

STUDENT LEADERSHIP GROUP PROFILE

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS at Urbana-Champaign

International Friendship Link (IFL)

Staff: Eriko Ishitsuka, Yasu Kamata, Nick Price, Bonnie Ward, Bob Whattoff

Reaching: Visiting scholars and their families, grad & undergrad students, Japanese wives, and some exchange and language students

Key Activities: In the fall, IFL organizes outdoor activities to build and deepen friendship with new international students and their families, such as visiting a farm for a bonfire and hayride, or trips to a nearby orchard, pumpkin patch, and an Amish farm. Monthly themed dinner discussions help new students get involved and help IFL leaders gauge their spiritual interest. I-GIGs (International Groups Investigating God, see back cover) are a crucial next step to help people understand the Bible and come to know Jesus. We have regular I-GIGs on campus, at a local church, and at an American home. Looking at Scripture is the key component, but we also try to incorporate DVD clips and invite special guests to share their testimonies. We also value corporate intercessory prayer for different countries and topics to promote awareness of God's work on a global scale.

Ministry Success Factors: IFL tries to be visible to the new international students arriving on campus for orientation by having a welcome/information table outside for a week. We also host a welcome dinner and a shopping trip for new internationals. Connecting with new international students early in the school year and providing them friendship and practical help is a key to building good relationships with them.

Leadership: The team includes all 5 staff, 2 undergrads from Japan and Korea, and 2 grad and 3 undergrad American students organized into Small Group Leading, Prayer, Events, and Visiting Scholar Outreach Teams. Also, 1 American and 1 international community volunteer

provide food, transportation, and other help. Staff make the overall ministry plan and invite student leaders to partner with them. As staff identify Christian international students with servants' hearts and ministry gifts who show eagerness to participate in events and partner with leaders and staff, we start giving them some responsibilities and invite them to step up into leadership. Staff (and a few American student leaders) provide consistency for the ministry as many internationals are on campus for less than 1 year.

Growing Leaders: Christian leaders disciplined by staff showed personal growth and development in leadership over the years. Studying the Bible and basic discipleship books such as *Following Jesus Without Dishonoring Your Parents* and *The Fight* (both published by InterVarsity Press) were helpful. Staff provide training during monthly leadership meetings to recast vision, pray, team build, and prepare for outreach events. In addition, InterVarsity's Chapter Focus Week helped a student get training on evangelism and be part of the larger Christian community on campus with American students. Urbana and INK conferences (see pages 8-10) have encouraged students by providing fellowship with other internationals and relevant training.

Student Leader Testimonies

Yui from Japan
(written by Eriko Ishitsuka)

When she arrived 3 years ago, Yui demonstrated her spiritual interest openly with the Christians she met and quickly got plugged into a small group Bible study. Through learning about Jesus and experiencing care from the community of believers, she decided to put her faith in Him at an InterVar-

sity conference. Since then, she has been a regular participant of IFL small group and outreach activities and often invites others. When her small group needed a leader, Yui stepped up to shepherd the group and has faithfully cared for and challenged the members to grow in their faith. She has remained in a dorm that especially attracts international students and will be a Resident Advisor (RA) next year.

