

ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

International Programs

Presents

Community Friends Program

Consistent with its overall educational mission, the Arkansas State University provides access to educational opportunities for international students in a caring and supportive environment. These international students bring with them different cultures and viewpoints, which serve to enrich the entire educational environment at the university and experiences offered to all of its students. One exciting dimension of the actions taken by the university to foster the international program and its attendant benefits are these cultural community programs described below.

In order for these Cultural Community Programs to have optimal benefits, host families with an interest in fostering positive cross-cultural exchanges are needed. If you have not previously served as a host family, it may be beneficial to begin with the short duration Community Friends Program so as to become more comfortable with the process and experience before making a commitment to either the Break and Weekend Home Stay Program or the Semester Home Stay Program. It is hoped that you will give serious consideration to becoming a host for an international student (within the structure of the program) and will decide favorably in this regard. As you will see, these are three levels of participation that range from as short as a day to a year or more.

Thank you so very much!

Silver Level: Cultural Friends Program

Gold Level: Break and Weekend Home Stay Program

Platinum Level: Semester Home Stay Program

● **Silver Level - Cultural Friends Program**

Purpose of The Program

The Cultural Friends Program at Arkansas State University connects international students with volunteers from the University or the Jonesboro Community. The purpose of this program is to provide an authentic communication setting where both volunteers and international students can broaden their multicultural perspectives, learn about other cultures, and meet new friends from different parts of the world. It is also important that this program does not contain any **legal or financial liability** on either side. Cultural Friends will never be asked to commit any funds or to get involve in any legal issues.

Who Can Participate?

ASU students, staff, faculty, and volunteers from the Jonesboro Community can participate as cultural friends. Participants should be enthusiastic individuals who are motivated to meet students from other countries and who commit to attend a limited number of scheduled meetings.

What Do Community Friends Participants Do?

Community Friends Program participants meet with International Students at times convenient to all parties. Activities can include anything that will encourage the international students to become involved in the community and adjust to their new way of life and allow the Community Friends to learn more about their students' culture and other cultures around the world.

Sample Activities

Some of the types of activities recommended for inclusion in the Community Friends Program are: attending a picnic or family reunion; athletic contest; play or musical performance; visiting an amusement park; zoo, aquarium, or botanical garden.

How Will Community Friends Participants Benefit?

The Community Friends Program provides an excellent environment for mutual sharing and cross-cultural communication. Volunteers gain valuable information about other cultures and people, build new friendships, and acquire a sense of satisfaction from helping others. It is particularly valuable when there are children in the home of the host family, as they will benefit greatly by their exposure to students from different countries, backgrounds, and experiences.

Who are the Student Partners?

The international student partners who sign up are currently studying at the Arkansas State University. Many are newcomers to this country, forming their first impressions of the United States and its people, and using English on a daily basis for the first time. Others, who have been here longer, want the opportunity to use their English skills more often, in relaxed, non-academic situations.

• Gold Level - Break and Weekend Home Stay Program

What is the Break and Weekend Home Stay Program?

The Break and Weekend Home Stay Program involves international students living with American families during some breaks and on weekends when hosts are available. Host families recognize and value the importance of cultural exchanges and often have children (whom as part of their overall educational development) they want to have direct and positive relationships with international students.

Who can participate?

The Break and Weekend Home Stay Program is ideal for individuals and families from the Jonesboro Community who are interested in meeting students from other countries. It is open to all individuals and families who have a willingness and desire to serve in a hosting capacity.

What Do Break and Weekend Home Stay Participants Do?

Break and Weekend Home Stay families should provide the following:

- A friendly, comfortable, and safe home environment for the student.
- Encouragement for the student to join daily family activities. (Example: Meals, Conversations, and Recreational Pursuits).

Who are the Students?

The International student participants who sign up are currently studying in regular academic programs at the Arkansas State University. All of the interested international students must receive approval to participate in this program from Office of International Student Services after filling out necessary forms. Students with medical problems or limited English skills will be included in the program only if the host family is willing to accept these conditions.

What are the benefits of the program for international students and host families?

All participants will be exposed to the experience and the value of cultural exchanges. Students will be using English on a daily basis for the first time in a home environment. They will receive a complete immersion in American Culture, not the stereotypes found in television, film, and other media. Similarly, hosts families will be exposed to other culture and will gain the satisfaction that their participation is helping the international student to obtain a more complete and beneficial educational experience.

- **Platinum Level - Semester Home Stay Program**

What is the Semester Home Stay Program?

In this program, host American families open their homes and families to international students for a more extended period of time. The international students reside in the homes of the host families for a semester or more, and participate actively and observe first-hand the daily lives of the American families. This program is designed for international students who are in regular academic programs, and who are interested in learning about the Jonesboro community and culture of the region. The program plays a positive role for both students and families because it provides a rich cultural learning environment and a wonderful cross-cultural adventure for everyone. There is no set time limit on the Semester Home Stay Program. Many families stay in contact with their students during their entire career at ASU and later into their lives. Basically, the length of the friendship is completely up to the Community Friends and their international student partners.

- **Frequently Asked Questions**

1. Do I need to know a foreign language?

No, Speaking another language is by no means a requirement of the programs.

2. Am I going to have any financial obligations?

No, there are no financial obligations for either families or students.

3. Am I going to have any legal obligations?

No, there are no legal obligations for either families or students. However, it is important that the international students and host family put forth a best faith effort and work together for mutual benefit if problems arise, the office of International Students Service should be contacted immediately to help resolve all issues or problems. .

4. What happens if my family is not happy after the student moves into our home?

The student would be asked to move back to his or her prior living arrangements.

5. Who should I contact if I am interested in participating in any of these programs?

Office of International Programs at ASU or Tugrul@astate.edu.

6. Can I have more than one International Student as a partner?

Yes, Office of International Programs will make necessary arrangements to accommodate all the requests and needs of participating families.

7. Am I going to meet with other participating families and International students?

There will number of occasions in which you will have the opportunity to meet with other participants and International students. For example, social mixer will be conducted every semester to encourage these types of positive exchanges.

8. Is there an orientation or training before starting the program?

Yes, all the participants will be required to attend the orientation session organized by the International Student Services. Also, interested persons can attend any mixer or orientation at no cost.

For More Information Please Contact:

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