



A VISION FOR OUR MISSION

THE DIRECTOR'S PRAYER

Jesus, we give you thanks. You are great and worthy of praise.

Equip us with love, understanding, and joy as we share your love with the international students in the Twin Cities.

May they proclaim your great deeds and your awesome works. May they celebrate and sing of your abundant goodness.

Thank you for the opportunity to welcome them to our home and share not only our lives but the good news as well.

God, you care for them so much. Give us your heart for them and may they encounter your presence through friendships they make with your people. Amen!

Josh Driver

Josh Driver
Executive Director

FOR 28 YEARS, WE WERE focused on loving international students from China. Far from leaving the

Chinese behind—as you will observe below—we have now expanded to include all 5,948 international students at the University of Minnesota (UMN). The majority of them are living and studying blocks away from our Minneapolis offices.

With this strategic location and through our mission expansion from Chinese to all international students, we are poised to launch a great season of fruit.

We have begun engaging with over 275 Indian students who are enjoying

our events, like a Diwali Celebration Meal (pictured above). They need friends and to know the one true God.

We are reaching less than one percent of approximately 2,500 undergraduates, but we have a vision to reach more of them.

We want to ensure that every student during their one-to-four year stay at the University of Minnesota is introduced to Jesus through friendship. What if we collectively loved them so well that international students told each other, "You cannot go to the Twin Cities without stopping by the Hospitality Center because they take care of you so well! Every need and every question, they can help with!"

What is our mission like?

We create activities that allow trained volunteers to intentionally pursue friendship with students. It is a joint effort of our organization which creates opportunities for volunteers, along with the volunteers' own initiative which impacts students...

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RELATIONSHIPS MATTER

ALL OF OUR ACTIVITIES and programs are designed to serve the physical and spiritual needs of international students at the UMN.

The primary way we serve students' physical needs is through warmly welcoming them when they first arrive by providing resources they need. We pick up students from the airport, we provide short-term hosting in a volunteer's home, we provide and deliver free furniture, and, lastly, we welcome students through our annual Welcome Picnic. These resources are often the first way an international student hears about us.

These resources pave the way for students to take part in our relationship-focused programming. This is the heart of what we do. International students have a chance not only to see and know Minnesota through our activities, but, more importantly, international students have a chance to be known by a local Christian volunteer.

These activities "set the table" for the local church and international

students to come together for friendship and opportunities to talk about life and faith. Every month we have one large meal and one large outdoor event which give opportunities for volunteers and students to connect. We also offer ongoing repetitive programs like Hiking Club, Food with Friends, and Conversation Partners which are intentionally small so that students and volunteers can have more focused, meaningful conversations.

It's in this context of friendship between our volunteers and international students that we see life and faith being shared and the spiritual needs of international students being met. Just as Jesus entered into our world and drew us into life in the Godhead through faith, we also have the opportunity to enter into the lives of international students—to know them—and invite them into our Christian communities so that they might know and believe in Jesus.

For Their Good and His Glory

At the end of the day, we work for the good of international students at the University of Minnesota and for the glory of Jesus, to whom every nation

will bow. This good is the physical and spiritual flourishing of international students at the University of Minnesota and back home when they return.

So we serve students in "word and deed." We exemplify Jesus's sacrificial love in concrete ways like picking up a stranger at the airport and praying for a student who is suffering with depression and anxiety. We go hiking at a state park with a student and we listen to that student share about homesickness. We host students in homes and invite students to church. And we seek to send students home not only with a good education from the University of Minnesota and a new friendship, but more importantly, the gospel.



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How? By hosting a meal that celebrates their culture. By picking them up from the airport. By inviting them into your home. By going on a walk with them. By calling them before a big test and praying with them.

Every week, Richard shared Jesus's love by driving a pair of Chinese students between campus and his church to study the Bible together. His willingness, commitment and friendship helped lead them to trust in Jesus and they still attend that church today!

A student who joined our new Hiking Club program declared that he finally found his first friendship here in Minnesota with a volunteer who also enjoyed hiking.

A graduate facing homelessness after being asked to leave her apartment is now pursuing Jesus because, by God's grace, a family

felt burdened to host her even while they were in the midst of moving.

Another volunteer, despite two guests staying at his house and preparing for his third child, hosted a young undergraduate who he doubted his ability to relate to. But his obedience to God led to that young man attending church, scrolling the internet for answers on who Jesus is, and grabbing a Bible.

It Is Worth It

The stories above are about Chinese students whom we have loved and focused on for most of our history.



We need to continue to love them, and the rest of the 130 nations at our doorstep in 2023 and beyond.

According to the UMN, international students consistently identified with feelings of isolation from Americans due to a difference in cultural background or understanding. Not only does the Hospitality Center exist to fill this need through our focus on fostering friendships between them and local believers, but we offer the greatest message of identity and hope. They are created in the image of Jesus Christ. Their sense of belonging can only truly be felt through a relationship with Jesus.

The joint efforts of our staff, partners, corporations, volunteers, and churches collectively reflect Jesus's love through sharing the Gospel and our lives. Join us in the great opportunity to (be a center for hospitality to) welcome and love international students from 130 countries who have traveled from all over the world to stay in our very neighborhoods.

VOLUNTEERS ARE ESSENTIAL

BEING A VOLUNTEER with the Hospitality Center is a commitment to investing in the lives of international students. As previously mentioned, our ministry strategically shares the love of Christ with international students and provides volunteers and international students the opportunity to form lifelong friendships. It requires our time, a humble attitude, commitment to prayer, and persistence.

The Hospitality Center continues to offer events that allow students to

take a break from their rigorous studies, have a bit of fun and get to know Minnesotans—particularly Christian Minnesotans.

These events include our weekend outings, our monthly Celebration Meals, and our ongoing programs. Whether someone volunteers for a weekend, or commits to a longer term program, all of our activities rely on volunteers.

Who Are Our Volunteers

One strength we see among our Hospitality Center volunteers is that they are from all walks of life and various generations. Some are...

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JORDAN STONEKING

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION

If you've done an event with us in the last two years, there is a good chance you have met Jordan. He has volunteered at over 25 events in the last two years and has spent 200+ hours with us!

Thank you Jordan for your time and energy that you have given. We hope and pray your time in Mongolia is fruitful!



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NEWSLETTER ISSUE 1 | WINTER 2022

The Hospitality Center is a nonprofit organization that shares the love of Christ through hospitality with international students and scholars.

MATCHING CAMPAIGN

Help us reach our goal of \$50,000!
 See where we're at and give online
 at thehospitalitycenter.org/give

VOLUNTEERS ARE ESSENTIAL

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students themselves, others are young professionals. We have stay at home mom's, men and women with full time careers, and even empty nesters and retirees. But all are intent on loving and getting to know international students—spending time, as they are able, to nurture relationships.

Some volunteers have time to help during arrival season when we do airport pickups and offer short term home stays. One family still connects regularly with the young woman they hosted for a few days last summer. Others have time to invest once a month and enjoy taking students on hikes or attending a Celebration Meal. Some volunteers have the capacity to meet weekly with a student through one of our programs. Friendships form through all of these encounters and

invitations are extended to share a meal together, go shopping for winter clothing or groceries. The time comes when some students are ready to begin learning more about Christianity and they open up the Bible with their volunteer.

In January we will begin a schedule of winter activities, like downhill skiing, a visit to Ice Castles and Celebration Meals. We will also begin new Conversation Partner classes, get students connected to new Friendship Match partners and launch new Food with Friends and Hiking Club groups.

None of these activities happens without volunteers—you are essential to what the Hospitality Center offers international students. And if you cannot volunteer with us because you live too far away, have a very busy family life, or have health issues you can still be involved.



Our hope is that everyone who follows the Hospitality Center is invested in some way with us. We do not just want people to read our emails or volunteer once a year.

We want individuals committed to our mission. This means praying for us. If you want to receive our prayer letter, please just let us know and we'd be glad to add you.

MONEY MATTERS

It also means financially supporting us. If you have volunteered and never given, consider giving this year. If you have donated but never volunteered, how could you plug in this Winter and coming Spring?

We want everyone to be able to contribute to the ministry in one way or another. So please, join us and do not be afraid to ask how you can help!