

Florida Tech's Friendship Program grows every year

Florida Tech's International Friendship Program benefits both students and their hosts in Brevard

By Maria Sonnenberg
For Al Día Today

MELBOURNE — It's always good to have a friend in a new city.

That's the concept behind Florida Tech's International Friendship Program, which pairs up local families with university students living far from home.

Sponsored by the Office of International Students and Scholars, the Friendship Program began in 2005 with four families who invited Florida Tech students into their homes for Thanksgiving.

"It gave students a chance to experience Thanksgiving," said Cindy Dubey, coordinator for Florida Tech's International Student and Scholar Services.

Students from more than 20 different countries are in need of "friends" this semester. Some of the new students are from Spanish-speaking countries and would enjoy chatting in their native tongue with new friends in Brevard.

Added to the program last year were coffee hours where both hosts and students were able to meet and share culture and friendship on an informal but regular basis.

Volunteers and student groups from Colombia, India, the Caribbean, Norway, the United Kingdom, Southeast Asia, China and the United States hosted these coffee klutches.

"These coffee hours are very successful," said Dubey.

"A different country hosts each coffee hour and students cook special desserts from their home country."

It's a win-win situation for students and hosts. For the new student "guests,"



For Al Día Today

International students at Florida Tech celebrated the holiday season with host families through the International Friendship program. The Friendship Program provides an opportunity to learn American culture firsthand and to get the scoop on Brevard County. Hosts, for their part, can experience different world cultures without leaving home.

the Friendship Program provides an opportunity to learn American culture firsthand and to get the scoop on Brevard County. Hosts, for their part, can experience different

world cultures without leaving home.

"It often results in some great friendships," said Dubey.

Please see FIT, page 16

More than 20% Florida Tech's student body is international. Faculty and students at the Melbourne university represent more than 100 countries.

FIT: Jump from page 11

There are no required activities, but hosts are encouraged to invite their guest student to experience an American holiday such as Thanksgiving or Christmas.

To help the new student settle in, the hosts can also offer insight into local shop-

ping and entertainment opportunities.

Some hosts, like Kay Wright, take their guest students on trips to local attractions, such as Brevard Zoo.

Hosts can also help international students with their English skills through the simple act of conversation.

Join the Program:

For more information on the Florida Tech International Friendship Program, contact Cindy Dubey at cdubey@fit.edu.

Mark Your Calendar:

Hold Sunday, Feb. 24, free so you can enjoy the second annual Florida Tech International Festival. Hosted by the International Student Scholar Services office, the festival last year brought 500 university students, faculty and staff together with the community to celebrate diversity through cultural displays, music and cuisine from around the globe.

Al Día Today

La Voz Latina en la Florida Central

(321) 724-6077

- 16 -

Enero 2008

AlDiaToday.com