

International students to experience Thanksgiving with host families

Kori Bowns
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Illinois Tech is a very diverse campus; our graduate student population consists of 65% international students and our undergraduate student population consists of 26% international students. These students come to Chicago and IIT from over 100 other countries in the world.

The International Center at Illinois Tech exists in part to support international students at the university. One program that does so is the International Center's Thanksgiving program, which allows international students to experience an American Thanksgiving with a host family located in or around Chicago. According to the International Center, hosts are arranged for Thanksgiving dinner and international students are given the opportunity to be matched with a host. The office says that spending Thanksgiving with one of these host families is a great opportunity for international

students to spend a traditional holiday with an American family, enjoy a tasty Thanksgiving meal, and get to know some other Illinois Tech students. The program has been going on for several years at the university.

Currently, 80 students are signed up to for the Thanksgiving program, but only 12 host families have signed up. According to Brianna Jones, International Student Advisor for the International Center, the program is always limited by the number of host families who sign up; students are unfortunately turned away every year because the number of hosts is too small to support the number of students who are interested. Members of the IIT community who are interested in hosting an international student at their Thanksgiving dinner this year can sign up by visiting the following link: tinyurl.com/puzba8. The deadline for hosts to sign up is Tuesday, November 10. International students who would like to spend Thanksgiving with a host family can also sign up at tinyurl.com/og68pfr by Friday, November 13. Jones says that the office offers opportunities to spend Thanksgiving with hosts on a first-come, first-served basis.

Jones had some additional information to share about the program. She says that a good mix of both undergraduate and graduate students have participated in the past; a wide spectrum of countries have also been represented. She also says that her office tries to pair students with host families who will match their interests and dietary restrictions.

"I think international students have a tendency to stay within their own community, and this is a good chance to break that," Jones said. She adds that many times, host families are able to accommodate more than one student, and students also get placed with their friends as they explore this American experience together.

Jones adds that hosts who participate in the program have an overwhelmingly

positive experience. Hosts participate in the program year after year and are very excited to welcome international students to their Thanksgiving dinner. She adds that hosts provide great feedback to the International Center to benefit the program. Hosts and students also often make valuable connections that last well past Thanksgiving.

Jones also adds that hosts come in many varieties; all are members of the IIT community, but many staff, faculty, alumni, and students' families participate. Most hosts take between two and four students, but some take as many as 13.

"I think it's a great way to give an international student an opportunity that they wouldn't otherwise have. It may seem kind of strange, but considering what Thanksgiving is all about, it's really in the spirit of the holiday," said Jones. Questions about the program can be directed to the International Center via email at icenter@iit.edu.

Circle K announces upcoming Thanksgiving events

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TECHNEWS WRITER

With the upcoming holiday of Thanksgiving, Circle K at IIT has planned holiday-themed events that every student is welcome to participate in. These events were discussed at the organization's fifth general body meeting that took place on Thursday, November 5. It was hosted at Wishnick Hall room 115 rather than the usual location of Wishnick Auditorium.

The Circle K President, Paul Nagtalon, called the meeting to order after the members walked in and settled into their

seats. Everyone then stood up and together they recited the Circle K Pledge that reminds them to help the community through service, leadership, and fellowship. The Membership Development and Education Chair, Yinman Zhong, then took the floor to lead a fellowship activity. In this activity called the human knot, members split up into pairs and held each other's hands. The objective was to work together in order to untangle themselves as fast as they could. After being told to begin, the members began to move in any way they could to untangle themselves. As the time continued, all of the pairs were having some difficulty untying themselves, but they were smiling

and laughing because of the many moves they had to make to complete their objective. A pair was able to successfully untangle themselves and they then helped the other pairs to also achieve their goal.

After the fellowship activity, new members were welcomed and told about the benefits of becoming a member. Some of these benefits include a club t-shirt, a membership handbook, and many others that can be found on the Circle K page on Hawklink. The exciting part of the meeting came next when Nagtalon discussed the upcoming events that anyone can be a part of. Some of these events include a Thanksgiving bake sale fundraiser

where members will get to bake cookies, brownies, and other food items. They will then be sold at the MTCC Bridge to raise funds for the organization to be able to continue helping the community. In another event, members will be able to come together to enjoy the zoo lights and ice-skating at Lincoln Park Zoo. The members were then notified about the next general body meeting which will take place at Wishnick 115 on October 19 during the lunch hour, and the meeting was then adjourned by Nagtalon. To learn about all the upcoming events or other information students may sign up for the Circle K emailing list at illinoistech.cki@gmail.com

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