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# Fun for people far from home

International students stuck here for the holidays can fight off loneliness in a number of ways

By Arlene Juan  
For the Emerald

I am Canadian. As an international student, I am quite familiar with the dreaded anticipation of a holiday away from home that's been buzzing around the international student community.

Barriers such as over-inflated airfares and over-booked flights make it impossible for some, like me, to travel home.

Being new to America, most of us have made only a handful of friends. But many of them will be away during winter break, leaving some us nearly alone during the holidays.

For this reason, I talked to some students to get the scoop on what we can do to attain and maintain a joyful holiday spirit. Yu Bai, a co-director of the International Student Association, advised me to "take advantage of the International Friend Program," also known as the Homestay option.

This program matches you to a local individual, couple, or family who will be your international friends. Your international friend may show you around Eugene or take you on day trips to the Oregon coast or nearby mountains. You will have the opportunity to attend ball games, cook dinners and even spend Christmas together.

Your International Friend can be a great resource for you when you have questions about local customs, getting around Eugene, or any other concerns. If this program interests you, pick up an application of International Education and Exchange. For more information, contact advisers Hilary

Lord or Melanie Williams at the OIEE office at 346-3206.

Jonathan Yeh, a member of the Taiwanese Student Association, advised that you not putter and pout during the break. Be active. Even away from home you can get out there and do all the activities you love to do during this time of year.

"Involve yourself in adventurous activities like snowboarding and skiing at Timberline Lodge or Willamette Pass Ski Area," Yeh said.

Timberline Lodge is located at Mount Hood and Willamette Pass Ski Area is on Highway 58 on the way to Bend.

Jennifer Huang, an American English Institute student, suggested another option.

"Visit relatives in other states if possible," she said. She emphasized that you must absorb the American holiday and see it from different perspectives by traveling.

If you can't be with family, be sure to surround yourself with friends during the break. Plan a gift exchange with your friends and even acquaintances. This can save you money on gift giving and make you feel as if you're with family. Another way to surround yourself with people is to volunteer. Embrace the true meaning of the holidays by giving back to the community. You can volunteer at the Eugene Mission, located at 1542 W. 1st Ave. Contact Lynn Antis at 344-3251 for more information.

An Quach, a junior business major, suggested another activity.

"You can go bowling at Emerald Lanes," Quach said. "You can bowl one game and play the second game free before 5:30 p.m. with Duck Bucks until the expiration date."

If Eugene tires you, hop on the Amtrak and go to Portland. It will typically cost \$30 per person to ride round trip during the holidays. Reservations must be made ahead of time. The Amtrak stops at the Union Station right in the heart of downtown Portland.

From there you can enjoy numerous activities within walking distance.

New to Portland is the Chinese Classical Garden, where you can see Chinese architecture and artwork for \$5 with a student identification card or \$7 at regular price.


For shopping, you can go to Pioneer Square. Basketball fanatics can also see any of the five games scheduled at the Rose Garden during the holidays. On Dec. 25, the Blazers will take on their archrivals, the Los Angeles Lakers. Ticket prices vary from \$10-\$200. Tickets must be purchased in advance. For details, visit <http://www.nba.com/blazers>.

For the late evening, take advantage of the nightlife if you are 21 years old because the club scene is said to be wild. Portland also has a few 18 and older clubs.


Daniel Duong, a senior computer science major, suggested the New Copper Penny to "get your groove on."

The Legin, Duong said, is good to get jiggy with it, or Ringlers to "simply chill and mellow with some alcoholic beverages."

You have nearly a month away from the books to indulge in the American lifestyle, so don't sulk. What you put into the holidays is what you will get out of them. Make the best of what is available to you. Oregon may not be home, but it is certainly home away from home. So smile, laugh a little, live a lot and have a happy holiday season, whatever you celebrate.



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