



FAMILY-SIZED MINISTRY

EXPANDING INVOLVEMENT WITH HC COMMUNITIES

What started as a prayer and idea last spring is now slowly coming into being as the first HC Community was launched this fall! Last spring, we prayed and brainstormed about what more we could do to introduce international students to Jesus. We came up with the idea of HC Communities—small groups of Hospitality Center volunteers who offer regular opportunities for international students to explore life’s important questions and learn more about Christianity together in a friendly, welcoming, and supportive environment.

The first HC Community began meeting this fall! Praise God! Although the results have been small thus far, the group of HC Communities volunteers have been intentionally pursuing and inviting dozens of students into their community to explore Christianity; so far, a small handful of students have attended! **We praise God that these students who come from backgrounds with little exposure to Christianity are now opening the Gospel of Matthew and having discussions about Jesus!**

One of our students, Nohra,* is attending her HC Community regularly and engaging deeply in discussions about faith and the

Bible. She’s grateful for the opportunity because the rich discussions remind her of time studying the Bible and Quran with her dad back home.

Looking ahead, we are praying that more friendships and communities like this form through our spring events. We will be offering an intentionally small, monthly North Shore day trip which we hope will result in friendships and invitations to explore Christianity. We are adding a prayer and discussion time to the end of our monthly Celebration Meals where international students will have the opportunity to be prayed for or ask more questions about Christianity. We will continue to offer Chai Dosti at Concordia and will now be offering a regular opportunity at our Minneapolis location for students to have open discussion around

various topics. In all these things, our hope is that by establishing family-sized communities we’d see heart transformation and students come to know Jesus.

Jonathan M. Nesvig

Jonathan Nesvig,
Community Engagement Director

**Pseudonyms have been used to protect the student’s identity.*



Would you like to lead or support an HC Community?



Scan here to learn more



THROUGH THE DECADES

THE TRADITION OF CELEBRATION MEALS

A few years ago, my husband and I shared a Celebration Meal with Helen, who had arrived just two days earlier. Just as we do today, we gathered around the table, shared a delicious meal and, since it was December, listened to the sharing of the Christmas story. During our conversation afterward, Helen made a profound statement: **"I think God brought me here."**

Little did we know that the meal marked the beginning of an incredible journey to faith for Helen and her three friends, who all embraced Christianity before returning to their home country two years later. It's amazing how a simple gathering paired with Christ's love can have such a profound impact on people's lives!

Sharing meals and time around the table have been an integral part of the Hospitality Center since its beginning in 1990. The first gathering of what became the Hospitality Center for Chinese was a Thanksgiving Meal in November 1990.

By October 1991, it was decided that Friendship Meals would be held monthly.

Now, 33 years later, monthly meals continue to be an important part of what we do.

Volunteers and students continue to experience the power of friendship that begins around the table at our monthly meals.

Celebration Meals are a part of God's strategic hospitality for us and volunteers experience the refreshing joy of becoming conduits of God's love. International students experience a touch of God's magnificent love and are given the opportunity to step into new friendships that, with time, often lead to the sharing of God's story and love for them.

Kim Sollie

Kim Sollie,
Volunteer Director



Meet Abe

Abe's first connection with us was at a Celebration Meal, where he tagged along with another student who rarely misses a meal. He is from West Asia and following the Muslim faith, but connecting with us at the meal has sparked interest and questions about other religions. He joined our first HC Community, has been reading the Bible, and has interest in church and learning more about Jesus! We are overjoyed to witness his flourishing within our close-knit family, where he feels secure to openly express his thoughts and ask questions about God and faith.

WE CELEBRATED KIM'S RETIREMENT IN DECEMBER AFTER 7.5 YEARS OF MINISTRY WITH US. THANK YOU TO ALL WHO HELPED US HONOR HER!



1993



2023

STUDENT NUMBERS AT A GLANCE

869

WELCOMED
INTO OUR
COMMUNITY

198

CONNECTED
WITH A
VOLUNTEER

52

NATIONS
REPRESENTED
AT EVENTS

13

CURIOUS
ABOUT FAITH
AND GOD



NATIONS

359 INDIANS

195 CHINESE

33 BANGLADESHI

22 TAIWANESE

15 NIGERIANS



THE
HOSPITALITY
CENTER



ONE STEP AT A TIME

PERSEVERANCE IN THE NURTURING OF FRIENDSHIP

“They are my boys. They are so easy to love.”

We sat down with Kristen and the two Indian students, Kore* and Max*, who stayed with her in August. According to Kristen, short-term hosting became “one of the best weeks of the year” as they were “saturated in conversation the whole week.” The students said that their stay was unforgettable, describing it as their **“favorite days in the U.S.”**

Both Kristen and the students remember memorable moments shared during their week together. From setting up bank accounts and acquiring U.S. sim cards to enjoying soccer games together, Kore and Max’s hosting experience played a vital role in their smooth transition to MN.

Though their different approaches to food started out as a point of contention, Kristen remembers the many strange conversations it took

to reach mutual understanding. After three days without Indian food, Kore remembers how Kristen noticed their desire for familiar food and took them to a nearby Indian grocery store.

Kristen learned that, despite being the host, she could let Kore and Max serve her; as a result, Kore and Max spent hours in her kitchen teaching the family Indian recipes and talking with the family! Conversely, at Thanksgiving, Kristen asserted herself as the host and cooked for them. This moment exemplified the beauty of direct communication within the context of friendship.

During their stay, Kristen, her husband Sean, Kore, and Max engaged in lengthy conversations, delving into differing views on marriage. Surprisingly, they discovered common ground in the underlying reasons behind their beliefs.

As the week unfolded, new experiences with Kristen’s children, such as board games and pickleball, further solidified their bond. Kore and Max expressed that they never felt homesick because Kristen’s family **“became like our second family.”**

It is our hope that friendships like that of Kristen and these students — born out of quality time spent together—will continue to blossom within family contexts.

**Pseudonyms have been used to protect the students’ identities.*



↑ Kristen’s family with Kore & Max during their stay.




THE HOSPITALITY CENTER
 1407 Cleveland Ave. N
 St. Paul, MN 55108
 www.thehospitalitycenter.org

NON-PROFIT
 ORG.
 U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
 TWIN CITIES, MN
 PERMIT #2291

**CHANGE
 SERVICE
 REQUESTED**

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.

FRIENDRAISER
April 18th, 6PM-9PM
 add to Google
 Calendar 

REFLECTING IN GRATITUDE

ENCOURAGEMENT FROM THE DIRECTOR

In a recent Crazy Love podcast episode, Francis Chan captures God’s heart for us at the Hospitality Center.

“Let us not neglect the person or the work of God. There is so much pressure in the pursuit of all the fruit, we forget that if we abide in Him, there is a guarantee that we will bear fruit. But it takes faith... look at your lives and ministry. The greatest things that have happened...was that your strategic planning? Or, was it where something fell into your lap? Lord, I was just abiding, trying to be faithful and what you did was supernatural. The greatest things in my ministry were not planned by me. Psalm 27:4 says: ‘One thing I have asked of the Lord, that I will seek after: is to dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, that I may gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple.’”

Our greatest joys at the Hospitality Center were not because of me, but because of the Lord. Recently a friend from India shared his perspective on the India Initiative that God entrusted us with last April:

“[The] India initiative is an answer to decades of prayers. Ministers have been praying to reach out to Indian students at the Universities in Twin Cities for decades. Although there has been success in reaching out to small groups of Indian students, India initiative has taken this to the next level where we see a big pool of Indian students attending HC’s event.”

Prayer and the power of the Lord have been at work even before we started welcoming Indian students. As we finished 2023, our prayers continue into 2024. We pray that the 75 Gospels of John that were taken at our last Celebration Meal touch many lives. We pray for steadfast faith, knowing that even if no students from the 52 nations choose Jesus, we trust in our calling and faithfully share God’s love with those He sends us.

Abide in the Lord with us.



Josh Driver,
 Executive Director


 Scan here to support the ministry.