

Dear Parents,

My wife, Janine, and I first took our children on a Global Program when Hannah was 6, Philip was 4, and Janine was pregnant with Laura. We directed a program in a relatively remote location in northwest China. Both of us had fears of them getting separated from us or picking up a deadly disease. These, of course, are natural fears but relatively unrealistic. I am so glad we went forward with our plans. We found our experience in China to be monumental. The summer of 2002 we took our children (Hannah then aged 12, Philip then aged 9 and Laura then aged 5) along with a team of university students to work with the poor in Cairo, Egypt.

It is natural for you to be concerned for the health and safety of your children. But sending your son or daughter overseas is not something we take lightly. InterVarsity began in 1940 as an organization devoted to helping university students walk out their Christian faith with integrity and passion. Part of what it means to follow Jesus is to grow in our love and concern for people of every ethnicity and culture and for God's purposes in the world. Global Programs have become a venue for students to explore what it means for them to be global citizens and to love the world. We have been taking students outside the country for service and learning since our first program in 1970 to Costa Rica. Today there are more than 50 InterVarsity sponsored international programs all over the world.

I would urge you to support and encourage your son or daughter in their journey of faith. Of all the "easy roads" your child might choose, it must be very satisfying to see them wanting to live a life of self-sacrifice and service. Although I cannot guarantee safety for your children as they travel overseas (no more than I could if they stayed in the U.S.), I can say that we undertake responsible measures to reduce risk. If your son or daughter is accepted onto a Global Program, I am confident that the conditions for a life-changing experience lay ahead. Specific details about the project your son or daughter is participating in, such as where, when, with what ministries, and the cost are available elsewhere on this website or via the program director. Feel free to contact us at gp@intervarsity.org if you have other questions.

With gratitude,
Scott Bessenecker,
Associate Director of Missions