

International Student and Scholar Office  
Administration Building, Suite 246  
7720 York Road  
Towson, MD 21252-0001  
Phone: 410-704-2421  
Fax: 410-704-6040

## **What is the Towson International Hospitality Association?**

The Towson International Hospitality Association (TIHA) is a volunteer program designed to help the greater Towson community get to know and foster friendships with Towson University international students.

Towson community residents will gain opportunities to understand other cultural perspectives. The community relationships provide international students with an excellent chance to experience U.S. home life first-hand and to interact more fully in the community. In addition, by befriending newly arrived international students, community participants can help students in their cultural adjustment to life here.

### **How do these connections take place?**

The Towson International Hospitality Association typically matches two international students with each participating U.S. host family (or individual), based on information gathered from all participants. (We suggest two international students per family/host, as some students feel shy or uncomfortable in these settings when they are alone.) International students and community participants meet each other for the first time at a welcome event organized by the International Student and Scholar Office, at the beginning of each semester, and are encouraged to meet at least once a month thereafter. Suggested activities and invitations to events will be sent via email periodically throughout the year.

### **What is expected of the Towson community participants?**

Towson community participants should make an effort to welcome and get to know their international students, which can be done through a variety of different ways. Some residents like to invite international students to their homes for a simple meal or for special holiday occasions, such as a birthday or Thanksgiving dinner. Including the international students in any family or recreational activity is a good ice-breaker. Because most international students do not have cars, participating Towson community hosts must be able to provide transportation for their students, generally from a campus pick-up point.

### **What should we do together?**

Inviting students to take part in family activities, such as a local sporting event, a child's school event, or a local shopping trip, is sometimes the perfect way to make them feel at home and invites lively sharing of cross-cultural information. Some other fun easy-to-plan suggestions for activities are: a picnic, open skating

at the local ice rink, miniature golfing, a visit to a driving range or batting cage, chatting over coffee or tea at a bookstore, an open campus event such as a concert, a visit to a zoo or museum, hiking at a state park, badminton or tennis on campus. A trip to the Inner Harbor to watch an Oriole's game, to visit the Baltimore Aquarium, or to take a water-taxi to Fells Point, are some great ways to introduce international students to Baltimore culture. As hosts and students get to know each other better, inclusion of the students in a short trip (such as to the shore or the bay, Annapolis, Washington or Philadelphia) might be mutually enjoyable. Before planning an event, hosts and their international students should make arrangements regarding some of the logistics (i.e., transportation, entrance fees, etc.), with sensitivity to the constraints of a student budget. Program participants should keep in mind that they are not required to plan specific types of events or activities, but it is up to them to decide what they would like to do together to introduce U.S. culture.

**What is not expected of Towson community participants?**

Towson community participants do not provide housing, financial assistance, nor legal advice for their student participants. They also do not need to provide help with serious emotional or health problems. Participants in the program should not expect their international friends to agree with their religious or political beliefs and perspectives, and should be cautious about the appropriateness of those types of conversations.

**What is expected of Towson international student participants?**

Towson international student participants are expected to meet and stay in contact with their hosts at least once a month for a minimum commitment of one semester. International students must also demonstrate willingness to both share their cultural perspectives and learn new ones. They must be open to invitations and willing to consider inviting their hosts to share special times of celebration with them. However, students should not feel obligated to host a dinner or take on any undue expenses in the relationship. Additionally, if international students feel uncomfortable with their TIHA connection, they may notify the ISSO to cancel participation prior to the completion of the first semester.

**What are the benefits of program participation?**

The most rewarding outcome of the Towson International Hospitality Association is that friendships –with potential for great intercultural learning– are established. The mutual respect gained for one another often leads to increased cross-cultural understanding and global awareness. Some friendships last only a single semester, while others last a lifetime.

If you have questions, comments, or concerns, please contact us at [isso@towson.edu](mailto:isso@towson.edu).

# Towson International Hospitality Association

\_\_\_\_\_  
First (Given) Name(s) Last (Family/Surname) Name(s) Month / Day / Year

Gender: Male Female Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Number and Street City, State ZIP

Preferred method of communication: Email Telephone

If you are married and/or have children in your household, please list name, age, and your relationship to them:

ex. John 33 (husband), Tina 6 (daughter) (for students: list those family members who are with you in the U.S.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
List interests, hobbies, sports, talents, etc. (for hosts: all in household): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Do you have an interest in or enjoy discussing religion? Yes  No  If yes, please feel free to either indicate your religion, or skip to the next section: \_\_\_\_\_

.....  
**Only Students Complete this Section: (Hosts should skip to lower section)**

Home Country \_\_\_\_\_ Languages: \_\_\_\_\_

Program (circle one): Undergraduate Graduate Student Field of Study: \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you been living in the United States? \_\_\_\_\_ Expected graduation date: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have relatives in the U.S.? Yes  No  If yes, where? \_\_\_\_\_

Please list any dietary requirements (e.g., vegetarian? don't eat pork?): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Do you have any allergies or concerns regarding family pets such as cats or dogs? Yes  No

If yes, please clarify. \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have use of a car? Yes  No

Which of the following hosts would you be comfortable with? **Check all that apply.**

Married couple  Single man  Single woman

Family  Towson University faculty or staff member (and possibly family)

.....  
**Only Hosts Complete this Section:**

Educational schools/colleges attending/attended, occupations, foreign language abilities (all in household):

\_\_\_\_\_  
Do you have pets? Yes  No  If yes, state what kind. \_\_\_\_\_

Which of the following international students would be your preference? **Check all that apply:**

Men  Women  Couples  With Children

Could you accommodate more than two students at a time? Yes  No

How many would you like, should that be possible? 3  4

Do you have any other requirements, requests, restrictions? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_