

Monday, Aug 01, 2016

ISSO host family program renamed Creating American International Relationships

With the goal of promoting a richer understanding of one of its primary missions, the **International Students and Scholars (ISSO)** at Oakland University is renaming its 12-year old Host Family Program to the Creating American International Relationships (CAIR) Program.

"I am very excited to see the growth of this program over last eight years and the tremendous involvement of our own faculty and staff," said Petra Knoche, international adviser and program director.

"In today's world, it is important for us to exchange open and friendly conversations and learn from each other and our individual backgrounds."

Rather than simply arrange housing opportunities to international students who come to Oakland's Rochester campus for both graduate and undergraduate studies, the CAIR Program aims to foster mutually beneficial and enriching partnerships between hosts and students.

These partnerships begin when the ISSO matches visiting students with individuals or families who share common interests and preferences.

Over time, international students come to appreciate support and friendship that helps them integrate into American culture. Meanwhile, the program offers hosts an opportunity to experience diversity firsthand and learn about another culture without having to leave home. In this sense, all involved in the cultural exchange partnerships that CAIR facilitates gain new knowledge, perspectives and insight from around the world.

In addition, the ISSO invites both hosts and students to attend several social events throughout each academic year. Program partners all receive regular updates on other multicultural events taking place on campus. All of these events create opportunities for CAIR partners to learn and experience even more through interaction with other program hosts and students.

"Our goal is to match all of our interested international students with partners," said Host Family Coordinator Kyla Kellerman, who came to Oakland University as an international student from Canada.

"We would greatly appreciate the community's help in this endeavor, because we know how important this program is to international students and the OU community."

Sameer Pokharel, a graduate student from Nepal who is majoring in exercise science, expressed a great deal of gratitude for the CAIR program.

"My hosts are among the most kind and loving persons I have met here in the U.S.A. They are very caring and benevolent in nature," he said.

"I feel highly obliged to our International Students and Scholars office for organizing such a program. I believe programs like this will make international students feel they are at their home ... (and help them) get acquainted to American culture and lifestyle."

Those interested in creating a cultural exchange partnership with an international student this fall can learn how on the **ISSO website**.

The office will also host its **Summer Picnic** from 4-8 p.m. on Thursday, Aug. 11, at Riverside Park in Auburn Hills. Prospective hosts can learn more about the program and meet current host and student partners. Additional event details are available by visiting the ISSO website at the link above.



Back row, from left to right: Yumeno, Geri Jablonski, Thao Vu, Just Ham, Nghia Tran. Front row, from left to right: Sameer Pokhrel and Thomas E. Jablonski