Host Family Interview Packet

Youth For Understanding USA
6400 Goldsboro Rd., Suite 100
Bethesda, MD 20817

1-866-4-YFUUSA
www.yfu-usa.org

Z914-1900-02

...Tips from past Host Families

Thousands of families aound the world have hosted YFU students over the past 50 years. To help you make the most of your exchange experience with your new host son or daughter here is some helpful advice.

• Be relaxed about the experience and let family life continue as normal - remember, this is not just a visitor, it is someone who really wants to be part of your family.

• Give your student their own work around the house and explain what is expected as a family member. Don't be afraid to tell them about little things that may seem unimportant, such as turning off the lights when they leave a room and where they can hang their towel.

• Let the student know about any family "rules" or "lifestyle" issues so there are no false expectations. Tell them what you expect, as you would with your own sons and daughters.

• Don't panic if it seems to take a long time to establish bonds of trust and acceptance.

• Give them some time to themselves when they arrive, so they can get used to you and adjust to being away from their families.

• Host parents sometimes seem to be a lot "nicer" to the exchange student at first - giving them special privileges or cooking special meals. Don't let this practice continue past the first few weeks or sibling rivalry may occur.

• Initially the student may spend a lot of time alone in their room; this is quite normal as it can be really exhausting to communicate in a new language and establish new relationships.

• Be prepared to explain gestures, words and things they don't understand. Don't be afraid to use big words - just explain them.

• Students sometimes say things that seem blunt. Don't be hurt, this may be due to their limited vocabulary or a cultural difference.

• Be caring and thoughtful when they are upset at special times - like birthdays, holidays or a special anniversary. They are a long way from home and may miss their families.

• Make them feel comfortable, wanted and loved as they may feel lonely with their families and friends on the other side of the world.

• Give them the freedom to go out with their friends and to speak with them on the phone—remembering that they may not always fit in with your son or daughter's friends.

• Don't expect the entire exchange experience to be perfect. There will be some "difficult" times. Look at these as learning experiences. Almost always the good times will far outweigh the bad times.

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Scheduling and Conducting Host Family Interviews

Preparation

Contact the family within one week to begin scheduling.

- ☐ Read family's application for interests, prior hosting experiences, how they learned about hosting with Youth For Understanding USA, and the name of their local high school. Check the available international student profiles to see if there are two or three students who might interest this family and suggest you email them the profiles.
- ☐ Review what's known about the school the student would attend. What is the current relationship between the school and YFU USA? Are there student enrollment guidelines? Is there a specific school contact for enrollment? Are there specific deadlines that must be met? Are there any other issues?
- ☐ Call the family by the date indicated on the data sheet. The purpose of this call is to introduce yourself as the local YFU representative, to reinforce the family's interest, answer some initial questions, and to establish a time to talk further and/or conduct the interview (scripts are available from the district office that outline this telephone call). Check for VCR availability and Internet access.
- ☐ Prepare a statement introducing yourself which briefly describes who you are, your role as a YFU volunteer, and some of your YFU experiences. Also state the purpose and length of the interview.
- ☐ Read over the *U.S. Host Family Interview Questions* (pp. 3-10).
- ☐ Gather materials to take to the family's house, including:
  - Host family (HF) information video or CD-Rom (for the family computer)
  - *HF Fact Sheets*
  - *HF Interview Packet*, and
  - Selected student profiles that you either print, email, or access online to show to the family.

At the Interview

Introduce yourself and the interview purpose.

- ☐ Show the HF informational video.
- ☐ Conduct the interview. During the interview, take notes, exchange information, draw out and answer concerns, and answer questions. Note questions you can't answer so you can check with the district office and get back to the family with a good answer.
- ☐ Conclude the interview. Have family complete part II of the host family application, and *US Host Family References and Emergency Contact* form. Give family two copies of the *YFU/Host Family Agreement*, one for them to sign and keep and the other to sign and return to you. Also give them *"Tips from Past Host Families"* and, the US Department of State "Criteria for Exchange-Visitor Teenage Programs" (pp.19-20).

Follow-up

Complete the interview report and reference checks within a week of the interview.

- ☐ Write down information learned and impressions received; complete the "Summary and Evaluation" section of the *Host Family Interview Report*.
- ☐ Conduct reference checks, by mail or by phone, and document on the *HF Reference Form*. If done by mail, enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope to ensure rapid response.
- ☐ Help the family select a YFU student for placement.
- ☐ Send completed *U.S. HF Interview Report*, *Host Family Reference Forms*, HF application part II and *YFU/HF Agreement* to YFU district office. Placement of student with the family will not be confirmed until these forms are completed and received in the district office.
- ☐ Get back to the prospective host family with the answers to their questions.
- ☐ If the family is selected, notify them.

Warning Indicators in the Selection of Host Families

Families exhibiting several of these traits *may* not be appropriate hosts, may need additional references to be considered, or may need additional support during the exchange.

Family Relationships/ Communication

- ☐ The family can't say what they mean to one another.
- ☐ Adults behave like children and/or children act like adults.
- ☐ There are indications that the marriage seems unstable.
- ☐ The parents seem to have difficulty setting limits for the children.
- ☐ The parents have no understanding of adolescent issues and are unwilling to learn.
- ☐ The family members seem to dislike or are uncomfortable with one another.
- ☐ The family seems humorless or takes minor matters very seriously.
- ☐ The family is inflexible or extremely detail-oriented.
- ☐ The family has experienced a trauma (e.g., death or serious illness in immediate family) within past twelve months.

Motivation for Hosting

- ☐ Family members cannot articulate their expectations or have very unrealistic expectations.
- ☐ One or more family members disagree with the decision to host a student.
- ☐ There appear to be hidden motives (e.g., babysitting, labor for family business).
- ☐ The family does not have adequate time for a student.

Community/School Connection

- ☐ The family shows no community involvement or school involvement.
- ☐ There are unresolved problems between the family and the school which have caused negative feelings.
- ☐ The home is extremely geographically isolated.
- ☐ They seem unable to provide contact with other young people.
- ☐ They are unwilling or unable to provide transportation or cannot arrange transportation with others.
- ☐ The family has financial problems.
- ☐ The family has a bad reputation or poor references.

Cross-Cultural Awareness

- ☐ The family shows no interest in other cultures.
- ☐ They seem intolerant of differences among themselves and in others.
- ☐ The family is closed to new ideas.

Organizational Commitment

- ☐ The family doesn't understand or appreciate the need for YFU guidelines.
- ☐ The family is unwilling to attend orientations.

Previous Hosting Experience (with YFU or others)

- ☐ The family has hosted before and there were problems or the experience was negative.
- ☐ The family has applied to host and was not accepted.

U.S. Host Family Interview Questions

Youth For Understanding USA

www.yfu-usa.org

Instructions to Interviewer

This interview should serve several purposes: to assess whether this would be a good family to host a student with Youth For Understanding USA, to obtain the information necessary to make a successful placement if this family is accepted, and to answer the family's questions about YFU and hosting. In the interview:

- ☐ Include all members of the family.
- ☐ Use the interview opportunity to tell the family more about hosting and about YFU. Answer any questions they may have. Offer to find the answers to the questions about which you are not sure.
- ☐ Discuss the process of school approval and student enrollment with the family.
- ☐ Ask the family to complete and return the *U.S. HF References and Emergency Contact* and *YFU/HF Agreement* forms to you before you leave.
- ☐ Complete the "Summary and Evaluation" portion of the *U.S. HF Interview Report* after concluding the interview (pp. 11-12).

Part I: Interview Questions

Use the words in italics to introduce each section. Then proceed to the questions. Space is provided for your notes.

A. Motivation

Just as YFU International Exchange students come in all shapes and sizes, so do our host families. We have found that host families have many different reasons for wanting to host a YFU student and expectations about what the student will be like.

1. What are some of the reasons your family wants to host a student? (What are the differences in how the various family members feel about hosting?)

2. When you think about having a student in your family, what is your picture of how he or she would act (think, be ...)?

3. Describe the relationship (each of) you would like to have with the YFU student.

B. Family Characteristics, Relationships, and Communication

It is important for YFU to have a sense of what your family is like so that we can help you select an appropriate student for your family.

4. Describe yourself to me. (Each family member should respond for themselves.)

5. How does your family spend time together?

6. What are meal times like in your family? (i.e., who fixes meals, who is there, do people regularly sit down together, who cleans up, etc.)

YFU exchange students are placed in host families so that they may experience life in the United States first hand. As a member of an American family, students need to adapt to the host family's customs and are expected to abide by the family's rules.

7. What are one or two of your family's customs that a new family member would need to adjust to (e.g., everyone visits grandma every Sunday, children kiss parents before bedtime, etc.)?

8. How are chores assigned and handled in your home?

9. How are family rules (curfew, calling to advise whereabouts, etc.) established in your home?
   What are some of the rules? What happens when the rules are broken?
   What are some of the rules regarding dating and bringing friends home to visit?

10. What is a common cause of friction in the family and how is it handled?

11. What happens when someone in your family becomes upset, angry, or sad? How is the feeling expressed?

12. How are feelings of sibling rivalry resolved in your family?

YFU host families are encouraged to treat their YFU student as a member of their family. YFU students are encouraged to be flexible and to share in the host family's lifestyle while educating the family about his or her own way of life. During the initial period of adjustment, however, differences can arise. Our experience tells us that when these differences can be discussed openly the adjustment phase goes better. For example, money can be an issue...

13. How would you treat a situation in which the student has more or less money than your own children ?

14. How do your own children obtain their spending money (i.e., allowances, part-time jobs, etc.)?

15. Which of the children's expenses do the parents pay for in your family? What kinds of things do the children pay for on their own? How would you expect to treat your YFU student?

Religion can be an issue as well...

16. What are your family's religious practices (i.e., attendance, frequency of attendance)?

17. Would you accept a student with a different religious practice or a student who did not wish to attend services with your family?

18. Are family members involved in other activities sponsored by your church/synagogue (e.g. youth groups, sport leagues)?

C. Living Conditions/Situations

YFU asks families to provide the student with a study area, a bed, and space to store belongings. YFU does not expect that host families be able to provide an exchange student with a private bedroom. If it is necessary that the student share a room:

19. Briefly describe the personality and habits of the person with whom the student would share a room.

20. Where would your student be able to study? *Before I leave today, I would like to see the bedroom and study area.*

There are sometimes special circumstances surrounding a family or exchange student.

21. Could your family host a student with special needs (i.e., strict vegetarian, hearing impaired, blind, physically disabled, allergic to animals or dust, diabetic, etc.)?

22. Are there any health conditions (physical or mental) among your family members which might affect the placement of a particular student with your family?

D. School Work

YFU is a school-based program and expects students to attend school and maintain average or better-than-average grades after an initial adjustment period.

23. How do you help your children with their school work (e.g. is someone available to help with homework, etc.)?

24. How would you support a student having difficulties with school subjects and/or language?

25. Does your family have any rules for studying and homework (i.e., specific time, complete before going out with friends, etc.)?

E. School and Community Involvement

YFU highly recommends that students get involved with a variety of school and community activities during their stay in the United States.

26. Approximately how far do you live from the high school? If you live beyond walking distance, how will the student get to and from school?

27. What school activities is your family involved in (Children: extracurricular, sports, clubs. Parents: PTA, coaching teams, etc.)?

28. What community or other activities are the members of your family involved in (i.e., service clubs, volunteer work, sports, arts, hobbies)? What special equipment or resources are available in your home or community (i.e., a swimming pool, musical instruments, computer, etc.)?

29. What transportation needs exist for extracurricular activities either after school or in the evenings? How would you handle these transportation needs?

30. If you do not have teenagers, in what ways do you think you might assist your student in meeting other teenagers?

F. The Role of YFU with Regard to Students and Host Families

YFU instructs and trains its volunteers to be in regular contact with both students and host families, and to offer assistance if there are any difficulties which the family and student are unable to resolve. There are also YFU policies and procedures that guide student behavior while on program.

31. How do you feel about a YFU representative offering suggestions for adjustment or any possible problems?

YFU is striving to choose an appropriate student for each host family. YFU volunteers look for all possible clues to help with the selection process.

32. Have you ever hosted a student or another person for a period of time in your home? If yes, discuss your experience with that person. (e.g. what was positive and what didn't go as well as you might have hoped?)

33. What do you think might be a difficult thing for a student to adjust to while living with your family?

34. What would be one of the most positive things for a student to experience while in your family?

G. Interest In Other YFU Programs

YFU USA offers other opportunities in which your family can participate. The YFU American Overseas program gives teenagers the chance to live and study in another country. YFU USA also offers opportunities to volunteer in your community. Local volunteers, like me, work with students and families to select and prepare them for their exchange experiences and to support them throughout the program. Other volunteers specialize in areas such as public relations, training and orientation, and school presentations.

35. Would you like information on other opportunities with YFU USA?

(Ask for referrals:)

36. Have you discussed your application to host with any friends who might be interested in sending a child on a YFU program? Who you think make good host parents? Who may be interested in becoming a YFU volunteer? May I have their name and address so I can send them information on YFU USA?

☐ American Overseas opportunities
☐ Hosting opportunities
☐ YFU volunteer opportunities

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip Code _____

(_____) _____
Telephone

☐ American Overseas opportunities
☐ Hosting opportunities
☐ YFU volunteer opportunities

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip Code _____

(_____) _____
Telephone

Part II: Host Family Agreement

Give the family a copy of the *YFU/Host Family Agreement* (p. 15) and the U.S. Department of State "Criteria for Exchange—Visitor Teenager Programs" (p. 19).

This agreement outlines what YFU USA will expect of your family if you are selected to host a YFU student. I am also giving you a copy of the U.S. Department of State "Criteria for Exchange—Visitor Teenager Programs." These are criteria, set by the U.S. government, which YFU USA must follow. I would like to read and discuss the agreement with you now because it is important for you to understand YFU guidelines...(discuss the YFU/HF Agreement *and student policies on reverse).*

37. Will you be able to enforce YFU policies and procedures for student behavior?

(Ask family to sign the agreement and to return the signed copy to you. Leave extra copy for their records.)

Part III: Next Steps—School, References, and Closure

School

Local high schools set their own guidelines regarding the enrollment of YFU exchange students. YFU USA contacts the school to determine whether the school is open to the enrollment of exchange students, the number of students the school will accept from YFU USA, and other procedures the school may impose. (Tell the family whether there are any current issues in their high school that may impact their ability to host or the time frame in which they may do so.)

References

YFU USA has a responsibility to ensure the safety and well-being of our student participants. Therefore, families cannot be officially accepted until references have been checked. I have a form to give you which asks for references, an emergency contact, and disclosure of some additional information. Please take some time to complete this now. (The parents may want privacy to complete this form. The children could show you the bedroom and study area now if it seems appropriate.)

Closure

Prior to departure:

- ☐ Summarize the key concepts and ideas discussed in the interview. Make sure the family agrees.
- ☐ If you will be recommending the family, reiterate some of the benefits they will be experiencing. Show them one or two student profiles you have selected. Say you will get back together if neither of the students interests them. Student availability will need to be checked with the district office.
- ☐ Repeat what needs to happen next (references checked, etc.).
- ☐ Thank the family for their time.

U.S. Host Family Interview Report

Youth For Understanding USA

www.yfu-usa.org

Family Name: _____ Telephone: (_____)_____

Address: _____ Email: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Part IV: Summary and Evaluation

Complete after the host family interview.

38. Does the family want to host a YFU student? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure
    If no, what are the family's reasons? If not sure, what does the family remain unsure about?

39. Were all family members present for the interview? ☐ Yes ☐ No
    If no, do you feel confident that the absent family members are in agreement with the family's decision to host? ☐ Yes ☐ No

40. What are your impressions of this family?

41. What kind of student would be comfortable with them?

42. Can the family accommodate a student with special health or activity needs? If yes, describe what needs could be met and how.

43. What is your overall impression of their home environment and the bedroom and study area a YFU student would use (e.g., size, location, and condition of home)?

44. Do you have any reservations about this family hosting (i.e., do they present any warning indicators)? Please describe.

45. Are there any time frame or other restrictions on the family's availability to host? ☐ Yes ☐ No

46. Do you recommend this family? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Conditionally
If no, please describe your reasons. If conditionally, please define under what conditions you could recommend this family and a date when YFU USA should re-contact them.

Part V: School Clearance

47. High school that student would attend: _____

48. Has YFU USA been approved to enroll a YFU student this year? ☐ Yes ☐ No Date given: _____

49. Name of individual who gave approval: _____

Title: _____

50. Has school been contacted about this family's interest? ☐ Yes ☐ No Date contacted: _____

51. Name of school contact: _____ Title: _____

52. Does the school have any reservations about this family's interest? ☐ Yes ☐ No
If yes, please describe concerns.

53. Does the school have any guidelines for student enrollment that the district office staff needs to follow? Please describe or attach a copy of written guidelines.

Return this completed interview form to the YFU USA district office with the following:

- ☐ *U.S. Host Family References and Emergency Contact* (p. 13)
- ☐ *YFU/Host Family Agreement* form—make sure it is signed! (p. 15)
- ☐ *Host Family Reference Forms*—both forms should be completed (pp. 21-24)

All items are due before placement of a student can be confirmed with the family.

_____ _____
Signature of YFU Interviewer *Interview date*

_____ _____
Printed Name of YFU Interviewer *YFU Volunteer ID #*

U.S. Host Family References and Emergency Contact

Youth For Understanding USA

www.yfu-usa.org

Family Name: _____ Telephone (_____)_____

Address: _____ Email: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

References

Please list two references who have known your **family** for at least three years and whom we may contact. References may not be representatives with Youth For Understanding USA.

Name: _____ Name: _____

Address: _____ Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____ City, State, Zip:_____

Telephone: (_____) _____ Telephone: (_____) _____

Disclosure

For any "Yes" response, please explain the circumstances on the reverse side.

To your knowledge, do you or any family members:

a) have an arrest or conviction record, other than for parking or minor traffic violations? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No

b) have a complaint filed with an agency concerning child neglect or abuse? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No

c) currently use illegal substances or have a drug/alcohol problem? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No

Have any of the following events occurred within the last twelve months:

d) divorce or re-marriage? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No

e) death of a spouse or child? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No

f) parent or child diagnosed with a serious illness? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No

Emergency Contact

Who may we contact in an emergency if we are unable to reach a family member?

Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Telephone Day: (_____)_____ Evening: (_____) _____

Attestations

The information provided to YFU USA through our application, interview, and the foregoing is true and correct to the best of our knowledge.

We understand and accept that YFU USA, in making its host family selections and student placements, does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, gender, or sexual orientation.

Signature of Host Parent: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Host Parent: _____ Date: _____

Explanation of “Yes” answers to “Disclosure” section:

YFU/Host Family Agreement

Youth For Understanding USA

www.yfu-usa.org

This copy is to remain with interviewer.

Our family has volunteered to host a student with Youth For Understanding USA (YFU USA), so that, by sharing our lives with an international visitor, we may gain exposure to new ideas and perspectives and promote international friendship.

If selected to host a YFU student:

1. We will welcome our YFU student as a member of our family and assist in our student's adaptation to our family as well as to U.S. life and culture.
2. We will provide a home environment for our YFU student, to include a bed, study area, and three meals per day.
3. We will help our YFU student meet other Americans through introductions to friends, neighbors and classmates, and by encouraging our student to join clubs or pursue activities.
4. We will help arrange necessary transportation for our YFU student, by driving the student, or by providing access to a bicycle, a bus, through rides with friends, etc.
5. We will help our YFU student become familiar with our community and its resources (e.g., interesting sights, location of and how to use the library, location and type of recreation facilities, location and layout of school building, shopping areas).
6. We will neither allow nor encourage our YFU student to violate YFU policies (see reverse), or the law, and will immediately report any such violation to our YFU Area Representative.
7. We will read the YFU *Host Family Handbook* to prepare our family for the arrival of our YFU student.
8. We will attend and facilitate the attendance of our YFU student at YFU-required orientation programs.
9. We will expect contact on a monthly basis from our YFU Area Representative.
10. We will work with our student to solve problems, and to resolve difficulties and misunderstandings. If these remain unresolved, we will contact our YFU Area Representative. We will also contact that person if issues arise in our family's and/or student's adjustment, in our student's school performance, or if our family must withdraw from the program at any point after a student placement is confirmed for us.

We have read and understand the above guidelines and agree to follow them throughout our participation as a YFU host family.
We have received a copy of the U.S. Department of State's "Criteria for Exchange—Visitor Teenager Programs."

Signature of Host Parent: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Host Parent: _____ Date: _____

Family Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

Policies

YFU must have certain policies to be consistent, fair, and protective of all its participants. The following policies provide a framework for the Youth For Understanding (YFU) participant support system. This support system includes the host family and host community, the exchanging YFU Organizations and the natural family. Procedures to implement these policies will vary from country to country because of cultural differences, and each YFU national office determines specific procedures for students being hosted in their country. For specific YFU procedures in the USA, please see the *Host Family Handbook* or *Passport to the USA*, the international student handbook.

Alcohol

Students are required to observe all laws of their host country with regard to the minimum drinking age. Students are also expected to follow host family guidelines on the use of alcohol. YFU students should not use alcohol in a manner that is excessive, unsuitable or embarrassing to the host family or YFU. A student will be considered for Early Return if he or she demonstrates an inability to control his or her use of alcohol.

Confidentiality

Due to the realities of a program such as YFU, confidential information must often be shared to resolve difficulties or facilitate understanding. All YFU staff and volunteers, including professional counselors, should refrain from promises of confidentiality, advising participants of the limitations of confidentiality within our organization. However, all YFU participants have the right to expect that YFU will share confidential information conservatively.

Counseling Sessions: Information shared with a YFU counselor or in a comparable situation is shared only on a need-to-know basis. Resulting reports are written to assist YFU staff in problem identification and problem-solving. These reports are not to be given to non-staff or anyone outside of the organization (without the consent of the writer of the report). Counseling reports are sent to the partner national office, but are not given to natural parents. **Caution:** Laws in the sending or in the receiving country may require YFU to release such reports.

Student/Host Family's Personal Belongings: The student's right to privacy must be respected. YFU considers it unethical to examine and/or confiscate a student's personal belongings (e.g., mail, diary, etc.). The student must respect the same rules regarding host family belongings. No representative of YFU has the legal right to withhold from the student any legal personal possession such as a passport, visa form, or driver's license. However, in some situations, YFU does have the right to demand, as a condition for remaining on program, that a student agrees to destroy or turn over the item.

Student's/Host Family's Address, Telephone Number, Status on Program: YFU prohibits any release of such information to non-YFU persons regarding a student or host family without the latter's permission (or that of the natural parent in the case of a student).

Contact from Natural Family, Home Country Friends

Natural families and home country friends are strongly discouraged from visiting the exchange student during the program year, especially during the initial adjustment period. The interruption breaks the continuity of the relationship with the host family and may lessen the exchange experience for the student and the host family. This break sometimes leads to adjustment difficulties so serious that YFU may consider Early Return of the student to his or her home country. Natural families who consider such visits must contact their national or regional YFU office before any arrangements are made. Host families must not be expected to accommodate visiting family members or friends with regard to room, meals or transportation.

Dangerous Activities

YFU may withhold authorization for any activity if it is considered hazardous and unacceptable for the student to participate. The following activities are strictly not permitted: hang-gliding, parachute jumping, piloting a private plane, bungee jumping, para-sailing, and driving a car or motorcycle. National or regional directors may permit some activities judged to involve an element of danger or a range of danger provided that permission is given by both natural parents (in writing) and the host parents to authorize the student to participate. This permission must satisfy the national YFU office in the hosting country and must release YFU and the host family from all responsibility during the time the student is involved in that activity. Further, it will be the responsibility of the student and natural parents alone to obtain additional insurance if necessary.

Driving

Exchange students are not permitted to drive cars or motorcycles. This policy applies even if the student has an International Driver's License or the host family thinks that the student is a responsible and careful driver. Violators of this policy will be considered for Early Return. Permission to use farm equipment, trail bikes and mopeds is different in each country, and the decision is left to the hosting national office. If the hosting national office allows the student to use one of the above vehicles, the student is expected to take safety precautions and obey the laws.

Drugs

YFU students may not buy, sell, possess, or use drugs that are illegal in their home or host country. Violators of this policy will be considered for Early Return. A verified violation normally includes physical evidence, student admission of usage or reliable witnesses who have seen the student with or using drugs.

Early Return

Voluntary Early Return: when a a student wants to return home early, and the natural parents agree with this decision.

Involuntary Early Return: when the host YFU country decides, based on stated guidelines, including consultation, that a student should be removed from the YFU program and returned home to his or her home country.

Employment

Laws regarding exchange students' employment are different in each country. Many countries limit employment as a condition for giving visas to visitors. Participants in the YFU program are not permitted to work full-time during their stay. Students should refer to the laws in their host country regarding other kinds of employment (e.g., part-time, casual).

Extension of Stay

YFU will not grant extension of stay, unless there is demonstrated evidence of medical or special emergency requiring such an extension.YFU responsibility ends with the return flight to which the student has been assigned. If a student extends his/her stay, he/she will be considered off program.

Marriage

Married students are not permitted on the YFU program. If a student marries while he or she is a YFU participant or is discovered to have married prior to becoming a YFU participant, the student will be considered for Early Return (or going off program when applicable).

Medical Treatment of a Student (including emergencies)

All YFU students must have insurance coverage for illness, medical emergencies, and hospitalization which is acceptable to the hosting YFU organization. YFU, its representatives and its host families are not responsible for any student medical bills regardless of who signs a hospital admission form. They also are not responsible for any negative results of emergency and/or other medical treatment.

Off Program

If a student is absent without permission from the host family or other place to which YFU has assigned him or her, YFU may determine that this student has removed him- or herself from the YFU program. In this case, YFU is released from all obligations, legal and otherwise, to the student and his or her natural parents or guardians for his or her current or further well-being. In most countries, the validity of the student's visa is linked to being on program. Therefore the visa is no longer valid if the student chooses to go off program. YFU will, if possible, work with the student to again accept YFU supervision. However, if this cannot be done, the separation from the YFU program is final. The student will then lose YFU support and his or her ticket to the home country where applicable.

Pregnancy

For medical reasons, placement and personal considerations, female students found to be pregnant while on the YFU program will normally be returned home immediately after the notification of the natural parents. Individual circumstances may justify exceptions to this policy; however, all students will be considered for Early Return.

Male YFU students who cause pregnancies while on program will be subject to the same policy as females.

School

Attendance: All YFU students on the year or semester program are expected to regularly attend a secondary school, and each host country is encouraged to see that a normal course of schoolwork is maintained. Repeated non-attendance will result in consideration for Early Return.

Performance: Allowing for an initial period of linguistic and/or academic adjustment, a student is expected to achieve an adequate school academic record. Within a reasonable period of time, poor motivation, underachievement (e.g., failing grades) or inappropriate behavior, in combination with poor adjustment in general, may be cause for Early Return consideration.

Formal Expulsion: If a student is expelled from school, the student will be considered for Early Return.

Student Expenses

Students are responsible for such expenses as school laboratory fees (in a few countries, some school expenses are included in the program fee), transportation, and books; trips or expenses during trips; telephone calls or other personal expenses. They are also responsible for any property damage they cause. Students are not responsible for meals and lodging.

Student Travel

YFU has a responsibility to assure student safety to the greatest extent possible; have knowledge of a student's location; and ensure that students participate in host family activities and school programs. Any travel which might have an impact on any of these factors should require special authorization from YFU. Each national office will have specific travel approval procedures. The national office in the host country has the final say in approving travel. Unauthorized travel may be cause for Early Return.

Violations of the Law

The nature and seriousness of the offense will determine procedure and possible outcome. Criminal prosecution, theft or shoplifting may be cause for Early Return.

YFU/Host Family Agreement

Youth For Understanding USA

www.yfu-usa.org

This copy is to remain with the family.

Our family has volunteered to host a student with Youth For Understanding USA (YFU USA), so that, by sharing our lives with an international visitor, we may gain exposure to new ideas and perspectives and promote international friendship.

If selected to host a YFU student:

1. We will welcome our YFU student as a member of our family and assist in our student's adaptation to our family as well as to U.S. life and culture.
2. We will provide a home environment for our YFU student, to include a bed, study area, and three meals per day.
3. We will help our YFU student meet other Americans through introductions to friends, neighbors and classmates, and by encouraging our student to join clubs or pursue activities.
4. We will help arrange necessary transportation for our YFU student, by driving the student, or by providing access to a bicycle, a bus, through rides with friends, etc.
5. We will help our YFU student become familiar with our community and its resources (e.g., interesting sights, location of and how to use the library, location and type of recreation facilities, location and layout of school building, shopping areas).
6. We will neither allow nor encourage our YFU student to violate YFU policies (see reverse), or the law, and will immediately report any such violation to our YFU Area Representative.
7. We will read the YFU *Host Family Handbook* to prepare our family for the arrival of our YFU student.
8. We will attend and facilitate the attendance of our YFU student at YFU-required orientation programs.
9. We will expect contact on a monthly basis from our YFU area Area Representative.
10. We will work with our student to solve problems, and to resolve difficulties and misunderstandings. If these remain unresolved, we will contact our YFU Area Representative. We will also contact that person if issues arise in our family's and/or student's adjustment, in our student's school performance, or if our family must withdraw from the program at any point after a student placement is confirmed for us.

We have read and understand the above guidelines and agree to follow them throughout our participation as a YFU host family.

We have received a copy of the U.S. Department of State's "Criteria for Exchange—Visitor Teenager Programs."

Signature of Host Parent: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Host Parent: _____ Date: _____

Family Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

Policies

YFU must have certain policies to be consistent, fair, and protective of all its participants. The following policies provide a framework for the Youth For Understanding (YFU) participant support system. This support system includes the host family and host community, the exchanging YFU Organizations and the natural family. Procedures to implement these policies will vary from country to country because of cultural differences, and each YFU national office determines specific procedures for students being hosted in their country. For specific YFU procedures in the USA, please see the *Host Family Handbook* or *Passport to the USA*, the international student handbook.

Alcohol

Students are required to observe all laws of their host country with regard to the minimum drinking age. Students are also expected to follow host family guidelines on the use of alcohol. YFU students should not use alcohol in a manner that is excessive, unsuitable or embarrassing to the host family or YFU. A student will be considered for Early Return if he or she demonstrates an inability to control his or her use of alcohol.

Confidentiality

Due to the realities of a program such as YFU, confidential information must often be shared to resolve difficulties or facilitate understanding. All YFU staff and volunteers, including professional counselors, should refrain from promises of confidentiality, advising participants of the limitations of confidentiality within our organization. However, all YFU participants have the right to expect that YFU will share confidential information conservatively.

Counseling Sessions: Information shared with a YFU counselor or in a comparable situation is shared only on a need-to-know basis. Resulting reports are written to assist YFU staff in problem identification and problem-solving. These reports are not to be given to non-staff or anyone outside of the organization (without the consent of the writer of the report). Counseling reports are sent to the partner national office, but are not given to natural parents. **Caution:** Laws in the sending or in the receiving country may require YFU to release such reports.

Student/Host Family's Personal Belongings: The student's right to privacy must be respected. YFU considers it unethical to examine and/or confiscate a student's personal belongings (e.g., mail, diary, etc.). The student must respect the same rules regarding host family belongings. No representative of YFU has the legal right to withhold from the student any legal personal possession such as a passport, visa form, or driver's license. However, in some situations, YFU does have the right to demand, as a condition for remaining on program, that a student agrees to destroy or turn over the item.

Student's/Host Family's Address, Telephone Number, Status on Program: YFU prohibits any release of such information to non-YFU persons regarding a student or host family without the latter's permission (or that of the natural parent in the case of a student).

Contact from Natural Family, Home Country Friends

Natural families and home country friends are strongly discouraged from visiting the exchange student during the program year, especially during the initial adjustment period. The interruption breaks the continuity of the relationship with the host family and may lessen the exchange experience for the student and the host family. This break sometimes leads to adjustment difficulties so serious that YFU may consider Early Return of the student to his or her home country. Natural families who consider such visits must contact their national or regional YFU office before any arrangements are made. Host families must not be expected to accommodate visiting family members or friends with regard to room, meals or transportation.

Dangerous Activities

YFU may withhold authorization for any activity if it is considered hazardous and unacceptable for the student to participate. The following activities are strictly not permitted: hang-gliding, parachute jumping, piloting a private plane, bungee jumping, para-sailing, and driving a car or motorcycle. National or regional directors may permit some activities judged to involve an element of danger or a range of danger provided that permission is given by both natural parents (in writing) and the host parents to authorize the student to participate. This permission must satisfy the national YFU office in the hosting country and must release YFU and the host family from all responsibility during the time the student is involved in that activity. Further, it will be the responsibility of the student and natural parents alone to obtain additional insurance if necessary.

Driving

Exchange students are not permitted to drive cars or motorcycles. This policy applies even if the student has an International Driver's License or the host family thinks that the student is a responsible and careful driver. Violators of this policy will be considered for Early Return. Permission to use farm equipment, trail bikes and mopeds is different in each country, and the decision is left to the hosting national office. If the hosting national office allows the student to use one of the above vehicles, the student is expected to take safety precautions and obey the laws.

Drugs

YFU students may not buy, sell, possess, or use drugs that are illegal in their home or host country. Violators of this policy will be considered for Early Return. A verified violation normally includes physical evidence, student admission of usage or reliable witnesses who have seen the student with or using drugs.

Early Return

Voluntary Early Return: when a a student wants to return home early, and the natural parents agree with this decision.

Involuntary Early Return: when the host YFU country decides, based on stated guidelines, including consultation, that a student should be removed from the YFU program and returned home to his or her home country.

Employment

Laws regarding exchange students' employment are different in each country. Many countries limit employment as a condition for giving visas to visitors. Participants in the YFU program are not permitted to work full-time during their stay. Students should refer to the laws in their host country regarding other kinds of employment (e.g., part-time, casual).

Extension of Stay

YFU will not grant extension of stay, unless there is demonstrated evidence of medical or special emergency requiring such an extension.YFU responsibility ends with the return flight to which the student has been assigned. If a student extends his/her stay, he/she will be considered off program.

Marriage

Married students are not permitted on the YFU program. If a student marries while he or she is a YFU participant or is discovered to have married prior to becoming a YFU participant, the student will be considered for Early Return (or going off program when applicable).

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Violations of the Law

The nature and seriousness of the offense will determine procedure and possible outcome. Criminal prosecution, theft or shoplifting may be cause for Early Return.

The US Department of State Criteria for Exchange—Visitor Teenager Programs

Excerpted from the Code of Federal Regulations (22 CFR 62)—Exchange Visitor Program; Final Rule. Federal Register (Vol. 64, No. 194), October 7, 1999.

§62.10 Program administration.

Sponsors are responsible for the effective administration of their exchange visitor programs. These responsibilities include:

(a) *Selection of exchange visitors.* Sponsors shall provide a system to screen and select prospective exchange visitors to ensure that they are eligible for program participation, and that:

(1) The program is suitable to the exchange visitor's background, needs, and experience; and

(2) The exchange visitor possesses sufficient proficiency in the English language to participate in his or her program.

(b) *Pre-arrival information.* Sponsors shall provide exchange visitors with pre-arrival materials including, but not limited to, information on:

(1) The purpose of the Exchange Visitor Program;

(2) Home-country physical presence requirement;

(3) Travel and entry into the United States;

(4) Housing;

(5) Fees payable to the sponsor;

(6) Other costs that the exchange visitor will likely incur (e.g., living expenses) while in the United States;

(7) Health care and insurance; and

(8) Other information which will assist exchange visitors to prepare for their stay in the United States.

(c) *Orientation.* Sponsors shall offer appropriate orientation for all exchange visitors. Sponsors are encouraged to provide orientation for the exchange visitor's immediate family, especially those who are expected to be in the United States for more than one year. Orientation shall include, but not be limited to, information concerning:

(1) Life and customs in the United States;

(2) Local community resources (e.g., public transportation, medical centers, schools, libraries, recreation centers, and banks), to the extent possible;

(3) Available health care, emergency assistance, and insurance coverage;

(4) A description of the program in which the exchange visitor is participating;

(5) Rules that the exchange visitors are required to follow under the sponsor's program;

(6) Address of the sponsor and the name and telephone number of the responsible officer; and

(7) Address and telephone number of the Exchange Visitor Program Services of the Agency and a copy of the Exchange Visitor Program brochure outlining the regulations relevant to the exchange visitors.

(d) *Form DS-2019.* Sponsors shall ensure that only the responsible officer or alternate responsible officers issue FormsDS-2019;

(e) *Monitoring of exchange visitors.* Sponsors shall monitor, through employees, officers, agents, or third parties, the exchange visitors participating in their programs. Sponsors shall:

(1) Ensure that the activity in which the exchange visitor is engaged is consistent with the category and activity listed on the exchange visitor's Form DS-2019;

(2) Monitor the progress and welfare of the exchange visitor to the extent appropriate for the category; and

(3) Require the exchange visitor to keep the sponsor apprised of his or her address and telephone number, and maintain such information.

(f) *Requests by the Agency.* Sponsors shall, to the extent lawfully permitted, furnish to the Agency within a reasonable time all information, reports, documents, books, files, and other records requested by the Agency on all matters related to their exchange visitor programs.

(g) *Inquiries and investigations.* Sponsors shall cooperate with any inquiry or investigation that may be undertaken by the Agency.

(h) *Retention of records.* Sponsors shall retain all records related to their exchange visitor program and exchange visitors for a minimum of three years.

§62.16 Employment.

(a) An exchange visitor may receive compensation from the sponsor or the sponsor's appropriate designee for employment when such activities are part of the exchange visitor's program.

(b) An exchange visitor who engages in unauthorized employment shall be deemed to be in violation of his or her program status and is subject to termination as a participant in an exchange visitor program.

(c) The acceptance of employment by an accompanying spouse or minor child of an exchange visitor is governed by Immigration and Naturalization Service regulations.

§62.25 Secondary school students.

(a) *Introduction.* These regulations govern Agency designated exchange visitor programs under which foreign national secondary students are afforded the opportunity for up to one year of study in a United States public or private secondary school, while living with an American host family or residing at an accredited U.S. boarding school.

(b) *Program sponsor eligibility.* Eligibility for designation as a secondary school student exchange program sponsor shall be limited to;

(1) Organizations with tax-exempt status as conferred by the Internal Revenue Service pursuant to section 501(c)(3); and

(2) Organizations which are United States citizens as such terms is defined §62.2.

(c) *Program eligibility.* Secondary school students exchange programs designated by the Agency shall:

(1) Require all participants to pursue a full course of study at an accredited educational institution as such terms are defined in this Part of not less than one academic semester (or quarter equivalency) nor more than two academic semesters (or quarter equivalency) duration; and

(2) Be conducted on an academic calendar year basis provided, however, participants may begin in the second semester of an academic year if specifically permitted to do so, in writing, by the school in which the exchange visitor is enrolled.

(d) Program administration. Sponsors shall ensure that all officers, employees, agents, and volunteers acting on their behalf:

(1) Are adequately trained and supervised;

(2) Make no student placement outside a 150 mile radius of the home of an organizational representative authorized to act on the sponsor's behalf in both routine and

emergency matters arising from a student's participation in their exchange program;

(3) Ensure that no organizational representative act as both host family and area supervisor for any student participant whom that organizational representative may host;

(4) Maintain a regular schedule of personal contact with the student and host family, and ensure that the school has contact information for the local organizational representative and U.S. offices of the sponsor; and

(5) Adhere to all regulatory provisions set forth in this Part and all additional terms and conditions governing program administration that the Agency may from time to time impose.

(e) *Student selection.* In addition to satisfying the requirements of §62.10(a), sponsors shall ensure that all participants in a designated secondary school student exchange program:

(1) Are bona fide students who:

(i) Are secondary school students in their home country who have not completed more than eleven years of primary and secondary study, exclusive of kindergarten; or

(ii) Are at least 15 years of age but not more than 18 and six months years of age at the time of initial school enrollment;

(2) Demonstrate maturity, good character, and scholastic aptitude; and

(3) Have not previously participated in an academic year or semester secondary school student exchange program in the United States.

(f) *Student enrollment.*

(1) Sponsors shall secure prior written acceptance for the enrollment of any student participant in a United States public or private secondary school. Such prior acceptance shall:

(i) Be secured from the school principal or other authorized school administrator of the school or school system that the student participant will attend; and

(ii)Include written arrangements concerning the payment of tuition or waiver thereof if applicable.

(2) Sponsors shall maintain copies of all written acceptances and make such documents available for Agency inspection upon request.

(3) Sponsors shall submit to the school a written English language summary of the student's complete academic course work prior to commencement of school.

(4) Under no circumstance shall a sponsor facilitate the entry into the United States of a student for whom a school placement has not been secured.

(5) Sponsors shall not facilitate the enrollment of more than five students in one school unless the school itself has requested, in writing, the placement of more than five students.

(g) *Student orientation.* In addition to the orientation requirements set forth herein at §62.10, all sponsors shall provide students, prior to their departure from the home country, with the following information:

(1) A summary of all operating procedures, rules, and regulations governing student participation in the exchange program;

(2) A detailed profile of the school, family, and community in which the student is placed;

(3) A detailed summary of travel arrangements;

(4) An identification card which lists the student's name, United States home placement address and telephone number, and a telephone number which affords immediate contact with both the Agency and the sponsor in case of emergency. Such cards may be provided in advance of home country departure or immediately upon entry into the United States.

(h) *Student extra-curricular activities.* Students may participate in school sanctioned and sponsored extra-curricular activities, including athletics, if such participation is:

(1) Authorized by the local school district in which the student is enrolled; and

(2) Authorized by the state authority responsible for determination of athletic eligibility, if applicable.

(i) *Student employment.* Students may not be employed on either a full or part-time basis but may accept sporadic or intermittent employment such as babysitting or yard work.

(j) *Host family selection.* Sponsors shall adequately screen all potential host families and at a minimum shall:

(1) Provide potential host families with a detailed summary of the exchange program and the parameters of their participation, duties, and obligations;

(2) Utilize a standard application form for all host family applicants which provides a detailed summary and profile of the host family, the physical home environment, family composition, and community environment;

(3) Conduct an in-person interview with all family members residing in the home;

(4) Ensure that the host family is capable of providing a comfortable and nurturing home environment;

(5) Ensure that the host family is of good reputation and character by securing two personal references for each host family from the school or community, attesting to the host family's good reputation and character;

(6) Ensure that the host family has adequate financial resources to undertake hosting obligations; and

(7) Maintain a record of application forms, evaluations, and interviews for all selected host families for a period of three years.

(k) *Host family orientation.* In addition to the orientation requirements set forth in §62.10, sponsors shall:

(1) Inform all host families of the philosophy, rules, and regulations governing the sponsor's exchange program;

(2) Provide all selected host families with a copy of Agency-promulgated Exchange Visitor Program regulations; and

(3) Advise all selected host families of strategies governing cross-cultural interaction and conduct workshops which will familiarize the host family with cultural differences and practices.

(1) *Host family placement.*

(1) Sponsors shall secure, prior to the student's departure from the home country, a host family placement for each student participant. Sponsors shall not:

(i) Facilitate the entry into the United States a student for whom a host family placement has not been secured; and

(ii) Place more than one student with a host family without the express prior written consent of the Agency.

(2) Sponsors shall advise both the student and host family, in writing, of the respective family compositions and backgrounds of each and shall facilitate and encourage the exchange of correspondence between the two prior to the student's departure from the home country.

(3) In the event of unforeseen circumstances which necessitate a change of host family placement, the sponsor shall document the reasons necessitating such change and provide the Statewith an annual statistical summary reflecting the number and the reason for such change in host family placement.

(m) *Placement report.* In lieu of listing the name and address of the host family and school placement on a participant's Form DS-2019, sponsors must, no later than August 31st of each academic year, submit to the Agency a report of all academic year program participants. Such report shall set forth the participant's name, school, and host family placements. A report of semester participants entering United States schools during the January to June term shall be submitted to the Agency by January 15th.

Host Family Reference Form

Youth For Understanding USA

www.yfu-usa.org

Instructions

The family listed below has submitted your name as a personal reference to Youth For Understanding USA (YFU USA). The family has applied to host a YFU international student. If accepted, they will be welcoming an international exchange student into their home. The student will attend high school and live the daily life of a teenager in this country.

Please evaluate the family from your own viewpoint. We appreciate your assistance. Use a separate sheet, if necessary.

Please return the completed form to:

_____

_____

_____

Host Family Applicant: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

How long have you known this family? _____

What is your relationship to this family? _____

Why do you think this family wishes to have an exchange student live with them? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

What characteristics do they have which make you feel they would be a good host family?

Include comments on activities, discipline, flexibility in family rules, etc.: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

What characteristics do they have which make you feel they would not be a good host family (if any)?

_____

_____

_____

How would the children adjust to having an exchange student in their home (if applicable)?_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

In your judgment, how would the family handle any problems they might have with an exchange student? (check those which apply)

☐ Generally handle problems satisfactorily without outside assistance.

☐ Discuss the problem objectively with the student as soon as it becomes obvious.

☐ Listen to the student's analysis of the problem.

☐ Be flexible and willing to compromise.

☐ Seek help from a YFU representative, if the problem necessitated such assistance.

☐ Generally ignore problems and avoid confrontations.

☐ Other (please specify): _____

_____

Do any family members, to your knowledge:

have an arrest or conviction record? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No

have a complaint filed with an agency concerning child neglect or abuse? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No

currently use illegal substances or have a drug/alcohol problem? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes for any/all of these, please describe: _____

_____

_____

Add other information, if applicable: _____

_____

_____

Would you recommend the family as a YFU host family? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Comments: _____

_____

_____

_____

Name of Reference: _____

Address:_____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: (_____) _____

☐ I would like more information about YFU USA and/or hosting a YFU student (please check here or call YFU at 1-866-4-YFUUSA).

Signature of Reference: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Volunteer (if completed by phone): _____ Date: _____

Host Family Reference Form

Youth For Understanding USA

www.yfu-usa.org

Instructions

The family listed below has submitted your name as a personal reference to Youth For Understanding USA (YFU USA). The family has applied to host a YFU international student. If accepted, they will be welcoming an international exchange student into their home. The student will attend high school and live the daily life of a teenager in this country.

Please evaluate the family from your own viewpoint. We appreciate your assistance. Use a separate sheet, if necessary.

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Host Family Applicant: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

How long have you known this family? _____

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Why do you think this family wishes to have an exchange student live with them? _____

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_____

_____

What characteristics do they have which make you feel they would be a good host family?

Include comments on activities, discipline, flexibility in family rules, etc.: _____

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_____

_____

_____

_____

What characteristics do they have which make you feel they would not be a good host family (if any)?

_____

_____

_____

How would the children adjust to having an exchange student in their home (if applicable)? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

In your judgment, how would the family handle any problems they might have with an exchange student? (check those which apply)

- ☐ Generally handle problems satisfactorily without outside assistance.
- ☐ Discuss the problem objectively with the student as soon as it becomes obvious.
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- ☐ Seek help from a YFU representative, if the problem necessitated such assistance.
- ☐ Generally ignore problems and avoid confrontations.
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

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Do any family members, to your knowledge:

have an arrest or conviction record? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No

have a complaint filed with an agency concerning child neglect or abuse? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No

currently use illegal substances or have a drug/alcohol problem? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes for any/all of these, please describe: _____

_____

_____

Add other information, if applicable: _____

_____

_____

Would you recommend the family as a YFU host family? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Comments: _____

_____

_____

_____

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