

What is MIC's hosting program?

Through one of our oldest and most popular programs, MIC offers members frequent opportunities to host mid-career professionals and students from around the world for dinner. Many MIC members enjoy opening their homes and gaining new insights into today's world in this informal way. Hosting international guests helps MIC promote global exchange and understanding between Minnesotans and citizens of the world.

Hosts have commented, *It was extremely rewarding... We always love these visits and feel lucky to be able to host them...Our conversation was lively, extensive and illuminating. This visit was absolutely wonderful. They (the visitors) seemed pleased and satisfied, and we were exceptionally happy with our guests.*

How are visits organized?

Members respond to MIC's announcements about dinner hosting opportunities, or staff and volunteers may contact you by phone or email. Brief written introductory information is provided to you and to your guests. If you have a question or suggestion about hosting, please contact MIC at 612.625.4421 or mic@umn.edu.

Hosts are MIC's members who enjoy meeting and welcoming international people into their homes to share a meal and lively discussion. It is not necessary that hosts and guests share interests or professions. The purpose of the visit is to promote cultural exchange. To ensure familiarity with MIC and its policies, hosting is an opportunity offered only to MIC members. MIC also encourages you to refer possible future members.

Who are the guests?

The Minnesota International Center organizes home visits with:

- 1) professional visitors, sponsored by the U.S. State Department, or
- 2) students and staff studying at the University of Minnesota or other area campuses.

International guests value visiting a local home to learn more about the U.S. and to share perspectives. MIC hosts value meeting well-informed international guests and discussing opinions that go beyond media sound bytes.

Mid-career *professional visitors*, who are sponsored by the United States Department of State, come to the Twin Cities for 2-3 days to meet with colleagues in their field. MIC's professional exchange staff and volunteers arrange their daytime professional appointments. Dinners for professional guests often occur after a day of appointments. During a typical year, MIC organizes dinner hosting for more than 150 professional guests, including educators, governmental officials, and staff of nonprofit organizations. A brochure about the U.S. State Department's International Visitor Leadership Program is available upon request.

MIC periodically arranges dinners for *international students* on a Saturday or Sunday during the academic year, or on holidays. Your guest may be pursuing a degree, conducting research, or studying English as a Second Language. A brochure providing

helpful suggestions about hosting international students is available upon request.

What should we know about hosting (in a nutshell)?

Advance information

Arrangements are confirmed in advance via fax, mail, or email. For professional visitors, a specific pick-up time is arranged, and an interpreter may accompany the guest. For students, hosts call their guests to arrange the pick-up time and location. There may be a short timeline on confirming dinner arrangements. We appreciate your flexibility and understanding.

The visit

Hosts pick up their guests at their hotel or residence at the time arranged, returning them at a reasonable time, so they can be ready for their next day's schedule. Because your guest is eager to visit a U.S. home, we ask that you host your guests at home, rather than in a restaurant. We provide information about dietary preferences, when known.

Conversation usually flows easily, but it may be helpful to have some topics ready, based on the background information provided. Topics may range from politics to the supermarket. Some guests may be willing or even eager to discuss controversial topics. For any topic, it's important that opinions and values are respected.

We suggest that you invite friends and neighbors to assist with hosting. We hope that you will encourage them to become MIC members and to enjoy hosting future dinners, too! MIC is happy to mail membership information to those you refer.

Political and religious activity

The mission of the Minnesota International Center (MIC) is to increase and strengthen international exchange and understanding between Minnesotans and other citizens of the world.

MIC participants recognize that the religious, political, and social beliefs of international students and visitors are important parts of their cultural heritage and merit the respect of Minnesotans. Openly discussing personal beliefs and inviting students and visitors to religious and political events can provide positive opportunities for mutual inquiry. However, there must not be any attempt to persuade someone to attend religious or political events or to persist with discussion of these topics if the person indicates a reluctance to do so. The goal of the relationship must not be to change a person's beliefs or affiliations. Any invitation to an event sponsored by a religious or political group should clearly indicate the nature of the event and its sponsorship.

Insurance coverage

Hosts accept the same legal responsibility for their guests' well-being as when hosting local guests. The Minnesota International Center assumes that all hosts carry auto and homeowners insurance coverage and have a good driving record. If you have any questions, we recommend that you consult with your insurance agent for appropriate coverage. The Minnesota International Center assumes no responsibility or liability for

any claims or damages or injuries caused by the acts or omissions of MIC-referred guests.

Future Contact

Many hosts and guests continue communicating beyond the visit. Ask your guests for their email and mailing addresses. MIC will not be able to provide address changes of guests.

How do we find out about Hosting Opportunities?

We encourage you to contact us about international guests you would like to host. You can find out about these opportunities through:

- ❖ **MIC's *Communique***: Watch for **Hosting Opportunities** listed in each issue.
- ❖ **Email announcements**: Provide MIC (mic@umn.edu) with your email address, and we will email you regular announcements about upcoming hosting opportunities.

Hosting international guests offers a wonderful experience for meaningful cultural exchange. We value your contribution to promoting international understanding.