



WHY CHOOSE A FAMILY-STAY PROGRAM?

A family-stay program offers students a unique and rewarding travel experience.

What an advantage to be able to meet a real family, to see the inside of a home, to experience family meals, to be able to visit a school abroad, to have an opportunity to make a lifelong friend. One can be a tourist at any age; a family-stay experience is unique!

The family stay offers an experience in understanding another culture. Students will come home with many stories to share. Preparing meals (an opportunity to try wonderful new foods!), sharing everyday activities, even watching television will be a new experience in another language.

Fear of a family stay is a normal reaction. Know, however, that the majority of students write on their post-program evaluation that the family stay was their favorite part of the program.

Returning students say a family stay is worthwhile because...

- *it offers the best opportunity to improve foreign language skills.*
- *it is a chance to make friends you would otherwise never meet.*
- *it helps students gain self-confidence, independence, and the ability to accept differences which are valuable skills for future educational and career endeavors.*

*The success of the family stay depends on everyone working together as a **TEAM**.*

Here are the members of the TEAM:

The Family-Stay Coordinator:

Language & Friendship is fortunate to have had many years of building strong relationships with dedicated teachers and coordinators abroad who organize the family stays. Like the teachers we work with in the U.S., they want their students and communities to have international friendships that broaden horizons and increase cultural understanding. They find families in their own schools and communities and personally meet each of the families in their homes to discuss the goals of the program. They are present for the duration of the stay, working with the host families, the American teacher, and the students in case of any questions.

The Host Family:

Host families **volunteer** to welcome a student into their home because they believe it will be an educational experience for their whole family. Host families are diverse in ethnicity and socio-economic level, yet alike in their openness and wholeheartedness. Families don't mind language mistakes! They are happy to help students express themselves and hope their student will be interested and willing to try. Matches are based on interests and needs of both host families and students, with **one student per family** so that each has the benefits of an immersion experience. (If students are placed together, they may speak English, which can alienate the host family.)

The American Student:

The success of the family stay depends a lot on the student's interest, openness, and willingness to give of self. L&F's preparation materials include lots of advice as well as useful expressions and situational dialogues to help students practice their communication skills. The opportunity to put these skills to use in a family environment is a truly rewarding adventure.

The American Teacher/Leader:

During preparation meetings, teachers cover valuable information to help prepare students for their experience. During the family stay, the teacher/leader traveling with the group is available to help students as needed, working with the family-stay coordinator and the host family in case of any question or concern. (Most questions are due to simple cultural or linguistic misunderstandings and can easily be cleared up.)

The American Parent:

Parents can support their child by reviewing the Family Stay section of the Parent/Student Guidebook and by reviewing the Communication Expectations together. By encouraging their child to be open to the differences they will encounter and ready to put their best foot forward, parents can help their child prepare for the difficulties and joys that this experience will bring. Family and friends can also help ensure a successful stay by refraining from unnecessary communication which disrupts and distracts from the immersion experience.

The L&F Staff Coordinator:

Your L&F coordinator is available at all times to support everyone through a positive experience.