



## **TOMODACHI PROGRAM INFORMATION**

### ***What is the Tomodachi Program?***

It is a friendship program, not a homestay program. One or two TIUA (Tokyo International University of America) students are matched with a family for almost one academic year (March-December). The family and student should plan to meet once a month (or more) for an activity such as dinner in the family's home, attending a school, community, musical, or sports event, to go shopping or on a picnic. The student and family, through their friendship, will have an opportunity to share their cultures with each other.

### ***How can we/I become involved in the Tomodachi program?***

The participants are selected through an application procedure. The application includes a Release Form that allows us to perform a Criminal Background Check. If you are interested, please fill out our application. You can do this two ways:

1. e-mail the program coordinator ([bdressle@willamette.edu](mailto:bdressle@willamette.edu)) to request more information; or
2. download an application form (requires Acrobat Reader) to mail or fax to TIUA. Application forms can be faxed to 503-373-3399.

### ***How are the students matched with the families?***

Students and families are matched on several criteria. The students have filled out questionnaires and that information is used in selecting a Tomodachi family. If the student has a special interest or hobby, we *try* to find a family who shares that interest or hobby.

### ***What are some activities we/I can do with our/my student(s)?***

Students are interested in how Americans do things. Feel free to invite your student(s) to participate in your daily routine, join you at special cele-

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brations, backyard barbecues, your children's activities, etc. Ask your student about his/her culture--how are things done in Japan? They will be glad to share their culture with you also.

***What if I have questions about what is or isn't culturally appropriate?***

Call the office at TIUA (373-3300) and we will be happy to answer any questions you may have. A couple of times during the year we plan to have some sort of activity for Tomodachi participants. Call TIUA or watch for our e-mails for the date, time, and place of the meetings.

***What kind of American manners are uncomfortable for Japanese students?***

Some Japanese students think Americans talk too much and would like to have more silent time to figure out the situation before answering. Some students feel they must decline offers of food or beverage to be polite, but then hope the host offers again or just serves what has been offered. Some students have difficulty refusing an invitation and will say "yes" but not show up at the appointed time. These are generalizations and do not apply to all students all of the time. A key phrase in Japanese is, "It depends on the situation."

***What if my student asks to stay with me for one or two weeks?***

This program is not a homestay program. If you would like to have the student stay in your home and **you** invite them, this is fine. However, we are discouraging overnight stays. If, like many families, you are very busy and prefer not to be a host for overnight or week-long guests, please explain to the student that this is not a homestay program. You are not obligated to be a homestay family and we encourage the students to participate in other programs if they desire a homestay situation. For your reference, housing is always available to students at TIUA or WU throughout the academic year (including vacation periods).

If you are wishing to have your student stay overnight with your family, TIUA will conduct a home visit to determine whether or not the accommodations are appropriate/adequate. Each student needs to have his/her own bed, preferably in their own room. Also, the student must complete a request form and obtain permission (in writing) from their parents. Additionally, every time you invite the student to stay over, TIUA needs to be notified in writing.

***What if my student has a medical emergency?***

All TIUA students carry AIU Health Insurance and should have their insurance card with them at all times. TIUA has staff in the residence halls and in the administration office on a year-round basis. If you have an emergency, call the school and someone can meet you at the hospital or can reach an interpreter, if needed, or give other assistance. Students also carry emergency phone cards to contact TIUA staff at any time.

***If you have any other questions, please don't hesitate to contact Barby Dressler at 373-3330 or [bdressle@willamette.edu](mailto:bdressle@willamette.edu).***