STATES' 4-H INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE PROGRAMS
HOST FAMILY DESCRIPTION

Can't find the time and money to travel? Enjoy the exposure to different cultures which traveling brings? Looking for a low-cost project or experience in which the whole family can participate and grow together? The States' 4-H International Exchange (S4-H) Summer Inbound Program allows families to gain the benefits of international travel right here at home by hosting an exchange delegate from Japan, Argentina, or Finland. Families often find they are drawn closer and see their lives in a whole new perspective as they welcome a new son, daughter, brother, or sister in their circle.

Hosting Summer Inbound Program Delegates

Japanese youths ages 12 - 18 will visit the U.S. from the third week of July to the third week of August. (The majority of the delegates are ages 12 - 13.) They are members of one of three Japanese organizations devoted to the study of foreign cultures and languages, and the benefits of international exchange. Youth delegates are placed in homes with a host sibling of the same gender and similar age.

Argentine and Norwegian youths ages 15-18 will visit the U.S. in June & July (dates vary, but the homestay will be approximately 4 weeks). Most of them have an association with the 4-H in their home country. Youth delegates are placed in homes with a host sibling of the same gender and similar age.

Hosting Summer Inbound Program Chaperones

Adult chaperones will accompany the summer youth delegation. Adults may stay for two weeks with two different host families or with one family for the duration of the program. Host families for chaperones may be singles, retirees or couples with grown or no children.

S4-H is looking for all types of families to give delegates as broad a perspective as possible about life in the U.S. Urban families, rural families, single-parent families, older couples, singles, couples without children, and families with varied religious and ethnic backgrounds all have something to offer visitors from other cultures.

The only hosting requirement is that the host family have a child of the same gender and similar age as the delegate. Families do not necessarily have to be 4-H members before participating, although they must be willing to help the delegate become involved in local 4-H activities during the exchange.

Being a 4-H International host family is easy, fun, rewarding and educational. Just welcome the delegate into your home and treat him or her like one of the family. The delegate will want to join in everyday activities, help with chores and otherwise fit in as a brother, sister, son or daughter. No special activities need to be planned, although many families and visitors enjoy the opportunity to take occasional sightseeing trips to local attractions and landmarks during the visit. Host families appreciate the chance to develop friendships which reach around the world. They find that the delegate teaches them not only to understand other ways of life, but to understand and appreciate their own way of life, as well.

Expectations of host families are:

- Have fun!
- Provide the delegate with meals and lodging.
- Include the delegate in all family activities.
- Read the materials sent by the S4-H Coordinator.
- Attend an orientation session(s). (Host Family Orientations are held in the spring.)
- Contact your S4-H County or State Coordinator immediately if illness or other major problems arise.
- Be flexible, patient, and willing to communicate both verbally and non-verbally with your delegate. Most of the participants will have limited English communication skills.
- The host sibling of the delegate must keep the exchange uppermost in mind during the hosting month, and make sure the delegate feels comfortable around friends and is included in activities.

If your family would like to host a delegate, please submit a completed Host Family Application to your County or State Coordinator. Following receipt of your application, an interview with your family will be scheduled. Early applications will receive preference for age and gender requests. However, applications will continue to be accepted until all delegates are placed. Please note that submission of an application does not guarantee assignment of a delegate.

Family matches are made as soon as biographical information about the delegates is received from the participating organizations. Host families who are matched with a delegate receive a packet of information about the participant as well as a handbook of ideas for preparing for the host family experience. All host families are required to attend an orientation(s), even if they have hosted in previous years.

Every effort is made to give host families as much time as possible to correspond with delegates and get to know them before they arrive. Exchanging photographs of family members, pets and your home are a good way to become acquainted. Families are encouraged to learn about the country where their delegate is from, culture, foods, family and living.

Arrangements for delegates to travel to and from host families are made on an individual basis. Families often carpool to pick up or drop-off their delegate from the arrival or departure site.

The host family experience doesn't have to end when the delegate returns home. Usually, the friendships formed last a lifetime! Host families find that delegates really do become members of the family, and sometimes are able to visit the family again on a subsequent trip. 4-H families also make efforts to visit their delegates either through the States' 4-H International Exchange Programs or through private travel. For host families, the world suddenly becomes smaller!