Global Friends Program

The Global Friends Program originated as Friendship International, a community based organization that was established in 1991. In 2002, oversight for the program was transferred to the College of William & Mary and the name was changed to the Global Friends Program.

The purpose of the program is two-fold: 1) to provide international students an opportunity to experience American life outside the campus, and 2) to provide community members the opportunity to become acquainted with a student from a different culture. One of the missions of the Reves Center is to foster cross-cultural exchanges in the local community. Global Friends is one program that serves this mission.

The Global Friends Program is not a home-stay program but rather one that encourages participants to keep in contact throughout the academic year via visits, e-mail, or phone (or a combination of them!). Additionally, we ask that participants invite their Global Friend to at least one activity or event each semester. For example, a W&M sports event, a cultural activity, an outing to a local park—in short, events that would enhance cross-cultural exchange and friendship.

In coordinating this program, the Reves Center matches international students with community members in the Williamsburg area. Additionally, we host an event each semester to bring the students and their hosts together. In the past, we have hosted a day out at Jamestown Settlement, a Ghost Tour of Colonial Williamsburg and a potluck picnic. Participants are also invited to other events organized by our office such as the annual Reves Pumpkin Carve.

More information on the Global Friends Program is available at tinyurl.com/globalfriendsW-M
## Purpose of Program
To promote and facilitate cross-cultural exchange and friendship

| **Job Responsibilities / Expectations** | 1. Contact your friend within the first week of receiving your partner’s name.  
2. Maintain regular contact with your friend via phone and email.  
3. Plan to include your friend in at least one activity per month during the school year (you do not have to pay for your friend’s expenses – the expectation is “dutch treat”).  
4. Attend one or more social events planned by the Reves Center for its participants.  
5. Contact the Reves Center when you have questions, or if you don’t feel comfortable in your friendship.  
6. Notify the Reves Center at the end of the year as to whether you want to keep the same friend, be matched with a new friend or no longer wish to participate in the program.  
7. Contact the Reves Center if you lose touch with your friend (regardless of the reason) or are no longer able to fulfill your responsibilities (meet once a month or maintain regular contact). |

| **Job Skills and Qualifications** | 1. Must respect friend’s religion, beliefs, values, and customs.  
2. Interest in other people.  
3. Interest in other cultures.  
4. Friendliness.  
5. Openness to cultural differences and appreciation of cultural diversity.  
6. Committed to developing cross-cultural friendship. |

| **Time Commitment** | One academic year (2 semesters) or for the duration of your stay in the US (from 4 to 9 months). |

| **Contact Person** | Community Programs Assistant  
Mona Starman  
E-mail: mstarman@wm.edu |

| **Limits of the Program** | You are not expected to ask your friend about ANY of the following:  
1. Housing  
2. Immigration Information  
3. Financial Resources  
4. Job Information  
5. Academic Advising  
6. Medical or insurance advice |
Suggestions for Developing a Great, Long-lasting Friendship

1. Be sure your friend knows your full name, address, and telephone number. Your friend will receive the information from our office, but you may want to confirm that information with him/her at the first meeting.

2. Be sure to contact your friend if you will be late for a planned meeting.

3. Do not cancel a meeting unless it is an emergency (e.g., sickness). Your friend has made the time to meet with you and you should respect your friend’s time and commitment to the relationship.

4. Ask your friend about dietary restrictions based on religious, cultural or personal preferences. Likewise, inform your friend of your dietary restrictions if you have been invited for a meal.

5. If you have been invited to a meal at your friend’s house, it is customary and polite to bring a small gift. You can ask your friend if you can contribute something to the meal (e.g., dessert, etc.). An item from your home country is generally a good gift idea.

6. Let your friend know if you will be away for long periods or unusually busy periods of time; a lapse of contact can cause misunderstandings.

7. Make sure to be specific about the time, place, and length of stay when you invite your friend to your home.

8. Include your friend in whatever you are doing: festivals, fairs, campus events, sport games, etc.

9. Be careful about jokes! What you find humorous may be offensive to someone from another culture.

10. Remember that the purpose of this program is for cross-cultural friendship and exchange. Take time to ask about your friend’s culture and country. Your friendship should be a two-way-street.

11. Be open; be yourself, feel free to ask questions, and, most of all, enjoy the experience of getting to know someone from another culture.

* Adapted from NC State Friendship handbook.
Suggested things to do with your friend in and around Williamsburg

- Picnics
- Farm/Plantation visits
- Walking and or hiking
- Sailing
- Canoeing
- Flea Market
- Farmer’s Market
- Garage/Yard/Rummage sales
- Backyard BBQ
- Malls and Shopping Centers
- Outlets
- Local and State Parks
- Potlucks
- Small towns (e.g., Surry)
- Bookstores
- Miniature golf
- Tennis
- Mountains
- Beach trips
- Ice cream or frozen yogurt store
- Ethnic food stores
- Movies
- Museums
- Ice-skating
- Historic Williamsburg
- Yorktown and Jamestown
- Sports events (e.g., W&M football games)
- Concerts