



Office of International
Students and Scholars

International Friendship Program Newsletter: Bridging Borders

Fall 2023 Newsletter

CELEBRATING A SUCCESSFUL FALL

Greetings, IFP Hosts and Students!

Welcome to the Fall 2023 issue of *Bridging Borders*, the official newsletter for the International Friendship Program (IFP). In this issue, you'll get to hear from new and long-term IFP hosts on their experiences this fall, as well as an introductory article for the new IFP program coordinator. You'll also get to see a short review of both IFP and the Thanksgiving Host-a-Boiler program, plus some upcoming Spring IFP events to put on your calendar. Thanks for giving this a read!

MAKING THE CONNECTIONS

Host John Race arrived at Purdue, and assumed his new post as Winter Session Program Manager. He discovered it would connect him to making an additional contribution to his new community.

A special experience had been having a Japanese roommate during college days. John had found that his new international friend needed support in connecting to campus and American life. He began to make it happen.

At Purdue he saw the opportunity to further this goal by becoming an IFP Host. John took his student to a campus-dining hall, and shared a meal with him. It was the chance for an international student to see an American university providing nutrition for its population.

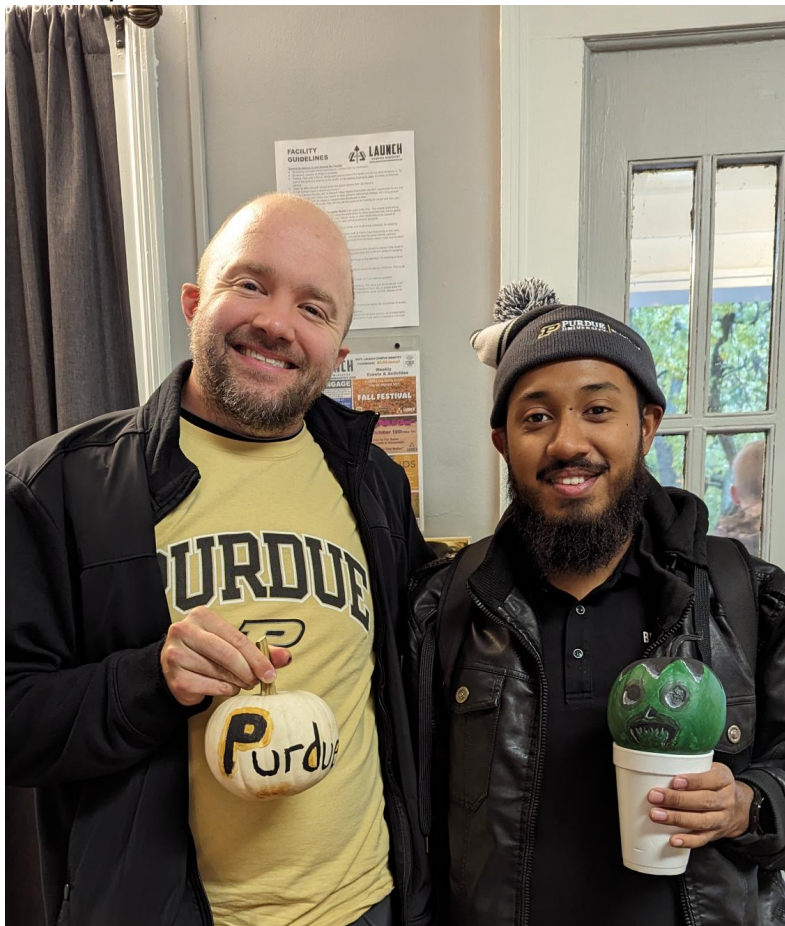
John also offered off campus activities to introduce his student to aspects of American life, and traditions. There was a visit to an apple orchard, a chili cook off, and a pumpkin painting for our unique celebration of Halloween. Most of all, John feels it is important to keep in touch. He uses text messaging, today's vital communication medium for younger generations.

John suggests that international students make the effort to develop connections that enrich American university experiences. He encourages them to start friendships with domestic classmates. Other possibilities include joining clubs and participating in activities where there are common interests. Watching some American TV can also offer a further look at American life.

He recommends that new hosts offer options for students to establish connections to campus and community. There is no single way, but hosts should offer their best possibilities. The students will appreciate the efforts.

In spare time John likes watching and playing sports. Volleyball is a current passion. He reads over a wide spectrum of genres, and likes diverse branches of music. He enjoys travel and trying new delicacies.

John feels hosting offers international students the guidance they need to make the connections that enrich their American experiences.





THE REWARDS CONTINUE

Longtime IFP Hosts Beth and Jeff Nagel talk about offering an important slice of American life for their international students. They estimate that perhaps 80% come with little knowledge or understanding of such. As Purdue graduates, they could see it first hand while on campus.

Former IFP Director, Beth Tucker had come to their church to talk about IFP, and recruit new hosts. As the rewarding outcomes of hosting became apparent, it was no surprise that Beth & Jeff signed up. Their joyful service has continued over the years.

They offer their international students a variety of fun activities. With farming in their backgrounds, they take students to farm areas. It is always a delightful experience for the students to ride on farm vehicles, and especially revealing for those from urban areas.

Multiple family activities include special holiday times, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter. Beth and Jeff describe the joyous moments of students searching for the traditional holiday eggs. They want their students to feel they have family far from home, bring their friends, and find a warm welcome in the Purdue Community.

Beth and Jeff advise their students to take advantage of campus opportunities beyond class work. They realize that international students tend to take their studies quite seriously. They feel that extra-curricular activities are also important in helping to accustom their students to campus life. They can join student organizations and attend or participate in various events. This can lead to new friendships and a better understanding of our local American scene.

In their spare time Beth and Jeff like board and card games. They participate in church activities

helping with hospitality and strengthening marriages. When away from home, they especially like family vacations.

As veteran hosts, they suggest that new hosts include students in family activities and make them feel part of your life. Most of all be yourself. They say that making the effort as welcoming hosts will bring forth special rewards, happy memories, and often lead to lifelong friendships as well.



THE NEXT STEPS

Leah Bechtold had her calling. The post of IFP Coordinator in the Office of International Students & Scholars had opened. She knew this was something she would love. Leah recalls, "I had to go for it."

Matching is a principal activity of IFP. Each semester brings forward the task of finding host families for new international students. At a previous ministry, Leah had found housing for Chinese students. Connecting Purdue's diverse international students with local hosts would be both exciting and challenging. It was Leah's

moment to embrace both.

She had long felt a mission to serve the world and share cultural experiences. That was enhanced by her major in intercultural studies at Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar, Missouri. It continued while teaching ESL to Burmese refugees near Springfield, her hometown.

Her goal is to build upon the many accomplishments of longtime former IFP Program Director, Beth Tucker. There will be an ambitious program of recruitment of both students and hosts.

Contact with new international students will emphasize the benefits of having "family" away from home, as well as taking advantage of what Purdue and the Greater Lafayette Community offer.

Veteran hosts will be contacted and encouraged to tell their friends. Local organizations will be visited, mentioning how hosting leads to feelings of satisfaction and accomplishment. There will be development of joint events with local businesses and community organizations. Hosts will be involved in the planning of them.

There will also be the goal of updating the IFP Website. It will be made smoother to navigate along with a seamless sign up process.

In her spare time, Leah likes board games, and trying new restaurants. She loves to travel, especially to places with personal connections. She finds volunteering for church activities rewarding. Most of all, she is passionate about getting people involved in their local communities and beyond. Her new mission is to take IFP to its next steps, and accomplishing those special goals.

FALL 2023 EVENTS









