

Opportunity

June • August 2021

friends
INTERNATIONAL

**Face-to-Face,
Once Again!**

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Growing Friendship and Faith with International Students



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Leading Thoughts

What did you miss that you didn't expect to miss during lockdown? When the pandemic took hold, it surprised me just how much I missed watching competitive sport!



Not meeting in-person at church was a struggle and significantly difficult for some. I heard some speak about how when we return to church we will be dancing in the

aisles, exuberant in joy. The reality of course is that the return to in-person services is a more guarded, limited experience without congregational singing or social contact. At the time of writing, restrictions are slowly lifting, and we look optimistically forward.

It was at Easter that Friends International had its first in-person events of the year, where restrictions allowed a few to meet outside. We are delighted to be back to meeting with international students in more ways, and yet clearly things are not back to what we used to call normal. We know that international students have been isolated and under pressure, and we are grateful for the now increasing ways to connect and support them once again.

We are so excited to be pushing forward with our vision to reach more students in more locations. A part of this is finding workers who are as excited as we are. Please read about our vacancies (page 6) and share them with those you think may be interested.

I would like to say a massive thank you to everyone who gave to our spring appeal, 'Sharing Jesus, Loving Students'. International student lives are being impacted because of your generosity. There are also many other ways to give, for example leaving a gift in your will is a tremendous way to allow your commitment to God's work to continue in future years. Read more about this on page 8.

Finally, thank you for your continued involvement in the ministry. We couldn't do what we do without your faithful support.

Alan

Alan Tower
National Director

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"For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known." 1 Corinthians 13:12

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"I'm very thankful to Friends International and to their staff and volunteers."

Testimony

Hello, my name is Vicky. I'm from China and my hometown is a very small place on the border with Vietnam, in southern China.

I came to the UK in 2019 to study information system management. I graduated recently and now I'm a Reach Trainee with Friends International.



My first contact with Christianity was from my grand uncle and his wife when I was about 11 or 12 years old. They were running a small house church near where I lived, and I was invited to their services from time to time. So, I got a very basic understanding of Christianity, but I didn't understand the deeper meaning of Jesus as a saviour.

There were some significant moments that helped me in my journey. Meeting Christian friends in the UK made me more intrigued about Jesus and witnessing their lives helped me believe. Every time I went to church, I had a feeling of belonging and attachment, and I knew that a warm welcoming family in Christ is what I was looking for.

Through the Bible Discovery course, I got a deeper understanding, and I learnt that Jesus was the answer to my questions. Since becoming a Christian, I am reminded of what Jesus is like and to put his words into practice. I have become more friendly, more patient, and I'm learning how to forgive people and forgive myself.

Becoming a Christian also means that I have a bigger and wider family in Christ. The feeling of safety and belonging is very important for me as an international student living in a foreign country.

I'm very thankful to Friends International and to their staff and volunteers. They have brought me great fun and lots of friendships. Friends International has made my student life more memorable and they led me onto the right path to follow Jesus. I'm very thankful for that.

"...I learnt that Jesus was the answer to my questions."

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We're
Back



We're Back Meeting Students Face-to-Face!

In April, our very first in-person events of the year took place. Where lockdown restrictions allowed, we met students outside for Easter trails and walks.

Here our staff share what it was like to meet students in-person again, after months of meeting online.

Dundee

"As a people person, I cannot be more excited to see some real faces!

Our first in-person event was our Easter trail. There was an immediate reunion feeling, and we also met some international students for the first time.

For many international students, meeting with friends outdoors again has brought so much joy and excitement. Some students approached us after our Easter trail and expressed enormous gratitude. They were grateful for the opportunity to meet with local friends and hear the stories behind Easter, after being stuck in their rooms doing online studies for so long."

Charis Chi,
Staff Worker, Dundee

Norwich

"It felt nice seeing students face-to-face, it was almost normal!

It was encouraging to meet some students who had just arrived in the country and to be able to bless them. We realise that for many we are the only Christians they know in the city. Part of me still laments for events where we could meet more students and link them

with churches straight away. The local CU has been very involved in our walks, which has been really encouraging.

The students we had contact with have been very reluctant to join us online in the last few months and they are all very happy and grateful to meet face-to-face again. The general feeling is that they want to continue meeting face-to-face, although we are being cautious and waiting before planning a full programme for September."

Raquel Medina,
Staff Worker, Norwich



Canterbury

"We have done Easter Trail events and walks in groups of six. We also had a picnic on Easter Sunday after attending an outdoor service, with six baptisms – which included two international students getting baptised!

It was lovely to engage with students face-to-face again. One Erasmus student felt so encouraged to attend a face-to-face church service, after she had been unable to go to a church in Germany for over a year. She said she will go to church services every Sunday here.

Four Muslim students were able to join us, and most of them didn't know anything about the events during the last week of Jesus' life. We had such a privilege to sit in a garden and tell them these stories, using pictures for prompts and by reading out some scriptures together.

However, we have found that some students are still fearful to even meet us outside for



walks. There are mixed feelings, but most students have appreciated an opportunity to meet outdoors and get to know other students, as they have been really lonely."

Baiba Strause-Kalmere,
Staff Worker, Canterbury



The World has Arrived. Now We're Just Waiting for You.



We have an exciting vision to see more staff join us in more locations around the UK and Ireland. This will mean more international students encountering the Good News of Jesus, and their lives being transformed.

But, to see this vision become a reality, we need more workers for the harvest. Are you or someone you know passionate about cross-cultural evangelism? If so, we would love for you to consider joining our team.

I Joined Friends International Last Year

"I heard about Friends International from so many different people involved in student ministry, and local church work, and even from students themselves! It has a wonderful reputation, and my church strongly supported my application for the position.

Since joining, a real highlight has been watching international students develop an interest in the Bible over time and gradually grow in their faith.

Our students come from all over the globe, and sometimes have governments who are unfriendly to the gospel. I spend time researching the religious makeup of their countries so I can communicate safely with them when they return.

I am amazed by the experience and the resources of Friends International as an organisation. There is so much wisdom to draw on, and so many incredible ideas for outreach and discipleship here.

I think if anyone has an interest in international student work, they couldn't find a better group of people to work alongside!"

Abigail Kawell,
Staff Worker, Birmingham



Interview with our HR Manager

What are the current vacancies at Friends International?

We have several vacancies for Centre Team Leaders, including in London, Paisley, Reading, Colchester, Coventry, and Sheffield. We also often have office support roles available. Find all our up-to-date vacancies on our website at friendsinternational.uk/jobs.

What key skills are needed to be considered for a job at Friends International?

It is important for our staff to have a passion for student ministry and cross-cultural evangelism and to be servant hearted. In terms of what's on a CV, we consider it important for candidates to have a university degree so that there is an understanding of what it's like to be a university student, and experience or qualifications in mission or theology.

If someone is interested in applying for a job what should they do?

They should email their CV (résumé) to our recruitment email address (recruitment@friendsinternational.uk), with a cover letter or email to explain which position they are interested in, what attracts them to it, and what skills and experience they can bring to the role.

What's the process after you receive an email like this?

When I receive an email from a candidate, I share their paperwork with the recruiting team. Next,

often someone will contact them to have an informal chat to find out a little more about them, and so that they can learn more about the role. If that conversation is positive, we would then ask them to complete an application form.



Diane Smith,
Friends International
HR Manager



**Download our
Recruitment Pack at:**
[friendsinternational.uk/
jobs](https://friendsinternational.uk/jobs)

Sophie's Gift – Making a Difference for Years to Come

Sophie and Leonard Rumney were prayer and financial supporters of ours from the time we were in university, over 25 years ago!

They met us at a supporters' day in 1992 when we were reporting back on our short-term summer placement with OMF. They faithfully prayed for and gave to our work until first, he, and then she, passed away in 2018.

They lived in South Shields, and although they never lived overseas that we know of, they exemplified a commitment to mission and were lifelong supporters of many mission organisations.

When Leonard died, Sophie continued in her own quiet and faithful way to do the things they had always done. She always wrote us letters full of news and even made it a point to meet up with us when she had a reunion with classmates from her teaching course in our area. This was even when she was well into her 80s.

Her generous legacy to Friends International came as a complete surprise but has given us the freedom to focus on our national roles at a time when we had to move away from other sources of financial support. For this, we are so very grateful.

The legacy is a reminder of their steadfast love for Jesus, and we thank God for their quiet faithfulness, encouragement, and friendship. They faithfully supported us from the time when we were just beginning to follow God's calling into mission as undergrads, until today.

Lynette and Peter Teagle, Staff Workers, Oxford

Could you leave a legacy?

Like Sophie and Leonard, we all want our commitment to God's work to continue in future years, even after we die. That's why leaving a gift in your will is a wonderful way to support international students for many years to come. Find out more at: friendsinternational.uk/legacy



Joan Davies: Why I'm Leaving a Legacy to Friends International

Could you tell us briefly how you got involved in Friends International and ministry to international students?

I was born in India as my parents were missionaries and we came home during the war when I was only two years of age. My parents were very hospitable and so we often had people in our home. I had always wanted to be a missionary in Africa since I was 11 years of age but because of an illness I had when I was 25, I was able to nurse but was not accepted to go abroad. In 1975 I came back from working as a midwife in London to help look after my mother. The university of Essex is only about a mile from the church I attend in Colchester. The church family has welcomed students and we often have entertained them in our homes. In 1994 I took early retirement and about 10 Christians met in my flat to pray about how we could reach more students with the love of God. In 1996 Friends International Colchester was born!

You plan to leave a legacy to Friends International, for which we are very grateful. What inspired you to do this?

Friends International has a great vision to reach students from other countries with the good news of Jesus Christ and send them back to their homes to share with others the gospel. I have seen with my own eyes the change that comes when somebody comes to faith in Jesus Christ and the impact that it can have when they go home. For example, one student from Malawi came to our church and became a Christian. His wife had been praying for him and said he came back a changed man and



Joan (left) with an international student.'

started having prayers and Bible reading with his seven children who are now all Christians. He had asked me to pray for him that he would have an influence for good in the Malawian government. Later he became minister for Trade and Industry in his country.

What would you say to someone who is considering leaving a legacy?

I would urge people to pray and ask God who He wants them to leave a legacy to. I did not go overseas but I am a missionary in England and God is bringing the world to our doorstep. Friends International staff workers are doing a great job and they need our support financially. I would ask those of you who are reading this to seriously consider leaving a legacy to the very important work of Friends International.



Just Say Hello Day is back!

Last year, we invited you to be part of the Just Say Hello Day – a day to warmly welcome an international student by starting a conversation.

Despite the academic year being impacted by Covid-19, international students still came to the UK and Ireland, and their need for connection was greater than ever. The Just Say Hello Day saw churches across the country connecting and reaching out to these international students using our Just Say Hello Day Resources Pack. That's why we are doing it again this October and would love for your church to join in.

This is an amazing opportunity for Christians to meet people from around the world and share friendship and faith as we reach out to them with the love of Christ. We have earmarked 17th October for you and your church, but don't worry if that day doesn't work, just choose another date to just say "hello".

Saying "hello" can be the beginning of an incredible adventure of meeting new people and seeing lives changed.

Find out more at:
friendsinternational.uk/hello



Latest News

Reach Trainees

Our 12 Reach Trainees are coming to the end of an unforgettable year – for both the great training but also the pandemic! Please pray for the new Reach Trainees starting with us on September 1st.



Recruitment Open Days

We are holding online recruitment open days for those who would like to find out more about working with Friends International. The next one is on June 22nd 2021. Please check our Jobs page for more information and to sign up: friendsinternational.uk/jobs

Join our Free Summer Training Seminars

Through June and July, we are running six free training seminars. The sessions, based on the theme of 'Sharing Christ Cross-Culturally' will include topics such as: Why culture and worldview matter when sharing the gospel; and How to make our churches and CU's 'International ready'. We would love for you to join us, find out more at:
friendsinternational.uk/training



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@friendsintl

The World has Arrived. Now We're Just Waiting for You.



Join our team and help us grow friendship and faith with international students.

Current Vacancies

We are currently looking to fill these key roles. If you think this could be you, we would love to hear from you.

Colchester – Centre Team Leader

Coventry – Centre Team Leader

Paisley – Centre Team Leader

London – Centre Team Leader

Newcastle – Staff Worker

Reading – Centre Team Leader

Sheffield – Centre Team Leader

Support Centre – Finance Manager



Find out more and download our recruitment pack at :
friendsinternational.uk/jobs



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