



What is the International Partners Program?

- It is an international student exchange program available *on campus* to *all* West Valley College students each semester since 1993.

What is its purpose?

- It promotes better relations between people of different cultures.
- It helps international students become fluent speakers of English.
- It provides American students with cross-cultural training.
- It offers all students valuable international networking opportunities.



Build a Bridge of Understanding ...



*Become
a
Partner!*

To find out more about IPP contact:

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International Partners Program



Promoting Awareness
and
Understanding
of
Cultural Diversity



How does the program work?

The IPP is similar to a penpal service. The only difference is that you get to meet your partner face-to-face. The program matches your name to the name of another West Valley College student who has a similar weekly schedule and interests as you. You and your partner meet each other at a time that is convenient for both of you, about one hour each month (minimum: four times per semester). Many instructors give extra credit for participating in the program.



How will I benefit from joining the Program?

Being among people from another culture can be frustrating, confusing, and lonely. Whether you speak English fluently or not, the International Partners Program can help you to . . .

- Increase your confidence to deal with unfamiliar situations
- Learn ways to talk to *anyone* about *anything*
- Develop your ability to take risks and strengthen your sense of humor
- Speak with people from California and around the world - Africa, Asia, Central and South America, Western and Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and island nations
- Prepare for a job with a multinational company at home or abroad



What should I do when I meet my International Partner?

That depends on you and your international partner. Most students spend the first hour sitting in the cafeteria and just talking. They talk about everyday things like family, school, work, hobbies, and other interests. They share pictures of their family and friends and learn words or slang expressions in their partner's language. When they meet again, many students like to:

- Compare food in the United States with food from other countries
- Visit an ethnic grocery store or restaurant
- Go off campus and relax at a cafe
- Visit a bookstore
- Take a walk in a park or visit one of the many hiking trails available in the South Bay area
- Go shopping or sightseeing
- Play soccer, hacky-sack, pool or ping pong
- Try something new like indoor rock climbing!



"Sometimes people feel that immigrants don't want to have anything to do with our society. One positive thing I learned from our interactions was that my partner was very interested in learning about American culture."

-an American student



International Student Perspectives

"I met my partner at the school cafeteria and coffee shops at convenient times after school. The program gave me a good chance to talk with a native speaker and understand American culture."

- a Korean student

"My partner was so open-minded, I didn't have to hesitate to start a sentence."

"I can speak English a lot [better] than before."

"I learned some American slang and [more about the] young people's culture."

"I got along very well with my American partner because both of us are married and we have a lot of things in common. We talked about our culture, family and our foods. I think this a great program to [become] familiar with people from other cultures [and] to find good friends."

- an Iranian student

"I don't feel nervous anymore when I speak English."

"I feel more comfortable talking with Americans now."



American Student Perspectives

"I feel more comfortable starting conversations with people from other cultures."

"I'll always remember how friendly she was and how easily we got along."

"I'm becoming bolder in asking [the international students] to repeat what they said, rather than smiling and never finding out."

"I am able to understand people with accents better."

"I was surprised at how much my partner's English improved this semester."

"I appreciate other cultures more now because I saw how difficult it was for [my partner] to adapt to American culture. I am also more inclined to listen to news reports about my partner's native country because I know more [about it]."

-an American student