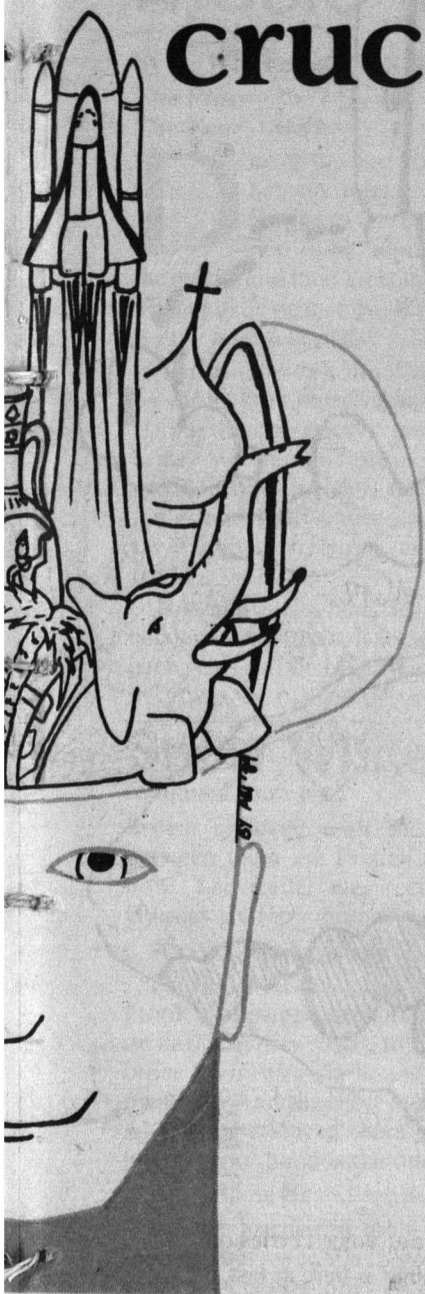


# crucial to students



students can meet others, on a casual social basis, who are in the same situation with similar problems and concerns.

But the International Centre also provides programs and services for the general university population, and it is these programs that make the Centre a one of a kind facility in Canada. "Most people are under the impression that this is a place for foreign students, which is quite untrue. It has meant as much for Canadian students as for foreign students. The Centre is a place where Canadians who want to become informed about different parts of the world can come in and question staff members or meet students from other countries. Canadians can learn about the world without leaving campus," explains Ramesh Sahasranam, a part-time staff member at the Centre. Any U of A student can come into the Centre to get information on exchange and study programs abroad, or make use of the Overseas Opportunities Room, which is a resource room containing calendars, pamphlets, magazines etc. about studying and working in other countries.

The Centre also runs the unique "Passport to the World" program every weekday during the noon hour. Discussions, films, slides, presentations, demonstrations, and lectures on a variety of international related topics are given during this hour. The Centre also hosts International Week, an annual week-long celebration, which includes everything from arts and craft displays, to lectures and presentations, to food fairs, to concerts. The main function of the Centre, and the goal behind all of its programs, according to volunteer Lawrence Dombro, is to

"open communication between Canadian and international students... discuss issues, world affairs, gain knowledge of religions and cultures... come to a better understanding and an appreciation of differences."

The International Centre is really still a test project and many people from other universities in Canada are watching for its success. The Centre's programs and services are organized and run by seven full-time and twelve part-time staff members, but the real backbone of many of the programs is the approximately 150 volunteers. As Bruce Caldwell explains "the Centre's unique programs can't exist without volunteers. Without volunteers the Centre has no vitality." People willing to volunteer their time, skills, knowledge etc. are always welcome at the Centre, said Wilf Allan. What funding the Centre does get comes from a variety of sources including the U of A Administration, the Students' Union, the Graduate Students' Association, the Canadian International Development Agency, etc.

As for the future of the Centre, Wilf Allan states, "our first priority will be helping the university do a better job at the international level... I would like to see us get to the point where every professor at this university sees an international dimension and draws upon the living resource represented by international students." A relaxed spirit of cooperation, understanding, interaction and exchange is prevalent as soon as you walk through the doors of the International Centre, and what you quickly realize is that the potential for growth of such a place, with a little help from U of A students, is practically unlimited.

of emergency loans and bursaries, to unique programs such as the Host Family Program and the Spouses Program. Under the Host Family Program, foreign students are brought in contact with Canadian families and both are encouraged to have a casual, recreational on-going relationship during the student's stay at the university. The Spouses Program is actually a support group for the spouses of foreign students studying on campus. The group meets weekly for informal English classes, tours, and a social exchange of information and experiences. For the foreign student studying at the U of A, the International Centre provides both helpful assistance and practical services, and is also a place where these



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