

# BRIDGING BORDERS

## INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP PROGRAM

### GREETINGS

In this issue of Bridging Borders, we hope our readers will see how IFP is impacting the lives of IFP students, including those who sheltered in place on campus and joined IFP for a special program installment "IFP: COVID-19 Online Edition."

Thank you, hosts, for reaching out and creating some new online connections! Your stories continue to inspire and we appreciate you all!

Stay well and safe!

*Beth Tucker, IFP Coordinator*

*Joseph Briller, Bridging Borders Editor*

### SHARING THE LOVE

John Toaquiza, a new student matched in January, had hosts who were no longer available. Another host family happily stepped up, but were not be able to attend the IFP Soup & Square Dance Mixer. John really wanted to come to the event, so a third family offered to fill in as his host family for the evening. And a fourth host family extended an invitation to a Super Bowl party at their house that same weekend! Welcome to Indiana, John Toaquiza! This is "Hoosier Hospitality" at its finest!

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*Host, Joe Wilkerson, and granddaughter, Jayda Neal, enjoyed an impromptu Thanksgiving concert by Luis Alfredo Gamboa Gamboa (Colombia) on the tiple requinto.*

### THINKING AHEAD

As you've heard by now, the fall semester at Purdue will look a bit different from other semesters. Some new international students will join Purdue online while others will join us on campus. But however new students join Purdue this fall, all will be offered a chance to make an American friend through IFP.

So with this new reality, some hosts will be engaging with their students as "pen pals" their first semester and as face-to-face friends in January upon on campus arrival. Other hosts will be able to engage in a more normal way with their student fall and spring semesters. In either case, IFP will continue to provide both in person AND online mixers along with smaller in person group events for hosts and student guests. (All creative ideas for these are welcome!)

Look for online orientations for new hosts and student guests beginning in June, and registration sign up beginning in July. We know as Boilermakers we can count on you. Boiler up!

## SPOTLIGHTING STUDENTS

International students come to Purdue to pursue their academic goals. Bridging Borders asked IFP students to share their experiences. Six volunteered to be our panel for this issue. They are Nishchay Khona, Ashwini Rao, Lakshya Swarup and Viraj Vora from India along with Aiza Hasib and Huma Shoaib from Pakistan.

Panel members were asked what brought them to Purdue. Nishchay, pursuing a master's in supply chain management, liked Purdue's specialized degree and the opportunity to function in a global culture. For Ashwini studying business analytics, Purdue offered a top rated program. Lakshya in engineering management saw opportunities in his field along with an international setting. Viraj, with a similar major, felt the need for a program where he could learn about the U.S. Aiza in computer graphics liked the program with available funding and the possibility of developing a network in her field. Huma, a PhD candidate in engineering education learned from a mentor that Purdue was one of the best in her field of studies.

Panel members found different paths to IFP. Lakshya, Viraj and Huma learned about it from IFP Coordinator Beth Tucker's welcoming email. Lakshya liked the concept and Viraj the chance to know about life and culture in the United States. A friend who said IFP was amazing recommended it to Ashwini. Aiza heard about it from friends in her department network.

Panel members mentioned joyous experiences with their hosts. Nishchay delighted in sharing family events. His hosts, Willy and Maryanne Dela Cruz took him to Fort Ouiatenon's famous Feast of the Hunters' Moon and invited him to Thanksgiving, Christmas and a birthday party. There was vegetarian food and cuisines from different countries. Most of all, there was always friendship and culture sharing. Ashwini was thrilled when her hosts, Dr. and Mrs. Harshvadhan

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## 2019/20 REVIEW

# 385

STUDENTS IMPACTED

# 142

HOST FAMILIES

## GAMING RESOURCES

Online games are great resources to stay connected to your students, as well as, friends and family. Here are some of the many games you can play together online in the comfort of your home.

**Telephone Pictionary** (4+ players)

**Blokus** (2-4 players)

**Battleship** (2 players)

**Monopoly** (2-4 players)

**Yahtzee** (2-10 players)

## COPING DURING COVID-19

"How are you coping while staying home?" This question was put to a group of IFP students who joined "IFP: COVID-19 Online Edition" earlier this month. Here are their replies:

Christin David Bose (India) - "I'm a 1st year PhD student in computer engineering at Purdue. I've been keeping myself busy by catching up on my research, trying out new cooking recipes and playing my digital piano. The latter is what probably keeps me sane throughout this 'Stay Home' period. I am really looking forward to my daily runs and playing tennis once life gets back to usual."

Owura Kuffuor (Ghana) - "In these times, I try to keep to my school schedule by watching class videos posted online at the periods I was supposed to go to class. That way, I don't fall behind schedule. Also, I take walks when the weather is good. My friends and I do a virtual hangout mostly over the weekend. We all sign on to Zoom and then watch a movie at the same time."

Antriksha Vishwakarma (India) - "I do miss the lectures and not being able to do experiments in the Aerospace Sciences Laboratory, however, deadlines have not changed and the academic load is the same. I am taking a few precautionary steps like going out only for groceries, washing hands for 20 seconds, eating cooked food almost daily, getting sufficient sleep and exercising almost daily. I stay in a 3 bed, 3 bath apartment with 2 other guys so physical distancing is implicitly maintained. I have not faced any inconvenience yet and all of us are healthy."

Shawn & Nelann Kaluf (West Lafayette) - Our family played Uno online with four international students and they all said they enjoyed it and would play again. There is a "chat" area on the game, and it allows for some "talk" during the game. And, it's free! (Even I could figure it out, and I'm not a techie.) If anyone else is interested in playing with their students, the website is <https://play.unofreak.com/> We set a time to play, notify the students two or three days in advance, then send them the game link via email or text at the set time. We had some technical difficulties with the first game, but Shawn was able to immediately text them, and we got it to work on the second try.

## SPOTLIGHTING STUDENTS - CONTINUED



*Top Row: Nishchay Khona with host family, Huma Shoaib, Lakshya with host family  
Bottom Row: Ashwini Rao, Aize Hasib with host family, Viraj Vora*

took her to see the award-winning movie, "Parasite." Then it was back to their home for a delicious Indian dinner. Ashwini enjoyed having a taste of her national cuisine far from home. She felt she was with "cool grandparents," in a family setting with the conversation flowing.

For Lakshya, the warm welcome from his hosts, Sang Eun Woo and Louis Tay meant so much. It was his first time away from India and he was a bit nervous. His hosts had been international students themselves and understood the challenges he was

facing. He was introduced to friends and colleagues and soon felt he was with family and part of the community.

Viraj's hosts, Dana and Adela Gottfried had been longtime residents in China, so he had the opportunity to learn about both American and Chinese cultures. It was nice to be invited to birthday parties and dinners, including Thanksgiving. Viraj was made to feel a part of the family and to take part in its activities from boys' soccer matches to joint cooking sessions. Aiza's host, Dulcy Abraham took her to the Feast of the Hunters' Moon and introduced her to other students and friends who made Aiza feel part of the community. Dulcy was aware of dietary needs and took her to places serving Halal food. Most of all, Dulcy became someone to turn to, far from home.

Huma's hosts, Catherine and Mark Bell, quickly became her family here. Catherine was like a mother to her and Mark offered welcome academic advice. Huma enjoyed dining with the Bells, both at their home and in restaurants. It provided a feeling of safety and comfort as they helped her to adjust to American life.

Panelists offered newly arriving international students some great advice. Nishchay recommended IFP to get accustomed to American life. Ashwini suggested joining IFP right away and get prepared for cold weather. Lakshya mentioned IFP enabled the sharing of family life away from the stress of studies. Viraj talked about the importance of a balance between academics and cultural activities, while Aiza talked about going beyond studies to make connections in a new country. Huma offered that it is helpful to join IFP and embrace American culture without losing your own.

Our panelists have varied paths to the future, but all emphasize leadership, responsibility and service. Nishchay's family has been in supply chain business for generations. He wishes to be in management to help continue its commitment to meeting people's requirements. Ashwini would like to lead a data scientist team. She likes hard work, lots of responsibility and guiding people positively. Lakshya looks toward meaningful work that contributes to society and balances a professional career with mentoring young people. Viraj mentions that today's dynamic society makes it difficult to predict the future, but he would like a career combining leadership and problem solving. Aiza would like to play a leading role in a management position to bring people together, Huma looks toward a career in academia as a professor of engineering education. She plans to use her experiences as a PhD candidate to mentor students pursuing that degree.

Bridging Borders found it exhilarating to chat with these panel members and learn of their experiences at Purdue, plans for the future and desires to use their skills and professional careers to serve and advance society.

## CELEBRATING BENI

Shailesh Pathrudkar, a graduate student in engineering management, wanted to do something special for host Beni Wilson's birthday on Saturday, April 11th. With wife Rachel, expecting their third child any day during "lockdown," Shailesh wanted it to be something memorable. He got his friends together and they made this special card! They also celebrated with Beni on Zoom. For a special birthday present, Beni and Rachel Wilson welcomed sweet baby girl, Hosanna, into the world on Thursday, April 9th. Both Rachel and baby are doing great!

