

Serving The World on Our Doorstep

Imagine being a student arriving from another country for the first time. You don't know anyone in the U.S. You arrive at the airport jet-lagged. You have to arrange transportation to wherever it is you might be staying temporarily (often the dorms are not open yet). Your language skills are probably limited.

Mai and I moved back to Columbus in 2005 with the intent of preparing for overseas missions in China. But God had a different pathway toward the Great Commission planned for us.

What we found was that God was sending us into the world by bringing it to our doorstep. We started volunteering with International Friendships (IFI) in the summer of 2005. We still had to take initiative to step out and make ourselves available. But instead of taking us there, he brought there here. We started by volunteering to pick up students at the airport. Since then, we have housed students for short and long periods of time; become language partners; shared holidays with students; hosted and participated in a wide variety of social events; and supported IFI and their staff financially.

Many of these students come from countries in which they have little or no exposure to the Gospel. In many cases it would be illegal or dangerous for the students to learn about Christ's love for them, let alone develop their own faith. But while in the US, while having to be careful certainly, they can hear about that love and see it lived out.

While writing this, we received a letter from an IFI intern we housed 10 years ago. She came to faith while an OSU student, committing her life to sharing that faith when she returned to China. In many ways, her life now looks much like any other citizen in Beijing— with the distinct exception that she knows the Lord of Creation personally. She has hosted home churches, discipled many friends and family, and has watched the Lord bless her through her obedience to his call.

How can you get involved? Come and see. IFI welcomes volunteers for any level of engagement. Never any pressure to do more or be someone you aren't.

-David and Mai Duff