



YOUTH FOR UNDERSTANDING
Intercultural Exchange Programs

MAY SUPPORT TIPS

As the saying goes, time flies! May is the last full month many host families and students have together. It can be difficult to know how to say goodbye. Throughout this month there are likely going to be small (or perhaps even large) reminders to both host families and students that their time together is coming to a close.

We hope these tips will provide you with the materials necessary to have comfortable and meaningful conversations during your monthly meetings. As always, thank you for the work you do, YFU could not exist without volunteers like you!

SUPPORT TIPS

A TIME OF THANKS

May is a good time for all of us to pause and say thank you. YFU Area Reps across the country are often the only YFU representatives to have direct contact with our students and host families. This is a great honor and a great responsibility. We thank you for accepting this responsibility and helping YFU support thousands of healthy and successful exchanges each year.

As the Area Rep, please thank your host families for volunteering with YFU. Encourage your students to thank their host family, host school and the wider community. There are many ways to do this. Students could start working on a thank you letter to their host family, write a **letter to the editor** of the local newspaper, or write a **letter to the school**.

HOW TO SAY GOODBYE

Families will likely attend final student performances, sporting events or award ceremonies, reminding them of their student's fast-approaching departure. It can be difficult for both students and host families to know how to say goodbye. But finding closure is important. As an Area Rep you can help in this process.

NO SCHOOL? MAKE PLANS!

Some students will have nearly a month of free time once school has ended and before they leave the US. It's important that they make plans for this time count. Instead of sleeping until noon, they could participate in community service or serve as a YFU Ambassador in the community.

OUTSTANDING BILLS

Please help your host families and students clear up loose ends such as medical bills or other money owed. If a student

leaves without doing so, the burden often falls upon the host family to resolve these issues.

RE-ENTRY ORIENTATIONS

Re-Entry Orientations at the end of April or the first half of May are designed to help students and families reflect on and begin to process the exchange experience, prepare to say goodbye and think about their roles with YFU in the future. Remind your students and host families about the importance of attending the local Re-Entry Orientation and why.

NATURAL PARENT VISIT

Please take the time to ask your student this month if their natural parents are visiting. Help ensure that the students go through the correct approval process. The Natural Parents contact their National Office, their National Office contacts YFU USA's National Office, then YFU USA contacts the Host Family, and lastly YFU USA makes the final decision.

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL - BAGGAGE FEES

Tell your student to call their airline or check online to confirm baggage allowances and fees for his/her flight! There are always high fees for oversized, over weight or excess bags. YFU is never responsible for these fees. Here are some guidelines on fees, though they may have changed, so it is the student's responsibility to verify their accuracy.

UNITED AIRLINES (as of May 1st)

- Between US and Europe: First bag is free, second bag is \$100.
- Between US and Japan: First and second bags are free.
- Between US and China, Korea, Australia: First bag is free, second bag is \$70.
- Any bag more than 50lbs (23 kg) costs an additional \$200-\$400. The cost to check a third bag cost is \$200.

AMERICAN AIRLINES (as of May 1st)

- Between US and Europe: First bag is free, second bag is \$100.
- Between US and Japan or China: First and second bags are free.
- Between US and South America: First bag is free, second bag is \$70.
- Any bag more than 50lbs (23 kg) costs an additional \$100-\$450.

AIRLINE CONTACT INFORMATION

To help your student better understand the luggage restrictions and fees, please have the student call the airline(s) directly to confirm luggage restrictions & weight limits.

AIRLINE NAME	PHONE	CODE	WEBSITE
American Airlines	1.800.433.7300	(AA)	aa.com
Continental	1.800.231.0856	(CO)	continental.com
Delta	1.800.241.4141	(DL)	delta.com
Lufthansa	1.800.645.3880	(LH)	lufthansa.com
United	1.800.538.2929	(UA)	united.com

Here are some airlines frequently used domestically within the U.S.

AIRLINE NAME	PHONE	CODE	WEBSITE
Alaska Airlines	1.800.252.7522	(AS)	alaskaair.com
Great Lakes Aviation	1.800.554.5111	(ZK)	greatlakesav.com
Midwest Express	1.800.432.1359	(YX)	midwestexpress.com
US Airways	1.800.428.4322	(US)	usairways.com

For any airlines not listed, call information at 1.800.555.1212.

Please [click here](#) for YFU USA Travel Department's luggage restriction information.

ADMINISTRATIVE

END OF THE YEAR TRAVEL

Remember, a **Permission To Travel Form** must be turned into the District Office if a student is traveling with their natural parents or host family at the end of the school year. This form must be turned in before any tickets are purchased and at least two weeks before the travel occurs.

TRAVEL INFORMATION - HEADING HOME

The YFU Travel Department sends each student a letter approximately 2-3 weeks before their departure from the US. The letter includes a copy of the student's electronic ticket and detailed travel safety information.

MISSING CONTACT REPORTS

You must ensure before your student leaves that you have completed any outstanding contact reports. This is critical because the US Department of State audits our contact reports well after an exchange experience has ended.

HELP YFU GROW

YFU encourages ARs to speak with host parents about considering other volunteer opportunities with YFU to a field staff person. Host parents can also recommend other HFs they feel would make great volunteers to the appropriate field staff person.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

FOR STUDENTS

How do you plan to show your appreciation on Mother's and Father's Day?

Recognizing Mother's or Father's Day is a great opportunity for students to say thank you and goodbye to host parents. As with past holidays, gift giving should not be the focus; students should think about creative homemade ideas - like making dinner one night, or doing an extra family chore around the house to say, "I appreciate you!"

How are you feeling about returning home?

Some students may have anxieties about returning home. They have changed through the exchange experience and are not sure how they will explain the experience to people who weren't with them. Talk with your student about strategies on how to share their experience. Some ideas are creating a slide show, writing a story, making a video recap of the experience, or simply jotting down some specific memories that capture the people and experience best. Talking with the student about these things will help them to process the exchange and prepare to share it.

What will you miss the most about your host family? Do they know this?

It is important to help students think out loud about their upcoming departure. Encourage your students to think about how they want to be remembered and ask what they can do to make sure that impression lasts. Many students feel they will have no problems saying goodbye or going back home; however letters we receive from students after they return home tell us that they later realize the importance of preparing for goodbyes.

Do you have any outstanding medical bills or other debts you have not taken care of? This is your final month to co-validate your grades and collect your transcripts—have you done that already?

Help the student make sure that all debts get paid. Students who need grade co-validation were given instructions by their home country and should begin the process now, especially if they plan to leave early. Each US state varies in their procedure, so make sure your student checks with the state consulate.

Let your student know that this is their responsibility to take care of, not their host family's nor YFU's responsibility.

Have you decided how you will bring everything home? Will it all fit into 2 suitcases? Will you ship some things home?

Often students have accumulated things throughout their time in the US and find out that not everything will fit into their suitcases. Encourage your student to do a "practice" packing, by packing two suitcases with their belonging and weighing the packed bags. Inexpensive luggage scales are available at many discount stores.

FOR FAMILIES

What do you anticipate will be the hardest part of your student's departure?

Planning how to say goodbye, and taking the time to say it well is important for the whole family. Have each host parent talk about something they will miss, and encourage the time for free discussion and vocalization of their sadness/anxiety/etc. Remind your host families about the importance of attending their local Re-Entry Orientation where they will have more time to process the exchange year and prepare for saying goodbye.

What is the one thing you wish you had done/said?

Although the family has known of the student's departure date for a while by now, realizing that it may come as soon as the end of the month can still come as a shock. List some things your family has learned/gained from hosting. Make sure to talk

with the family about how they can accomplish any lingering plans with their student.

How do you plan to stay in touch with your student once s/he is home?

Remind families that, with technology, keeping in touch has never been easier. Perhaps your family needs to establish a Skype account, or Facebook profile. Help your host family identify ways to make sure this YFU relationship between their student and them will continue.

*If your host family and student have struggled through the year: YFU often finds that the students who cause the most grief while on program are the ones who gain the most from the exchange. They often call out of the blue a few years later to thank their host family for changing their lives.

If you have any questions about Monthly Contacts, **please contact your Support Service Manager!**