Host

an Exchange Student

800.322.HOST (4678)
www.academicyear.org
AYA is one of the leading high school/student exchange programs in the United States. Founded in 1981, AYA is well respected by high schools and host families across the U.S.

AYA is sponsored by the American Institute For Foreign Study (AIFS) Foundation, a not-for-profit organization founded in 1967 with the assistance of the late Senator Robert F. Kennedy. Its mission is to promote worldwide understanding through cultural exchange. The Foundation awards grants to high schools for projects that encourage intercultural awareness. It also provides scholarships that enable young Americans to study and travel abroad.

The Academic Year in America program is a member of the Council on Standards for International Educational Travel (CSIET). CSIET, established in 1984, is a non-profit organization that oversees quality international educational travel and exchange. It establishes standards for organizations operating international educational travel and exchange programs at the high school level, monitors compliance with those standards, and disseminates information regarding international educational travel organizations. AYA is listed in the 2012–2013 CSIET Advisory List for high schools which ensures a high quality program for participants, students, host families and high schools. AYA participates in the CSIET evaluation process annually.

On the basis of materials submitted and reviewed, the Council on Standards for International Educational Travel grants full listing to Academic Year in America in the 2012 – 2013 Advisory List. The CSIET certification mark certifies that this organization complies with the standards set forth in the CSIET Standards for International Educational Travel Programs.
Dear Friends,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the world of international student exchange! Every year, the AIFS Foundation’s Academic Year in America (AYA) program welcomes almost 1,000 students from over 35 countries to live with a host family and attend the local high school.

This is one of the purest and most effective forms of people-to-people diplomacy that exists. Hosting an exchange student from another country is an experience that is life-changing for everyone involved. AYA students go home with more confidence and knowledge about themselves and the world. Host families step away from this experience with a friendship that will last a lifetime.

Our AYA students are well-screened and motivated to spend a year as a member of an American host family. Our host families are excited to welcome a new son or daughter into their family and share their daily lives, special holidays and American customs. Our network of Local Coordinators across the U.S. are ready to facilitate this amazing experience.

Many years ago, I was an exchange student and my family in turn hosted a student. The experience changed my life! I am still in touch with my Spanish host family and my Brazilian sister and those experiences put me on the path to my career of over 24 years with the AIFS Foundation to help make the world a little smaller by bringing people together, one at a time.

Join us, host a student and make a difference today!

Melanie French,
Executive Director, AIFS Foundation
Make a Difference.

When you host an exchange student, not only will you make a difference in their lives, but they also will leave a lasting impression in yours.

Here are just a few of the benefits…

An extended family
Your host student will live with your family for a full year, sharing in the full range of experiences. From watching television together to celebrating a birthday, the bond that develops between you and your new international son or daughter will last a lifetime.

Bring the world to your home
Along with an “American dream”, your host student brings the culture, customs and traditions of his or her home country to your living room. Learn your student’s native language, taste a mouth-watering dish from his or her hometown, hear stories of his or her country’s heritage; you’ll receive all the benefits of traveling the world in the comfort and safety of your own home.

Share your culture
One benefit that many families are pleasantly surprised by is seeing how much they realize about their own culture by sharing it with someone from another. From meal times to American holidays, you will gain a new appreciation for activities that have become commonplace in your way of life.

Support you can count on
AYA is here to support you, offer you guidance and help you get the most out of your hosting experience.

Our national office is comprised of a caring, dedicated team of professionals committed to helping you find the perfect student for your family and supporting you throughout the year.

“Having a foreign exchange student in our home presented a wonderful opportunity for our family to grow in selflessness and to give back some of the many blessings we have been given. Not only did we give, but we received so much by having Olya in our home.”
—Host Mom, Iowa

“Our students have brought so much joy to our lives—we have fun sharing daily activities and holidays with them. Every year I get Mother’s Day cards from my sons and daughters around the world.”
—Host Mom, Michigan
Who are AYA Host Families?

Host families are united by a desire to know and love a young person from abroad as a “son” or “daughter.” A host family’s commitment is altruistic: to bring a little more understanding to our world.

Just as there is no “typical” American family, there is no “typical” host family. Retirees, single parents and young couples are all able to give an AYA international student a good home. Some host families may not have children of their own. Host families come from many walks of life and represent different generations. They come from all over the United States and live in suburban and rural areas.

A host family's responsibility is to provide the student with a bed of his or her own, a place to study, and meals, but their commitment to AYA and their new “son” or “daughter” goes well beyond that.

Host Family Benefits
- Welcome a new son or daughter to your family!
- Choose a carefully selected student who will be the best match for your family.
- Claim a charitable tax deduction for hosting students.
- Foster greater understanding between cultures of the world.
- Be a public diplomat!
- Make lifelong friendships.
- Experience a rewarding intercultural learning experience in your own home.

Q: How do I/we become a host family?
A: Go to www.academicyear.org, where you can register and complete your application packet.

“Jessica was the perfect member of our family. She played with our grandchildren for hours, was a great sister to all three of our daughters—27, 26 and 15 years old—and played basketball with our 13-year-old son. She was my helper in the kitchen and was always baking us a surprise. She was pretty good at playing cards and games, too. She wasn’t just a helper, but a great player in the snow! She’d walk, jog or ride bikes with whoever wanted to ride. Now tell me, where could you find a better student? We could have kept her forever. She will be a hard act to follow!”

—Host Family, Ohio
Who are AYA Students?

AYA students are the best and brightest representatives of their countries, and they all share a strong desire to become part of an American family.

All AYA Students:

• Are between 15 and 18 years old and come from over 35 different countries. They are bright, eager ambassadors from all parts of the world.

• Demonstrate excellent academic and English ability as well as the emotional stability and maturity necessary for a successful U.S. exchange.

• Want to be a true member of their American Host Family.

• Are provided with full medical insurance.

AYA students are the best young “ambassadors” of their country and have all studied English for at least three years, maintaining solid academic standing. These students seek the opportunity to become part of a new culture and family in a different country in hopes of gaining independence and a global perspective – and they possess the courage to do just that.

Students come from more than 35 countries including:

- Armenia
- Austria
- Azerbaijan
- Brazil
- Chile
- China
- Colombia
- Egypt
- Georgia
- Germany
- Ghana
- Guatemala
- Hungary
- India
- Indonesia
- Italy
- Kazakhstan
- Kenya
- Kyrgyzstan
- Luxembourg
- Malaysia
- Mexico
- Moldova
- Mozambique
- Philippines
- Poland
- Russia
- Saudi Arabia
- South Korea
- Spain
- Switzerland
- Tajikistan
- Thailand
- Turkey
- Turkmenistan
- Ukraine
- Uzbekistan

“Annina, our host daughter, and our daughter, Kim, were like sisters, which was great because Annina didn’t have a real sister back home. We’re going to miss her more than words can say. We feel good knowing that we helped her learn about America, and that she touched so many lives while she was here. I know we’ll keep in touch though, because she’s become part of our family.”

Host Dad, Maine

Q: Can I select my student?

A: Yes! At www.academicyear.org you can register to review student profiles and find the perfect fit for your family.

Search by gender, age, nationality and interests.
“Being a Local Coordinator has been one of the best decisions I have ever made! The world has become smaller now, as I have a vested interest in lives close to home and far away. My heart has a special place that includes people from all faiths and cultures. Working with AYA students and host families I have seen relationships grow and change. I see the good in so many people as they break down their personal and social barriers and welcome a different perspective while sharing their own. The feedback has been great from students and families. I have support from Academic Year in America every step of the way. Being a host parent and Local Coordinator has improved my life, my community and the world!”

—AYA Local Coordinator, Iowa

To learn more about AYA Local Coordinators
Please visit our website
www.academicyear.org
AYA Support Network

We are here for you. Every step of the way.
Any time you need us.

Whether you are just considering becoming a host family or are in your tenth year of hosting, AYA is here to support you, offer you guidance and help you get the most out of your hosting experience.

In Your Community

Your AYA Local Coordinator is there for you!

Your AYA Local Coordinator (LC) lives in your community and serves as your day-to-day support, handling everything from your initial orientation to questions about your yearlong experience.

AYA has a network of several hundred dedicated Local Coordinators throughout the U.S. They are men and women of all ages and backgrounds—teachers, retirees, professionals, and homemakers. They share a deep belief in the value of cross-cultural exchange. Many of our Local Coordinators are current or former host parents.

They also receive ongoing instruction and direction from AYA and attend annual training sessions.

Local Coordinators serve as community representatives for AYA, finding homes and enrolling AYA students in area high schools. The Local Coordinator is the person that the school, student, and host family can turn to with any questions or concerns.

Local Coordinator Responsibilities

• Screening, interviewing, and selecting safe and suitable host families
• Providing host families with a pre-arrival orientation
• Serving as a local liaison to the high school
• Supervising and supporting families and students throughout the program year
• Sending monthly student reports to the national office, based on monthly student visits and communications with host families and high schools
• Providing emergency assistance to the AYA student, host family, and high school (should it ever be required)
• Receiving ongoing instruction and direction from AYA and attending annual training sessions.

AYA National Office

Our national office is comprised of a caring, dedicated team of professionals committed to helping you find the perfect student for your family and assisting you throughout the year.

24/7 Emergency Coverage

AYA provides 24-hour service and access to our staff via telephone for the convenience of students, host families, Local Coordinators, and high schools.

Round-the-clock coverage includes a program counselor, a toll free number, and a 24-hour emergency telephone service.

“All of my host families and students know they can come to me anytime with a question or concern they might have—my door is always open! All of the families also network amongst themselves and work together—helping each other out. We do a lot of activities so everyone always helps everyone out—like one big family! I love to watch and teach the students from arrival to departure and see how they learn and grow! Now, I have students from all over the world that I still keep in contact with—and always will!”

—AYA Local Coordinator, South Carolina

www.academicyear.org
“My first experience hanging out with American friends was at a camp we went to. It was a freezing night! We stayed in a tent and kept chatting until midnight. The next day we went hiking for five hours to reach the top of the mountain. I stood there with the sky as the background. I also went to see the famous arches in Utah. It is really beautiful!”

—Ives – AYA Student, China
Meet AYA Students

Right at home in Kansas
By Jonathan – AYA Student, Germany

“My name is Jonathan and I am living in a small town in Kansas. Since I arrived here many things have changed for me. I found so many new friends, had a lot of fun, went to a Kansas City Chiefs football game, and everyday life in school is just awesome. I always enjoy my time in school, even if my school is a very small one, I love it because this small school made it possible for me to play football and basketball without going through tryouts! I want to thank AYA for giving me the chance to have these experiences!”

Fun in Oregon!
By Jiangnan – AYA Student, China

“I’m so glad to have a memorable experience in America and thankful for my Local Coordinator’s help with my study and host family. Here is a photo of me (black shirt) playing the flute in our holiday concert. Thanks to AIFS for this good opportunity to learn more in America, and show others some Chinese culture.”

View profiles of current available students.
Register online today!
www.academicyear.org
Frequently Asked Questions

**What does a host family provide for an AYA student?**
- A warm, safe, and suitable home environment
- The student’s own bed in a private room, or in a room shared with another child in the same age range
- A quiet place to study
- All meals except for school lunches

**Do I get to choose my student?**
Yes, you can choose your student from many different countries and profiles. You have the choice of hosting a boy or girl. You can choose your student based on different hobbies and interests.

**When can I expect my student to arrive?**
Students arrive during the month of August for fall placements and January for spring placements. Some students first attend an AYA-sponsored orientation and then fly from the orientation site to their host community; others fly directly to their community. Host families and Local Coordinators receive detailed flight information as soon as it is available.

**Will my student come with his/her own spending money?**
Students are expected to have their own spending money for personal expenses (school lunches, supplies, clothes, entertainment).

**Are students allowed to drive?**
Students are not permitted to drive any motor vehicle (including motorcycles, mopeds and cars) except during the course of an accredited driver education class. Students may enroll in a school-sponsored driver education class if their host and natural parents permit it. AYA does not guarantee any student that he or she will have the opportunity to get a driver’s license.

**Note:** It is becoming increasingly difficult in most states for foreign students to obtain a driver’s license. Check with the Department of Motor Vehicles in your state for the official regulations. Students will incur all costs.

**How will my student get to and from school?**
Your student may walk, be driven by a family member or a friend with a driver’s license, or take the bus.

**Does the student have insurance?**
Yes, students have medical and accidental insurance through AYA or their sponsoring agency. Students receive an insurance card and a brochure detailing the policy coverage when they arrive in the U.S.

**When does my student have to leave?**
Students have open-ended return tickets. They book their own flights home with guidance from the national office and help from their Local Coordinators. Students must return home within two weeks after the last day of school (with the permission of their Host Family), or no later than June 30.

**Can I contact my Local Coordinator throughout the year?**
Yes, you are encouraged to call your Local Coordinator anytime with any questions or concerns you may have. The Local Coordinator is required by AYA to be in monthly contact with the host family and student. The Local Coordinator is also required to submit monthly reports on each student he/she is supervising.

**What happens if the placement doesn’t work out?**
The Local Coordinator will work with a host family and student to try to resolve miscommunications, unrealistic expectations, or cultural misunderstandings. Most of the time misunderstandings can be resolved with the help of an objective mediator. If he/she determines things cannot be resolved, the Local Coordinator will consult with the national office and relocate the student to another host family (within the same school district when possible).

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**Student Safety**
Paramount to AYA and its team of trained professionals is the safety of our students. As a Department of State designated program, AYA adheres to the strict guidelines set forth for high school exchange, including all screening, safety, and support regulations. A multi-tiered support system is in place to ensure that every student’s time in the United States as an exchange student is memorable, enjoyable, and worry-free.

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**Have Additional Questions?**
Contact us today at 800.322.HOST (4678)
The AIFS Foundation

The AIFS Foundation, an independent, not-for-profit, 501(c)(3) tax exempt public charity, was established in 1967 with the assistance of the late Senator Robert F. Kennedy to help young people from many nations and diverse cultures to understand each other better. The AIFS Foundation, in partnership with corporations and foundations, provides grants and scholarships to students for participation in study abroad programs and provides grants to high schools and institutions to encourage international and educational travel.

The AIFS Foundation sponsors the Academic Year in America program which enables more than 1,000 international teenage students to spend a semester or academic year with an American family while attending the local high school. The AIFS Foundation is designated by the U.S. Department of State to issue the J-1 Exchange Visitor Visa for this program.

The AIFS Foundation Mission
The AIFS Foundation Mission is to provide educational and cultural exchange opportunities to foster greater understanding among the people of the world.

The Foundation Seeks to Fulfill its Mission by:
• Organizing high quality educational programs at affordable prices, enabling young people to live and study abroad.
• Supporting educational and travel opportunities for disadvantaged youth.
• Developing cooperative programs between organizations, both public and private, that share our goals.
• Providing grants to individuals for participation in culturally enriching homestay and educational programs.

The late Senator Robert F. Kennedy with AIFS Students in 1967

Find more information on the AIFS Foundation!
Please visit our website
www.aifsfoundation.org
Apply today!

Our application process is simple. Just go to www.academicyear.org and follow these two easy steps:

1. **Register Online**
   Registering your family with AYA is a quick way to begin your hosting experience. Once you have registered, you can begin to read student profiles and begin your host family application.

2. **Complete Your Host Family Application Online**
   Once your host family application is approved, you will be able to view photos of AYA students along with their profile information.

Once both of these steps have been completed, a Local Coordinator in your area will meet with you and your family to answer any questions you may have about hosting a student. The Local Coordinator will also interview your family, assist you with filling out the necessary forms, and help you select your student.

It’s that easy! Thousands of families have welcomed international exchange students into their homes, and many host year after year. We hope you’ll join us in bringing the world together!

**Contacting AYA**

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