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## (Far From) Home for the Holidays

by Bethany Krepela, Donor Advocate

Have your holiday plans taken a major hit this year?

Perhaps you are scaling back from hosting a house full of family or postponing a long-awaited trip. Maybe you're one of the many who have lost a job or, worse yet, a loved one.

**These students aren't "stuck" at home or "safe" at home; they are far from home.**

The impact of these unmatched times is also monumental for the 10,000 international students in the Twin Cities right now. Travel restrictions prevented 4,000 from returning home at the end of spring or summer classes alone. On top of the pandemic, these students have

witnessed political tension nationally and social unrest locally.

These students aren't "stuck" at home or "safe" at home; they are **far from home.**

Students from more than 27 countries craving connection have found their way to HCC this year. At the same time, we've been invited to bring our ministry onto two new campuses! So, when COVID-19 hit, HCC pivoted to serve this population explosion in new ways.

Currently, HCC delivers direct aid like homemade masks, clothes, and groceries, hosts small-group activities, and offers online programming. **The need for the love we share is real.**

This expansion and growth, and the ability to meet the increased demand in new and safe ways, is made possible only through your support!

**Your gift, now more than ever, allows HCC to grow and minister in powerful ways to students hungry for good news.** Give by Dec. 31 to have your gift matched, doubling your impact (up to \$38,500).

Whether you will celebrate Christmas close to home or far from it, may your convictions confirm that the reason for the season is what matters most. Will you share this Good News with the nations through your gift to HCC today? •

# New Campus Outreach in Time for the Holidays

by Josh Driver, Church Advocate

HCC has been fortunate to work with nine full-time students of Bethany Global University (BGU) who have been helping us extend hospitality to more nations and more campuses this fall semester. Four of them have specifically been assisting HCC to bring activities to Macalester College and Concordia University, Saint Paul.

## Macalester College

Many doors have closed on our strategies for connecting to students but we still have the opportunity to reach the students on campus:

- 24% of Macalester students are international students who come from 97 other countries.
- Nearly 165 international students are currently enrolled in spite of Covid 19
- Approximately 104 or 63% of international students are currently studying in the USA.

We hope to introduce students to hospitality through establishing trust with their international student office, and connecting with their host family program, nine or ten international/culture groups, and several language houses. We have connected with some students through offering hiking trips. One particular Chinese student has offered some good insights into what events would attract his fellow classmates.

## Concordia University, St. Paul

We have regular communication with their international student office and weekly send activities for them to promote to students.

- Nearly 153 or 4% of undergrad students are international students, about 153 students.
- 68% of the student population currently lives on campus.
- The majority of international

students are from: Saudi Arabia (86), India, and China with half of them enrolled in a Business Admin & Management Degree.

Concordia actively promotes our activities directly to all their international students. In mid-November, they welcomed us on campus to serve hot drinks and offer free winter clothing to students. Three international students came in person and we gave away over 20 gift bags. We are creating a reputation of hospitality among both international and American students. A great relationship with the international student office has been a strategic victory in developing a deeper relationship with Concordia's international students. •

# America's History as a Home for All

2020 has brought to the surface so much pain and baggage in our country. The unrest caused by racism, politics, pandemic, and global conflict are not new this year but have played a powerful role in our turmoil this year. **Our country's history concerning getting along across racial, ethnic, and cultural lines has been well documented since our inception.** Yet this Thanksgiving, I'm reminded that tumultuous history is not the only history we have as a nation.

The United States of America also has also done wonders to "take your tired, your poor/your huddled masses yearning to breathe free" as poetically written by Emma Lazarus

and engraved on the Statue of Liberty. I was struck this week by the re-telling of the history between the Pilgrims and the Native Americans. The reality is that the Pilgrims were some of the first internationals, the strangers, the foreigners. They were the ones far from home and in need of hospitality. The first "hospitality center" in our country was when the Native Americans graciously shared resources and relationships with the lost and needy strangers to their land.

Do not mistake the purpose of my writing as a statement on immigration. Our present reality is that the United States has 1.2 Million international students per

year coming to our universities, pumping billions of dollars into our economy. **Yet 80% of these future leaders of the world will never be invited into an American's home.** These dear people are in need of hope, love, and **hospitality!**

In spite of brokenness in our country, HCC continues to care for the tired, poor, lost, hurting, and broken. That remains our vision and the mission of the **hundreds** of generous Minnesotan volunteers and donors who give sacrificially to welcome international students through HCC! •



Tim Grunditz  
Executive Director

# Volunteer *with* HCC



## Smaller Can Be Richer

by Kim Sollie, Volunteer Engagement Coordinator

This past February, we were grappling with the question of online programming: "Will it work? Will students and volunteers respond?" Much to our surprise, it has worked exceptionally well. In January, we had 16 volunteers involved in online programming and now near the end of 2020, **we have 135 volunteers connecting with students monthly.**

The option before us this past summer and fall was to move to small events. These smaller events have opened the door for **greater impact and deeper relationships.** It did not take too long to observe the upside of smaller numbers - quicker connections, and better conversation where many new friendships have formed. This has been a real boost to students emotionally in a year when being far from home has been especially difficult.

Students have felt comfortable and willing to share from their hearts in one-on-one online connections via our Conversation Partner and Friendship Match programs. They have had a safe place to talk about the struggles of being far from home and the anxiety that they've faced during this pandemic. Volunteers have offered a ready, listening ear, encouragement, prayers, and sometimes a helping hand by taking students on a grocery run and inviting them to an outdoor picnic at their home.

There have been some very open and honest conversations around the table at our small cultural friendship meals. One student commented, "Oh, thank you, this was great! We want to talk about these current issues but don't know who we can talk to." At a ladies-

only meal, the young women talked almost non-stop for two hours. We realized that they are somewhat starved for conversation. One volunteer commented, "I loved this! It really can be easy to get to know international students. Spending time around the table with people, just like Jesus did, really works!"

Thank you, volunteers, for all that you have done this year to ease the pain of being far from home and making it a year of deeper relationships with international students. Thank you, donors, for providing the funding that has allowed HCC to continue to reach out to international students during a very unusual and challenging year. •



To discover our current volunteer opportunities, visit [hcchinese.org/volunteer](http://hcchinese.org/volunteer)



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## Two Organizations Becoming "One Home"

HCC is proud to announce our merging with OASIS in 2020. OASIS has been the product of men and women with a vision to see every international student touched with the Love of Christ. They have strategically pursued this vision by helping Twin Cities churches and international student ministries to reach their full potential by collaboration with one another.

OASIS has been serving international students, with HCC playing a key role, since inception. **After years of collaboration, it became unanimously clear to both boards that "Together" we could achieve much more than alone.** It's an honor and a privilege to become "one home" with our dear friends at OASIS for the sake of serving every single international student in the Twin Cities and beyond. •



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HCC NEWSLETTER | WINTER 2020

HCC is a nonprofit organization that is impacting the world by connecting the best and brightest future leaders of the world with the most loving and hospitable volunteers in Minnesota.

## VIRTUAL VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

For updates on events,  
 volunteering, connecting, and  
 donating online visit

[www.hcchinese.org](http://www.hcchinese.org)



# Returning Home with Hope!

by Jonathan Nesvig, ReEntry Coordinator

Since June of 2020, HCC has sent over 50 students and scholars back to China. It's sad to see familiar faces leave but it's also exciting knowing that students and scholars are returning to their home countries as leaders and influencers. You, our volunteers and church partners, have welcomed them and thereby impacted them, and they are returning home to impact and influence others.

One Chinese couple studying at Carlson Business School more than 10 years ago was involved with HCC. They then went on to live in Africa for a time before returning to Minnesota for the past couple of years. Through their journey and their interaction with local churches—both in the Twin Cities and elsewhere—they both

decided to become Christians. The husband has returned as a business leader and influencer in China and the wife has returned with a counseling degree and is now a Life Coach to people in China. She's hit the ground running and is walking alongside others in the highs and lows of life.

Another couple joined many HCC

**You, our volunteers and church partners, have welcomed them and thereby impacted them, and they are returning home to impact and influence others.**

events last year, the first of which was a Day-at-the-Lake event in summer 2019. They got connected with a partner church of ours and were paired with another couple for



ESL lessons. Because of their experience, conversations, and interactions with that couple they were partnered with, they decided to become Christians. They recently went home, and their transformational experience here in Minnesota prepared them to have confidence as they face many uncertainties in this season.

**Thank you, volunteers and partner churches, for not retreating in this challenging season but moving forward with us in welcoming and loving the international students here in the Twin Cities. •**