



Getting Connected 2015!

Leviticus 19:34

“You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.”

Not only has God called us to go into the world and make disciples of all nations, but He also is bringing these people to our own backyards and neighborhoods. IFC is a great way to reach into the lives of an international student with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

About International Friendship Connection (IFC): IFC is not an incorporated or nationwide organization—it is simply a group of local, evangelical churches, including Stow Alliance Fellowship, who have covenanted to work together to serve international students at KSU. Our shared vision is to make Christ known among the nations by befriending international students at KSU.

Opportunity:

- There are over 2500 International Students at Kent State University.
- Over 1000 Chinese students and more than 600 students from Saudi Arabia as well as from many other countries around the world.
- 80% of them will *never* be invited into an American home.
- Most of them will *never* have someone tell them about Jesus.
- Most of them will go back to their home country. . . wouldn't it be wonderful if they returned knowing Jesus and ready to tell others about Him?
- We have a mission field at our back door!

Ministry: Our congregation supports IFC by providing leadership, volunteers, financial support, practical expertise and hosting events. Volunteers are asked to complete an IFC application and agree to the IFC Statement of Faith which has been approved by our congregation. To equip them for cross-cultural ministry, volunteers are asked to attend one of the 2-hour IFC Orientation and Trainings which are held over the summer months.

IFC Volunteers serve in three important ways:

Friendship Partners: IFC's greatest need is for Friendship Partners—individuals or families who love Jesus and want to befriend an international student. *Friendship Partners are NOT host families; the international students live at KSU. This is a friendship ministry.* If you volunteer as a Friendship Partner, you will be matched with an international student in September. Friendship Partners are encouraged to spend time together with their student on at least a monthly basis, especially during the holidays, and to keep in regular contact through e-mail, texting or Facebook. The heart of this ministry is lifestyle evangelism--offering comfort, hospitality and kindness to the "foreigner in the land". But, the great possibility is that as we spend time with students and share our lives with them, we are planting the seeds of the Gospel that will result in saved lives. The activities and conversations you share with your student can open doors to talk about Jesus and His love for them.

Conversation Partners: IFC works with the staff of China Outreach Ministries to provide weekly "Conversation Corners" throughout the year which are held on the KSU campus—meetings are one and a half hours long and are scheduled on weekdays, evenings and weekends. The exact days, times and locations are made available in September. IFC volunteers can sign up for the days and times they are available to come.

Conversation Partners help students improve their English and learn about American customs and cultural norms. Games and small group conversation starters are provided each week. IFC volunteers and students have a great time conversing in English and getting to know one another. Sometimes because of their positive experience in Conversation Corners, international students ask to have IFC find them a Friendship Partner, too!

Welcome Events: Most international students arrive two weeks before classes begin in the fall. During this time IFC volunteers meet and greet students at various "welcome" events on the KSU campus. This year the key week to welcome international students will be *Monday, August 17th through Friday, August 21th*. On each of these days, IFC volunteers will take students shopping at Walmart and provide small group conversations so that students can practice conversing in English. IFC volunteers also welcome students at a "Welcome Picnic" for international students which will be held on the KSU campus *Sunday afternoon, August 23th*. During all of these August activities, IFC volunteers have an opportunity to capture the names and contact information of the international students so that they can be matched with an IFC Friendship Partner or join a Conversation Corner during the school year. If you can help with any of these welcome activities, just let our IFC Representatives know and they will give you more details.

About IFC Volunteers

IFC is a volunteer driven organization. Each IFC congregation selects their own IFC Representative who serves on the IFC Ministry Team and generally coordinates the IFC ministry for their congregation. All IFC volunteers are welcome to attend Ministry Team meetings which are held four times per year. IFC volunteers may also be nominated to serve on the IFC Steering Committee. We covet the faithful prayers of all our volunteers for the IFC churches, volunteers and the international students whom we serve together in the name of Jesus.

How Can You Get Involved In IFC?: Have questions about where you could fit into IFC? Rob & Marlene Osborn are our IFC representatives. For further contact information, please call the church office at: 330-688-7433 or e-mail us at: office@stowalliance.org.

To become an IFC Volunteer, you'll need to do three things:

- 1) Complete a brief application so that we can stay in touch and make a good student match for you,
- 2) Agree to the IFC Statement of Faith, and
- 3) Attend an IFC Orientation and Training.

2015 IFC Orientation & Training sessions will be offered in the summer at either Christ Community Chapel in Hudson or Stow Alliance Fellowship in Stow. **IFC Orientation and Training is mandatory this year for IFC volunteers.** At the IFC Orientation and Training you will get to meet other IFC volunteers, learn about your role and responsibilities as an IFC volunteer, and be equipped to handle some of the challenges of cross-cultural communication.

The following dates are available:

- Thursday, June 25 at CCC Hudson, 7 - 9 p.m.
- Tuesday, July 14, at Stow Alliance Fellowship, 7 - 9 p.m.
- Thursday, July 30, at Stow Alliance Fellowship, 7 - 9 p.m.