Did you know that almost 70% of international students and scholars return home without making friends with an American?

Don’t be part of that statistic!

**Application Process**

To join Friendship Partners, please contact Director of ESL and Friendship Partners, Laura Danner, at (205) 776-5343, ldanner@briarwood.org.

Partners are matched during the first few weeks of each semester. Thanks!

Proselytizing is not allowed in this program. While your partner may come from a different religious, ethnic, and/or social background than you, you are not expected or required to adopt their beliefs or customs. UAB adheres to the NAFSA: Association for International Educators policy of encouraging participants to be sensitive to and respectful of each others’ beliefs while allowing for a mutual exchange of ideas.
What Is Friendship Partners?

Briarwood Presbyterian Church’s Office of International Outreach coordinates the Friendship Partners program, which pairs American families with international students at UAB and other Birmingham-area universities. The program seeks to promote friendship and understanding between cultures.

Friendship Partners is directed by Laura Danner, Director of ESL at Briarwood Presbyterian Church, PCA.

Why Should I Participate?

- Promote cultural awareness
- Step outside yourself and learn from others
- Make an international visitor’s time in the US a memorable and enjoyable experience
- Share wonderful and fun experiences
- See Birmingham through different eyes
- Gain insight into different world views
- Meet other community members with similar interests
- “Travel” while staying at home
- Make a new friend for life

What Is Expected of a Friendship Partner?

- Commit to befriend an international student or scholar for two semesters.
- Meet with your partner at least once a month. Contact them at least one other time as well, via email or phone.
- Include your partner in activities and conversations when possible and answer questions about life in the US.
- Care about and be a general resource for your partner.
- Actively support and participate in social activities planned for Friendship Partners.

What Else Do I Need to Know?

International students and scholars arrive in the US with their own religious and political beliefs. Proselytizing may be offensive and/or confusing to them. Partners should be sensitive to and respectful of each others’ beliefs to allow for a mutual exchange of ideas.

What Can I Do With My Friendship Partner?

The possibilities are endless! Ask them what they would like to do and plan something together. Here are some ideas:

- Invite your partner to your home and cook a favorite family recipe
- Attend a cultural event
- Cheer on the hometeam at a sporting event
- Go to a movie or a concert
- Explore a local park
- Go shopping
- Explore Birmingham after dark
- Include your partner in family and holiday traditions (birthday parties, Fourth of July, Thanksgiving, etc.)
- Invite your partner to a tailgate or football game party
- Bike around downtown one afternoon to orient them to the city
- Take them to a farmers market on Saturday