

International Friends

of Tucson, Arizona

Long-Term Joys of Hosting

As the very first student we hosted with International Friends five years ago graduated last weekend with his Ph.D., I have been doing a great deal of reflecting. Yu-Kai quickly became a part of our family and will remain so, and I am dealing with empty nest syndrome (really), as he moves to Florida.

Yu-Kai is from Taiwan, while during the last five years all of the other students we have hosted have been from China.

We have learned so much about China and Taiwan that we didn't know - customs, history, and culture.

These young people know the history of their countries and are eager to share and exchange ideas. They are always ready to experience new things and discover new places.



Dr. Yu-Kai Lin with his family from Taiwan to celebrate his graduation

As we share these experiences, we rediscover too.

**Pamela Harlan/
IF Co-Chair**



Student Peidong Zhang catching a water balloon at the IF Spring Picnic

Living the Dream: My 9 Years on the Board of International Friends

Upon completion of my 9 years on the Board of International Friends, I believe it is important to express my thanks to this wonderful organization for providing the opportunity to work with the international student community at the University of Arizona. More specifically, I owe many thanks to **Noelle** and her wonderful staff at the International Student Services office, as well as my fellow board members, all of the volunteers and hosts, and most importantly all of the international students who have studied at the University of Arizona. This organization has created such positive



LuAnn Haley

energy that crosses cultural lines.

If you have not considered working on this wonderful Board, I would encourage you to do so as you will find the experience fulfilling.

But more importantly, you may ask "How" was your personal experience with the students you have hosted over the past 15 years with International Friends?

Well, of course, there have been some interesting, or shall we say "challenging," times with some of the 25 students I have hosted. There were trips to the Emergency Room with a few students who needed medical attention on the weekends, helping a student through a difficult academic situation in their department, assisting when a housing situation wasn't working out, and most scary . . . teaching international students to drive!

Putting all these difficult, but appreciated, times aside, "What" you ask were the best experiences?

These are too numerous to list but some of the most memorable are seeing the local sights with students, being invited to eight weddings of former students in India,

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LuAnn giving game instruction at the Spring Picnic

IF Host applications are available online at:
www.ifriendstucson.org

New Semester, New Students, New Experiences - from New IF/Co-Chair

Being a part of International Friends provides many memorable moments with many amazing kids. One of my most outstanding memories as an International Friend was to be able to stand in for our India Student's parents at her MIS graduation ceremony. However, the casual times are often at the crux of what the organization provides (both for

students and hosts).

A simple meal of pizza and then some games gives everyone a chance to better learn and understand about a different culture. It's always good for a few laughs even though there might be some language barriers.

My husband and I enjoy having bright, young, enthusiastic students around again. Our girls are grown and

busy and even my grandson is too far away for many family dinners or game nights.

We have been in Tucson since 1973 and we do enjoy sharing our city with others. Our girls grew up here so we can draw on things we did with them as well as our favorite Tucson sights and activities. As a new co-chair of the organization, I'm excited to see how many lives we



Jody and Greg Friend with student Kritika Patil from India

touch. Each year I look forward to the new students and enlisting new hosts to join in the fun.

**Jody Friend/
IF Co-Chair**

From the One Semester Host



Hannah from Korea

I have been a Host with International Friends for 20 plus years. This mid-year semester, for the first time, I chose a One-Semester Exchange student. *Hannah*, from Korea, was in a university exchange program which offered their students several out-of-town trips

to see Arizona and the USA.

Choosing a shorter-term student had advantages I had not thought about before. I realized that because only a few weeks/months, rather than a year of involvement time or more, was ahead of me, I needed to be organized and efficient about planning for experiences for and with her. At first I was challenged, but as it turned out it offered us both a condensed, yet quality, time spent together. **Sherie Carlson/Host/Former Board Member**

From Being a Host . . . To an "American Grandma"

As a retired nurse and traveler, I chose to host a student whose major was Public Health (2-year graduate program) from Africa.



Margo Graham with Keila

Within weeks I happily learned that his pregnant wife, having finished her college degree, had arrived in Tucson. Her goal was to polish her English (her 3rd language.). While in Arizona, baby girl *Keila* was born. When driving the mother to class, baby and I bonded during class time. I sang songs and read books to her while Mom was at Pima College evening Advanced English

courses. Dad on most evenings rode his bike to the library for studying.

I became so fond of this family of three that I asked *Keila's* parents if I could be "Honorary Grandma" to the baby girl. We all then realized that we had become a family and I was truly "Mom" and "Grandma."

This family has not been back to Africa for 3 years since arriving in Tucson and University of Arizona.

This has been an endearingly amazing experience and gift to each of us.

It all started with the clicking of a mouse during the International Friends selection process.

My family returns to Africa this summer, but I have a "Forever Family." Lovingly,

**Margo Graham/
Host/Board Member**



Students LNR and Amey showing off their pumpkin carving at Halloween



Sack Race Game at Spring Picnic

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having five "International" grandchildren when I have no children of my own, receiving cards and calls on Mother's Day from all my former students, having a wedding ceremony in my backyard for a student from India, and knowing that I can visit many countries (China, India, Iran, Canada, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Spain, Mexico, and more) as a member of my former student families. You can't put a price tag on these truly wonderful rewards of being a host for International Friends.

So, although I must bid a fond farewell to the exceptional Board of International Friends, I will continue to look forward to hosting new international students each semester at the University of Arizona.

LuAnn Haley/Past Co-Chair

Andre Jones On Board



Andre Jones joined the International Friends Board of Directors in January 2015. Andre comes with over 15 years of computer experience, including hardware, software, troubleshooting, and other repair services. On top of this, Andre has a vast knowledge of

web design, web hosting, and Internet databases. His current project is to update the current International Friends website to be more user friendly with a modern look and feel. Andre is also currently a student at the University of Arizona studying Information Science and Technology, where he will be graduating with his second Bachelor's Degree in the fall of 2016. Outside of computers and technology, Andre enjoys traveling, reading, writing, and spending time with his 10-year-old daughter, Amanda, and his dog, Buddy.



IF Student Jiawei Xu gets hands-on mask making instruction on Halloween



Netraj, Jashio, LNR, Nitigya, and Amey hiking at Sabino Canyon



Monique Blustenne's favorite shirt on her island of New Caledonia

Handwritten Notes

Mid-June 2015: Four Board Members arranged to make a very personal idea come to life . . . to handwrite notes to a list of former International Friends Hosts to encourage them to restart and/or continue involvement with IF incoming students. This need for more hosts arises with our realization that:

1. We are seeing much interest in our program.
2. We always want to have enough hosts available to meet student requests for a local Friend/Family.
3. New hosts help energize the whole group as they hear of the program and join us. Within hours of receiving a note, two hosts emailed of their memorable decade of amazing student involvement. Their lives were enriched with exchange semester students or multiple year graduate program students.



Go online now to find your new International Friends

International Friends has an online system for matching hosts with students. The system is user friendly and easily accessible.

you with your password information.

Step 2: Edit Profile

Once you have entered your password, it will



Megan Ma and Zoe Deng learning how to cook pasta from scratch

Just follow a few simple steps.

All you need is access to a computer with an internet connection.

Step 1:

Log On (Begin Aug. 22)

Go to <http://ifriendstucson.org/login.html>

It will take you to a login page.

Username:

Enter your full email address.

Password:

Enter your password.

If you have forgotten your password, email

Andre Jones at andre@ifriendstucson.org,

using the email address with which you log into the I-Friends system.

Andre will then email

take you to your profile page.

Please edit or update your information.

Step3:

Select a Student

Search through the students who are seeking a host to find student(s) that look like a good match.

Select the student(s).

Step 4:

Meet Your Student(s)

Once you have selected the student(s), our assignments coordinator will confirm the match and send you and your student(s) an email with each other's contact information.

You can then contact your student(s) to arrange your first get-together.

"Friend" your students at the annual Fall Festival- **Sunday, September 13, 3-5 pm**

A festive Sunday gathering for new international students and IF hosts will be held **Sept. 13, from 3-5 pm at Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church**, 830 N. First Ave. The church is a close walk or bike ride to campus and free parking is available in the church parking lot located at the intersection of First Avenue and Second Street.

Students and hosts can connect with each other, **make new friends**, and discover shared interests. Beverages and light "finger

foods" will be served.

Also, bring some cash to buy an I-Friends T-shirt featuring flags from around the world (\$15 each) or to **buy some raffle tickets to help your student win a brand new bicycle!**

This is a great opportunity to mingle with students and fellow hosts. If you have selected a student, we encourage you to attend this event together.

If you are not yet matched, you may meet the international student just right for you at this event!

Find us on Facebook!

International Friends @Tucson, Arizona

is IF's official Facebook group. If you haven't joined, take time now to check us out and keep informed of IF activities throughout the year.

If you aren't on Facebook, there's no time like the present! Go to

www.facebook.com and sign up. It's easy, fun, and a good way to connect with friends, old and new.

This is the way students communicate today, so you will be up-to-date on what your I-Friends are up to.

Coming IF Events: 2015

Aug. 3, Mon., Board Meeting ISS, 5:30pm

Aug.12, Wed., Orientation Student Union, 8am
Info Fair, Student Union 1:30-3:30pm

Aug.15, Sat., Welcome Luncheon, 1st. Methodist Church, 11am-2pm

Aug.22, Sat., Student/Host Matching Begins

Sept.13, Sun., Fall Social Grace Lutheran Church 3-5pm

Oct.12, Mon., Board Meeting ISS, 5:30pm

Nov.7, Sat., International Students Got Talent Show Student Union, 7pm

Dec.7, Mon., Board Meeting ISS, 5:30pm

2016

Jan.10, Sun., Spring Mixer Place and Time: TBA

Mar.,7, Mon., Annual Board Meeting, ISS, 5:30pm

April 3, Sun., Spring Picnic Reid Park, Ramada 22, 12-3pm

International Friends, Tucson

International Student Services (ISS), International Friends, 915 N. Tyndall Avenue, Tucson, AZ 85721

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