



ERDT/SHARE! FACT SHEET

- ***ERDT HISTORY AND BACKGROUND***

Educational Resource Development Trust (ERDT), a non-profit educational foundation, was established in 1974 and has, since its inception, been successfully involved in working with international students – both individually and in groups – for short-term and long-term educational and homestay programs. In the 1970's, ERDT was primarily involved in administering scholarships for employees of foreign government agencies and multinational corporations for study at U.S. colleges and universities.

In 1980, ERDT was designated by the U.S. Department of State's Exchange Visitor Program to sponsor a Teenager High School Exchange Program – our **SHARE! High School Exchange Program**. ERDT/SHARE! now places more than 700 international students a year with American host families while they attend local high schools. ERDT also organizes various Special Programs, including short-term homestays and outbound programs for Americans. All of the ERDT programs have met the standards for listing in the **Advisory List**, produced by the Council on Standards for International Educational Travel (CSIET), an independent, national educational organization. ERDT/SHARE! has been granted full listing in the **CSIET Advisory List since 1987**.

- ***THE ERDT/SHARE! PHILOSOPHY***

The goal of ERDT/SHARE! is to provide opportunities for people of different cultures to come together so that they can learn about other points of view and ways of life. We at ERDT/SHARE! believe that cross-cultural understanding is fundamental to developing understanding, tolerance, and friendships around the world. Our programs are designed to be cultural experiences that foster goodwill through a positive people-to-people experience.

- ***SHARE! HIGH SCHOOL EXCHANGE PROGRAM***

The SHARE! Student Exchange Program sponsors high school students from abroad for either one semester (5 months) or one academic year (10 months) of study in the United States. In the SHARE! Program, each student is matched with a suitable Host Family and attends the local high school in the district in which the family lives.

The Students

The students come to America from around the globe, including countries such as Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Norway, Vietnam, Jordan, Mongolia, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Poland, Romania, Serbia/Montenegro, Spain, Switzerland, and Bolivia. They are between the ages of 15 and 18 years and are carefully screened in their home countries to ensure that they are academically prepared as well as proficient in English. Students arrive with medical insurance and ample pocket money to cover personal expenses. All students are required to provide detailed personal and academic information as part of our exchange student application, which includes recommendations, an

English proficiency test, school transcripts from the three most recent years, with English translations, and medical/dental reports.

SHARE! students are prepared to make real contributions to their school, community, and host family. They are to be considered not as guests, but rather as family and community members. The exchange students expect to participate as active members of the family household as well as to share their own country's culture, politics, and recipes with the family, the high school, and community organizations.

Credit for academic achievement and/or graduation diplomas are granted at the school's discretion and have not been promised to the students. Students must return to their home countries at the end of the program, usually 7 to 10 days after the last day of school.

The Host Families

ERDT Exchange Program Coordinators carefully screen Host Families without consideration of race, religion, national origin, or profession, selecting families who are truly interested in sharing a cross-cultural experience. English must be the language spoken in the home. Families need not have a teenager in the home to qualify as a Host Family. Qualities that are sought in Host Families are interest, flexibility, happiness, stability, sense of humor, friendliness, and warmth. In matching Host Families with students, many factors are taken into consideration, among them compatibility of interests and personalities (as indicated in interviews with the families and letters from the students), and ages of the Host Family members. Host Families provide room and board for the student. All other expenses are the responsibility of the student. Although families receive no monetary compensation for hosting, the IRS allows each family to deduct \$50.00 for each month that the exchange student lives with them.

The Exchange Program Coordinators

Exchange Program Coordinators, who coordinate programs on the local level, are selected and trained by ERDT staff to be professional and acutely responsive to the needs of exchange students. They recruit, screen, and orient Host Families, match them with students, plan the group get-togethers, and help counsel Host Families and students if any adjustment problems arise. At all times, EPCs remain in close contact with ERDT's Regional Administrators and main office located in Santa Monica, California.

The Exchange Program Coordinators also prepare monthly written reports covering the student's adjustment to the Host Family, school, and community. These monthly reports are sent to Overseas Representatives and then forwarded to the biological family. ERDT students and families may contact ERDT main office for assistance at any time. The national office maintains an answering service for contact twenty-four hours a day.

• *SPECIAL PROGRAMS*

ERDT's Special Programs division offers a wide variety of short-term programs, including homestays, ranch and farmstays, group/study tours, and college and university placements throughout the year. ERDT can arrange custom-designed programs to meet different travel/study needs. In homestay programs, the students live with American Host Families as family members. The most important aspect of all homestays is the cross-cultural family relationship. The length of time for Special Programs range from one night to several months. ERDT's Special Programs provide opportunities for individuals and families who want to participate in a cross-cultural experience for a shorter period of time.

INVITE THE WORLD HOME!