



International Host Family Program Overview and FAQs

'We had the privilege to welcome two boys into our home! God placed it upon our hearts to be a host family and we are glad we listened! It was our prayer that the impact of living life with us for the year would have a lasting effect and would be used by God in their lives. Watching the boys experience the excitement of WCA, America, learning new things, and most of all the growth of their faith through church, WCA, and youth group was priceless. We were blessed by the opportunity!'

-Bill and Melody Miller

Why Host an International Student?

Washtenaw Christian Academy's International Student Program (ISP) is a growing and exciting part of the WCA community. Each year there are a number of students that leave their families for the school year and come to the United States for their middle school and/or high school experience. A growing number of students are choosing WCA to be their home away from home. We have welcomed students from Brazil, Chile, China, Germany, Japan, Korea, Moldova and Spain and are looking forward to expanding this program.

Hosting an international student in your home expands your own family's perspectives and connections with other cultures around the world. You'll start a life-long relationship with your new "son" or "daughter," and when your student returns home you'll have a friend in another country. Members of your family will feel closer to each other through sharing your daily lives with an exchange student. If you have children, they'll gain a broader perspective on the world, learning more about geography, communication and international cultures. If your children are young, they'll probably love having a big brother or sister from another country. You will be a citizen diplomat by creating positive impressions about America and Americans, breaking stereotypes, and fostering mutual understanding and respect.

This experience also provides your family with an opportunity to live out our faith in Jesus Christ by welcoming others and showing hospitality. Not only could your family make a relationship that lasts a lifetime, but hosting an international student gives your family an opportunity to grow and stretch in new ways.

Being a host family is a life-changing experience that has an eternal impact on the lives of our international students and enriches the lives of the host family.

WCA invites you to apply to be a host family! It will be a powerful experience for you and your family.

If you are interested in hosting a WCA international student, please fill out and submit the [International Host Family Application](#). FAQs are below.



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How long do we need to host our international student?

You can host a student for one semester or for the entire school year if you choose. Some students plan to come for the year while others plan to come for just a semester. Let us know which arrangement would work best for you.

Do I have to have the same age/grade student to host?

No, host families come in all shapes and sizes. Host families may include married or single parent households, parents with adult children, families with small children or many other varieties.

What is required of a host family?

The health and safety of each student is our highest priority and so we ask our host families to abide by regulations of the U.S. Department of State and the Council of Standards for International and Educational Travel (CSIET), as well as:

- Be able to provide for an additional member of the family including a separate bed (which can be in a shared room with a host sibling of similar age and same gender), suitable quiet study area and three meals per day.
- Offer a supportive environment as the student goes through his or her adjustment process.
- Be interested in teenagers/international students and have realistic expectations of what life with a teenager is like.
- Help your student adapt to your family and to U.S. life and culture.
- Familiarize your student with your hometown and promote participation in school and community events.
- Open communication, encouragement, patience and sound advice
- Local transportation (students are not permitted to drive while on the program)
- Treatment as a member of the family, which may include household rules, responsibilities and privileges. More information can be found in the WCA International Host Family Handbook which can be shared upon request.

Will my exchange student speak English?

Yes. It is required that all students must be able to function in their classrooms while an international student. While students do speak English, some cultures will be more proficient in the beginning.

Am I the host student's legal guardian?

No, the international student's natural parents remain legal guardians. However, each incoming international student and their parents sign a Host Family Release Form which states that host parents may secure medical treatments in the case of an emergency.



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Will my international student have health insurance?

Yes, each student is automatically enrolled in a comprehensive health plan via LowerMark health insurance.

Is there a monthly stipend for expenses?

Yes, in most circumstances there is a monthly stipend to cover some expenses. There are occasional situations when a student is attending on a scholarship and host families willingly cover these expenses.

Is the international student expected to participate in all of our family activities?

In addition to providing food and rides for your student to school and activities, your international student participates in daily family life, routines, church participation, and celebrations.

Host Parents commit to 'step-in' parenting to help guide and provide emotional support to the international student during the school year.

Regular outings and activities will be planned by WCA for the international students but families are welcomed and encouraged to participate in normal family outings and activities together with their international student.

International Students and Host Families agree to live by certain standards, codes of conduct, and expectations of the International Student Program. More detailed information can be found in the WCA International Host Family Handbook and the WCA International Student Handbook which can be shared upon request.