For more than five years, students from Madonna University's International Student Office have been directly involved in community outreach endeavors in several of Highland Park's neighborhoods that are situated on the Woodward corridor. In collaboration with the Fort Street Open Door, a homeless outreach mission in downtown Detroit, and the KCPMD (Korean Presbyterian Church of Metro Detroit), ISO staff is able to link new residents with the community known as a "Centers for Community".

Though not traditional by most definitions, this "center" serves for the fact that what it does best, aside from the weekly family-style dinner and monthly birthday party, includes offering a place for children and infants, is embody true Christian hospitality to strangers. By working side-by-side with both collaborating and community members alike, ISO students have been able to make this project possible since it began and have worked quite successfully to blur the lines between guests and volunteers.

From meal preparation and service to arts, crafts, and cultural projects, to the facilitation of an annual Christmas party, ISO students have helped build, nurture and sustain a program where more was previously unavailable. Looking into what has resulted is a place that forges friendships which contradict the messages about who is "valuable" and "good to be with", and does so in a manner amount the division of racial and economic differences. In doing so, the Fort Street group has helped foster a place where the hope embodied by everyone involved nourishes, challenges and transforms not only the guests and the hosts, but the entire community at large.

Written by Benjamin Ogden (Director, Fort Street Open Door)