



Community Friend Orientation Manual



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www.MIFP.org

Dear Community Friend,

Thank you for your participation as a *Community Friend* with the Missoula International Friendship Program (MIFP) for international students and at The University of Montana.

The MIFP Board members hope your experiences are rewarding for both you and the students.

To help you benefit the most from your experiences, we have compiled this manual. It is designed to help you bridge the cultural differences and offer helpful suggestions of things to do with your new friend.

We have included MIFP's expectations of our Community Friends, contact numbers for the Board and the office of International Students and Scholars Program, ways to be more involved with the MIFP organization, and the Statement of Ethics created by the Association of International Educators.

Our communication with you is very important. Please contact us if you have questions, concerns or suggestions for our program. Thank you and have a wonderful year with your student.

Sincerely,

MIFP Executive Board

MIFP EXPECTATIONS of COMMUNITY FRIENDS

MIFP expects Community Friends:

1. to have fun with their students, enjoy the relationships, and participate when possible in the scheduled functions offered by MIFP. The calendar of events lists our annual event. In addition, the Office of International Student & Scholar Services & MIFP sponsored several field trips for the international students. Occasionally these events are open to Community Friends for your participation. We will keep you informed about these opportunities via emails.
2. to follow the Code of Ethics of NAFSA: Association of International Educators. (See page 15)
3. to respect the student's cultural and religious backgrounds.
4. to meet with their student at least once a month and to continue with the program and their student for the assigned academic year.
5. to contact Board members, if a problem with the student should arise.
6. to refer students with their "student- problems" to the Office of International Student & Scholar Services at the University of Montana. Medical, financial, visa, and housing problems should definitely be referred.
7. not to use this program for contacting international students for any purposes other than those offered through the Missoula International Friendship Program.

Community friends are not expected to extend beyond casual socialization, though deep personal friendships may develop. MIFP does not expect you to offer activities that are beyond your financial ability. Activities such as dinner out, overnight stays out of town, ski trips, etc. should be discussed ahead with your student. Student may not be able to afford the extra costs and you are not expected to pay for this. MIFP cannot reimburse you for any expenses that you incur while entertaining your student.

CONVERSATION STARTERS

Here are some questions you can ask to learn more about your student's customs, culture, and family. It is important that you don't pry or force a conversation. Be a good listener and offer insights into your own family and culture when appropriate.

An easy question is: "What would you like to tell me about yourself?"
Or, ask what they do in their country regarding any of the following.

FOOD

1. How many meals per day do people usually eat?
2. What would you eat and drink at each of these meals?
3. What is the most popular: vegetable, meat, fish, dessert?
4. Are meats, Fruits, vegetables preserved? How?
5. Does the family eat together most of the time?
6. Is your country famous for a special crop?
7. Please explain how to make one of your favorite meals. Would you prepare it for us sometime?

CLOTHING

1. What kinds of clothing do men and women wear to work?
2. What do children wear to school?
3. Do fashions change quickly or frequently?

SHELTER

1. Please describe the appearance of a typical home.
2. How many rooms in an average room or apartment?
3. Which is usually the largest room in the residence?
4. What furniture is found in a typical residence?

TRANSPORTATION

1. What forms of transportation are available in urban areas?
2. How do you get to school or work?
3. Do people travel much from town to town?
4. Is it customary for a family to go somewhere for a vacation? Where do they go?
5. How much does it cost to use a taxi?

PETS

1. What is the most common kind of pet?
2. Where do people keep their pets?

3. What animals are useful, and how are they used?
4. Is there a zoo? Have you been there?

CHILDREN

1. How do parents select a name for their baby?
2. At what age do children start school. How many hours a day are they in school?
3. Are children punished for bad behavior? Who does it? What kind of punishment?
4. What song or story do you remember as a child?

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

1. What is the average family size? How many members of your family? Do you have any pictures?
2. Do grandparents live in the same house with the family?
3. What are the typical responsibilities of each family member?
4. Do married women work outside the home?
5. What are some special holidays, and how does your family celebrate?
6. What is an acceptable way to meet someone to marry?
7. At what age do children leave home to live?

LEISURE ACTIVITIES

1. What are the most popular sports & what are your favorite sports?
2. Are films from North America popular? Which ones?
3. What kind of music do you listen to?
4. Do most cities have libraries? Are they free or do they charge a fee?
5. How do most university students spend leisure time?
6. What activities do most families enjoy after work or school?

SOCIAL GROUPS

1. What different languages do people speak in your country?
2. How strong are class distinctions?
3. What types of organizations are most popular with adults?
4. What is the most common religion in your country?
5. What would we do after the greeting?
6. What is the polite way to leave after a social evening together?
7. What is the most common greeting and farewell in your language?

EDUCATION

1. What are some of the differences between schools in your country and those here in the United States?
2. How will you use at home what you are learning here?

3. What are the procedures for a student desiring to enter university in your country?

SPIRITUAL

1. What are your worship centers like?
2. What do you learn about Christian faith?
3. What is your own concept or belief about God?
4. What is your own perception of religion in this country?
5. Would you tell me something about your religion that is important to you?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR YOU AND YOUR STUDENT

Bake Cookies - Watch TV - **Hike to the “M”** - Go cross- country skiing - **Watch a Video depicting American Culture or Countryside** - Go for a Bike Ride - **Fly a Kite** - Bake a Cake - **Make a food dish from another country** - Go to the Fort Missoula Museum - **Attend a play** - Visit Missoula Art Museum - **Go Roller blading** - Go to the Pet Store - **Attend an Art Show** - Go to Lolo Hot Springs - **Pick out & carve a Pumpkin** - Go horseback riding - **Go to Farmer’s Market** -Visit a retirement community - **Do charity work together** - Attend a movie - **Go Bird Watching** - Visit the Jeannette Rankin Peace Center - **Make a photo album of your together times** - Celebrate a birthday - Have coffee or ice cream on campus - **Bat balls at a batting cage** - Visit the Theme Park in Victor - **Go bowling** - Visit the Bison Range – **Take in an educational event at the public library** - Go Hiking - **Do crafts together** - Spend an afternoon visiting the art galleries - **Go to a music concert** - Decorate a Christmas Tree - **Browse through a bookstore** - Have lunch at the Mall - **Wash a Car** - Go camping - **Build a snowman** - Go Bowling – **Shop downtown** - **Play tennis** - Take a Sunday drive - **Take pictures of Missoula Valley** - Attend a local high school play or concert - **Help decorate the student’s room or apartment** - Shovel snow - **Attend a church or synagogue** - Visit Grant Kohrs ranch - **Attend a football game** - Go grocery shopping - **Celebrate a special holiday from another country** - Shop for winter hats - **Go snow shoeing** - Play table tennis, Pictionary, card games, or scrabble - **Plan a dinner with your student and friends** - Gather pinecones and construct a decoration- **Go Christmas caroling** - Have a picnic in Greenough Park - **Go to a garage sale** - Ride the free green trolley - **Take a walking tour** - Go to Out-to-Lunch - **Go trick-or-treating** - Take an evening class together - **Visit Pattee Canyon** - Go Folfing - **Cut a Christmas tree** - Swim at Missoula Splash - **Hike to the “M”** - Go stargazing at Blue Mountain - **Go fishing** - Go rafting - **Make a video and post it on YouTube** - **Just Go.**

Do's & Don'ts of Cross-Cultural Communication

Do suspend judgment. Cultures aren't right or wrong - they're different. Ranking one's culture as superior to another's culture does little to increase understanding. It merely traps us in our own separate worlds. Practically speaking, suspending judgment is an effective way to put emotions on "hold" in a tense situation. It offers a chance to pull back and assess what's going on and gather more information before taking action or reaching a final decision.

Do keep your sense of humor! This can be a real help. When talking with international visitors, however, keep in mind that sarcasm, exaggeration and puns may not always be understood - no matter how good his or her English may be. In some cultures people take others very much at their word, in which case our brand of humor may fall flat.

Do stay flexible. Dealing with situations as they are rather than as you think they "ought" to be enables the communications process to be more beneficial for all concerned. The visitor who arrives with an unexpected friend or two may be totally unaware that this is not an accepted practice here. In many countries, because a pot of stew can be stretched to feed many mouths, last minute guests are welcomed into the home.

Do cultivate patience. Beware of impatience - most of the time it's due to frustration with the situation or your-self, but sometimes it comes from a sense of superiority. ("How can this person not understand this--any four-year old could grasp it!") What you're saying may be so off base from his/her cultural background that understanding what you mean may take time.

Do use "plain" English, not slang. International visitors familiar with America often know and use our expressions, however, in a cross-cultural communication situation, it is best to assume they don't know until you are certain. This means it's better to offer to "meet" a visitor at 4:00, rather than "drop by to pick him/her up" at 4:00. Important, too, is the fact that stress tends to dramatically reduce one's ability to converse in a foreign language because concentration is more difficult. Slang simply adds to stress. Do not invite a student to "drop in" without a specific invitation.

Do maintain a normal voice level. Speaking louder does not improve the students understanding of the English language. Speaking slowly and clearly will help, especially during the student's first few months at the University. Try to determine her/his language fluency level, then speed up or slow down accordingly. **NOTE:** When entertaining an international visitor who isn't completely fluent in English, remind your American guests to slow down when talking. Otherwise the international guest may miss most of the conversation!

Do convey an attitude of respect. Healthy, friendly debate can make a good conversation, but do not try to convert the student to your beliefs. Respect the student's point of view and be gracious when you disagree, especially regarding politics and religion.

Do keep in mind the importance of acting naturally with the student. Just be yourself.

Do initiate rather than waiting for the student to call you. Often students are hesitant about initiating calls.

Do accept it when the student declines an invitation. They are busy with their academic activities. A student may have to decline several consecutive invitations. Do not assume that this is a lack of interest. School is their first priority.

Do keep in contact with the student to show your interest even if the student has declined several invitations. If you have concerns, contact an MIFP Board member or the International Student & Scholar Services Office at 243-2288.

Do urge the student to take part in other activities, even if it means he can't meet with you at that particular time.

Do let the student know you are available, if she wants to call. If you want your student to call before stopping by your home or work place, make sure he/she understands that. Families differ and the student needs to know your specific patterns.

Do ask the student about dietary, religious and cultural restrictions. Don't avoid discussion of these "differences."

Do involve student in family activities. Share your life; have them participate in community events. Don't limit your contact to just meals.

Don't think it is necessary to always take the student someplace - evenings at home are fine.

Don't put the student "on exhibit" by having large numbers of people over to meet him. Keep your first few meetings for your immediate family. Later add friends.

Do remember that even the most fluent English speaker may misunderstand you at times. Urge her to ask you for clarification, if she doesn't understand what was said.

Do be alert of possible misunderstanding about:

- Use of your phone for long distance calls
- Times of arrival
- Permissible topics of conversation
- Helping in Kitchen
- Language and gestures
- Wearing shoes into the house

Do feel free to contact the International Student & Scholar Services Office at 243-2288 for any reason.

Do ask for a change, if the student and your family are not compatible. This sometimes happens, and a change can be made. Call any MIFP Board member or contact the International Student & Scholar Services Office at 243-2288.

Don't get involved in financial situations with your student. You could jeopardize the student's visa status. If there is a problem, refer them to the International Student & Scholar Services Office at 243-2288.

Don't get involved in immigration work permit questions. Refer the student to the International Student & Scholar Services Office at 243-2288.

Don't get involved in medical problems. Refer the student to the University of Montana Curry Health Center.

Don't get involved in student's academic problems. Refer the student to the International Student & Scholar Services Office at 243-2288.

QUESTIONS? WHERE TO GO FOR ANSWERS

- Q.** If the student is sick, to where do I refer him?
- A.** UM Curry Health Center at 243-2122
- Q.** If the student needs money, where do I suggest she go?
- A.** The Office of International Student & Scholar Services, 243-2288. It is very important that the students who might need extra money be referred to this office. Their visa depends on their income statement. Don't jeopardize the student's visa status by overstepping these bounds. Please contact the campus office.
- Q.** If a student has family or personal problems, where can I refer him to go?
- A.** UM Curry Health Center where there are medical and counseling services for University students. 243-2122

If you have any questions, please call the Office of International Student and Scholar Services, 243-2288 or a Board member.

RESOURCES

Website: MIFP.org

The Office of International Student & Scholar Services at the University of Montana have resources for you to borrow that might be of help for your involvement in the international friendship program. Videos, culture-grams, books, and general information are available. Phone 243-2288.

If you are unable to find what you are looking for, contact a MIFP Board member and make your request.

WAYS TO BE MORE INVOLVED WITH MIFP

Contact any MIFP Board Member or The Office of International Student & Scholar Services at 243-2288 to do any of the following:

- Help with an MIFP activity, such as planning social events, matching new students with their community friends, or communicating with current students.
- Host a special event, such as pumpkin carving, cooking, horseback riding, hiking, skiing, swimming, etc.
- Donate your time or talent for MIFP functions, for example music or dancing at the Holiday Party or Spring Potluck.
- Host a potluck or gathering (in your home or the community) for a small group of students and their Community Friends, especially during semester breaks and summer sessions.
- Lead or join a field trip for international students during the semester break or during the summer time.
- Become an MIFP Board member.
- Contribute money for a special function, field trip, or activity.
- Create your own activity to do with international students.

MIFP Mission Statement

Our mission is to promote global awareness, understanding, friendship, and intercultural learning between international students and scholars at the University of Montana and the greater Missoula community.

MIFP Goals

1. Provide cultural orientation, professional training and reflection as part of the community experience for international individuals.
2. Assist students in understanding American culture
3. Increase curiosity and awareness of, and encourage participation in, diverse academic and non-academic programs offered throughout the year.
4. Create an atmosphere stimulating formal and informal learning.
5. Facilitate communication and interaction to share resources and to develop a sense of a 'world community'.

NAFSA: ASSOCIATION OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATORS

Statement of Ethics, part 3 (Taken from: NAFSA.org)

In relationships with international students & scholars, members shall:

1. Understand and protect the civil and human rights of all individuals.
2. Not discriminate with regard to race, color, national origin, ethnicity, sex, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, age, political opinion, immigration status, or disability.
3. Recognize their own cultural and value orientations and be aware of how those orientations affect their interactions with people from other cultures.
4. Demonstrate awareness of, sensitivity to, and respect for other educational systems, values, beliefs, and cultures.
5. Not exploit, threaten, coerce, or sexually harass others.
6. Not use one's position to proselytize.
7. Refrain from invoking governmental or institutional regulations in order to intimidate participants in matters not related to their status.
8. Maintain the confidentiality, integrity, and security of participants' records and of all communications with program participants. Members shall secure permission of the individuals before sharing information with others inside or outside the organization, unless disclosure is authorized by law or institutional policy or is mandated by previous arrangement.
9. Inform participants of their rights and responsibilities in the context of the institution and the community.
10. Respond to inquiries fairly, equitably, and professionally.
11. Provide accurate, complete, current, and unbiased information.
12. Refrain from becoming involved in personal relationships with students and scholars when such relationships might result in either the appearance or the fact of undue influence being exercised on the making of professional judgments.
13. Accept only gifts that are of nominal value and that do not seem intended to influence professional decisions, while remaining sensitive to the varying significance and implications of gifts in different cultures.
14. Identify and provide appropriate referrals for students or scholars who experience unusual levels of emotional difficulty.
15. Provide information, orientation, and support services needed to facilitate participants' adaptation to a new educational and cultural environment.