

# University of Northern Iowa International Friendship Program (IFP)

The International Friendship Program provides an opportunity for local families to be matched with an international student enrolled at UNI. The goal of this program is to promote cultural exchange between international students and American host families so both parties learn and grow from the relationship. Participants are not asked to provide housing for students, only friendship, support and a “home away from home.” The program has been a highlight for many of UNI’s international students and rewarding for the families who have opened their lives to these students.

The Program was started in 1965 by the Cedar Falls Branch of the American Association of University Women in cooperation with the UNI International Services Office. The IFP Organizing Committee provides a variety of group activities that help bring families and students together to share in local traditions.

*Fall Orientation will help you meet your international host student and learn how to effectively build your relationship.*

*A Family Weekend Tailgate Party lets students know they have support even when they are far from home. Go Panthers!*

*A pre-Thanksgiving Dinner brings families together for a potluck dinner and traditional holiday fun.*

*Field trips organized by IFP to local sites such as farms and holiday displays provide memorable experiences for all participants.*

*An e-mail list-serve lets IFP families share ideas of successful activities and upcoming events.*

**Carol and John Reese—host family:** “We have been involved with the Program for the past 6 years. It has been like traveling around the world without leaving our living room. We have had students from many countries. The students have given us a broader view of the world on a personal level. We have learned our similarities far outnumber our differences and it is those differences that make us interesting people. It has become an integral part of our lives and we will continue to participate. If only we could learn all those languages!”



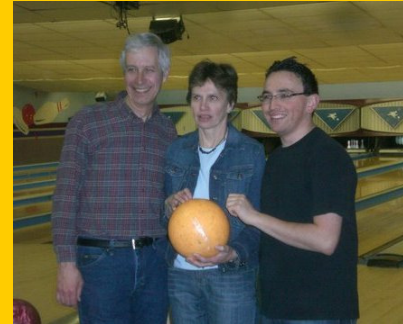
**Rakshith Varadaraju, India — a host student of the Reeses:** “I have been part of the host family program for about 2 years now, and in this time I have grown very close to my host parents. My host parents are the first source I go to when I need to know more about procedures such as getting a driving license, buying a car, or medicines to use when I am sick. They offer a comforting environment that I can go to during holidays and vacation. And most importantly they offer a place that I can call home.”

**For more information contact:**

**Ross Schupbach, International Services —ross.schupbach@uni.edu/ 273-6421**  
**Pramod Sarin, IFP Community Representative —sarinpramod@uni.edu/ 234-3304.**

# Ideas for Activities to do with Your International Student

- ◆ First of all, be a friend: help make a student feel at home in a strange country. Introduce them to American culture.
- ◆ Invite them to your home for some meals.
- ◆ Go on picnics.
- ◆ Take pictures of the student for him/her to send home.
- ◆ Have the student invite a friend to come along to your home.
- ◆ Call a student once in awhile to inquire how the student is doing. Send them a care package for finals.
- ◆ Invite a student to your home for a holiday dinner—Thanksgiving, Christmas, etc. Carve pumpkins, decorate the Christmas tree together, rake leaves, plant a garden.
- ◆ Include a student, when possible, in your normal



family activities—sports events, concerts, family birthday parties, etc.

- ◆ Tour historical or recreational places in the area.
- ◆ Invite a student and his/her friends to cook their native food for your family.
- ◆ Be creative! Do what is enjoyable for your student and you.

## Interesting UNI International Facts:

*There are almost 500 international students enrolled at the University of Northern Iowa representing 77 countries around the world.*

*UNI's largest student groups hail from Saudi Arabia, Russia, China, India and Japan.*

*The International Services Office provides orientation, advising, support, and social and educational activities for students.*  
[www.uni.edu/intladm/iso](http://www.uni.edu/intladm/iso)

*UNI's international students are involved in every part of campus including student government, honor societies, athletics, clubs and so much more.*