



**Intercultural  
Programs USA**

# What The World Needs Now Is...

# You!



**Step Up. Stand Out. Make the World a Better Place.  
Open your home and heart to an AFS Exchange Student.**

# 1-800-AFS-INFO

[www.afs.org/usa](http://www.afs.org/usa)

## What The World Needs Now Is...You!

You can help change the world. It's true! The world needs intercultural understanding now more than ever. That's something that happens person-to-person. Imagine how different the world would be if every high school student had an opportunity to experience family, school, and community life in another country, and every family experienced what it was like to share their lives with a young person from a different culture.

Each year, more than 11,000 young people study abroad in countries around the world with AFS Intercultural Programs. The families who step forward to host these outstanding young people become part of a very special worldwide community—one that is working together to help support the AFS Mission of building a more just and peaceful world.

Here in the U.S., families are always needed to share their lives with high school students who are eager to discover what it's like to live as a member of a family, school, and community in America. Families who open their homes and hearts to host a student open the door to intercultural understanding. This experience forever changes the lives of not only their own family, but so many other people as well. What begins as an exchange of kindness, customs, and culture within a family extends throughout a high school and community to touch thousands of people.

## Who Can Host?

Every family has something to offer: two-parent households with small children, teenagers, or no children at home; single parents; grandparents; families with adopted children; or foster parents. When you share your lives, home, and community with an exchange student, you learn and grow in so many ways while forming bonds of friendship that will last for a lifetime.



***"It's impossible to express the joy and satisfaction I've experienced over the past 50 years as a result of hosting with AFS. I have 5 AFS 'brothers' and 'sisters' and 5 AFS 'children,' not to mention the many exchange students that I worked with here. Now I even have 4 AFS 'grandchildren.' What more could one ask! It's such a wonderful feeling to have family on almost every continent."*** - Carolyn Berry, AFS Host Mom and Volunteer



***"An AFS international experience is an awesome, life-changing, and earth-shattering experience. I applied to AFS and landed safely in Ohio. My host family received me with great friendliness and hospitality, helping me to take my own 'first steps' through a new culture. My host family became an important part of my life."***

- Jakob, Congress-Bundestag Scholar, Germany to U.S., Year Program

## Our History

During World Wars I & II, young Americans volunteered as ambulance drivers in the American Field Service evacuating the wounded from battlefields. When they returned home, they founded a movement to promote understanding and peace through international student exchange known as AFS Intercultural Programs.

Today, AFS places high school students with more than 2,700 very special U.S. families each year. Students come from every continent and from more than 50 countries around the world. Many come to the U.S. on scholarships such as high school students from Germany chosen to be Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange Program scholars, students from the former Soviet Union who receive support through FLEX (Future Leaders Exchange Program), and young people from countries with a significant Muslim population whose study abroad experience in the U.S. is made possible through YES (Partnership for Learning Youth Exchange and Study Program), sponsored by the U.S. Department of State. These students become members of the families with whom they live, attend local high schools, and participate in community life. Most students remain in contact with their host families for years and even decades.



## How Does Being a Host Family Work?

Host families welcome their new hosted son or daughter into their home, agree to share their daily lives with their student, and provide a bed and meals. Families are asked to guide, love, and support their hosted student as they would their own children. Most families host for 11 months with students arriving in August. Some families host for a semester with students arriving in January. Students come with their own spending money and secondary medical insurance coverage. Students are between 15 and 18 years of age.

For more than 55 years, AFS has been matching host families with high school students from all over the world. AFS Volunteers who are based in communities around the country arrange for students to attend local high schools and provide guidance and support throughout the hosting experience. Many of these volunteers are former host parents themselves, or went abroad with AFS as exchange students. A liaison supports the family, student, and school to ensure that all will gain the most from the experience. A student may also be assigned an "aunt" or "uncle" to share special times.

In addition to host families, AFS needs volunteers, host "aunts" and "uncles," and families who can host as a welcome family for a few weeks. If you are unable to serve as a host family for a year or semester, please consider the other ways you can help.

## Why Do Families Host?

The reasons why families host are many and varied, but most families share one thing—they quickly discover that they had no idea how much hosting would mean and how much they would gain until they stepped forward.

- Enrich your family's daily life simply by sharing it with an exchange student from another culture
- Bring your family closer together
- Introduce a new culture and customs to yourself and your children
- Discover your community and country through the eyes of a young person from a different country
- Meet new people in your community by participating in AFS activities
- Develop a connection with your hosted student and his or her family that will last for years to come
- Help an outstanding young person grow into a more confident and knowledgeable adult
- Help make a real difference in your community and in the world

***"Thank you for every moment that you've given to me, every thought that has broadened my horizon, every example about life for me to follow, every criticism that made me think, every compliment that made me feel good, every advice that made me be a better person, everything that you've given to me all this time."*** -Syarief, YES Program Participant, Indonesia to U.S., Year Program. (Writing to his U.S. host family before returning home.)



**1-800-AFS-INFO**  
**www.afs.org/usa**

AFS-USA  
506 SW Sixth Avenue  
Portland, OR 97204  
afsinfo@afs.org

