



# **PARTNERS OF THE AMERICAS**

**Indiana, USA/Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil**

## **Host Family FAQ Frequently Asked Questions**

### **1. What are my responsibilities as a host parent?**

- a. Your primary responsibility is to welcome the youth ambassador into your home and treat him or her as one of your own children for the eight-week period. In addition to that basic premise, host parents also agree to do the following:
  - i. Provide personal space to sleep and live
  - ii. Provide three meals per day
  - iii. Offer emotional support adjusting to new family and culture
  - iv. Offer assistance in scheduling two presentations about the youth ambassador's life, school or state to community or school groups
  - v. Attend the Partners Feijoada social event with youth ambassador
  - vi. Complete follow-up survey

### **2. Do I have to be the parent of a high school child to host a Partners Youth Ambassador?**

No, families do not have to have teenagers to be eligible to host; however, hosting often works best in families with high school students who are able to help youth ambassadors fit in at school and who may help with transportation to and from extracurricular events.

### **3. What if our family doesn't have an extra bedroom?**

Youth ambassadors may share a bedroom with a same gender child if separate beds are available. Providing some place or opportunity for privacy at some times during the day is recommended.

### **4. Do I need to provide lunch money for my youth ambassador?**

Just as they would provide a meal for their own children at lunchtime, host families provide all meals for their youth ambassadors. At lunchtime, this may take the form of weekly lunch money or a sack lunch, according to the practices of the other children in the family.

### **5. Do I need to provide spending money for my youth ambassador?**

Youth ambassadors bring their own spending money with them for personal expenses. Restaurant meals or admission fees during family outings should be covered by the family, as they would be for their own children.

- 6. Do I have to provide long distance telephone calls for the youth ambassador?**  
IN Partners asks that the family pay for an initial telephone call home for the youth ambassador to confirm that he or she has arrived safely. Additional calls are the financial responsibility of the youth ambassador.
- 7. Does my family need to have Internet access?**  
No, students do not need to access Internet on a daily basis. The family can be creative, such as by using public libraries or school computers, if the student is required to blog or use the Internet for a school project.
- 8. We only have one bathroom. Is that a problem?**  
Partners youth ambassadors apply to come to the United States to experience life as an American teenager. If your family uses only one bathroom, that will be an authentic part of family life for the youth ambassador. Be sure to discuss your family's procedures and routines with your youth ambassador early after his or her arrival so that bathroom scheduling will run smoothly.
- 9. How do I find out if our school will accept an exchange student?**  
Check out our *Tips for Talking to School Officials* on the IN Partners website. Consider talking with your school's guidance counselor and principal before applying to be a host. Frequently, other schools are willing to host Partners students, so consider contacting these schools as well. Contact a Partners representative for further guidance.
- 10. What if we don't speak Portuguese or any foreign language?**  
No problem. Brazilian students accepted as youth ambassadors have had several years of English study and are eager to practice speaking English. If you find yourself being misunderstood, use simple language and speak slowly for clarity.
- 11. What if we don't belong to any clubs or organizations for the youth ambassador to speak to?**  
Consider asking relatives, neighbors, and friends for connections they may have, such as church groups and service clubs, or talk with teachers who may be willing to host presentations in their classrooms during school.
- 12. Do I need to include the youth ambassador on my health insurance?**  
No, youth ambassadors come to the USA with their own health insurance. If he or she became ill, you would need to seek medical attention for the Y, as you would your own child.
- 13. What about driving?**  
Youth ambassadors are not permitted to drive while they are in the USA. Host parents should use discretion about allowing a youth ambassador to ride with other students, as parents are responsible for the safety of their visiting youth ambassador.

**14. We have planned a vacation during this time. Can the youth ambassador come with us?**

Probably. Fill out an Overnight, Out-of-State Travel Request form (available on the Partners website) at least two weeks before the planned trip, and send it to Jhani Laupus for approval.

**15. What would I do if the youth ambassador were hurt or had a problem that I could not handle?**

Treating your youth ambassador as you would your own child is the key to handling most situations. If the youth ambassador were hurt, you would seek medical attention. If the youth ambassador had emotional problems or other situations that the parents felt they could not handle, they ~~can~~ always contact Jhani Laupis or Hal Roepke

**16. We would like to host a youth ambassador, but we just don't have the time to entertain a guest right now. Is there another time to host?**

Remember that youth ambassadors are in Indiana to experience life in a family. They should not be considered guests, but treated as family members. Youth ambassadors should have some household responsibilities and do not need to be entertained. If you cannot host but want to be involved in other ways, check opportunities on the IN Partners website or consider hosting next year.

**17. What if our budget does not provide extra money for special trips?**

Be creative. Host families are not expected to provide travel experiences for their youth ambassadors, although they certainly may. Consider places in or near your community that would be of interest to teens from Brazil, such as small museums, state parks, and farms. Remember that inexpensive activities, like bowling, movie parties, game nights, and school sporting events can also be fun for students, especially if they involve other teens. Also consider networking with other Partners host families to piggyback on daytrips they may be taking.

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