

WEEKEND HOMESTAY HOST 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. If the international student is able to experience hospitality and love by Christians, this often opens their hearts to know God. While some students receive help with temporary housing when they first arrive, many have not and moved directly into the dormitory or did not hear about IFI's temporary housing service.

WHEN WILL I BE NEEDED?

Although there are opportunities throughout the year, most volunteers are needed last weekend in August and labor Day weekend as well as the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays.

PROCEDURES

1. Visit columbus.ifipartners.org/weekend-homestay to tell us you would like to host a student(s) for the weekend and which date(s) you are available. If you are available on more than one weekend, please list all dates. That will allow us to place students with you on the weekend where we have the most student sign ups.
2. Getting a Student – You will receive an email from IFI with all of the pertinent information: student name, email address, and phone number. *If you are in doubt about the contact info being correct, call the office to confirm.*
3. Contact Your Student - Contact the student **as soon as possible** to introduce yourself and your family as well as confirm where you are to pick up the student(s), what you will do over the weekend (in case they need to bring special clothes such as a swim suit), and when you will be dropping them off on Sunday. It is also a good time to let them know that you are excited to meet and host them.
4. Prepare for Homestay – Tidy up your house and car. Make a list of possible activities to do while the student is there.
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. A sample of a house rules document can be found under Resources on the Temporary Housing web page at: columbus.ifipartners.org/involve/air-temp-house. If you have pets, please tell the student in advance (if possible). If they have any concerns, talk about it with them. If a student is allergic or afraid, please be sensitive to this. Notify IFI if there is a real problem.
6. Length of Stay – Most homestay weekends are from Friday night to Sunday early afternoon. You can invite the student to attend church with you, but please let them know they don't have to attend and can stay at your home and rest while you are gone.
7. 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/volunteer-resources.

8. Activities to do with Your Student – Consider taking your student along to whatever you are doing such as to a barbecue, a park, visiting the zoo, art museum, Ohio History Center, or going to a movie or sporting event. You may also want to see if there are any festivals or special events going on. There are other suggestions on the document “Things to Do with Your International Friend” at: columbus.ifipartners.org/volunteer-resources.

PROCEDURES

You may be the first American this individual has ever met, and you are a reflection on IFI. Be sure to obey all traffic laws as you drive your student around and your vehicle is clean and comfortable for them. Likewise, a clean and comfortable home is best for your student’s comfort.

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.

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.