

# RUF=INTERNATIONAL

## THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE

### Welcoming the Nations & Equipping Kingdom Ambassadors

CHRISTMAS 2017

Celebrating 10 Years of RUFI at UT!!!

Dear Friends,

As RUF International at UT prepares to wrap up 10 years of ministry this month, we want you to know how incredibly blessed we've been to have partnered with you. We're so encouraged as we think back on so many friends from so many nations whom the Lord has brought into our lives over the past decade. These are people who have heard the Christmas hope and experienced the love of the Savior because YOU sent us to The University of Tennessee, YOU have supported us, and YOU have prayed for our ministry to bear fruit. The Light continues to shine into the darkest places of our world and hearts. Merry Christmas!



Gerry - PhD Student from the Philippines

#### Making Room

**Christine Pohl**, in her book, *Making Room*, describes hospitality as “not first a duty and responsibility; it is first a response of love and gratitude for God’s love and welcome to us.” I love this because it is *this* vision of biblical hospitality that shapes RUFI’s commitment to welcome the 1.2 million international students on campuses in the U.S.

On Sunday, Nov. 19, our RUFI staff and volunteer team (along with gracious hosts, Sam and Martha Ann Fulk) **made room for 100 internationals to experience Thanksgiving in an American home.** Friends from places like Lebanon and Costa Rica, Iraq and Uganda, and Nepal and Bangladesh enjoyed the sea of traditional foods and favorite holiday desserts, and they participated in their first ever wishbone-breaking contest.

Finally, we **recalled the 1<sup>st</sup> Thanksgiving** and reflected a few moments together on the importance of gratitude, before giving folks a **chance to give thanks** for whatever was on their heart. **Gerry from the Philippines** shared this with the group: “*I would like to thank RUFI, my second family here. For 1 ½ years, I have been really happy. As I start a 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter of my life, having finished my PhD...thanks to Lee and the volunteers and the staff of RUFI...I’m thankful for the nurture and having a family to help me with English and (other things) I don’t know.*”

#### Ministering to the Whole Person

“**People are not projects.**” It’s easy to forget this in our zeal and haste for the people we care about to change, because we want what’s best for them. This has relevance for us on campus each day as God calls us to love our international friends where they are, not to fix them, not to demand they conform to our expectations, and not to treat them merely as souls who need to get in the door of heaven before we move on to others.

This semester we have had **many rich conversations with friends from across the globe!**



Friends at RUFI's Thanksgiving Dinner

#### In Their Own Words...



RUFI friends with Linsu (right)

“My English is not good but, first, I want to thank my country for giving me such an opportunity here to study and meet different people and set up friendship. And thank Lee and your team for bringing me closer to God and to get some knowledge of your powerful religion. Because of RUF, I’ve met new faces. Thank you for all the hands and hearts.”

*Linsu - Visiting Scholar from China*

“Effective evangelism requires relationships. There are very few exceptions. In my case, I knew of no Christian who truly cared about me...none that I knew who cared about me unconditionally. Since no Christian cared about me, I did not care about their message.”

*Nabeel Qureshi - Christian author of Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus*



Brazilian Friends

“I posted 1 Peter 5:7 on Facebook because I deal a lot with anxiety. It says, ‘Cast your anxieties on Him because He cares for you.’ I found it on a website of quotes, along with others by Buddha and Confucius... I’m not sure where inner strength comes from. Maybe from Jesus?”

*Debora - PhD student from Brazil*



RUFI at UT Staff  
Drew, Lee, & Jenny

## Prayer & Praise

- **Praise** for 300 students from 40 countries who attended 1 or more RUFI events this fall!
- **Pray** for our Christmas Party we're hosting on 12/9 and for our interns as they host a special Christmas activity for the families of visiting scholars on 12/16
- **Praise** for a great semester of *Dinner & Discovery* on Thursday nights, monthly "Welcome" events, and 4 small groups
- **Pray** for Christ to reveal himself to many UT internationals as the true Light who offers salvation
- **Pray** for \$25,000 in December giving to meet our budget and finish 2017 strong.
- **Pray** for wisdom in Daniel's college search and for peace in Phillip's change from West to CAK

## Contribution Information

You may **GIVE** online at  
[www.rufi.org/utrufi](http://www.rufi.org/utrufi)

Or to **GIVE** by check please make it payable to "RUF" and designate the memo line as:

"RUFI @ UTK / #241010510"

Reformed University Fellowship  
P.O. Box 890004  
Charlotte, NC 28289-0004

All gifts are tax-deductible

We're excited for "Coco" from China who is professing new faith in Jesus, and for "I" from West Africa who has become interested in Christianity since arriving in the U.S. **But God is also using the relational capital we've built up** to enable us to meaningfully care for students who are suffering greatly – from insomnia, academic stress, aching loneliness and depression.

Just last night a Masters student from Asia, who is a dear Christian friend, called me out of desperation. He recently attempted to take his own life as he's finally coming to terms with childhood trauma he experienced. He's wrestling with *why* his Heavenly Father would allow him to suffer in so many personal and professional ways. I'm so thankful to have been able to listen, to reflect together on Jesus' presence in our pain, and to pray for his soul to find rest.

## Family Portrait

**Twenty years ago this month**, I surprised Jen at our wedding by singing to her "If You Could See What I See." Now, two decades later, I can say that, while love has not always been easy, I can see all the more clearly how the Lord led me to the perfect woman to build a life and family together with. We rejoice at how our family life continues to evolve!

**Neissa (9)** loves to flash her big eyes at you, has a quick wit, is proud to be learning her times tables, and is a serious self-taught gymnast! **Annie (11)** appreciates order, has the stamina to spend hours creating homemade "slime", is always a teacher favorite, and has a truly tender heart. **Phillip (15)** keeps us honest as parents (!), loves to coerce his little sisters into serving him however he can, and is gearing up for a new beginning in the new year at Christian Academy of Knoxville. And **Daniel (18)** is about to enter his final lap of high school! It's been a special semester for him in so many ways. Jen and I cried crocodile tears with him the night of his last football game as a West Rebel. But if the phone keeps ringing (as it has been the last 2 weeks) - and scholarship offers begin arriving by the truckload - then it's a real possibility Daniel could end up playing football somewhere (?) in college next fall.



Daniel, Lee, Annie, Neissa, Jen & Phillip

## Facts & Figures

For 10 years now the Lord has faithfully led churches, individuals, and families like YOU to support RUFI's ministry among the nations at UT. How incredibly thankful we are for each of you! We need your ongoing financial support and prayers as we enter a new decade of ministry. **Currently, our 2017 giving is set to finish \$25,000 behind** last year's giving due to the loss of a large foundation gift we've been blessed with the past few years. **Would you pray** for the Lord to provide this \$25,000 before the end of the year, so we can move forward securely into 2018? **And would you even consider** how you might be part of helping us reach that goal? Thank you!

*So That the Nations May Be Glad,*

*Lee, Jen, Daniel, Phillip, Annie, & Neisse Leadbetter*

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