

Suggestions for Greater Kansas City People to People (GKCPTP) Sponsors

- If at all possible, be at the airport to greet your officer and family. If unable to be at the airport, communicate that to the officer, to the other two sponsors and to GKCPTP (Pamela Felton). If the officer comes by car, arrange to meet the day of arrival or within 1-2 days after.
- A welcome basket with things to get them through the first 24 hours is a great idea (e.g. granola bars, juice, water, coloring book or toy for a small child).
- Read about your officer's country ahead of time so you know some basics. Review the Culture Gram provided in your sponsor packet before the officer arrives.
- Make sure the officer knows how to contact you and ask for current contact information for the officer (officer may have changed or prefer different contact information than what was officially provided to IMSD). Don't expect the officer to initiate early contacts as they will be overwhelmed.
- Help make the spouse and family feel part of the sponsor program from the beginning by including them in communications and activities. Especially if the spouse and/or children don't speak English, communicate your intention to include them via the officer (who can translate to his/her family.)
- Coordinate with the two other sponsor groups: Operation International (OI) (the Leavenworth/Lansing) and military. The OI and military sponsors often help with transportation to the Fort, acquiring a car, housing, and with officer orientation to the Fort and their new city. Especially when the officer first arrives, try to host or attend (if another sponsor hosts) a casual gathering with all sponsors and the officer and family. It serves to help establish a foundational relationship with the officer and the sponsor team.
- Remember that you will need an LAC pass to gain access to the Fort. There is a separate process to obtain your LAC pass. You can also find instructions on our website: www.gkcptp.org
- Be intentional about making several early contacts by phone, email, text, and in person. It will do a great deal to help the officer and family to get past the initial anxiety of being in a different country away from home and extended family. If you are not comfortable with cultural or religious differences, ask. It provides an excellent opportunity for conversation in the "getting to know you" stage.
- The first 40 days are critical in establishing a positive relationship with your officer and family and this is the time your officer and family will have the most unscheduled time.
- At least one face to face meeting should have taken place before the July Icebreaker. Please consider including your new officer and family in your 4th of July celebration(s).
- Once classes begin after the Flag ceremony in August, there is a lot of pressure on the officer to study and the family will begin to become involved in children's school and other family activities.
- At this point, the frequency of contact can relax and should become natural. Invite your officer and family to functions you would normally have such as BBQs, children's sport activities, family's birthday dinners, fairs and cultural events in Kansas City. Sharing your normal interests helps make others feel part of your family.
- If the officer and family are not traveling on holiday weekends and weeks off such as Spring break, this is a good time to get together.