



FOR IMMEDIATE NEWS RELEASE -- ALL MEDIA

9/22/14

Preparations underway for Thanksgiving Event / NEED FOR HOMESTAY HOST FAMILIES

Local volunteers for Geneseo International Thanksgiving Fellowship Program met September 16 in home of board member Sue Fonteyne, Geneseo, to initiate plans for the fifty-fifth annual visit of international college students (some with families) from Chicago area colleges over Thanksgiving weekend, November 26 – 30, 2014. Jackie Mickley, Geneseo, and Cindra German, Cambridge were elected to the GITFP Board, replacing retiring members, GayAnn Rahn, Geneseo, and MaryJane Boelens, Atkinson.

The program, unique to Illinois, is carried out in communities surrounding centers in Geneseo, Morrison, Paris, Prophetstown, and Sterling-Rock Falls. Those areas charter buses to transport the students from Chicago to their central communities and back to Chicago.

Foreign students attending Chicago area colleges are invited to participate, not as a vacation but as an opportunity to meet Americans and learn about their own homes, the unique American holiday, and a part of “real” America outside Chicago and that often portrayed by the media. It enables them to practice conversational English. It is intended for people new to the United States who plan to return home and help their countries. It improves understanding for both hosts and guests and helps Americans appreciate the United States more as well. The program offers a fun and interesting way to learn about other parts and peoples of the world at very little expense.

Host families (singles, couples, with or without children) with an extra bedroom and a willingness to share their holiday and to learn about another culture are needed. Younger homestay hosts and farm families are always requested. Applications need to be completed with any of the following people by November 12:

Atkinson – MaryJane Boelens (Albert), GayAnn Rahn (Richard)

Cambridge – Karen Lyman (Alan), Cindra German (Ken)

Colona & Quad Cities Area – Jacki (Don) Catour, Colona

Orion-Andover -- Joanne Wright (John) after October 24th

Geneseo -- First Lutheran – Janet Boyd-Larson (Jim)

First United Methodist - Jan Corsaro, Karen Lyman (Alan)

Grace United Methodist - Margaret McDowell (Ross), Jackie Mickley (Joe)

Loraine United Methodist – Vicky Vandike (Steve)

St. John’s Lutheran –Terri Hock (Larry) after October 24th;

Arlyn or Marcia Helke

St. Malachy’s Catholic –Vicki (Mike) Rowlands, Sue Fonteyne (Steve)

Overall Coordinators -- Arlyn and Marcia Helke, (309) 944-4486

People from areas or churches not listed should check with their church offices or ministers or are welcome to contact any of the above people.

A Host Information meeting for past and new hosts will be held Monday, November 17 at 7:00 pm at First Presbyterian Church, 133 East North Street, Geneseo. It is important for ALL (previous and new) hosts to try to attend to receive information, materials and changes for this year's event, and to meet other hosts as well.

Guests will arrive approximately 5:00 pm (depending on student arrival in Chicago, weather, traffic, etc.) Wednesday, November 26 at First Congregational Church, 101 West Pearl Street, Geneseo to meet host families. They will leave from same location, Sunday, November 30 at 2:00 pm.

The only group event that all hosts and guests need to attend will be a 6:00 pm International Potluck followed by a Program on Saturday, November 29 at First United Methodist Church, 302 North State Street, Geneseo. Use State Street door. It is a special time for all guests and hosts to talk with each other and usually means a lot to all those in attendance. Foreign guests here on other programs are also invited to attend with their host families, as well as donors and the public.

GITFP operates through tax-deductible donations and limited grants totally by volunteers. Any organization, business, or individual wishing to donate fingerfood for the bus ride, funds for the nonprofit program expenses, or to volunteer in any way, should contact anyone listed in this article.

(Thank you!
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