

# Horizons International



Every year God brings the world to our doorstep, in the form of more than 750,000 international students and visiting scholars who study and work in the US each year. 2000 of these come to the Capital District to study and work at area universities.

They come from almost every country in the world, many of which are closed to traditional missionary activity. They represent the best and brightest young people these countries produce. Some will go home to be leaders one day. For example, the current president of China was an international student here.

When they first come to the US they are curious about America and eager to form relationships with Americans, but statistics say that many of these students will spend one, two, or more years here and never see the inside of an American home. Most are not Christians, but think the US is a “Christian” country. What impressions will they have of Christianity if all they know about us is the behavior they observe on the campuses and the images they see on the TV?

Horizons International is a Christian ministry to these students and scholars that has been working in this area for the last 26 years. We work at three area colleges (RPI, U Albany, Union College).

Our purpose is to mobilize and equip churches and campuses to welcome these young people in the love of Christ and to make disciples of all nations – introducing them to the character and claims of Jesus and teaching them to follow His commands.

Our vision is to see (1) international students and visiting scholars experiencing the love of Jesus through friendship, practical help, personal witness, and discipleship (2) American Christians providing hospitality and love to international students, scholars, and their families, and (3) international students & scholars passionately following Jesus and discovering their role in the Great Commission.

Our approach to ministry is a relational one that combines loving servanthood and genuine friendship with a clear presentation of the Gospel message. It is characterized by the following elements . . .

- Welcome dinners and other large group events designed to meet social and recreational needs of the students and scholars
- A Friendship Partner program designed to foster individual friendships between students and American Christians
- Bible groups and outreach events designed to clearly present the Gospel message

- Personal mentoring in discipleship and connection with a local church for Christian students or those who become Christians while they are here

Horizons is always seeking American Christians from local churches who would be willing to come along side us and befriend one or two students for the school year. We call these people Friendship Partners. Through this program, American individuals and families are matched with one or two international students so that they can get to know each other through simple things like meals, holiday celebrations, and other shared activities and hobbies. It is our desire and prayer that relationships will grow from this time together.

Friendship Partners are encouraged to share their Christian faith with their students as a natural part of their lives. We do not force our faith upon the students, nor is our friendship contingent upon them accepting our values and beliefs. However, each year we see students accept Christ or be deeply influenced as they see Christ's love expressed through committed friendship.

For more information, please contact Mark Harkness [mharknes@nycap.rr.com](mailto:mharknes@nycap.rr.com) or (518-274-7909) or visit our Facebook page (Horizons International - Albany)