believe by parents, teachers and counselors.</li> <li>[redacted] inadequate skills for finding a group or not being selected by one.</li> <li>x Mid-term exam and class pressures lead to</li> </ul>

# Culture Shock

## Model of Culture Shock

Culture shock cannot fit in a calendar. It can happen suddenly or come on slowly for a student. Some students may go through different phases of the process several times. Other students



