

Discover Amazing Opportunities To Help

Volunteer

Contact your local college or university and ask if they have an international student advisor. Tell the advisor that you understand it is often challenging for an international student who has just arrived and that you are willing to volunteer to help. Ask if they have a specific volunteer program already. Find out what special needs international students have. Find out if there is an international student orientation day at the beginning of the school year.

Join a club

Find out if there are any specific ethnic clubs on campus. They may be happy to have foreigners join if you let them know you have a special interest in their country and culture.

Help with English

One of the best things you can do for an international student is to help him or her speak English well. Think how difficult it would be to study at the college level in a second language.

1. A) You can join existing tutoring programs.
2. B) You can offer to speak English with them once a week.
3. C) You could advertise a typing and editing service for their class papers. You wouldn't need to do it for free, but could charge an economical price. Then take time together talking over the paper to help them

learn. You may be able to help them also as issues come up relating to values, morals, and spiritual matters.

Provide Initial Needs

Partner with others to hold a “Garage Giveaway” like the Christian churches of Greater Portland do with International Students, Incorporated. Think of things a student might especially need if they’ve just arrived with only a suitcase of clothes.

This creates relationships and meets a real need for supplies that international students have when just arriving.

Invite them home for the holidays

Invite some international students to stay in your home for Christmas. As most of the students vacate the campus for the holidays, many lonely international students stay behind. You can bring some real cheer by bringing them into your home. If you are not comfortable having them stay with you, you can at least invite them for Christmas day.

Thanksgiving and spring break are also good times for interaction. At the beginning of the school year, many students arrive early and often need a place to stay. Your friendship can really help them get started in their new environment. When they first come is definitely the most important time to connect with them.

Cook Together

Research local grocery stores to see who sells food that comes from the nations of these students. Help make these connections for them. Invite them to your home and turn over your kitchen for them to cook up a feast that will taste so familiar and good to them and strange and probably good to you too.

Teach them about American culture

You can help them know how to acceptably talk with their professors and how to ask questions and get help. One of the areas about culture that is especially challenging for international students is the issue of respect and informality in the classroom. In many cultures it is truly impolite to ask your professor questions. A student should not speak up in class. You can help them think this through for their new environment.

Some Americans have established a lunch---time book club where they invite international students to come together to read American books together and discuss the cultural elements and the values.

Involve them in helping others

Let them share what they enjoyed doing back at home. They are likely to have a talented and successful background, with much to offer now. Help them find ways to use their skills to serve others, alongside you!

Make friends with their family

Ask if you could write or contact their family members back in their home country. Send pictures of your family doing activities with their son or daughter. Have the international student write a note for you in his or her own language that can be sent to the family.

Don't forget international students from Christian schools

Check with your church's academies, colleges, and universities to find out about international students there. Do some of the same activities for them, especially inviting them to come and spend the holidays with you.