Dear MFIS,

I'm leaving Madison tomorrow, after 4 months of hard, but very pleasant work here. I couldn't leave, however, without first telling you how grateful I am for all the help and care with me. You've done much more than finding a family to host me for the very first days or loaning me some furniture.

By staying with Marilyn and Dave, I got much more than shelter and solidarity. In fact, I've met a wonderful family who was able to make me feel at home and whose friendship is one of the most valuable assets of my time here in Madison.

Mike and Bill were also (tireless) in their effort to help me turn an empty apartment into a home. If I had any doubts about it, I now know that angels do exist. Thank you so much and may all of the good things you've been doing for so many people turn into blessings to you and your beloved ones.

Finally, not to extend too much, my experience with MFIS made me think a lot about how much I have (or have not) been taking an active part in my community and how much I have (or have not) been committed to making someone else's life easier or better. I hope I've learned enough to act more proactively towards other people and would just like to let you know how grateful I am for you happening to be on my way. You're now a good - very good, by the way - part of it.

Yours,
Hamilton, of Brazil

Volunteers Needed for New International Student Orientation in August!

Every fall and spring MIFS is the only off-campus organization invited by ISS to be a part of the welcome for incoming international students. Many of you have been a part of this welcome which includes a smile, meeting and greeting, and sharing info on MFIS. If you can help, please put the dates located to the right of this page on your calendar. (Contact Sherry Caves at 279-7437, shercaves@tds.net.) The most important is Sept. 1 from 10 to 12 at the new OGG Hall.
Temp Hosting Program has URGENT needs

MFIS Temporary Hosting program, through which incoming internationals are matched to host families that house them for their first 2-4 days in Madison, is one of MFIS most helpful programs to international students and scholars. And the busy time for that program is this month--July. Temp Hosting is managed by a team of several individuals, but the load for making placements is heavy from now through mid August and additional helpers for this team are critically needed. If you are able to send emails and make phone calls in the coming several weeks, please consider helping the Temporary Hosting program by agreeing to make a certain number of matches. This is an urgent MFIS need!

In addition, each year it is difficult to place all of the students who request Temp Hosting because the number of volunteers is insufficient to provide matches for all interested students. Last year, we had to tell several students that we could not help them due to running out of available volunteers. If you will be available to host in your home in mid to late August, please consider adding your name to the list of potential hosts. The more volunteer hosts we get, the fewer students we'll have to turn away this fall.

Here are a few quotes from past program volunteers…

"We had a lot of fun with (our student) …we love hosting and intend to do it forever".

"After dinner, we took our students for a walk, which they enjoyed…one said, 'I don't want to blink, I think I will miss some of the beauty that surrounds me'."

To help match students and hosts, or to sign up as a potential host family, please contact MFIS at mfis.temphosting@gmail.com or 263-4010. Thank you for considering helping with this critical MFIS program!

Sign Up Today! Fall Semester International Students Will Be Arriving Soon!

“Friendship Hosts” program temporarily suspended, coordinators needed

In the Spring 2009 MFIS newsletter, it was announced that the Friendship Sharing & Conversation Partner programs were going to be merged into one program called “Friendship Hosts.” Although the programs do have differences, we believe the two offerings can be more efficiently administered as a single program by a single coordinator or team, instead of one coordinator/team for each program. To do so simply means finding out participating students’ specific interests (e.g., general friendship vs. language improvement), finding out program volunteers’ specific interests on these same two counts, and making matches as appropriate.

Although the two programs have been merged, MFIS’ “Friendship Hosts” program lacks coordinators to run this landmark that has been a vital part of the long history of MFIS. Though MFIS is anxious to serve incoming 2009-2010 students, we need 1-2 organized individuals to coordinate these student/host matches, so if helping with this “new” program interests you, please contact us ASAP!
Mentors needed for U.S. State Dept. sponsored international students at MATC

In the upcoming academic year, MATC will host 13 international students from a variety of countries who are being sponsored on a U.S. State Department grant administered through Community Colleges for International Development. This program provides underserved, non-elite young adults with quality educational programs, professional development, employment skills, and a first-hand understanding of U.S. society, with which to make contributions to the continued economic and democratic development of their home countries. If you’d like to be part of an influential diplomatic initiative such as this, please consider serving as a student mentor. For details, please contact MATC at internationalstudents@matcmadison.edu or 243-4461.

CIEE needs school-year hosts for international high schoolers

The Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE) is looking for Madison families with an extra bed who find value in learning about another culture and want to share American culture by welcoming an international high school student into their home. Some CIEE students come for one semester (5 months), while others come for a full school year (10 months). According to a CIEE volunteer, the students all come with high GPAs, their own money, their own health insurance, etc. If you’d be interested in hosting an international high schooler through CIEE, please contact Daniel Stiepleman at danielstiepleman@yahoo.com or 630-3641.

“It is one of the most beautiful compensations of this life that no man can sincerely try to help another without helping himself. “ ~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

BOARD MEMBERS 2009-10

Co-President: Stephanie Cowan
Co-President: Katie Wirka
Past President: Sabrina Karl
Treasurer: Heidi Boyce
Secretary: Sherry Caves
Directors: Brian Beutter
           Hedda Goodman
           Lisa Jackson
           Shere-Ling Krause-Yao
           Joanne Lenburg
           Anne Nahn
           Gail Nordheim
           Joy Rice
           Erin Van Der Loop
ISS Liaison: Tina Hatch
MFIS' annual picnic is coming up...

Please join us for the 48th annual "Welcome to Wisconsin!" Picnic. Whether you'd like to attend just to mix and mingle with our newly arriving international students, scholars, and their families, or can provide some added help (see below), we would love to have you be a part of this important MFIS event! (Please see enclosed flyer for detailed information.)

Date: Sun, Aug 30
Time: 11:30a - 2:30p
Place: Rennebohm Park, 115 N. Eau Claire Ave., Madison (just west of Hilldale Mall)
Cost: $8 for a buffet-style picnic lunch

Volunteers needed for:
Mixing/mingling with students
Pre-event set-up
Post-meal clean-up
A ride to/from the event for 1-2 students
Helping organize picnic games and sports

To reserve your spot at the event and indicate whether you can help with any of the above volunteer needs, see enclosed flyer for more details. Reservations can be made by contacting MFIS at mfis@odos.wisc.edu or 263-4010.
Hope to see you there!

Madison Friends of International Students
UW Red Gym, 716 Langdon St.
Room 223
Madison, WI 53706-1400