



TOMODACHI PROGRAM INFORMATION

What is the Tomodachi Program?

Tomodachi is the Japanese word for friendship. The program is a way for the American Studies Program (ASP) students to meet people outside of the university borders. It is a friendship program, not a homestay program. One or two ASP (American Studies Program) students are matched with participants for a semester (either Spring--April-June, or Fall--Sept-Dec.). The participant(s) and student(s) should plan to meet at least once a month for an activity such as dinner at the host's home, celebrating an American holiday, attending a school musical or sports event, to go shopping or on a picnic. If things are going well at the end of the first part of the program, participants may opt to finish out the year together. In not, participants may choose to discontinue the relationship and try again in the Fall semester. Any students who weren't able to participate in the Spring will be assigned first in the fall.

How can we/I become involved in the Tomodachi Program?

All participants must complete a short application form. Part of the application process includes running a Criminal Background Check every three years. After you submit your application, you will receive an email from Advanced Reporting/me with a link to a form to complete in order for them to run the background check. This is not a credit check. We are primarily looking for felony sex convictions.

If you are interested, please fill out the application. You can do this two ways:

1. e-mail the program coordinator (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 participants?

Students and participants are matched on several criteria. The students have filled out questionnaires and that information is used in matching their Tomodachi. If the student has a special interest or hobby, we *try* to find participants who share 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 celebrations, 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 group activity for Tomodachi participants. Call TIUA, become a fan of our Facebook page, 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 do discourage 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 host 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 Willamette University residence halls throughout the academic year (including vacation periods).

If you do wish to have your student stay overnight with you, a TIUA staff member 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 staff needs to be notified in writing.

What if my student has a medical emergency?

All ASP students carry health insurance through Tokio Marine and Nichido Insurance and should have their insurance card with them at all times. If you have a medical emergency, you should call 911 first. Then please call our 24-hour-phone number and tell us what happened. The number is 503-559-0154. A staff member will go to the hospital or assist you over the phone. Students also carry the emergency phone number so that they may 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.