

# STRENGTHENING CHURCH RELATIONSHIPS



To reach every international student in our nation, Bridges must partner with local churches. We desire to build interdependent relationships that the Holy Spirit can use to lead to greater fruitfulness in churches and on campuses. *(Hebrews 10:24)*

The following illustrates a process of building relationships with local churches.



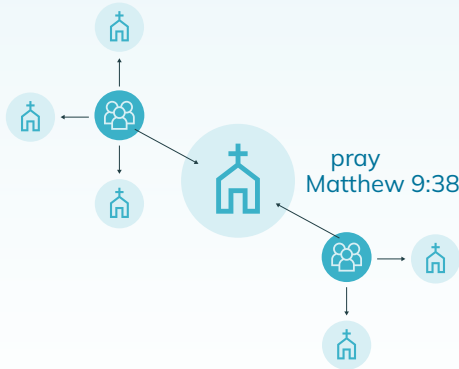
= Bridges Team



= Local Church

## 1 CONNECT

*with your community*



**Be** present in networks

**Initiate** conversations

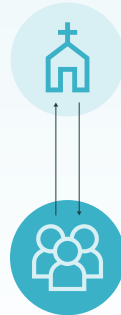
**Learn & Value** their point of view (vision, mission, values, passions)

**Look** for common vision

IDENTIFY CHURCH

## 2 BUILD TRUST

*to form lasting relationships*



**Go** to their world and invite them to yours

**Pray** for one another

**Serve** without expecting a return and with no hidden agenda

AUTHENTIC RELATIONSHIPS

## 3 ENTER

*to do more together than apart*



**Cast vision** for opportunity

**Share** your unique roles, strengths, and limitations

**Find** a mutually beneficial action step (start slow)

**Invest** in the relationship

MUTUAL GENEROSITY

## 4 PARTNER

*with a kingdom mindset*

3 Types of Partnering:

### Connect

Provide church avenues to serve and connect with international students.

### Share

A team and church team-up regularly with a common goal.

### Coach

Equip a church to own a distant campus in your scope.

**Communicate** regularly

**Generate** resources

**Give** recognition

**Celebrate** together

**Trust** the Holy Spirit for the outcome

INCREASED FRUITFULNESS

# SUGGESTED PARTNERING TIMELINE

## SUMMER

- Build relationships with church leaders.
- Help key partners to own ministry during the summer.
- Recruit and equip churches for welcome opportunities.
- Invite volunteers/churches to meet students' needs.

**Main Idea:** build relationships & invite connections with students

## FALL

- Plan the fall retreat with a church.
- Invite key partners to Vision Partners Track.
- Set up Thanksgiving host families in October.
- Hold a training session for churches and new volunteers.

**Main Idea:** train partners & utilize Thanksgiving to partner with churches

## WINTER

- Follow up with Thanksgiving host families.
- Plan spring break with a church.
- Partner with a church at Christmas.
- Challenge key partners to follow up new students at welcome events.
- Hold a training session for churches and new volunteers.
- During a launch trip, connect with a local church to build a relationship.

**Main Idea:** empower partners

## SPRING

- Partner with a church at Easter.
- Do EV with volunteers and pastors.
- Utilize fundraiser to build new relationships in the community.
- Plan a celebration gathering.
- Delegate summer ministry to key partners.

**Main Idea:** utilize fundraiser, celebrate, & delegate for summer

## TEAM DISCUSSION *(refer to front)*

1. What churches are you connected with in your community? (List church volunteers and pastors.)
2. Have you learned their vision, mission and values? Do they share a common vision?
3. Are there opportunities this year to grow your connections with more churches?
4. What can you do to build trust with each church connection this year? *a. When is the last time you initiated a conversation with the pastor or a leader? b. In what ways can you serve them?*
5. What is the best environment for key church leaders to experience the vision of Bridges? (bring students to them/invite to a Bridges gathering)
6. Consider the potential partnering relationship. *a. How will you cast vision for the opportunity? b. What are the strengths and needs on each side? c. How can you meet each other's needs? d. What is your next step together?*  
Assess what type of partnering is possible: **Connect** | **Share** | **Coach**
7. What are the opportunities this year to develop and strengthen the partnering relationship? How will you equip and train each partner?
8. How can you celebrate together or give recognition to your church partners?