Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

#1. When should hosts expect to hear back from the International Office with updates about the program and information about my pairings?

The International Office will contact hosts every Friday with various updates and information leading up to Thanksgiving.
In addition, pairings with your students will be sent out to hosts the week before Thanksgiving.

#2. Best Practices - Contacting paired international students or scholars about the date, time, and location of host family Thanksgiving dinner.

We advise that once you have been paired, that you reach out to your pairings confirming the date, location, and time of your Thanksgiving dinner.
If you have indicated that your dinner is on a date other than Thanksgiving, we have made sure to only pair you with students who are available on those dates.

#3. Are hosts able to request international students, scholars, or families attending their dinner to be from a specific country or region?

The pairings between hosts and international students, scholars, and their families are randomized. We cannot guarantee preferred pairings.
Randomizing pairings have been a great success as it allows students & scholars from a variety of countries, departments, and cultural backgrounds to meet outside of their normal classes and school events.

#4. What about dietary restrictions?

When we pair your international student or scholar with you, we ask students & scholars to notify hosts if they have any food allergies or restrictions. You as the host are also welcome to initiate this conversation.

#5. If hosts do not live in Evanston are they required to provide transportation?

Hosts are not required to provide transportation. Please keep in mind this was a question in the sign up survey.
If you are not local, and are unable to provide transportation, we ask that you work with your pairings to determine the best way to arrive at your home. This can be done via public transportation. Most international students and scholars do not have access to a car.

#6. MOST IMPORTANT! HAVE FUN! TAKE PICTURES! Enjoy yourselves!! AND THANK YOU!

Intercultural Communication Tools

- Americans tend to have a certain way of conducting themselves, but what may seem "normal" to us, may not make sense to someone familiar with a different social culture.

- American culture values individualism, but this is not true of all cultures. Your guests may not feel comfortable being singled out. It's best to try to include them in your conversations and activities without making them the focus.

- While Americans value egalitarianism in our relationships, your guests may be more familiar with hierarchical social structures. Don't be surprised or overwhelmed if they are very formal in their interactions. You are the host, so they may wait for you to invite them into conversations and activities. It's your party, they may expect you to make the rules.

- Not all cultures are as emotional or expressive as American culture tends to be. Just because your guests are quiet does not mean that they are not having a good time. Try not to overwhelm them. Handshakes are plenty in the physical contact department.

- Some cultures are expressive, while others are more reserved. Some people read between the lines, while others expect directness and specificity. It's best not to assume anything. Try not to over-analyze the situation. Intercultural communication is hard enough without reading into things (even if someone else is doing exactly that). Try to be direct without being aggressive.