

ISM PROMOTES INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP AT THE 2022 LCMS NATIONAL YOUTH GATHERING

About 1000 youth interacted with six past and current ISM volunteers and staff at the LCMS Youth Gathering in Houston in July. Some stopped to add their thoughts on a ‘graffiti wall’ asking “If I were an international student in China, India, Saudi Arabia, I would hope that someone there would...” Others picked up a Doorstep, or a Getting Started with International Friendships booklet, or looked at artifacts from around the world. All were invited to have tea with a curious ‘doctoral student from Afghanistan’ sitting cross-legged on the large Asian carpet in the middle of our 20x20 foot space. The youth were asked questions that Muslims typically ask Christians, and the youth eagerly and winsomely engaged. After about 10 minutes, the ‘student’ shared that she was really

American and then shared with them how they and their families could be a friendship family to an international student at a university near them.

Read on for first hand accounts of people’s work and experiences in the

ISM booth at the LCMS

National Youth Gathering.

Rev. Larry Krueger, past campus pastor at Texas A&M, relates his interaction with

students as he volunteered in the ISM exhibit:

“I would ask the high school students how they would feel if they had come to the Youth Gathering of 20,000 people by themselves. They would reply with responses like, “Overwhelmed, “Afraid,” “Lost.” The follow-up question was whether, or not, they would hope to make a friend at the gathering. Every person said, “Yes,” to

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A BAPTISM REVISITED

Wayne Weiss

ISM Vice Chair

Do you remember your baptism? If you were baptized as an infant, obviously not. How about your confirmation? Other than a sense of relief that you made it through, how did you feel? How about if you were baptized as an adult? Did your newly found faith make you want to share this wonderful Savior with everyone?

Allow me to introduce to you Aim from Thailand. When we first met her in

2007 she was a graduate student at the University of Wisconsin/Madison. She started attending English conversation classes at the International Friendship Center to improve her English. When asked if she wanted to practice her English more at a Bible study, she reluctantly agreed. That is where my wife Suzanne and I met her.

After a few weeks she had questions

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I NEVER WANTED TO BE AN ISM DIRECTOR... BUT GOD HAD ANOTHER PLAN!

Lydia Schinnerer, M.S., RDN, LD

Former ISM Director, University Lutheran, College Station TX

I never wanted to be an ISM director. As a pastor’s kid who had inadvertently been “volunteered” for every church role available, I was quite content in college to just sit in the pew on Sunday and exit the building unnoticed.

But just as God had other plans for Jonah, Isaiah, Gideon, Jeremiah, Ruth and others, God had different plans for me. And just as those biblical figures

felt wildly unworthy and unprepared, I felt like God had called the wrong woman when I was approached to become a leader in ISM. After all, I had

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wanting a friend so they would not be alone. I would then explain that this is what it is like for international students coming to a new college with thousands of students in a new country where they did not have a friend. This perspective emphasized the importance for youth and their families to be a friend to an international student, especially as an avenue for the international student to have an opportunity to know the friend they have in Jesus. The youth gained new perspectives about international students in our country and the role each of them could undertake to be a friend to an international student.”

Rev. Paul Hoemann, past ISM Inc. Board President, shares his thoughts as he considered the students interacting in the ISM exhibit:

“As an 18-year-old senior in high school (or even younger), I would have said “no” to the invitation to join a tea party, such as was being offered in the ISM, Inc. display area. So, I was pleasantly surprised to see the number of young people say “yes” to our invitations. I’m glad that we were able to connect with so many and share with them what international student ministry is all about!”

Sally Krueger, past ISM volunteer at Texas A&M, recounts not only her own experience, but the response of several students and adults that participated in the exhibit:

I was really encouraged that so many youth took 15-20 minutes to engage with Sue. Sue was great at the role-playing. There was a constant stream of people engaging with her. At times, we had people waiting for their turn. I tried to engage with those who finished their carpet time to “debrief” informally. Some of the things they told me were...

- I had no idea there were that many international students studying in America.
- I never really thought about other cultures and

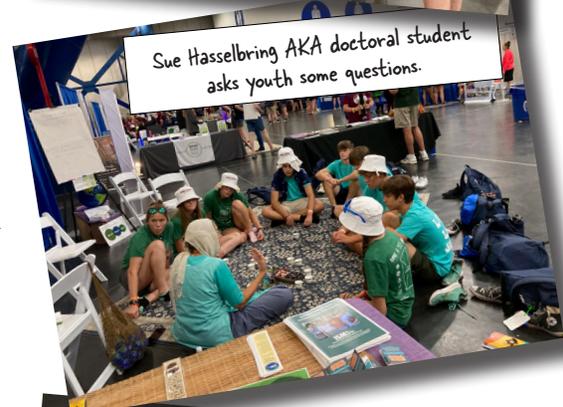
- how I might share Jesus with them.
- This is really the only exhibit that is talking to us about theology.
- How can I be a friend to an international student?
- I want to spend more time in church.

Adults who encountered our exhibit also had some very encouraging things to say:

- This! This, right here, is the most impactful thing they will take away from this gathering.
- I had to come over here and find out what this was all about. Some youth in my group came and did this yesterday and when we were debriefing for the day and talking about what sessions we went to they were talking about this experience. I knew there were no sessions about international students, so I was confused. So, what is she doing over there with them on the carpet? After explaining, he remarked that what they had told him now made sense. He said maybe this should be a session. (I actually heard that from the youth as well).
- I got a phone call from one of my youth yesterday after they attended this experience. They were so excited that they wanted everyone in our group to come over and experience it themselves! What you guys are doing here is fabulous!
- It was a fantastic experience and I’m very glad that I stopped by. Thank you for all you do in our Lord’s kingdom.
- One woman told me they were getting a new associate pastor and she was going to suggest he start friendship families in their church. I encouraged her to be the volunteer to organize it. She seemed genuinely interested in doing so. †



Pastor Krueger engages with youth



Sue Hasselbring AKA doctoral student asks youth some questions.



Bessie Frick and Evelyn Crowe talk with some youth.



Adults and youth sit down together to answer the questions about Christianity



All is ready at the ISM area as the Youth Gathering is about to start.



Sue and Gena Nelson, mother of former intern Alec Nelson.

CELEBRATING CHRIST-CENTERED RESOURCES AND EVENTS GRANTS

From Marcia Mittwede

Director University of Texas at Austin

Thanks to a grant from ISM, Inc., we were able to offer Bibles for our international friends. Students from South Korea, Turkey, Japan, Hungary, and China asked for Bibles and we were so happy to provide these free-of-charge for the students. We know that our words may not always be correct, but that the Holy Spirit uses the Word of God to bring people to Jesus.

We were also able to provide a fun dinner at a Chinese restaurant for some of our students, thanks to this Grant. Our students were able to bring along their family members to the event so we could meet them as well. All of us together heard Pastor Richard's message which told about Him who is the Reason for the hope within us.

We so appreciate the friends who support ISM, Inc. financially so those of us who are working among international students can provide Bibles and events. Thank you!



From Pastor Freeman Li

University of California, Santa Cruz

First, we were able to purchase four additional Chinese-English Bibles. So we have 24 copies in total that we are able to use in our Campus ministry.

Second, we were able to obtain the Chinese calendar which we ordered from Taiwan Lutheran publishing house. This is a great gift for Chinese students, as it includes a monthly Bible verse and Chinese lunar calendar and western calendar. Plus, we put our service time and contact information. Most students love them.

Finally, we handed out the rest of the

calendars after Chinese New year event. That was a wonderful event. We had a preparation BBQ for volunteers (one UCSC student and one visiting mom) on Jan 16, and Pastor Freeman smoked some meat for the event. There were 29 people who joined the event, including three English speakers from Messiah congregation, fifteen International students and family members from UC Santa Cruz and local area. This event after Sunday Service was a very joyful event. Pastor Freeman prayed for the community especially students who just finished the Midterm. Thank you so much for the generosity support the Chinese mission in Santa Cruz. †

("Baptism" continued from page 1)

about what this strange religion was, who this guy Jesus was, and what faith was about. She accepted an invitation to meet with me one-on-one to try to answer those questions. After a few sessions we started studying a simplified Luther's Small Catechism, written for internationals. When we had completed it, she wanted to learn more. It was obvious the Holy Spirit had become alive in her. And then, she stated that she had accepted Jesus as her Lord and Savior and wanted to be baptized. But, how to tell her parents? She didn't. She was baptized. She returned to Thailand for a month and didn't tell them. A few weeks after her return and through much prayer, she told them and they were supportive.

Then she shared with Suzanne and me that she wanted to drop out of her Ph.D. program in biochemistry and share the Gospel with the people of Thailand. But, how to tell her parents? Again through much prayer her parents supported her in this. Aim did receive her Master's degree before leaving Madison.

That summer Aim returned to Thailand to marry her fiancé who was in graduate school in Boulder, CO. She returned to Colorado and enrolled at Denver Seminary where she earned a Master's degree in Philosophy of Religion.



Remember Aim's comments on wanting to bring the Gospel to the people of Thailand, fast forward to today. Currently she is mentoring two new Christian women in Thailand via Zoom. She recently completed teaching a Christian based parenting class on Zoom. Of the thirty individuals who participated in the course, over half were Buddhists and many others unchurched. In August she will be

teaching another similar class with primarily Buddhist parents. She is a member of a team that is allowed into Christian schools in the Bangkok area to meet with parents to make these programs available. Due to the high quality of education these schools provide, they attract a large number of non-Christian students.

One final note. Aim and her family spent the last six months in the Minneapolis area. Her husband's employer sent him there to work with a sister company. During their stay they returned to Madison to renew friendships. On their last visit their one-year-old daughter, Jane, was baptized, on Trinity Sunday,

It is truly amazing to see God working His Plan in the lives of His Servants, in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and Thailand!

Prayer Requests: The Holy Spirit lead Aim's parents to accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

The hearts of those hearing the Gospel in Aim's parenting classes be softened to accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior. †

("ISM Director" continued from page 1)
never been outside the country. I only spoke English. I was intimidated by the students' accents. Most glaringly of all, I was only 18 years old. Everyone in the ministry had at least 15 years more experience than me!

God knew all that, of course. My shortcomings were no mystery to Him, and He already had a solution. He was going to send some help to prepare me and grow me into the person I needed to be.

Brady Newcomb, one of the current ISM co-directors, was one person God sent to help. I like to say that he dragged me into this ministry kicking and screaming. I jest, but it really is how it felt. He saw what God was doing, and he wouldn't let me mess it up. He demolished every excuse I had when it came to attending church and ISM events. He gave me rides, he texted me reminders, and he invited me to his classes so that I could observe.

What really drew me to the ministry was that as I observed people from all over the world, I realized how similar all the people were when you ignore the politics and the person's outward

THE ROLE OF STUDENT ISM DIRECTORS AT TEXAS A&M

Two LCMS university students were typically serving as the ISM Co-Directors at University Lutheran Chapel at Texas A&M. You were mentored the first year, and then when you graduated or left the position, you mentored the new co-director. The ISM directors welcomed new international students, created social media and print advertising, assured that meeting rooms were ready for classes, catered culturally appropriate food, facilitated conversation and dialogue between American and international students, and so much more. The campus pastor and other volunteers from neighboring congregations provided support, guidance, and encouragement as conversation partners or as teachers.

appearance. I remember being in a conversation circle and listening to a short, older Korean man gush about the love of his life followed by a young, statuesque Iranian woman speaking similarly about her husband. These people's lives could not be more different, yet they were describing the same need and desire: to be loved.

Just as we all share the need to be loved, no matter our background, we are all the same in another way: "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus." (Romans 3:23) All are lost and in need of a Savior. And all can

be changed by His love. Including the international students. Including me.

Through the Holy Spirit's work on my heart and soul, I, an inexperienced, 18 year old, monolingual American, was able to fulfill God's plan for my life as an ISM director. Several belly laughs, awkward moments, secret baptisms, and tearful goodbyes later, I can confidently say that even though I never wanted to be an ISM director, I'm thankful beyond belief that God chose me anyway. If you feel the call, don't let your shortcomings stop you. Give God the chance to mold you into the person He needs to do the job. †

A Participant's Perspective

DOORSTEP INTERVIEWS HANNAH AND NORA, TWO STUDENTS WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE ISM EXHIBIT AT THE NATIONAL YOUTH GATHERING

Hannah (17) and Nora (14) went through the experience at the International Student Ministry, Inc. exhibit at this year's LCMS National Youth Gathering.

Doorstep spoke with them via Zoom from their home in North Carolina, following the Gathering to get a participant's perspective of the experience. The following is an excerpt of a longer conversation.

Doorstep: What church did you go with?

Hannah/Nora: Calvary Lutheran Church in Jacksonville.

Doorstep: Jacksonville? There is a Jacksonville in North Carolina?

Hannah/Nora: There is... It's kind of funny because we would say we were from Jacksonville to other groups and I could tell they were thinking Florida.

Doorstep: Tell me about your experience at the ISM exhibit.

Hannah/Nora: We came in halfway



through and we were invited to sit down and take off our shoes and have a conversation. She [Sue] briefly introduced herself as a college student and then she was saying that she was talking with two other girls about how we have two different gods or one god and tried to work through that as

a conversation topic. I used the metaphor of an egg. It's got the shells. One part, the yolk is part, the white is another part, but it's still one egg. And at that point she's saying, Oh, so you do have one God. And then we dropped that and moved on to the next topic.

Doorstep: What did you learn about International Student Ministry?

Hannah/Nora: I didn't know that a whole family could sponsor a student, and I thought that was really cool.

Doorstep: Were you sad that there wasn't real tea to drink?

Hannah/Nora: It was kind of confusing at first, but I think it helped all of us to see that it was a role play scenario.

Doorstep: Anything else?

Hannah/Nora: I think it's definitely important that [the ISM exhibit] was there because I don't think that a lot of teenagers tend to think about international students. Not that they are selfish. It just doesn't occur to them. †

The first two sets of prayer requests come from comments written at the Youth Gathering. Please pray that many of those who interacted with ISM there would become a friend of at least one international student.

Pray that Christians in the US would “be there” for international scholars and students as they:

- welcome me with open arms
- guide me in learning the language better
- make me some good food
- not only be my friend, but introduce me to the rest of their friends
- eat with me in the dining hall
- talk with God with me
- be patient with me

Pray that Christians in the US would grow in being spiritual influencers by

- having empathy and trustworthy character
- forgiving and asking for forgiveness
- having passion for Christ and caring for others.
- instilling a desire to learn more and constantly dig into God’s word
- never being afraid to share our faith with anyone
- prioritizing faith over everything in my life

The next two sets come from opportunities and challenges shared by ISM site leaders in August.

Pray that volunteers and leaders would follow God’s lead in:

- Welcoming and interacting with new students
- Following up on referrals shared by the campus or other groups.
- Collaborating with the International office on campus and other churches and ministries.

- Restarting serving meals regularly to students and scholars.
- Creatively connecting students with transportation.
- Helping the US students to interact with international students
- Using the new Bible studies that encourage friendship with internationals.

Pray that God would grant grace in facing these challenges:

- Transitions in local leadership due to former leaders not being available.
- Difficulties finding new volunteers, especially to teach classes and be conversation partners
- A poor relationship with the student office - they do not return phone calls.
- Fundraising
- Finding our niche: not duplicating or competing and knowing our strengths
- Helping the US students who are German Lutherans to grow in interactions with internationals.
- Struggling to meet and get a list of international students and scholars



From Sharon Owens, Campus Mission Coalition, Arizona State University

Praise God for:

- A great summer of fellowship with students
- The dedication of the student leadership team and their service to their peers
- Partner churches identifying how they can come alongside our mission

Pray for:

- The more than 4,000 incoming in-

- international students to get connected and have their immediate needs met
- Our international student leadership team as they execute a semester of awesome activities for international students
- Employed former students who miss the community on campus.

From other sites

- Praise God that several international students have contacted Trinity, Norman Oklahoma expressing interest in the English Conversation Classes, and that several new volunteers have offered to help. Pray for more volunteers, and a strong start to the semester.
 - Praise God for how he is working through ISM Pittsburgh: One international student was baptized and another confirmed, attendance in Bible class and ESL remained strong through the summer, and Lutheran Student Fellowship students are reaching out to their classmates from other countries.

Upcoming ISM Inc. activities

- Praise God that Sue will represent ISM at the Best Practices Heartland in Frankenmuth, Michigan Sept 18-20. Pray that those who attend her breakout session, “You can be a friend! You can open the door to transformation!” will grow in their passion for ministering among international students and scholars.
- Pray that Sue’s visit on Sept 11 would help students at University Lutheran Church at Purdue University to grow in their willingness to be a friend to international students and share Christ’s truth with them.
- Pray that several more campus ministries and churches would invite Sue to speak about ISM on her way to and from Best Practices.
- Pray that God would open doors for Sue to speak at several churches and campus ministries in Southern California before and after the Nov 3-5 Beautiful Feet Missions Conference at Concordia University-Irvine. †

SUBMIT YOUR ISM-RELATED PRAYERS

You are always welcome to submit prayers via email to: prayer@isminc.org. However, for an organization as spread out as ISM is, organization can become a challenge. We encourage you to use the Prayer Request Form you can find at:

<https://tinyurl.com/ismincprayer>

Why not bookmark the form and send off a prayer request whenever the Spirit moves you?



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DoorstepNews

The Doorstep is the official publication of ISM, Inc.,
A Recognized Service Organization of The Lutheran
Church—Missouri Synod, dedicated to ministry among
international students.

September/October 2022
Volume 26/Issue 5

In any relationship, communication is energy. Everyone in the ISM community is encouraged when others share whatever is going on, whether it is a great triumph or serious struggle. Doorstep News is our community communication. Share something with our ISM community!

We've been hearing amazing ways that people are connecting international students and scholars with the love of Christ. Please send in your articles, pictures and especially your prayer requests.

Please send your submissions for the November/December issue by email. The deadline is September 29, 2022. Send your submissions to doorstep@isminc.org.

- See our privacy policy on our website
- Send your submission as a Word document and images as separate files.
- Please include your name, your role, and the ministry and/or campus you serve.



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