



Madison Friends of International Students continues to touch lives around the world by connecting UW-Madison and Madison College international students, scholars and family members with local volunteers for conversation, fun, service, and learning. We do this because we care, and because we want to foster positive cultural exchange, friendships and global goodwill. We have the world at our doorstep – look what is happening right here in our own community:



Temporary Home Stays: Want to make an immediate impact in the life of a visiting student or scholar? MFIS volunteers provide short-term housing for arriving students and families, providing friendship, rest and comfort in a period of great transition. Participating students have found this to be most helpful as they adjust to their new surroundings and settle into permanent housing.

"Thanks for this opportunity. We hosted Fabio from Chile. This has been one of the single most positive experiences of our lives. Seriously. We are looking forward to visiting Fabio in Costa Rica sometime in the near future... We had no idea when we got this email from you in August how much fun we had ahead of us. Definitely keep us high on your list for future opportunities!!!"

Temporary Home Stay hosts have welcomed more than 50 students to Madison since July, and more are expected in the next few weeks. New hosts are always needed, even in January!



UW and Madison College New Student Receptions: MFIS welcomes new international students to the Madison area by participating in new student receptions at both UW-Madison and Madison College. This is a great opportunity to introduce students to the wide variety of programs with our organization, plus show support for the international student services offices with whom we work closely throughout the year. Thank you Kathryn Lederhause for skillfully coordinating coverage for a wide variety of 2013 reception events.



Fall Welcome Picnic: Over 230 students and 80 volunteers joined forces Saturday, August 24th, for a spirited Welcome to Wisconsin picnic. Who knew how popular the Wisconsin fight song would be – one song sheet per table was definitely not enough! Culvers on the Beltline provided an amazing dinner and outstanding service, and the weather could not have been better. The picnic remains an amazing kick-off event and introduction to Wisconsin fun for newly-arrived students.

I loved it! I learn that the community is really nice and welcoming! It makes me feel really comfortable and makes me happy that I choose to come here! (student comment from online picnic follow-up survey)

Special thanks to Anisha Akula, Sujatha Gunaseka and Sherry Caves for their many hours of planning and coordination, and Susan Bulgrin, owner of Culvers on the Beltline, for our delicious food, superb customer service and willingness to address a wide variety of dietary preferences. You rock!



Furniture Program: On November 27th, long-time Furniture Program coordinator Mike von Schneidmesser was honored as 2013 Senior Service Award recipient by the Madison Downtown Rotary for his work with MFIS and the Madison – Freiburg, Germany sister city program. Kudos to Mike and his team of dedicated volunteers, Giovanna Miceli-Jeffries, and Abbas Idris who provide a warm welcome to newly-arrived Internationals through much needed furniture and household items.

*Dear. Mrs. Jaffries,
Writing to express my deep great thanks to your help on getting my little house furnished by your support and the great team at MFIS. Special thanks go to your husband Johns for his deriving the furniture to our house.*

Rasha, Nael, and the triplet

Also we are looking for a Donated VAN!

Last year, funds raised through the furniture program comprised 35% of total annual donations. Maybe the next time you see your neighbor placing gently used furniture on the curb you might suggest they call Mike instead. No city tags. No pick up fees. Just really grateful MFIS volunteers and student recipients! Of course, that will probably mean we'll need a few more volunteers... ☺



English Program: MFIS provides numerous classroom opportunities for students and family members to improve their conversational English throughout the academic year. But did you know that our volunteers continue the fun with casual Summer conversation groups and walking tours? In addition to conversation and writing classes, this year's MFIS English Program provides a Parent & Child class for parents with children under two years of age. Living abroad with a small child can be a very isolating experience – what a special gift to connect our visiting parents with others for fun and conversation.



Global Friends: Through the Global Friends program, students are paired with a member of the MFIS volunteer community for casual conversation and/or social gatherings. This Fall, 33 students have been matched with volunteers. We're not sure who has more fun, students or volunteers. Our Global Friends volunteers rave about their experiences!



Special Events: Students have expressed a particular interest in small group activities with significant interaction with volunteers. To date, MFIS has responded with the development of two smaller scale activities – a prairie seed collecting day with DNR staff and volunteers, and an American Football party where the rules of this very strange game are explained in a fun and festive atmosphere. You'd be surprised who we'd crown as the newest and biggest Packer fan! *Special thanks to Jared Urban, Conservation Biologist with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and Ellen Burleigh, mega football fan and party planner extraordinaire, for their enthusiasm in planning these well-received events.*



Thanksgiving Hospitality: This past week, 82 international students and 9 family members from around the world were welcomed by 38 Madison-area host families to share in a traditional American Thanksgiving dinner. Visiting students THRIVE on this type of personal interaction with American families. Thank you for opening your homes to our very special guests! And thank you to Sue Copey for her expert coordination of the all participants! We are so grateful.



MFIS Office Volunteers: A team of very committed volunteers – Joan Maynard, Nancy Kelly, Sue Thieben, Kathy Johnson and Joanne Lenburg – provide operational coordination and communications support for our MFIS programs by staffing the MFIS 'office' every weekday morning. A special thank you to Kathy Johnson for bringing much needed technical expertise and support to our online registration processes this year!



Capital Reception: What's a good activity for a cold Sunday afternoon in January? How about a tour of our beautiful State Capital building! There will always be political differences, however, the Capital Reception allows visitors to experience the place where democracy happens. A Wisconsin legislator will introduce visitors to the Wisconsin political process followed by a brief introduction to the state's history and an opportunity to see the legislative rooms, murals and outstanding architecture of this landmark building.



Annual Dinner: Plans are just getting underway for our Spring 2014 Annual Dinner. New last year was our silent auction which raised about \$700 for MFIS programs. If you have an item or service you would like to contribute to this year's auction, please drop us a line.

Upcoming Events:

Capitol Reception – Sunday, January 26th at the Capital, of course!
 MFIS Board Meeting – Thursday, January 16th at First Baptist Church (518 N Franklin Ave)
 Annual Dinner Meeting for MFIS Volunteers – Spring 2014 (date and location to be determined)

Opportunities to get involved:

Volunteer: We can always use more! Please indicate your preferences on the sheet included
Give: MFIS is still thousands of dollars short our 2014 budgetary needs. Please consider a gift to support our programs.
Share: the MFIS story with your friends and co-workers.



Come see what we're all about. Volunteer for an event. Check out one of our programs. Visit an upcoming Board meeting. We'd love to introduce you to the wide wonderful world right here at your doorstep!

Checks to: **MFIS • 716 Langdon St. • Room 223 • Madison • WI • 53706**

Our secure website: www.iss.wisc.edu/mfis Click the "Donate" button

All donations are tax deductible as MFIS is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization.

Your contact information is not shared