



Office of International
Students and Scholars

International Friendship Program Newsletter: Bridging Borders

Fall 2022 Newsletter

Message from the Coordinator

It was November 2013, and winter break was swiftly approaching. For International Programs, it began as an idea--to provide a holiday opportunity for international students spending their breaks on the Purdue campus.

Now in its tenth year (counting 2020 which was virtual), Host-A-Boiler has provided holiday opportunities for local hosts and international students, scholars and their families to enjoy a holiday gathering or a home-cooked meal together. At quick glance, over 1,400 guests and 640 hosts and their families and friends chose to extend and accept offers of hospitality and friendship through this program.

In this issue of Bridging Borders, newsletter editor and host Joseph Briller looks back on two host families and the student guests who graced their Thanksgiving tables. For both families their first experience hosting began in Thanksgiving 2021.

Joseph and I hope you our readers enjoy this our last issue written together.

--Beth Tucker, Coordinator

Host-A-Boiler & International Friendship Program



One-Time Matchup

That's how it all started. Every Thanksgiving, IFP Coordinator, Beth Tucker, enlists support for the holiday Host-A-Boiler Program. She makes sure that scores of international students are not alone on this traditional American family holiday. It came about that Parth Mau from India would spend it with new hosts, Joy and Dale Krumroy. Little did they know that Parth would enter their lives for a lot longer.

The special bonding began to take shape with phone calls, get-togethers, and a number of "coffees." between Parth and his now regular hosts. "Coffees" proved to be excellent opportunities for sharing.

As the relationship continued to thrive, Parth related much about his family, his concerns, and his hopes for the future. Soon the Krumroys shared their own. It was clear that for Parth and the Krumroys the idea of a one-time get-together was a distant memory.

When it came time for Parth to move on from Purdue to his new job in Texas, he had a request. He wished to donate what he could not take with him to local charities. Included were useful items such as non-perishable foods, appliances, and assorted housewares. At this point, the Krumroys' knowledge of where they could be taken was a most valuable asset.

As IFP hosts, we all experience that touch of sadness when it comes time for students to move on. Along with many hosts, the Krumroys experienced such, but could also feel the inspiration and treasure the memories that are common to us all.

As hosts we sometimes go to graduations that are not our own or not those of our children. Families of international students cannot always come to graduation. With that in mind, Parth had one final request. So the Krumroys had the honor of attending his graduation. We call ourselves host families, and we become family in many ways for our international students. The Krumroys thrilled with their experience, now ask others to open their hearts and homes to students and to share the inspiration and the special delight that comes along with it.

Note from Joy Krumroy: This year we were able to meet and have over for Thanksgiving dinner five other incredible men all from India but diverse backgrounds and from different parts of the sub-continent. They were excited to talk about common things and differences they had with one another. We have extended an open door over the winter break and have let them know about community activities through the first of the new year. Three of them know I am working on learning new vegetarian dishes.



"Why Not Add A Few More?"

That was the Thanksgiving motto of Host-A-Boiler hosts, Heather and Tom St. Myer. Ten international students joined Heather, Tom, and their seven children for that delightful day.

Lots of good food, both traditional and vegetarian, was followed by personal stories, conversation and happy laughter. Potential barriers quickly came down, as students from diverse countries bonded with the St. Myer family and one another in a memorable holiday celebration.

President Mitch Daniels initiated Host-A-Boiler in his first year at Purdue to help international students far from home avoid holiday loneliness and isolation. Each year, scores of host families

both within and without IFP participate enthusiastically in this most successful program. The St. Myer family embraced it in their own special style.

It all began during freshman year at Harrison Hall. Heather and Tom came to Purdue to pursue their studies in engineering. They met, married, and began their own Boilermaker Family. They earned the first St. Myer Purdue degrees. There would be more.

Oldest son Xavier has already obtained his degree in chemistry. Oldest daughter Samantha is working toward hers in actuarial sciences. Twin sons Montgomery and Jackson are establishing their majors in Purdue programs that match their interests. The three youngest are likely to come aboard to continue the family tradition.

It was no surprise that Heather and Tom became hosts in Host-A-Boiler. Tom has traveled extensively during his professional career, meeting people from different places. International guests often graced the St. Myer dinner table. Host-A-Boiler was a perfect way for Heather and Tom to continue their enjoyment of international friendship.

Future plans include continuing as holiday hosts and welcoming more Purdue international students. One suggestion they offer is for students to bring a specialty dish from their home country. They find that such sharing is a great conversation starter that leads to much bonding. Of course they make it clear that there is never an obligation.

Most of all the St. Myers offer the very cordial welcome that has become typical of Host-A-Boiler, IFP and Purdue University. This unique Boilermaker family is a perfect example of that goal and accomplishment.



Welcoming the World

For IFP Coordinator, Beth Tucker, it began in a Sunday school classroom made to look like an Indian home that touched her eight-year-old imagination. Then came the book report assignments with special book covers Beth designed about the countries she loved learning about. A university interdisciplinary studies major at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, morphed into an ESL teaching assignment in Taipei, Taiwan. Along the way, she had her first host family experience at Grace Fellowship of Mansfield, Ohio. Beth had found her calling.

She was advising international students at the University of Houston when Purdue's magic moment arrived in November 2003. Dean Brzezinski of International Programs, then Director of the International Students and Scholars Office, had an opening. Through the grapevine of NAFSA, the professional organization for those in international higher education, Dean Brzezinski had become acquainted with Beth, and asked her to apply. Beth's long tenure of serving Purdue's community of international students had begun.

Over the last nine years, her leadership in IFP has resulted in the plethora of creative programs and host family matchups with students that we have come to admire.

As Beth approaches the culmination of her long tenure, Bridging Borders asked her about the highlights of her time at Purdue. There were many, but the one that stands out as most rewarding was the relationships with international students and their hosts.

As Beth looks toward a well-earned retirement from Purdue, she will not completely leave her service to the world. She has joined an organization called International Friendships, Inc., as a campus ministry leader. She will continue her liaison with Purdue, assisting IFI in developing the next generation of staff for its on-campus programs.

Off campus, Beth will have time to enjoy reading, journaling and other writing projects, international travel, and continuing her long-term friendships.

Her advice to those beginning careers in international education is to be curious about other cultures, keep open to new experiences, and most importantly listen to each person's story. Her message to international students at Purdue is to not be afraid to explore and experience new possibilities, and to develop relationships with those people who offer positive pathways to help them reach their life goals.

