

Group matches foreign students with local hosts

By Pat Carraher

An organization has changed its name and is trying to expand its work in Lincoln.

The Lincoln Friends of Foreign Students, formerly called the Host Family Association, is a local group which matches a foreign student with a local resident, or host, to help with any problems the foreign student might have.

"It's an all-volunteer program, said Marge Borman, assistant coordinator of the program. "We have applications from foreign students, and we have applications from Lincoln residents. My job is to match them up."

In the past, the hosts for the foreign students were usually families. However, it seems that has changed. Borman said that now they are happy to include anyone, male or female, married or single, in the organization. She also said that the foreign students may be either married or single.

"Once the foreign student has been matched with a host, it is entirely up to them how often they want to meet, and what they want to do when they meet," Borman said.

The meeting may be made so the foreign student can

receive some help for a certain problem. Local procedures, such as getting a drivers license, may cause some problems for a foreign student.

The student may want to meet with someone just for a social get-together, she said.

"The meetings are usually a social thing. The host may want to invite the student to a meal, a concert, a game of cards or something like this," Borman said.

It is recommended that the student should see his Lincoln host once a week, although some are so busy that even meeting once a month is difficult.

A good example of a useful meeting between a host and a foreign student is a holiday meal, Borman said. A holiday meal not only gives the student some place to go for a holiday, but also allows for an exchange of culture during a holiday.

Twice a year, all those involved in the program get together for an activity.

"We only have two group meetings a year," she said. "One is a picnic right before first semester, and the other is a winter activity right before the start of the second semester."

While work in the organization seems to be going well,

Borman said there is one major problem that it faces.

"Right now, we aren't able to match up all the foreign students with a host," she said. "We don't have enough applications from potential host families at the moment."

More Lincoln students and area residents should get involved in the program, and become a host, she said.

"I suppose, first of all, it's very helpful to the foreign student, but both will get a lot of enjoyment out of it. I don't know of one person ever involved in the program who hasn't enjoyed it," she said.

Linda Becker, of the International Educational Services Department at UNL, agrees with Borman that more hosts are needed in the program.

"We have about 200 foreign students placed. That represents about 150 hosts, or 'friends', since some people have taken on more than one student," she said. She also mentioned that there are many more students on a waiting list.

short stuff

Leaders' Theater will be today at 1 p.m. in the Student Y, Nebraska Union room 117. Al Harris will lead the group in an informal sharing of students' writings and thoughts. Everyone is welcome.

InterVarsity Christian Fellowship will have a meeting at 7 tonight in the Nebraska Union. Room will be posted.

UNL Chess Club will meet on Monday from 6:30 to 11 p.m. in the South Crib of the Nebraska Union.

Everyone is invited to play badminton every Monday from 6 to 7 p.m. Equipment is provided. For more information, call 472-1264.

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