

Friends



The Friendship Foundation for International Students, Eugene, Oregon

bridging cultures and promoting world peace and understanding through international friendships

A Monthly E-Newsletter

January 2011

Mission Statement

The Friendship Foundation for International Students (FFIS) is a non-profit organization that exists to bridge cultures and promote world peace and understanding through international friendship, personal diplomacy, and exchange of ideas. Through our programs and activities, FFIS builds trust and fosters goodwill between the local community and University of Oregon international students, alumni, scholars, and their families.

FFIS Steering Committee

Kelli Matthews (Chair), Rick Obst (Vice Chair), Olivia Pierce (Secretary), Shirley Gilbreath/Matthew Fisher (Treasurer), Steve Gilbreath (Conversation Friend Coordinator), Becky Megerssa (UO Liaison), Lindy Mabuya (Student Program Assistant), June Brooks, Ann Danby, Anuncia Escala, Jan Jones, Suzanne Makita, Peggy Rice, Cerise Roth-Vinson, Kris Stewart, Stephanie Wood, Vania Situmeang (international student), Xuanyao "Isabell" Zhu (international student)

Contact Us or Make a Donation

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*FFIS relies on voluntary donations. Please consider making a **tax-deductible donation** today. Checks should be made payable to FFIS. Debit/Credit: Online (Paypal) at ffisoregon.org.*

Thank You!

Interview with June Brooks

June Brooks, an FFIS Steering Committee member and ongoing participant in FFIS's Homestay program, shares her most recent Homestay program experience hosting UO international student Lucile de Boisson of France.

How and when did you get involved with FFIS?

I have been involved as a host parent for international students since 1989. We became involved through a friend who had been a host parent for a number of years. In the past 21 years, we have probably had around 20 students.

How many times have you participated in FFIS's Homestay program? If more than once, what other countries were your Homestay students from?

Our students have come from all over Europe (England, Scotland, Norway, Denmark, France, Germany, Cyprus, Romania, Austria and Italy) as well as from Australia. Some of them have stayed at the U of O for only one term while others have



Left to right: Dan Kaye (June's Husband), Lucile de Boisson, and June Brooks

completed entire degrees here, undergraduate as well as graduate degrees. I am still in close contact with my first student, a young man from Norway, as well as about 10 others. My husband and I were actually able to visit five of our former students last year while we traveled throughout northern Europe. It was certainly wonderful to see so many of them, to meet their spouses and their children or in two cases, their parents.

What did you enjoy most about your experiences

If you would like to host an international student, go to international.uoregon.edu/index.php/community-members/short-term-homestay-program to sign up to be a host family or email ffis@uoregon.edu to update your FFIS profile.

with the Homestay program?

The thing that I enjoy most about the program is getting to know the students and having the opportunity to show them around the Eugene area and then around Oregon. We always make it a point to take them to Crater Lake right away in September since the northern entrance to the National Park closes at the first snowfall and sometimes doesn't open again until late June. We always take them to the coast. We also like to take them to places right here in town that they might not know about (Spencer's Butte, Mt. Pisgah, the Bijou movie theater). Having them over for dinner on a regular basis, taking them to U of O sporting events, and taking them shopping are other things that are always enjoyable.

Please briefly explain how you may have helped Lucile make that transition from French to American culture?

Lucile is one of the most outgoing, vivacious students we have ever had the pleasure of getting to know. She jumped into the American culture and all the opportunities at the U of O with no prompting from us!

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Students from 18 Countries Hosted

The FFIS Winter Homestay Program gave 18 students from Germany, China, Taiwan, Singapore, Italy, Denmark, New Zealand, South Korea, Japan and France the experience of American life over the holidays, thanks to 10 FFIS host families.

Thank you to the following families for their tremendous generosity this holiday season:

Ellen Singer & Gary Rondeau
Patti & Barry Burnette
Jeanne & Kent Henriksen
Robbin & Kaz Howard
Elaine Pandolfi
Scott & Lori Rude
Galen & Laura Griffin
Thomas Sanchez
Kenda Pitetti
Suzanne & Bill Dassenko

If you would like to host a student for the Spring Homestay Program from March 23 - 27, please contact the FFIS office at ffis@UOregon.edu or 541-346-0435.

Your Support Counts!

Thank you to the following 2010-11 donors:

Stephanie Wood and Robert Hasket
Frederick and Linda Meyer
June Brooks and Daniel Kaye
Janice and Paul Jones
Richard and Suzanne Obst
Peggy and Richard Rice
Olivia Pierce
Stephen and Shirley Gilbreath
Anuncia Escala
Catherine Manz Smith
David and Jeanne Brewer
James and Helen Jackson
James A. Nell
Paul Weaver
Kent and Jeanne Henriksen
Paul and Susan Primak
Karen and Tenold Peterson
Terrence and Anne Carter
Irene Phillips

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JANUARY 2011

20 Career Fair for Int'l Students

FEBRUARY 2011

2 FFIS Steering Committee Meeting

11 Volunteer Appreciation Party

19,20 Asian Celebration/Fairgrounds

Quick Facts

- 118 new international students winter term
- Total international student enrollment is 1720
- 10 FFIS members hosted new winter students
- 39 FFIS Conversation Friends matched with students

Be a Conversation Friend to a Student

Imagine being a student from Japan, Saudi Arabia, or China and trying to figure out what "scraping the bottom of the barrel" or "he wears many hats" mean!! We use many idioms in conversation which are particularly difficult for international students.



The Conversation Friend Program matches volunteer members from our community with international students to help them with conversational English. There are no textbooks, lesson plans, or firm schedules. Each volunteer meets with their student for one hour a week to help them in whatever way best meets their needs in adapting to and understanding our language. These conversations can occur anywhere—in a coffee shop, in your home, at the mall or Saturday Market. Please consider volunteering. We ask only that you try to meet your student for one hour a week at a time and place that is convenient for both of you. And don't be surprised if you soon become good



friends. These conversations often result in life-long friendships as you learn about one another's culture and celebrate special occasions and experiences together.

If you cannot commit to meeting once a week for one hour, but would like to meet and be friends with an international student on a more casual and irregular basis, we also have an International Friend Program to promote friendship and hospitality between members of the community and the students.

To enrich the experience of an international student in our community and find a friend from another culture by participating in one of these programs, please email ffis@uoregon.edu.

Interview with June Brooks *continued*

She has gone sea kayaking at the coast, rock climbing at Smith Rock, snowboarding at Mt. Bachelor, gone whitewater rafting on the McKenzie and she has climbed South Sister to watch the sunrise - just to name a few things she has done in the three months she has been here! She has seen more of Oregon and has enjoyed more of its natural wonders than people who have lived here their entire lives.

What was the most memorable thing you learned about Lucile's way of life in France?

I think that the most important thing we have learned from our students over the years is that the things that we as human beings have in common are much, much greater than any differences we may have because we speak a different language or have a different religion. France is not so very different from the U.S., so there hasn't been one thing that stands out that we have learned about the French culture from Lucile.

Was there anything you discovered about your own culture while hosting?

Most of my students comment on how friendly Americans are - how warm and outgoing we are. Depending on where they come from, they see our infrastructure and our way of doing things as very efficient and commendable, or very antiquated. It is interesting to see how that opinion changes depending on where the students hail from.

Where in the World is...?

Ever wonder exactly where your international student is from, but don't have a good atlas handy? There are a number of excellent map websites from where your student can show the area of his or her home town:

Google Maps - <http://maps.google.com/>

World Atlas - <http://www.worldatlas.com/aatlas/world.htm>

Just Maps - <http://www.justmaps.org/>

About.com - <http://geography.about.com/library/maps/blindex.htm>

NEEDS:

- Conversation Friend volunteers
- Host families for spring term (March 23-27)
- Tax-deductible donations

To volunteer or make a donation, please email ffis@uoregon.edu

Go Global Ducks!

An International Student's Reflection on Duck Football

— Xuanyao "Isabell" Zhu

Isabell, from China, is studying, via scholarship, Sociology, Business, and Nonprofit Administration at the University of Oregon. After college, she would like to work at the United Nations or as a fundraiser in a nonprofit organization. Isabell enjoys watching movies, playing piano, reading, listening to music, and skiing.

I had many "first times" here in the U.S. and I still look forward to more firsts. Among all the ones I have had so far though, the most eye-opening to me has to be my experiences with American football.

Before coming to the U.S., football to me meant soccer. When my friends first invited me to watch a football game on TV, I thought we were going to watch a soccer match. I expected to see a lot of tall, skinny guys kicking a soccer ball around. Instead I saw a team of bear-like athletes smashing into each other.

I was totally blown away by the passion (or actually craziness) my fellow dorm mates showed in front of the screen as the game went on. At first, I could not stop making assumptions in my heart: "Ha, this is American football. It's violent and aggressive and represents the American spirit that encourages competition."

At first I didn't really understand the rules of football. But after watching a few games and listening to the rules explained, I was very amazed by the strategies, cooperation, and coordination carried out by the football players and their coaches. Attending a game at Autzen stadium also greatly enlightened my interest in football. I had never been in a place that had 60,000+ people wear the same color of clothing and shout out the same word. This unity represented at the stadium was awesome!

Of course I understand American football is not European soccer. However, I always joke with my family and friends back in China how football can be played so differently between the U.S. and China. For example, there are many American male teenagers who try out and play on football teams. However, if American-style football was played in China, not too many would want to join because of the game's assertiveness.

Whenever there's a chance to watch a Duck's game at Autzen, I definitely will go. Thanks to the U of O football games, I have learned to enjoy sports and am proud to be a Duck.

I have quite a few friends who study at different institutions on the West Coast. Every time we chat, we always start with collegiate football games and occasionally make bets among ourselves. This year, the Ducks beat the Trojans, the Bruins, the Bears and the Huskies! Because of these awesome game results, I won many free lunches and dinners along the West Coast and I am going to redeem them this winter break as I travel!



Left to right: King Tang, (unknown), Hao Zheng, Bonnie Tsang. Above: Xingwei Fu, Li-Hsien Yang