



PARTNERSHIP & PROVISION

AN UPDATE ON OUR MINISTRY AT CONCORDIA—ST. PAUL

It is all by the grace of God we have been able to have successful Chai Dosti (“Tea and Friendship”) at Concordia–St. Paul (CSP) so far. Chai Dosti is a time where students and volunteers enjoy discussion, Masala chai, and samosas together. We are praising God for the growing interest in our volunteers and are so encouraged by their commitment. They bring their amazing positive energy to the tables and love on the students. Having the same volunteers each

time helps the students connect well with them. The Lord has answered prayers for the India Initiative through Chai Dosti and our partnership with CSP. Not only do we meet with 60+ students regularly, but volunteers have showed sincere interest and joy in the event!

One of our volunteers said, **“I see God moving in Chai Dosti,”** and we couldn’t agree more. Another couple regularly volunteering at Chai Dosti has had the opportunity to connect with the same students

nearly every week. **The couple said that after forming these “good friendships with a group of 6 students, we invited them home for an Indian meal.”**

Volunteers are beginning to see openness to discussion about friendship, forgiveness, as well as other deep topics; they are forming intentional friendships in hopes of eventually going deeper into these conversations.

“I love Chai Dosti because I not only have Chai and Samosas, I was able to meet Richard and Miriam, every time we meet we will have great laughter. They share good stories from their lives.”

“We wait for Chai Dosti every week...Thanks to the Hospitality Center for Chai Dosti!”



Students are loving Chai Dosti, too!



“Chai Dosti is one of my favorite events on campus because it fosters a sense of community and helps develop valuable social skills. Plus, it’s a great way to meet new friends! As for my relationship with the Ericksons, it was amazing. I learned so much about their cultures and their deep devotion to Jesus.”

“Chai Dosti is very helpful, we are able to connect to all other students outside of our class and are able to enjoy fun time and have chai just like at home. I made some new friends through Chai Dosti. We are having valuable conversations.”

HOSPITALITY CENTER TEAM UPDATE

This January, David joined us as our Program Specialist and Dana began as our Volunteer Coordinator!



Dana



David

“ — STUDENT TESTIMONY

Some places and moments are special from an individual perspective. This is what the Hospitality Center and the moments I spent there have been to me. Besides all the occasions we get together, group games played together, delicious food shared, and so on, **we have been excited by the kindness, warmth, and welcoming manner of hosts and volunteers.** It makes us feel at home as its name signifies. International students sometimes inevitably feel loneliness to some extent, which results from being far from family and loved ones even if they have a high level of satisfactory academic achievements. Such amazing events at HC bring students together from a wide spectrum of nationalities, religious backgrounds, and various educational backgrounds and create great times, new friendships, pleasure, and joy. Students see the world through HC in some sense, which not only builds friendships and connections but also develops their sociability and creates a nice picture of their feelings about studying and living in Minnesota. As a student from Iran studying Ph.D. at the University of Minnesota medical school, I have had fantastic moments at HC through which I met a fair number of people whose friendships are precious to me. Dana, Alex, and their family are a case in point. Joy, pleasure, and happiness around our incredible Christian friends there have made the moments special.

—Student in HC Community

FAMILY-SIZED MINISTRY

DEEPENING DISCUSSIONS AT HC COMMUNITIES

What comes to mind when you think of the Holy Spirit? Two weeks ago at HC Communities, we had a great discussion about the Trinity, and the Holy Spirit in particular. Drawing from Matthew Chapter 12, one student from Central Asia, Nohra,* asked, “Who is the Holy Spirit?”

Her question led us into a discussion about the Holy Spirit as our advocate, comforter, guide—one and the same in unity with the Father and Jesus Christ. Then, Abe,* a Muslim student, shared that he and his Muslim friends discuss theological topics with one another regularly. Abe explained, “Nohra, I have an explanation for the Trinity! I was recently watching a Youtube video, and I read the comments section. Someone described the Trinity as

being like the sun. The sun is made of fire, but creates rays of light, as well as heat. All three of these are different elements/aspects, but all the same thing. This analogy was being used to explain the truth of the reality of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit being three persons, but one God. So there is only one God, but just like the sun there are three persons. I'm not sure I believe this. But the way this person explained that made sense to me, and I thought it was a beautiful concept and explained very well.”

Abe is actively reading the Bible, watching Christian podcasts, and asking questions about Jesus. Pray for Abe and Nohra, that they will continue to seek and encounter our Triune God.



Dana and a student at our Spring Festival celebration!

We would love to see more communities like this form organically with students in the future. We encourage volunteers to attend our large events and day trips. This helps them build relationships with students and paves the way for deeper discipleship opportunities.

Dana Bhalla,
Volunteer Coordinator

*Pseudonyms used to protect students' identities.



GOING BEYOND THE NORTH SHORE

Students and volunteers on our February North Shore Trip.

“Conversations...made the trip worthwhile.”

We started monthly North Shore trips this spring semester with the hope that by the end of the 14-hour day the following would be accomplished: students would have had fun seeing a new part of Minnesota, students and volunteers would have had meaningful life conversations and felt a sense of community, and volunteers would know the students and how to pray and follow-up accordingly. Hear from Kathie, one of the leaders of the February trip, about her experience:

When I was given the opportunity to accompany my husband and eight students to the North Shore in early February, I wasn't sure if I should go. I don't talk with strangers easily; questions about the weather and the long day gave me pause; yet I didn't want to miss an opportunity to be a blessing.

*Food, hiking, and Gooseberry Falls were amazing. Conversations, some deep, made the trip worthwhile. One student shared his shyness of talking with girls, another disclosed a difficult youth, and one of his disbelief in God. **What joy I experienced when this student and 3 others attended a church service with us the very next Sunday and heard the gospel.** I'm looking forward to a reunion in our home later this month.*



The North Shore Trip exceeded my expectations in every way. I knew some of the people already, but I indeed made some new friends during the trip. In the car we were talking all the time and we also reflected on some topics suggested by John about our life and spiritual journey. I found those topics really interesting and meaningful.

—Juanjo



RECOMMENDED

It was all I expected and more. I especially loved the deep questions. It made us all closer. I made new friends.

—Harold



The food was great. The choice of restaurants is excellent.

—Ava

Interested in volunteering for trips like this?

Scan here to learn more!





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NEWSLETTER ISSUE 1 | WINTER 2024

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

END OF FISCAL YEAR
 HELP US REACH OUR REMAINING BUDGET
 NEED OF \$84,811 BY MAY 31ST

**GIVE ONLINE OR REGISTER FOR FREE
 FOR OUR 2024 FRIENDRAISER ON
 APRIL 18TH!**



**REJOICING IN ALL
 THAT GOD HAS FOR US**

Dear reader,

You are invited today to pray about giving financially to the Hospitality Center. Much is happening with our students!

International students at Concordia University—St. Paul are finding an on-campus community with our volunteers who are committed to the bi-weekly Chai Dosti (“Tea and Friendship”) events and are visiting the volunteers’ homes. A UMN student is asking about forgiveness regularly. Another connected with a volunteer about mental health at a Celebration Meal, stating she needed to hear the truth about this topic. Friendships blossomed so quickly and deeply at one church overnight that tears flowed at the trip’s end and volunteers drove two hours to visit their new student friends soon after. Several Indian students are being disciplined. A Chinese researcher afraid of

dying is hearing the truth of eternal life. 40+ students signed up for Easter hosting and heard the holiday’s life-giving message. Our student group is multinational for the first time ever with student officers from Nigeria, China, Uzbekistan, India, and the Philippines! Some of these student leaders love Jesus, some are seeking, but all of them share the desire to love their fellow international students.

Thank God with us that His purposes are being fulfilled through us, bringing those who are without hope and far from their families into our life-giving community—not by our good works, but because of His mercy. **God has blessed us with much favor at these events and we pray that this favor results in students becoming heirs in the hope of eternal life.** This is what your financial gift is supporting.

May we walk faithfully and humbly before God day after day and into the next fiscal year. Thank you for asking God what your support may look like.

Rejoicing in all that God has for us,



Josh Driver,
Executive Director

HOW FAR DOES YOUR GIFT GO?

\$6,444 FUNDS THE INDIA INITIATIVE

\$1,000 FUNDS ONE CELEBRATION MEAL

\$40/MONTH FUNDS ONE OF OUR STUDENTS



Scan here to give 