

June 2020

Dear International Grinnellians, Class of 2024,

On behalf of all of the community hosts who are involved with the [Friends of International Students](#) (FIS) program, we would like to welcome you to Grinnell! Covid-19 has altered many things for 2020-2021, and unfortunately, the FIS program is no exception. We will not be able to have as much personal contact as we would like, but that does not change our excitement about having you become a part of our local family.



Just as students are diverse (coming from all over the world), host families also differ – in terms of family size; habits and hobbies; professions and lifestyles; experiences and perspectives. **That said, *all* FIS hosts share the common goal to provide an additional resource and comfort to international Grinnellians (YOU!), and all of us enjoy the unique relationships that are formed. We all agree that [#YouAreWelcomeHere!](#)**

*“It was so fun taking our student to her first college football game and showing her an American Thanksgiving with all of our traditions. It was nice to be with her when she experienced something new and hear about what her family and life in another country was like.”*

- Frances Pedersen, age 11

*“Our two FIS students have become part of our family. We look forward to hearing about classes, having them over for meals, and celebrating happy occasions together. Getting to know our host students during their time at Grinnell College has been a true joy.”*

- Richelle and P.J. Mahaffey '11, Lawyers

*When we travel internationally, our experiences are better when we connect with local people. Often, those connections stem from our involvement with FIS. We've been hosting since the late 1970s. Being a host has been a great way to help student's experiences go smoother and it has made our lives richer.*

- Al and Nancy '61 Maly, retired local residents

While necessary changes will impact our program this year, many of the redeeming qualities of this community remain unchanged. The town of Grinnell is filled with kind, creative, and generous people. Hundreds of local residents stand ready to welcome you, and look forward to getting to know you better! FIS host sister Slane McCue, age 11, said it well, *“We have really nice parks and you can walk to get almost anything you need. There are a lot of welcoming people, and a lot of good food. And, we have the best ice cream shop ever!”*

Whether or not you will participate in the program, FIS hosts are all incredibly excited that you will be joining our community and we look forward to the experiences that we will share over the coming years.

Sending ♥ from FIS Hosts,

Rachel Bly; JoAnn Britton; Mary Lindberg; and Sara McCue  
Volunteer FIS Coordinators

*“Before America was my home, Iowa was my home. Before Iowa was my home, Grinnell was my home.”*

- Kumail Nanjiani '01, Grinnell Commencement Speech 2017