Rice is an increasingly international university, where a quarter of undergraduate and graduate students come from outside of the U.S. to pursue research and take advantage of Rice’s stellar learning environment. But for students, it is not always easy to acclimate to a new community. Fortunately, passionate Rice volunteers like Mary Kay Dauria step forward every year to make sure these students’ new home is a second home. Through IFR, a program within the Office of International Students and Scholars, Mary Kay hosts international students at social events and on cultural outings, showing them what Houston has to offer and providing them a view of an American family’s traditions and culture.

“I care deeply about international students,” says Mary Kay, a retired senior VP of international services for AIG who has traveled to 60 countries, worked abroad and led a team of international employees in Houston. “I connected with Rice because this is an amazing institution. As a result, our family has gotten to know a wonderful group of students, and hopefully we have welcomed them into an American family.” Mary Kay has hosted a number of students over the years, including computer science doctoral candidate Simbarashe “Simba” Dzinamarira. Her warm welcome eased Simba, who is from Zimbabwe, into life in Houston. What began as a welcome, with trips to the theater and the Art Car Parade, has become a lasting bond. “Simba has remained a close family friend, and I think he’ll be a lifelong friend,” Mary Kay says.

If you would like to learn more about welcoming international students to Rice through International Friends at Rice, visit oiss.rice.edu/ifr or email oiss@rice.edu.

Mary Kay Dauria, a volunteer for International Friends at Rice (IFR), offers international students a warm welcome and an open door.
Dear Rice Volunteers,

Because of you, our students are warmly welcomed to Rice, they receive an outstanding education and form meaningful connections while they are here, and they graduate to join a passionate community of alumni.

Your steadfast generosity of time, effort and resources — on campus and across the globe, in schools and programs, at events and in your workplace — ensures that Rice can be the university and the community of which we are so proud. Your timeless passion and dedication to mentorship and the student experience drove the successful conclusion of the Initiative for Students and inspired the launch of Sallyportal, Rice’s online professional development hub.

Through these efforts and the many other ways in which volunteers connect with Rice and with each other, we are able to provide our students with an unparalleled educational experience — one fueled by a generous community of support that encourages excellence, innovation and a desire to improve the world.

As you read this year’s volunteer impact report, I hope that you will take pride in the work that you have done to support Rice, our mission and our students. Thank you for all that you do.

Warmly,

David W. Leebron
President