

Meeting People at and around MIT

While you are at MIT, you will find yourself busy with your research or teaching activities and it may feel difficult for you (and your spouse) to meet people. We encourage you to get involved in activities and make friends! Links to many of the organizations listed below are available on the International Scholars Office (ISchO) website at <<http://web.mit.edu/scholars/>>, and in the ISchO's Guide to MIT and Visa Information for International Scholars and their Families.

As you may have noticed, many Americans are very direct. They speak to strangers and are not shy about it. This means that they often expect other people to do the same thing. Try to be brave, look a new person directly in the eye, and start or join a conversation. If you are worried about your English speaking ability, remember that most Americans will appreciate that you are trying hard to speak English. Here are a few ideas for you.

On Campus Resources

- ❖ Use MIT's athletic facilities and sign up for a class.
- ❖ Join the Language Conversation Exchange.
- ❖ Go to an outing or activity offered by spouses&partners@mit, a group for American and international spouses and partners.
- ❖ Attend an event available through MITAC, the MIT Activities Committee.
- ❖ Join one of MIT's many international, ethnic or language groups.
- ❖ Go to a movie or "Fun Lecture" offered through the MIT Lecture Series Committee.
- ❖ Attend a meeting or event organized on campus by people who have similar interests and hobbies -- such as working with wood (wood shop), sports (informal teams and games), the MIT Outing Club (hiking, biking, skiing, camping, canoeing, etc.), swing dancing, martial arts, and others.
- ❖ Look through *TechTalk*, MIT's newspaper, or check MIT's bulletin boards. Choose a concert, play, lecture, or other activity to attend.
- ❖ Go to a program offered by the MIT Center for Work, Family& Personal Life.
- ❖ Attend a service or activity sponsored by one of religious groups represented on campus.
- ❖ Enjoy the many programs offered through the MIT Women's League.
- ❖ Look through the MIT *LifeSites* website <<http://web.mit.edu/lifesites/new.html>>, especially the Community Life section, and consider other options listed there.
- ❖ Look through the Newcomers' Guide posted online at <http://web.mit.edu/spouses/newcomers_guide/index.html>, particularly the Leisure Activities section, for other ideas. (This is offered through spouses&partners@mit, but is of interest to everyone.)

Around Town

- ❖ Get the local newspaper in the town where you live and attend local events.
- ❖ Join your local library. Attend events for children and adults that are scheduled there.
- ❖ Join a book reading and discussion group!
- ❖ Attend a local church, mosque, temple or other religious institution.

- ❖ If your children are in school, go to school events and join the PTO, the Parent Teacher Organization, also known as the PTA in some schools. Choose a committee where you could be helpful.
- ❖ Volunteer for a community service organization.
- ❖ Go to activities at an international organization in the Boston area.
- ❖ Join a community organization such as the Harvard Film Archive or the Boston Ski & Sports Club.
- ❖ Participate in charity fundraisers, such as a walk for a particular cause.
- ❖ Consider “Meetup,” a resource for locating people and participating in activities that interest you. See the website <<http://www.meetup.com/>>.

Tips on Meeting Other People and Understanding American Communication Styles

See the International Scholars Office list of resources helpful at understanding Americans and helpful for helping your children and family to adjust to life in the U.S.

[insert link to booklist “Making the Transition...”]

See other tips on getting to know Americans on this Harvard University website:

<http://www.hio.harvard.edu/students_scholars/get_to_know_americans.php>

New York University’s website also has very helpful information. Go to <<http://www.nyu.edu/oiss/beyond/index.html>> and select “Beyond NYU” and then “Cultural Issues.” In particular, see the sections on Meeting new people; Know Americans; The U.S. Workplace; and Cultural Adjustment.