



Mentor Family Program Expectations and Tips for Families and Students

Expectations for Program Participants

- The MFP is essentially a first-year program, though it is very common for relationships to continue for many years. Once the student's first year has ended, student and mentors may agree to continue together, add new student to their "family," or simply stop.
- Participants generally spend time together once or twice a month. We recognize that some students and families may be unable to commit so much time and that is ok. We match families who have less time with those students who have indicated that they would still like to be involved but are more independent.
- In addition to the activities planned by individuals, MC's Office of International Programs coordinates several programs each year for all mentor families and students. We hope all participants make a strong effort to be at each of these events.
- Mentor families should be available to offer support for simple daily tasks such as the occasional shopping trip or by giving advice on what to do for fun in the community.
- Occasionally, questions and problems will arise between participants. Please keep open contact with the MFP Coordinator so that we can address any concerns, provide support, and help ensure everyone involved has a positive experience.

What should not be Expected from Program Participants

- Hosting. Though mentor families might choose to invite students over for a short-term stay, this is not a hosting program. All new international students are provided on- campus housing.
- Airport runs. The MC International Programs Office provides free airport transportation on specified dates and MC Campus Police provides this service anytime students request it for a fee of \$60.
- Summer storage. Though it is a helpful service, if space permits, this is not required or expected or mentor families.
- Legal or emotional counsel. Marietta College provides all students a variety of services such as a counseling center, a career center, and an international student advisor who handles legal issues, employment concerns, and more. The MFP is a social program and not intended to substitute for campus services already available to students.

Tips for Mentor Families

Students will not want to be a bother to you and may rarely ask you for help directly (at least in the beginning). Sometimes, they may even refuse your offer for dinner or to visit their home because they do not want to impose. We encourage you to be persistent and reassure them that you are involved in this program because you want to visit with them. At the same time, you will want to encourage them to be open with you when they have other commitments and are truly unable to accept your invitation.

You do not always need to create activities for your student. By simply inviting them into your home, having them over for a holiday celebration, going grocery shopping, or by taking them to your office, etc., you are educating them on the US culture.

When students visit your home, please share with them the “ground rules” your family members abide by such as, not wearing hats at the dinner table, removal of shoes before entering the home, etc. During long stays, this is more crucial as some students may not realize the inconvenience caused by long hours on the internet or phone, or late night calls or visits from friends.

Tips for Students

Please understand that your mentor family has signed up for the program because they want to spend time with you and become your friend. If they invite you to their home or offer to take you to dinner, it is because they are very happy to do so. Please also understand that if you often refuse their invitations, they may think they are bothering you and may stop inviting you.

When you do visit a person’s home for the first time, be aware that they many households have specific rules that family members and guests should follow, such as no smoking the house, not wearing a hat at the dinner table, not making long distance phone calls without permission. It is always ok, and even more so when staying for a long period of time to ask questions about these “ground rules,” as we call them. Additionally, as American’s are generally direct people, when they say to “make yourself at home,” they really mean it. You are not just a visitor to them—you are part of their family. They want you to feel free to get a drink when you are thirsty or a snack when you are hungry.

I encourage you to invite your mentor family to campus for activities such as art shows, theatre performances, or sporting events, etc. This gives you the opportunity to host them for a few hours and share your life and your college experience with them.