

TEMPORARY HOUSING INFORMATION SHEET

VISION

Our larger vision is to see international students return home equipped to be effective witnesses among their people. A key element of fulfilling this vision is winning a hearing for the gospel by serving the physical and social needs of internationals. The sooner the international student is served by Christians the better, since the window of time that internationals are most open is usually during their first year in the USA. Temporary housing can provide a vital first relationship for the student. Most of the students who stay with a family when they first arrive continue to participate in other IFI activities during their time in Columbus.

WHEN WILL I BE NEEDED?

Although there are opportunities throughout the year, most volunteers are needed during July and August. The peak time of arrival is the last week of July through the second week of August. Usually we are able to let you know about an opportunity to house a student a week or two prior to the student's arrival date, although we occasionally have "last-minute" requests.

PROCEDURES

1. Getting a Student - You will receive an email from IFI directing you to the list of incoming students. Please contact the office via email or phone to let us know that you would like to house a particular student(s). IFI will put your name into the list next to that student and email you a confirmation with the all of the pertinent information: student name and email address, arrival date and time, airline, flight number, and an IFI Welcomes sign. *If you are in doubt, call the office several days ahead of time to confirm whether or not you have been matched with the student you requested to prevent miscommunication.*
2. Contact Your Student - Contact the student **as soon as possible** to introduce yourself and your family as well as confirm all of the details regarding their arrival. If you have the time, try to get some correspondence going to develop the relationship a bit before they arrive. It is also a good time to let them know that you are excited to meet and host them.
3. Prepare for Homestay – Tidy up your house and car(s). Brainstorm on activities to do while the student is with you.
4. Student Arrival
 - a. As has been arranged through IFI, you or another party will pick the student up at the airport and take him/her to your home. As the student will have been traveling for a long time, and on a different time schedule, please offer a meal and rest on the first day.
 - b. Changes - As soon as IFI is notified of any travel plan changes, you will be contacted with updated information. If someone else is meeting the student at the airport, they will contact you with any changes or if they are unable to connect with the student. Occasionally, we are unable to connect with a student at the airport, or they have made other arrangements, of which we are unaware. Although this is disappointing, know that you offered your hospitality as a service to God. Hopefully you will have an opportunity with another student!
5. In Your Home – Help the student get settled in and familiar with your home, and explain any specifics, house rules or essential home etiquette they may need to know. There is a sample of a "House Rules" document at: columbus.ifipartners.org/ap-th. As for pets, please tell the student in advance (if possible) if you have pets, and hear any concerns they may have. If a student is allergic or afraid, please be sensitive to this. Notify IFI if there is a real problem.

6. Going to Campus- Find out when he/she will need to register and attend orientation. It is absolutely essential that they attend their assigned orientation as it is mandatory. After an initial rest, try to drive them to campus in the morning and pick them up in the evening on the first day. Later you may orient them to the bus lines or make other arrangements.
7. Meals- Meals should be negotiated on an individual basis, but we ask you to provide at least one meal each day. Please be flexible and work with the student and his/her individual needs. Length of Stay - This varies from student to student. Some may need one night while others may need several. IFI offers the students up to 4 days maximum. However, situations may occur where a student remains in your home longer than expected. may be an uncomfortable situation to address. Please do not hesitate to call the IFI office if this occurs. Please see our additional resource “When Students Overstay” at columbus.ifipartners.org/ap-th.
8. Relating to Your 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 our additional resource “Interacting with Your International Friends” at columbus.ifipartners.org/ap-th.
9. Helping the Student Out – As your student prepares to move on to his/her next location, please provide transportation and loving assistance throughout his/her transition as much as possible. Also, be sure they have a copy of the IFI Activities & Welcome brochure and that they know where our office is and how they can get in touch with IFI (print out the brochure here: columbus.ifipartners.org/ap-th).

AN ADDITIONAL NOTE ON FLEXIBILITY...

Serving people can bring great joy. It can also bring frustrations. Sometimes plans unexpectedly change, a student misplaces your phone number or gets lost, or communication is more challenging than you expected. Oftentimes, students have a very different understanding of hospitality than we do. Do your best to prepare for and be accepting of these unexpected events. Ultimately, your flexibility and patience will go a very long way towards your student feeling loved and valued by you. Please do not be discouraged, but know that you have offered yourself in service to God.

IMPORTANT FOLLOW-UP INFORMATION!

If you take the student to campus housing, please communicate the address to IFI. Please also give the student an invitation to the Friday night Bible discussion group as well as the IFI Activities & Welcome brochure. If you feel good about your interaction with the student, you may also want to exchange your own name and address with the student. You may want to call on the student for a get together at another time. If you decide to do this type of follow-up please be sure to let us know.

WHAT ABOUT SHARING MY FAITH?

Volunteers must be willing to serve without feeling the necessity of sharing the gospel during the short visit, but realize they are part of a larger ministry taking place to these students of which this is just the start. It is not expected that you hide being a Christian. It is expected that you not have an agenda that says that you must share with everyone you pick up at the airport. Being very sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit is key. Sometimes, the Holy Spirit will use a short expression or even a single word or example to leave a deep impression on the student’s heart. If a good conversation takes place, a further meeting with the student could be considered (but not expected).

THANKS!

Thank you for giving of yourself to serve international students and demonstrate the love of Christ. For those students who are wondering, as they travel on the plane, "Who will meet me when I arrive?" your presence (in Jesus’ name) will be most welcome and appreciated. You will be their first American friend.