

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE GLOBAL FRIENDS PROGRAM

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Sign Up to Volunteer:



Questions?

Contact Mona David-Starman, mstarman@wm.edu.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE REVES CENTER



Read the Reves Center's biannual magazine, *World Minded*! Published in the fall and spring semesters. *World Minded* contains articles and announcements on William & Mary's internationally focused programs and initiatives, as well as features on the international research and experiences of the W&M community.



www.wm.edu/offices/revescenter/publications/worldminded/index.php



REVES CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

Global Friends Program

Matching international students with members of the local community in an effort to foster cross-cultural friendships and understanding.



WHAT IS THE GLOBAL FRIEND'S PROGRAM?

Global Friends, originally established in 1991 as Friendship International, provides international students at William & Mary with the opportunity to experience American life outside of campus while at the same time providing Williamsburg community members the chance to get to know students, scholars and their families from other cultures.

In the 2019- 2020 academic year, William & Mary enrolled more than 730 international students from approximately 60 countries. Chinese, South Korean, and Indian were the largest international student populations. International students study at W&M at both the undergraduate and graduate level, across the faculty of Arts & Sciences, Raymond A. Mason School of Business, School of Law, School of Education, and Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS).

Many of these students bring spouses and families with them to Williamsburg who are interested in making friends and participating in conversation exchanges with local community members.

There is no homestay component to the Global Friends program, but Global Friends are asked to get together at least once per month to enhance the students' understanding of American society and culture. Many friends stay in touch via email or telephone conversations throughout the academic year. The Reves Center also hosts an event each semester to bring students and their hosts together, and program participants are invited to a number of other Reves Center events throughout the year as well.



WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A GLOBAL FRIEND?

Volunteering as a Global Friend means committing to a relationship with a W&M international student for the duration of an academic year (August through May), or for the duration of a student's exchange program (four to nine months).

During this time, Global Friends maintain regular contact with their students, plan to get together for one activity per month, and enjoy the opportunity to learn more about students' cultures and customs, while sharing their own. Many Global Friends find that their students enjoy less formal activities.

Global Friends must respect their assigned student's religion, beliefs, values, and customs, and be open to cultural differences. Global Friends are not expected to provide students with housing, immigration information, financial resources, employment information or academic advising.

It is the policy of the Reves Center for International Studies to match single Global Friends volunteers with students of the same gender.

Popular outings in the Williamsburg area include:

- Picnics
- Farm/plantation visits (James River Plantations)
- Norfolk Aquarium
- Waller Mill State Park, First Landing State Park
- Yorktown and Jamestown
- Sporting events (for example, a Norfolk Tides baseball game)
- Visiting friends or relatives
- Backyard BBQs
- Miniature golf

"We hear about their travels and adventures. We talk about our families, and what we have learned is that there are many more similarities than differences between us."

*- Anita Lowe
and*

Carolyn Lodzieski

"Global Friends was a great opportunity to see America from a perspective other than a college campus." - Jan Hubenthal