



# **Bridging Borders**

*International Friendship Program*

**WINTER 2019 EDITION**

**PURDUE**  
UNIVERSITY

Office of International  
Students and Scholars

**Dear Hosts,**

***It's the last day of finals, hence this Winter 2019 Edition of "Bridging Borders."***

***Receive this as your Fall 2019 Semester wrap up. A big heartfelt "thank you" for all the many ways you GIVE through IFP. I wish you could read each email Joseph and I received. So many stories were collected for this issue and remind us why IFP continues to be so effective in bridging borders. In reading may you be inspired to keep on GIVING. Grateful for each one of you. Special kudos to Joseph who wrote this issue. He did a fabulous job!***

***Beth Tucker, IFP Coordinator, and Joseph Briller, "Bridging Borders" Editor***

## **Becoming A Host**

IFP Hosts find that participating in this exciting program is a rewarding experience. We have the chance to meet aspiring young people from all over the world and learn about their cultures. It also gives us the opportunity to share the best of our community and ourselves.

Sometimes we can be somewhat apprehensive. Will we connect with our new international students? Will we easily cross the frontiers of cultural differences? Will we be thought of as family far from home?

Bridging Borders asked IFP members to make some comments about what makes for successful hosting.

Host Bob Falk mentions that, "It is a great feeling to welcome someone to our community from somewhere else in the world. We have a lot to offer new community members."

Steven and Laurel Lee Skiles suggest, "Just be a friend to them. Include them for meals in your

home and your activities when appropriate. Trust that they will feel your love and care."

Erica Pence emphasizes not being afraid to share real life experiences with them. She took her student, Sara Chartano, to her husband's job site. "Sara is an ag major and Paul works in agricultural drainage." Erica demonstrates how this kind of bonding can be relevant and rewarding.

A student's point of view comes from Russian student, Snezhanna Pankratova who studied in Japan before coming to the U.S. "I recommend being honest and polite in all your cross-cultural conversations. You will learn many interesting things about people from other countries." As Snezhanna suggests, hosting becomes a learning experience for us that is one of the rewards of our service.

Mary McKeever offers the one all-important qualification for being a host. "Anybody can serve. You don't have to make your subject and verb agree. You only need a heart full of grace and a soul generated by love."





## Engaging with our Students

One of our first questions as host families is what can we do to interest our students and make them feel welcome. A multitude of possibilities awaits us on and off campus.

Student Josh Chetankumar remembers a good time at a first meeting in the Purdue Memorial Union and attending a football game a short time later.

Host Pamela Pickett launched her first semester in the program with dinner out. She followed that with a visit to Exploration Acres and a movie at the Long Center. This venue is often ideal for taking students to performances of the Purdue Musical Organizations and the Lafayette Symphony Orchestra.

Hosts Shawn and Nelann Kaluf took students to the county fair at Prophetstown. They tried a player piano and took a ride in a restored Model T Ford. Their day was capped off with an enjoyable picnic in Prophetstown State Park.

Food is often a fun activity for many hosts and their students. It can vary from favorite restaurants to home cooked meals jointly prepared. Hosts talk about the joy of shopping and cooking together. An invite to Thanksgiving dinner can be an especially bonding experience. Students enjoy the traditional festive dinner during an American family holiday.

Purdue's rich athletic program offers many opportunities. Hosts also offer community and cultural events, among them the annual Feast of the Hunters' Moon in October. Other activities include religious services, farmers markets, cookouts and games at home.

Varied exciting activities help us organize our welcome and build those special bonds. Student Chengjie Liu mentions that she is introverted, but happy that her roommate insisted she join IFP. Now she finds it is really comfortable chatting with her family. Ayanda Ncube says that IFP provides you with an "instant family." Shivani Thakkar says, "I feel like I found a perfect guide for me."

We are indeed family at Purdue and in a manner of speaking, family to the world.

## Hosting with Pat and Charlie

Host families come from different places and experiences. Pat Short arrived by way of Scotland. Her involvement with the International Center at Purdue led her to IFP over twenty-five years ago. Charlie from West Lafayette didn't travel quite so far. He jokes that Pat "drafted" him, but as a political science major specializing in international relations it was a perfect fit.



A favorite for the Shorts is having students participate with them during Feast of the Hunters' Moon.

Pictured at left are Pat and Charlie Short at the Lafayette Lyons Club booth with Mexican student, Maria Montes.

Other activities often center on food. Cooking together and sharing a meal encourage discussion of multiple topics. Inviting students to their Thanksgiving dinner is truly special. During this American family holiday, students far from home are not alone, but in "family." Thanksgiving is also an ideal time to familiarize students with American history and traditions.

Cross-cultural discussions bring forth understandings and closer relationships. Pat and Charlie tell about a dinner where they hosted students from Austria, Germany, China, Taiwan and Colombia. The students listened carefully to each other as they shared information. The result was a deeper appreciation of each other's cultures. They like to get their students to relax and feel free to talk about anything. Pat and Charlie feel it's important to listen, trust our students and not push opinions.

Parting at semester's end or graduation can be somewhat sad. They hope that students will stay in touch and that their influence will be helpful for the future. Charlie who spent some time in the boat industry likens it to a launching. It's a great feeling to see a student go forward after being a part of the Purdue and IFP experience.

Students often show much appreciation for their host families. The result is also greatly rewarding to the hosts. Pat and Charlie happily attest to that.