The Global Friends Program
“I really like being part of the Global Friends Programme because it gives me the chance to get off campus and see a bit more of American family life. My American mum has been great, although we have only met up a handful of times… I enjoy getting out and about into the local area and my host parents have offered to show me more of the historical things around here which I would like to see. A friend of mine and I went to the mall in Newport News last Saturday and then went back to my host parents for dinner which was great! We had apple meatloaf (which I have never heard of) and chatted about international things like the differences between the universities and drinking ages. Hanging out with my host parents has shown me more of American family life and given me someone outside of the college to go to if I ever need any advice or help.” ~ Ruth Messenger

“I’m glad to have participated in the Global Friends program, through which I not only learned a lot about US culture and tradition, but also developed close relationship with the family… We’ve been to the Thanksgiving dinner at their house, Colonial Williamsburg tour, Rotary club visit, basketball games, and drama plays, etc… I’m still keeping contact with them now and certainly wish to stay connected with them in the future.” ~ Henry Xu

Global Friends is such a wonderful program!! Now I have my family in America!! My global friends, and I share great time. I learned about American culture and tradition from them. I celebrate Thanksgiving with them. We grilled turkey together, and I cooked cranberry sauce. It was yummy!! ;) They also have interest in Japan. They came to join our Japanese Tea Ceremony. We watched Japanese TV program and discussed it. It is a great opportunity for international exchange. I am so happy to have met such nice people through the Global Friends Program at the College of William and Mary!! ~ Reika Mizobuchi

Reika and Jerry (Xi Chu), our grad student from China both had Thanksgiving dinner with us and our family, ten in all… We all had a wonderful time. Three generations of our family were together including two teenagers.

I am amazed at how well these young students can adapt and am touched by their interest in our culture (They were fascinated by the turkey!!). However, it is very understandable to us having lived in both their countries. I know how interested we were in the customs and cultures of their countries and still continue to take great interest.

We enjoy their company and simply want to extend a welcome and friendship to these young students. We are rewarded by their enthusiasm and youthful sociability and responsiveness. We hope they are rewarded by getting to know an American family a little better than just what they see and hear in the media. All in all it is a friendship beneficial both ways as we get to know each other. ~ Eugenie Hamm (Host)
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 international student to at least one activity or event each semester. For example, a home cooked meal, a family outing to a local park, a local sports event, or a cultural activity—in short, events that would enhance the international student's experience in the U.S. and understanding of American culture.

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
**Global Friend “Job Description”**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Job Title</strong></th>
<th>Volunteer Friend to an international student attending the College of William &amp; Mary</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose of Program</strong></td>
<td>To promote and facilitate cross-cultural friendship</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| **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 the friend’s 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 provide ANY of the following to your international friend:  
   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. 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. Students are more likely to be available on weekends.
6. Make sure to be specific about the time, place, and length of stay when you invite your friend to your home.
7. Include your friend in whatever you are doing: cookouts, service clubs, community festivals, fairs, and holidays, etc. Please keep in mind our policy concerning religious and political meetings; refer to the page on Ethical Considerations. Your friend will probably be more comfortable with informal activities than with formal activities planned specifically for them.
8. Invite your friend to include an American or other international friend on occasion if s/he wishes to do so.
9. Remember that some students are shy and quiet; some are not as proficient as others in the English language; some like to listen to you more than talk about themselves.
10. Be careful about jokes! What you find humorous may be offensive to someone from another culture.
11. The student’s academic schedule may at times prevent acceptance of your invitation. Be understanding and offer an optional date.
12. 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.
13. Don’t assume anything about your friend, including that they may need “help.” Most international students are quite capable of doing many things independently.
14. 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
Ethical Considerations

The Global Friends Program exists for the friendship and cultural exchange made possible through the pairing of international students with community volunteers. We who work with international students are committed to the policies set forth by NAFSA: Association of International Educators, a professional organization located in Washington, D.C. Those who become volunteer friends through the Reves Center are bound by the same policies. The following is excerpted from NAFSA’s Statement of Ethical Principles, “In both word and deed we will respect the dignity and worth of all people and be properly attentive and responsive to the beliefs and cultural commitments of others. In the planning, development, and implementation of programs and services we will engage respectfully with the diversity of peoples and perspectives. We will strive to ensure that our programs reflect the diversity of our institutions and their educational goals.”

RELIGION: While it is acceptable to have open discussions about religion with your partner if he/she wishes to do so, arguing or proselytizing is absolutely unacceptable.

DRUGS: The use of non-medical drugs is illegal in the U.S. although such use may be legal in other countries. You should not offer or encourage your partner to indulge in any form of illegal drug use, i.e., smoking marijuana, nor should you use any type of illegal drugs in their presence.

ALCOHOL: Many of our international students do not consume alcohol because of religious or personal beliefs. Be sure to inquire about your friend’s beliefs before offering alcoholic drinks to him/her. You also should not offer alcohol to a friend who is under 21 years of age. If your friend is over 21, you should not allow him/her to drink to excess in your home and then drive a car.

Source:
NAFSA’s Statement of Ethical Principles. Available at http://www.nafsa.org/Learn_About_NAFSA/Governance_Documents/Ethics_And_Principles/Statement_Of_Ethics/NAFSA_s_Statement_of_Ethical_Principles/
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
- Grocery shopping (bear in mind that few international students own cars)
Additional Readings and Resources

- Culturegram
  http://www.culturegrams.com/
  The CultureGrams website is a great resource for finding out more about your partner’s country and culture. Through this site, you can, among other things, read about the languages, holidays, and food in your partner’s home country.

- NAFSA: Association for International Educators
  http://www.nafsa.org/

- US State Department: Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
  http://exchanges.state.gov/