

## **About the International Center**

The International Center of West Lafayette is a registered 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. We exist to create cross-cultural connections between the diverse residents of Greater Lafayette through education, the arts, cultural events, cultural information and assistance, and housing. Since 1971, the IC has been welcoming new international students, visiting scholars, international spouses and other visitors to the Greater Lafayette area. We have visitors from nearly 40 different countries who regularly come to the International Center to participate in classes, share their language and culture, and make friends from around the world.

The International center has a number of programs that are very popular, but most of our visitors come seeking help to make their stay in the US better. Many students come for free English classes or one on one conversation partners. We also get a number of questions about practical considerations. Visitors want to know how to get a driver's license, where to set up a bank account, how to pay their utilities, which store is the best to shop at, and any number of other daily concerns. We are always looking for new ways to assist visitors in adjusting to life in America and integrating into the community. We have decided to create a new program called "Living in America", and we would like to invite you to be a part of it.

## **Living in America**

Living in America will meet weekly, starting in autumn of 2014. We will invite experts from a number of areas to do a presentation to international visitors. The presentations will have practical information for the international visitors to help them adjust to life in Lafayette. We are considering a number of topics, including:

- Safety and the role of law enforcement
- How to get an apartment
- How to buy a car
- All about insurance
- Paying taxes
- Doctors, Hospitals and Pharmacies
- Banking

We anticipate having between 50-60 visitors for each session. Given that nearly half of the international community in the Lafayette area has Mandarin Chinese as their native language, we are offering the option for two sessions, and target one session specifically to the Chinese speaking population and one session to the general international community.

## **Online Component**

We are in the process of redesigning our website to better serve the International Community. Currently, our website averages over 2,500 hits a month. We anticipate this number will rise as we continue to put more practical information on the website. Our web designer is creating a section of the website that will closely follow the sessions of Living in America.

We will post the handout materials from each session of Living in America under the appropriate heading on the website.

We are also creating a new forum on our website. Many visitors prefer to get information and recommendations from people from their home country, or from a source that they know and trust. We are anticipating that the forum will facilitate the flow of information among students, and allow knowledgeable Americans to give information to students under the umbrella of the International Center.

### **Orientation and Welcome**

We have a welcome packet that we give to new international guests as we see them throughout the year. The International Center helps many visiting scholars, who come every day of the year rather than at the beginning of semesters.

The majority of the international guests in Lafayette are affiliated with Purdue University, and most of them come to Lafayette in August. Purdue hosts a mandatory orientation for all of these students. The International Center has a table at this orientation to make students aware of the programs and resources that we offer. We also distribute our welcome packet at this event.