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***What is Hosting?***

At Ayusa, we believe the best way to experience another culture is by making a young person from another country a part of your family and home.  Hosting an Ayusa exchange student is the perfect way to share your culture and traditions while experiencing and welcoming those from another country.

We firmly believe that one connection has the power to change the world.  What better way to make a difference than by welcoming a young person from another country to your own home and community?  The impact of this connection can last a lifetime and benefit your family in ways you never imagined.

***What are the Benefits of Hosting?***

* Exposing your family to a new culture and language
* Growing closer as a family as you help the exchange student to learn about your town and area
* Experiencing the joys of having a new family member to love
* Practicing hospitality and generosity with your own family
* Developing a relationship with a foreign teenager that may last for years to come
* Supporting diversity and cross-cultural understanding in your own home
* Giving back to your community
* Helping to make a difference in the world

There is no such thing as a "typical" Ayusa Host Family.  Whether you live in a rural or an urban community, and regardless of the shape and size of your family, you are invited to host an Ayusa exchange student.  We believe that all families can benefit from participating in cultural exchange by hosting an Ayusa exchange student.

***What Does a Host Family Provide?***

As an Ayusa Host Family, your financial responsibility is minimal.  Ayusa asks that you provide your exchange son or daughter with three meals a day (including a sack lunch from home) and his or her own bed in a private room or shared with a host sibling of the same gender close in age.  Families offer their students a safe, warm, and nurturing environment while sharing their American culture and lifestyle.

# *Why Ayusa?*

Ayusa is a non-profit organization that promotes global learning and leadership by creating opportunities for international high school students to experience life in America. We offer a unique, richly personal experience for students, volunteer families, host high schools and local communities. Ayusa reaches across interpersonal and international borders, celebrating worldwide community through the spirit, character and promise of our youth.

Since 1980, Ayusa has provided opportunities for more than 40,000 foreign exchange students from around the world to live and study through our programs. Ayusa is designated by the U.S. Department of State as an Exchange Visitor Program Sponsor, enabling all Ayusa participants to travel on J-1 visas. We are also a founding member of The Council for Standards for International Education Travel (CSIET).

From student selection and school registration to academic and supportive counseling for each exchange student and host family, our network of community representatives is there to assist you. Ayusa operates on a 3-tiered regional system of support for host families and students, in addition to our full-time headquarters staff in San Francisco. Our staff is available to you and your student 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

### Ayusa carefully selects exchange students from all over the world. Our students are:

* Between the ages of 15 and 18½ at the beginning of the program.
* Diverse - our students hail from over 60 countries throughout Europe, Asia, Central, South America and Africa and many are recipients of prestigious scholarships.
* Active – Ayusa students enjoy a variety of activities including sports, fine arts, and other hobbies. The student to host family matching process is one of the hallmarks of Ayusa. We work very closely with you to find a student that shares some of your interests!
* Motivated to learn about American culture and possess intellectual maturity, strength of goals, and leadership qualities
* Community-service minded with a desire to give back to their host communities through community service projects.
* Rigorously screened to ensure their success in dealing with common challenges at school and at home.
* Well prepared – all students attend a Pre-Departure Orientation in their home country by our partners to ensure they have realistic expectations and are ready for the experience of a lifetime.

***Answers to Frequently Asked Questions***

* [What kind of support will our family & student receive from Ayusa?](http://www.ayusa.org/families/faq)

A professionally trained Community Representative (CR) will be assigned to work with your family and student for the entire program. Your CR will visit with you and your student monthly, offering advice and support whenever needed. The CR will maintain regular contact with your local high school and complete a quarterly report, evaluating your student's progress in family life, academic achievement and social activity. Your CR, in turn, is supported by a team of dedicated regional and national Ayusa staff, available 24 hours in case of emergency.

* [How will our student get around?](http://www.ayusa.org/families/faq)

Ayusa realizes that families are very busy with work responsibilities and extra-curricular activities. Our students are not allowed to drive, but will take school and public buses whenever available. They often purchase or borrow used bicycles and usually make friends who drive. Family members are not expected to be chauffeurs, but to simply offer the student a ride when it is convenient.

* [What if our student needs medical attention?](http://www.ayusa.org/families/faq)

Your student is provided with health insurance that will cover any expenses should they require a visit to the doctor. Before a student is accepted into the Ayusa program, they must undergo a complete physical exam and submit a certified report documenting that they are in excellent health.

* [Will our student speak good English?](http://www.ayusa.org/families/faq)

Your student will be able to converse with you immediately. Some teens will be almost fluent, while others will have a stronger accent and use smaller words depending on how many years they have been studying English. You will be amazed at how your student's English fluency will improve, often quickly and dramatically, once they are immersed in school and social life.

* [How much does hosting cost?](http://www.ayusa.org/families/faq)

Your financial responsibility is quite minimal and mainly consists of room and board for your student, which includes 3 meals a day. Your student's natural parents will pay for all travel costs, program fees and health insurance. They will also provide your student with a monthly spending allowance used for school expenses, social activities, clothing, and other essentials. A $50 per month tax deduction can be claimed for each month you host.

* Is it possible to host two students?

YES! Families can choose to host two students and as long as the students and their natural parents agree, the students can be placed together. Students must come from two different countries and primary languages.

* [Are we good candidates for hosting?](http://www.ayusa.org/families/faq)

It cannot be said enough: there is no "typical" Ayusa Host Family. Ayusa students enjoy living on farms, in small towns, suburbs, and big cities. Whether you are a married couple with children at home, a single parent, an empty-nester, or a grandparent, the desire to love and care for a student is all that is needed to host. Every community offers a wonderful opportunity for friendship and learning. Somewhere in the world there is a student waiting to live with a family just like yours!

* [How do we become an Ayusa Host Family?](http://www.ayusa.org/families/faq)

The application process begins with an online application at [www.ayusa.org](http://www.ayusa.org). Basic information about your family and community are entered there and you give Ayusa permission to conduct a federal background check on all members of the family age 18 and older.

During step two of the process, you will have a home visit from the local Community Representative (CR). The CR will give you an overview of the Ayusa program, conduct an interview with all family members, and provide several student profiles for your family to consider. He or she will also take a few pictures of you and your home for your hosting file. Personal references are checked by the CR during this step as well.

Once your family is approved for hosting, you may look at photos of students online and make your final selection. Your CR will assist you in choosing a student based on your school’s specific criteria and deadline. Once you have chosen a student, the CR will request enrollment permission for the student from your local high school. Upon completion of these steps, your placement will be confirmed and you will be able to celebrate the joy of welcoming a student into your home!