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A place to make friends

► The International Christian Friendship Center will serve as a home away from home for SU's international students.

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Contributing Writer

International students at Syracuse University now have a friendly place to call their own.

The International Christian Friendship Center on Lafayette Road in Jamesville officially opened Aug. 1.

"It's their home away from home," said the Rev. T.E. Koshy, evangelical Christian chaplain for SU. "(The center) is an outgrowth of my 30 years of service to the campus, particularly among international students."

After he came to the United States from India more than 30 years ago, Koshy said, he felt lonely in his first years. He knows other international students feel the same way and hopes that the center will give them a place to relax and talk to other students and people from the community.

The center, on 52 acres near the Lafayette Country Club, is in its first phase of building. Eventually, Koshy wants to see sports facilities and an addition to the main center.

One of the main services at the center will be Friendship Meals. Koshy and his wife, Indira, have been inviting international students to their home in the university area for many years. Now Friendship Meals are offered weekly at SU's Hendricks Chapel.

"The way to anyone's heart is through their stomach," Koshy said with a laugh.

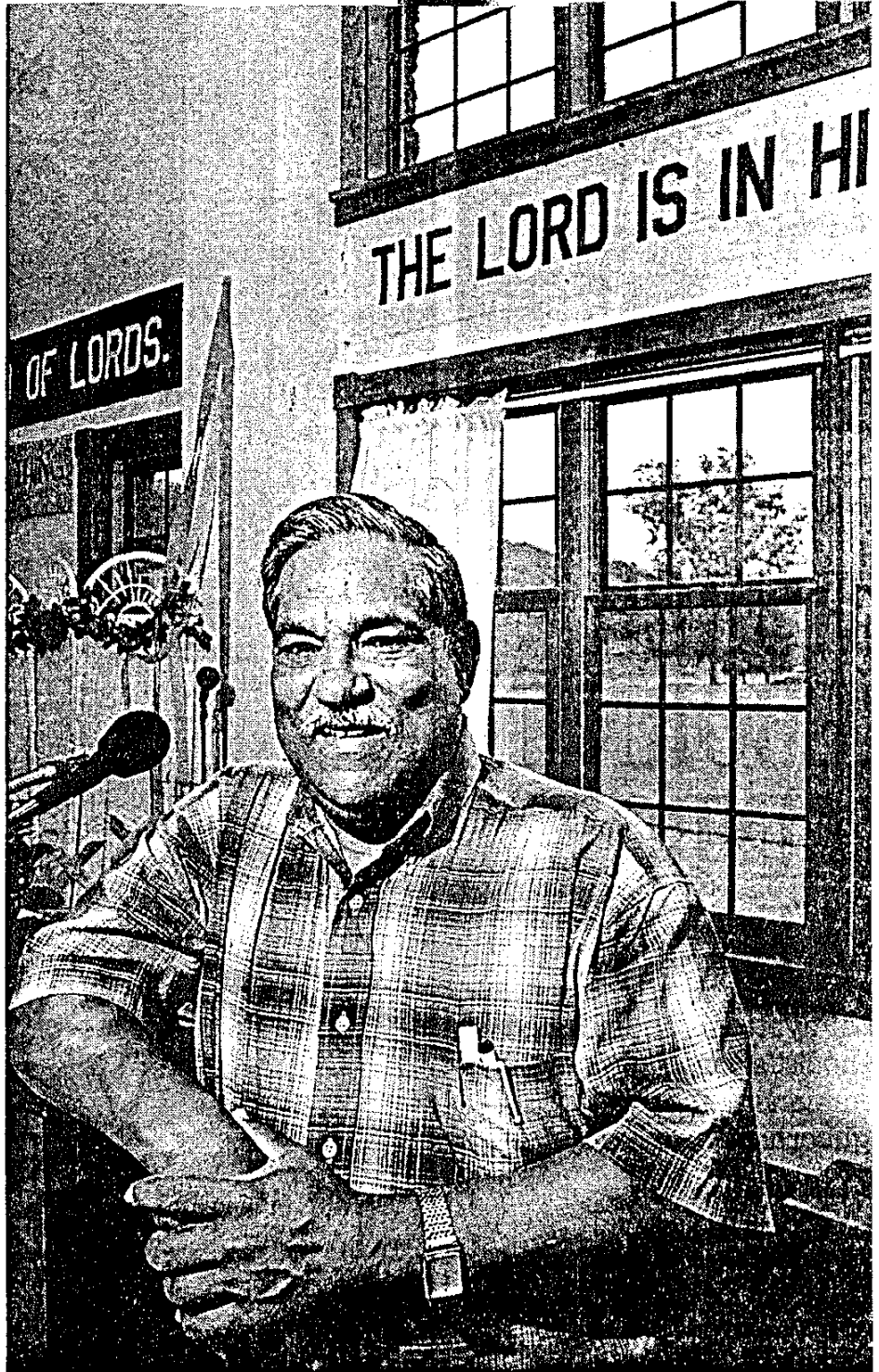
The center also holds two religious services, at 9:30 and 11 a.m. Sundays.

"The services are nondenominational," Koshy said. "This center is open to everyone. It's a local church with a difference."

Koshy wants the center to be "a place where students can come to put their feet up and have a cup of coffee or meet with other students."

Koshy's goal is the same one he has followed since coming to SU in 1965.

"I want to build friendships," Koshy said.



GARY WALTERS/Staff photo

THE REV. T.E. KOSHY, evangelical Christian chaplain at Syracuse University, sits in the International Christian Friendship Center in Jamesville.