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## THANKSGIVING HOSTING INFORMATION SHEET

### HOW DO I SIGN UP?

Go to our website to sign up: <https://cincy.ifipartners.org/involve/holiday-meal-hosting/> Let us know how many students you would like! The deadline for sign-up for Thanksgiving hosting is the Friday of the week before Thanksgiving.

### IS THERE ANY TRAINING?

See Tips and Training button on the webpage referenced above.

### HOW DO THE STUDENTS FIND OUT ABOUT THIS OPPORTUNITY?

Some students will be part of our Friday night Bible and L.I.F.E. discussion groups, or have attended one of our trips or events, but we often open this event to the general international student population at UC. Students may find out about this opportunity through our website. It is possible that you may host a student with whom this is our first contact. Many students see this as an opportunity to experience US American culture and to see a US American home and family.

### MAY I REQUEST A STUDENT FROM A SPECIFIC COUNTRY?

Yes, when you sign up, you may indicate any preferences you may have. We will do our best to honor your request, but we cannot guarantee that a student will be available from any given country. The vast majority of students here in Cincinnati are from India and China.

### HOW WILL I BE MATCHED WITH ONE OR MORE STUDENTS?

We aim to email your student's name, email, phone number, and address to you by at least the Monday before Thanksgiving. However, we may have a few students who sign up at the last minute, and we appreciate volunteers who can be flexible! Once you receive their information, please contact the student(s) with an invitation to your celebration and to make arrangements for transportation.

### CONTACTING THE STUDENT(S)

Email is often the most effective way to contact them, however, a phone call is fine. You may need to try calling several times and perhaps at different times of the day. Keep in mind that it may be intimidating for an international to return your call. Please do not give up after one try. If, after several tries, you are still unable to contact and / or make arrangements with the student, please contact the coordinator for assistance or for the name of another student.

## TRANSPORTATION AND DISTANCE

Most students will not have transportation. In most cases, you will need to come to campus to transport the student to your home and then take him/her back after your celebration. Please communicate the expected pickup and return times to your student. We have found that some students who do have their own cars are not comfortable driving a long distance to their host's home. If you live at a distance, please plan on picking the student up.

## WHAT IF OUR CELEBRATION IS OUT OF TOWN?

If you plan to drive a long distance from campus, please explain your plans to the student(s) and make sure that is acceptable to them. If they need time to study, you might suggest they bring books and then offer a quiet place at some time during the day. In the case that a long drive is not acceptable to your assigned student, please contact IFI for another match. If you are planning an overnight stay, please let IFI know ahead of time, and we will do our best to match you with a student who would like to do this. This may not always be possible.

## RELATING TO AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT

Sometimes hosts are nervous about how to relate to an international. Relax and enjoy your time with the student. They will be happy to have someone welcome them and open their home. We suggest that you take the attitude of a learner and seek to gain a deeper understanding of a new culture. Please see document "Interacting with Your International Friends" on our website.

## ARE THERE ANY DIETARY RESTRICTIONS

When we send you the name of your student, we will also notify you of any dietary restrictions that the student indicated. Usually, if you serve a variety of food including vegetarian dishes, there will not be a problem. In general, students from Hindu backgrounds will not eat beef or pork, Muslims will not eat pork (such as ham), and some students are vegetarians. Chicken and turkey are a safe choice for most. In fact, many international students have never tasted turkey or seen one carved (you will have fun letting them watch and / or participate).

## WHAT ABOUT SHARING MY FAITH?

At this initial stage of meeting the student, please be sensitive to the fact that they may have little or no previous exposure to Christianity. Our hope is that you will have the perspective that you are part of a larger ongoing ministry to the student, as it is more likely that the students who are hosted by our volunteers will come to an IFI Bible study or L.I.F.E. group on Friday nights. We hope that over time the student will have the opportunity to build a relationship of trust with you or our other volunteers which would be a more appropriate context for sharing spiritually. We ask that you not force a spiritual discussion but be sensitive to the student and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. Do practice your normal family traditions such as praying before the meal or sharing what you are thankful for, etc. You might explain to the student that this is what your family does, and share why.

## WHAT ABOUT CONTACTING THE STUDENT(S) IN THE FUTURE?

It is our hope that this will be the beginning of a wonderful and mutual friendship. We encourage you to keep in touch with the student, but this is not required. You could keep in touch through social media or by calls, texts or emails to let them know you are thinking of them, inviting them to your home again, sending cards for birthdays and holidays, etc.

**THANK YOU** for your willingness to serve. We hope and pray you will be blessed as you share your holiday with an international student. Your hospitality opens a door for an international student to be touched by the love of Christ!