



COMMON QUESTIONS ASKED BY HOST FAMILIES

1. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE AN ERDT/SHARE! HOST FAMILY?

The most important quality we look for in a Host Family is the genuine desire to open your home to an international high school exchange student and to treat your student as you would a member of your own family.

All ERDT/SHARE! Host families believe in the importance of cross-cultural exchange and are eager to learn about other countries and cultures as well as to share their American way of life with their student. Host Families need not have a teenager in the home to qualify.

Qualities that are sought in a Host Family are friendliness, warmth, flexibility, financial and emotional stability. The Host Family must also have the means to provide room and board for the student for the period of the student's stay. The socioeconomic or educational level of the family is not as important as the family's willingness to share and learn with their exchange student.

2. DO HOST FAMILIES RECEIVE COMPENSATION FOR HOSTING?

All of ERDT/SHARE! Host Families are volunteer and do not receive payment for hosting. By eliminating any monetary incentives for hosting, ERDT/SHARE! ensures that all motivation for hosting comes from the heart. The IRS allows each family to deduct \$50.00 for each month that the exchange student lives with them. Exchange students bring their own spending money and are expected to pay for souvenirs and personal items.

3. HOW LONG IS THE SHARE! HIGH SCHOOL EXCHANGE PROGRAM?

SHARE! exchange students live with a Host Family and attend high school for a full, 10-month academic year or for a 5-month semester program. All students arrive approximately one week before school begins and depart 7-10 days after the program ends. The full academic year students arrive in late August and depart in June. The students participating in the 5-month fall semester program arrive in late August and depart in January. The 5-month spring semester students arrive in mid-January and depart in June. If the high school in your area starts early or your family will be on vacation, special arrangements can be made for the arrival date of your student.

4. WHAT KIND OF SUPPORT WILL WE RECEIVE?

Your ERDT/SHARE! Exchange Program Coordinator has been trained to be sensitive to both the needs of the Host Family and the needs of your exchange student. Your Exchange Program Coordinator is available to provide orientations, to answer questions, and to offer support. On the occasion when your Exchange Program Coordinator might not be available, the ERDT/SHARE! office staff may be reached by calling our toll-free number. In the event of an emergency, an ERDT/SHARE! staff member is always available on a 24-hour basis. We greatly appreciate the generosity of our Host Families and strive to

provide each Host Family with all of the support and understanding that they might need to ensure an enriching cross-cultural experience.

5. WILL WE RECEIVE INFORMATION ABOUT THE HOSTING EXPERIENCE?

Your Exchange Program Coordinator will visit you in your home to explain the hosting experience and to answer any questions that you may have. Before your student arrives, you will have a meeting, either as a group with other Host Families or individually with your Exchange Program Coordinator. You will be provided with orientation materials that will provide more details about the intercultural experience of hosting. When you select a student and the placement is confirmed, you will receive a Host Family Packet from the ERDT/SHARE! National Office, which contains information about insurance coverage, policies, rules and regulations as well as cultural information. Also included in the Host Family Packet is the SHARE! Host Family Orientation Handbook written specifically to give Host Families more information about the cross-cultural experience.

6. WHAT WILL OUR EXCHANGE STUDENT EXPECT?

The exchange students who participate in the SHARE! High School Exchange Program expect to be treated as a member of your family. They have made the decision to leave behind their own family and friends for 5 or 10 months to have the experience of living with an American family and attending an American high school. The international students are as diverse as the American families who host them. Some are outgoing and gregarious; others are quiet and shy. Like most teenagers around the world, they are curious and inquisitive. They have come to the United States to discover what the American way of life is all about. They have also come as ambassadors from their countries to share their way of life with you. Your exchange student will expect you to communicate with him/her about your values, and will also expect you to listen when he/she tells you about the way of life of his/her country.

7. WILL OUR STUDENT ABIDE BY THE RULES OF OUR HOME?

Your student is expected to behave as a member of your family and follow all of the rules and expectations of your household. Since every family has its own set of house rules and policies, it is important for the family to take time in the beginning to explain to their guest everything that is needed to know about your household, including rules, chores, daily schedules, curfews, etc. Your Exchange Program Coordinator will provide you with information which will be helpful to you in the initial stages of your hosting experience. In addition, the SHARE! Host Family Orientation Handbook contains information about communicating rules and regulations to your exchange student. You should be honest and open about your household rules. Remember, your student is not merely a guest, but a new member of your family!

8. WHO PAYS FOR EXCHANGE STUDENT'S EXPENSES DURING THE PROGRAM?

All exchange students have their own spending money and are requested to bring or receive from home approximately \$200-\$300 per month to cover personal expenses, such as school supplies, clothing, snacks outside of the home and entertainment, etc. Host Families are expected to provide room and board for the student. The expenses of the Host Families will differ, depending on the lifestyles of each family.

9. MAY OUR EXCHANGE STUDENT SHARE A BEDROOM WITH ONE OF OUR CHILDREN?

Many ERDT/SHARE! Host Families do not have enough bedrooms in their home to accommodate an exchange student with a private bedroom. We require only that your student be given his or her own bed and space in the closet and the chest of drawers. Consideration should be given to the fact that your student will be attending high school and will be required to study and do homework.

10. IS THE HOST FAMILY THE LEGAL SPONSOR FOR THE STUDENT?

No. ERDT/SHARE! is the legal sponsor for the student. As the legal sponsor, ERDT/SHARE! issues the documents necessary for the student to obtain an exchange-visitor visa to enter the United States and to participate in the SHARE! High School Exchange Program. ERDT/SHARE! remains legally responsible for the student for the duration of the program. The Host Family does, however, have permission to obtain medical treatment from a licensed physician for the student when necessary. A medical release signed by the biological parents is included in the student's application.

11. WILL OUR STUDENT HAVE INSURANCE COVERAGE?

Your exchange student is covered with medical/accident insurance and will receive an insurance card. Emergency dental treatment is covered for relief of pain or when damage to the teeth is caused by an accident. You will receive insurance information and claim forms in your ERDT/SHARE! Host Family Packet prior to the arrival of your student.

12. WOULD IT BE ACCEPTABLE TO INVITE STUDENT TO OUR PLACE OF WORSHIP?

Your exchange student should be invited to attend your place of worship. If your exchange student is of a different religion, but is interested in attending your church, temple, or synagogue to learn more about this aspect of our culture, they should be welcomed and encouraged. However, attendance of religious services should not be forced upon the student. Arrangements should be made to allow the exchange student to attend the church of his/her choice if so desired.

13. MAY WE ALLOW OUR STUDENT TO TRAVEL ON HIS/HER OWN?

Your exchange student is not permitted to travel outside the local area by himself/herself or with peers. Overnight travel with the Host Family, another family, or a responsible adult is permitted if prior consent is given by the Host Family and Exchange Program Coordinator. Overnight travel is also permitted with an approved group (e.g. church, school, etc.). The Host Family and the Exchange Program Coordinator must be informed of all such trips and have a telephone contact, i.e. the name and telephone number of a responsible adult, in order to reach the student in an emergency.

14. HOW IS THE PARTICIPANT'S FEE PUT TO USE?

The exchange students pay a fee in their home country that is established by our Overseas Representative in each particular country. The fee covers the many costs and expenses that are necessary for a successful exchange program. A large portion of the fee covers round-trip airfare to the final destination in the United States, pre-departure orientation meeting in the student's home country, and educational and program materials for the students. The overseas office also uses a portion of the fee for promoting the program and for office overhead and administration.

In the United States, ERDT/SHARE! uses approximately 10% of our fee for field representative recruitment and development. 30% of our fee for placement, orientations, and supervision. Advertising, promotion, and materials are approximately 30% of the fee, with the remaining 30% used to cover office overhead and administration of the program in the United States. ERDT/SHARE! is a nonprofit educational foundation, and as a designated sponsor of high school exchange students is subject to regulations established by the United States Department of State.

15. WHAT SHOULD I KNOW ABOUT ERDT/SHARE!?

Educational Resource Development Trust and the SHARE! High School Exchange Program (ERDT/SHARE!) has over forty years experience providing successful cross-cultural homestay experiences. We are a well-established and a well-respected student exchange organization that takes pride in our very personal approach to student exchange. We are a medium-sized organization — large enough to provide stability and variety but small enough to maintain a personal touch. We can maintain a family-like atmosphere that extends to our field representatives, host families, and exchange students.

ERDT was established in 1974 and has been successfully involved in working with international students — both individually and in groups — for short-term and long-term educational and homestay programs. In 1980, ERDT was designated by the United States Department of State to sponsor high school exchange students — our SHARE! Student Exchange Program. In addition, ERDT/SHARE! organizes a variety of Special Programs, including short-term homestays and ranchstays as well as outbound programs for Americans. ERDT/SHARE! is included in the ***Advisory List since 1987*** published by the **Council on Standards for International Educational Travel (CSIET)**, an independent not-for-profit organization committed to quality international educational travel. CSIET establishes standards for organizations and monitors compliance with those standards. ERDT/SHARE! is proud to have met the criteria for listing in the ***CSIET Advisory List***.

16. WHAT IS THE NEXT STEP?

To receive more information about the hosting an exchange student, please contact your local Exchange Program Coordinator or the ERDT/SHARE! National Office at 214-366-4678.

The ERDT/SHARE! Exchange Program Coordinator in your community will make arrangements to visit you in your home at a convenient time for your family. Your Exchange Program Coordinator will ask you to fill out the Host Family Application and Host Family Profile and will answer all of your questions. We appreciate your interest in promoting intercultural understanding in your community.

INVITE THE WORLD HOME!