

Suggested Activities for Good Neighbor Teams and Friendship Partners

Don't worry about what to do during your meetings with your refugee family or friend. The options are endless!

Even if your refugee partner speaks very little English, there are activities you can enjoy together. Shared activities provide a focus and structure for your time together. They can also provide opportunities to learn words or phrases in English and your refugee partner's native language.

Below are a few ideas to get you started:

Community Orientation

- Take a ride together on public transportation. Help newcomers locate the nearest bus stop and travel to important locations via public transport (grocery store, hospital, public assistance office, library, etc.)
- Go grocery shopping at an American grocery store and/or an ethnic store. Look at pricing, pounds, sizes, products, and coupons. Teach newcomers how to shop on a budget.
- Take a tour of a local government office, i.e. post office, fire station, or police station (usually offered for free if arranged in advance).
- Visit an ethnic restaurant of which the food is familiar for the newcomer.
- Enjoy parks, holiday festivities, Church, and sporting events with your refugee partners.
- Give your refugee partners a map of the city, state, country, and/or world so they can have a perspective on where they are now in relation to their home country. (city maps are free at the visitor's bureau)
- Some refugees may enjoy hearing the history of the area and city they are living in now.

Cultural Adaptation

- Discuss public safety and how to call 911 – when to call, when not to call, what to say.
- Review the home for maintenance problems. Practice with the newcomer explaining them to the landlord.
- Teach newcomers simple English phrases and words important to everyday life. Learn the same phrases in their language.
- Review a map of the community. Ride the bus or drive around town to learn street names.
- Visit the local post office and show them how to buy stamps and mail a letter.
- Visit the local library, show them how to use the Internet, apply for a library card, and check out books.
- Practice making and receiving telephone calls. Practice polite greetings and phone etiquette.
- Discuss money. Practice making change, tipping, etc.

- Practice telling time with a clock. Explain the importance of being on time in this culture.
- Take a trip to the laundromat. Discuss temperatures, color separation, amount of detergent, coin machines, etc.
- Go to a second-hand store or garage sale together and buy something for yourself. Some newcomers may think there is a stigma to buying used items. If you buy some for yourself that will help them see that it is okay.

Friendship Building Activities

- Take them to the park
- Invite them to a cultural event (family birthday party, wedding, cultural celebration)
- Ask them to teach you how to prepare a dish from their culture or teach you some other skill they have.
- Find out what they like to do and do it with them! (Bike riding, hiking, sewing, dancing, etc.)
- Find out about international events in the area (International Festival, etc.)