



Youth Ambassadors Program 2009 Guidelines for Candidates

Program Travel Period: The tentative dates for 2009 are June 7-July 5 (4 weeks).

Objectives

Of Partners of the Americas:

Through committees of volunteers, the objective of Partners is to put community resources to work to the benefit of Sister States to achieve technical and cultural projects based on the principles of shared assistance and benefits without reference to race, religion or political creeds.

Of the Youth Ambassador Program:

To provide Indiana youth with an opportunity for intercultural experiences, building leadership skills and understanding with Indiana's partner state, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil (RGS), and creating an awareness of cooperation between cultures and promoting volunteerism through an immersion experience in a host family.

General Information

1. A maximum number of six youths will be selected each year. A special committee appointed by the Indiana Partners Board of Directors will make the selection.
2. Each youth will be responsible for his or her own air transportation and spending money.
3. Program activities, lodging, food and local transportation will be the responsibility of the host family as arranged by the Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, Committee.
4. The length of the Ambassador's stay will be approximately four weeks (2nd week of June-2nd week of July). Exact dates will depend on school schedules and available flights.
5. Each youth will complete the program as established by the RGS Committee in one or more cities.
6. The programming will include participation of the youth in volunteer activities in the host community.

7. The candidate must join as a family member (\$40) of Indiana Partners.
8. The candidate's age must be between 15 and 18 years, such that:
 - This will be the youth's age during the period of the trip;
 - He/she is not a university student;
 - Preference will be given to those who are 16 and older.

Application Process

1. If the candidate does not have a passport valid beyond the period of travel, he/she should apply for one **immediately!** In addition, a visa is required for entry into Brazil and it may take more than a month for the Brazilian Consulate to process it.
2. The candidate must submit a written essay which is:
 - A maximum of 1 page in length;
 - Concerning 1) the reasons why he/she wishes to be chosen for the Partners Youth Ambassadors Program; 2) expectations of the program, including interest in Brazil, in developing cross-cultural and language (Portuguese) skills; 3) interest and experience in volunteer activities; and 4) how he/she might work with the Indiana Committee on returning to share his/her thoughts about youth participation in the cultural exchange and volunteer activities.
3. Each youth candidate also must include the following documents:
 - **A signed letter of recommendation from one of his/her parents**, including any pertinent information about the candidate that will help the Selection Committee. This letter also should include a statement from his/her parents agreeing to these guidelines.
 - **A signed letter of recommendation from a physician**, specifying the candidate's general state of health, including medication taken regularly, and any health problems that could require treatment during the Ambassadorship, in order to facilitate any necessary treatment. It should cite, for example, diabetes, asthma, any prohibited activities, medicines for which there may be an allergic reaction, allergies and other facts deemed important by the doctor.
 - **At least one school or community letter of recommendation** from the principal, a teacher or a leader in the civic or church community that can address the candidate's industriousness and participation in extracurricular activities.
 - **At least one character letter of recommendation** from a personal or close family friend who can speak to the candidate's character.
 - **A letter of recommendation from a member of Indiana Partners** (an interview with a Partners local community member or board member will be arranged for those who do not know any Partners members well).
4. An application fee of \$25.00 must accompany the application. This fee can be waived for a scholarship candidate.

Requirements for Selected Participants

1. Youths chosen are required to participate in all preparatory meetings organized by the Youth Ambassadors Committee.
2. Those selected for the program must pay a project fee of \$50, payable in US\$ cash directly to RGS Partners on arrival.
3. All candidates will travel together in a group both going and returning. Indiana Partners will assist in finding the cheapest airfare for the best service.
4. Health insurance valid for use in Brazil that meets the criteria of Indiana Partners is required. Traveling youth must take their insurance card or information.
5. The candidate's parents or legal guardian must complete the authorization and release from liability forms provided by Indiana Partners.
6. Documentation necessary for travel outside the country, including passport, Brazilian visa and any authorization required by the Brazilian government for a minor to travel unaccompanied by his/her parents. Indiana Partners will assist with information about obtaining a Brazilian visa from the Consulate in Chicago.
7. Participants must complete the program organized and prepared for him/her in Rio Grande do Sul.
8. If the participant has not already done so, the youth and his/her family is expected to participate as active members in Indiana Partners for at least a year (e.g.: as host for a Gaucho visitor, as a member of the YAP committee, work on the International Festival Committee, etc.)
9. Any difficulties that may occur after arrival in Rio Grande do Sul will be brought immediately to the attention of the program coordinator or the president of RGS Partners.
10. Upon their return, participants are required to
 - a. prepare a written report of their experiences with any recommendations for improvements to the program, an article for the newsletter, and an oral presentation at the Annual Partners Meeting (late October or early November).
 - b. to participate voluntarily in Partners activities, such as hosting a gaucho or assisting with the International Festival booth, for at least a year.

Program Costs

- Roundtrip airfare from Indianapolis (IND) to Porto Alegre (POA)
- Family membership in Indiana Partners - \$40
- Application fee - \$25
- Program fee - \$50
- Passport and Brazil visa fees, photos, expediting fees, etc.
- Health insurance valid in Brazil (past costs have been approximately \$15/week)
- Spending money while in Brazil

Application Timeline and Instructions

March 30	Final date for submission of complete application
April 1	Announcement of selected candidates; information sent to RS, Brazil
May 1	Notification of Host family placements in Brazil
May	Apply to visas, make travel arrangements, orient students

Completed application and appended documents should be mailed or scanned and emailed to Leslie Barratt.

By mail: 1516 S. 6th St., Terre Haute, Indiana 47802 (812.232.3604)

By email: LeslieBarratt@indstate.edu