What can you do?

Here are some ideas:
- Have a student over for a meal
- Telephone or e-mail occasionally to learn how he or she is doing
- Let the student know that you are available to talk or to help when he or she needs it
- Share some everyday and special family activities: watching a movie, decorating a Christmas tree, swimming in the pool, go for a picnic, etc.
- Have a student cook a meal from his or her native country and show you some of his/her family pictures
- Help with shopping, including “bargain hunting,” especially when the student first arrives.

What kind of food should you serve?

Almost anything is appropriate because the students are open-minded enough to try new dishes and want to learn about American food. However, it is wise to ask the student before hand, if there are any foods that he or she cannot eat for health or religious reasons.

How should you act?

Be yourself. The students are interested in learning about the American way of life, so do what you always do.

What about religion?

International students come from a variety of religious backgrounds. Many are not Christian. While discussing and sharing information about each other’s religious beliefs and practices can be interesting and informative, it is important to respect the students’ beliefs.

What if a student experiences financial problems?

You are not expected to provide financial support of any kind, and we strongly recommend that if a financial problem does arise, you or the student contact the International Programs Office before taking any action.

Who should you contact if you have concerns about the student?

Contact the International Programs Office at USC Aiken. We are here to help.

Dr. Maria Anastasiou
Phone: 803-641-3671
email: mariaa@usca.edu
SAC Office Suite, Room 160
471 University Parkway
Aiken, SC 29801
http://web.usca.edu/international-programs/index.dot
What is FIS?
Friends of International Students is a community-based hospitality program whose purpose is to

- Assist USCA international students in a new culture
- Promote international friendship and understanding
- Encourage learning and interaction between international students and the community through various activities

Who are these students?
USCA has a growing community of international students. They represent over 20 different countries, including Canada, Brazil, Nigeria, India, the Caribbean, Germany, and France.

Friends of international students welcome new foreign students as they arrive, assist them in various ways while they live in the area, and help to promote good will and understanding through person-to-person interaction.

How can you join?
We invite families and individuals who would like to learn about other people, countries, and cultures to join FIS. Please contact the International Programs Office at (803) 641-3671 to join.

Why is this important?
Have you ever
- Been alone, away from home, and wished for someone to talk to?
- Wanted to know more about another country or culture?
- Wanted to make friends with someone different from you?
- Wished you could do a little to help the cause of peace and understanding?

Then you should consider becoming a friend to an international student. A “friend” can be an individual, a couple, a family, or anyone who would like to befriend a student from another country and help him or her understand the American way of life, our language, our customs, and our community.

How will you benefit?
You will gain a new level of understanding about yourself and your own country. The process of trying to explain an American holiday or our concept of freedom can help clarify your own beliefs. You will also learn first-hand about the traditions and beliefs of the country of your student-friend. Most importantly, it will bring you a gift of friendship and true gratitude from the student you chose to help.

How can you contribute financially to this program?
USCA enrolls international students with strong academic abilities. Unfortunately these students often lack the necessary funds to help them achieve their educational goals. If you would like to make a tax-deductible contribution to the USCA international scholarship fund, please make your check payable to the Aiken Partnership and mail it to the USCA Development Office, 471 University Parkway, Aiken, SC 29801. If you would like to donate items, please contact Maria Anastasiou at mariaa@usca.edu

What commitment will you need to make?
We suggest that you see your student at least once a month so your friendship can grow. During periods when your schedule is irregular or your student is extremely busy with schoolwork, telephone contact can help keep the relationship strong until you can see each other again.

Holidays are usually lonely times for international students, so your friend will appreciate an opportunity to spend a holiday with you and your family.