

## The Host Family Program

In these days of world tension, many are asking what they can do to help make the world a safer and friendlier place in which to live. Residents of college and university communities have an excellent opportunity to do something positive, namely, to promote international understanding and simple hospitality by serving as "host families" for international students.

Most universities have organized a "host family" program and are always in need of additional families in the community to serve as hosts. Contact with the university's Foreign Student Advisor's office will provide the information necessary to participate in the program. Where a "host family" program does not exist, your campus ministry can be instrumental in working with the university to establish such a program. Sad to say, it is estimated that more than 70% of all international students never see the inside of an American home or become acquainted with an American family.

Families are invited to serve as hosts—not by paying expenses of international students or giving them room and board, but by making their homes a "home away from home" for the students. A host family agrees to become especially interested in a particular international student, to invite him/her into their home, make every attempt to make him/her feel at home, and help him/her to know and understand an American family.

This can be done in a variety of ways: occasional meals, family trips or outings, picnics, sports events, festival observances such as Thanksgiving and Christmas, community functions, church services, and being ready to help when the student faces problems or concerns.

Many lasting friendships have developed between students and host families that have promoted international understanding and good will.