

# Open up your home

- become a host family



**THE BEST THING  
ABOUT BEING A HOST  
FAMILY IS THAT YOU  
CREATE LIFELONG  
FRIENDSHIPS**



*STS was founded in 1958. We are a global organization with offices and partners in more than 30 countries. Thanks to our long experience and our committed employees we have had more than one million satisfied customers.*



### **HOST & GO- DISCOUNT!**

Get a discount if you host an exchange student while someone in your family travels with STS on a high school exchange.



### **WHY HOST?**

- Travel by staying at home
- Learn a new language
- Discover a new culture
  - Have lots of fun
- Gain a new family member and friend for life!







High School students from all over the world dream about living and studying abroad. Many people experience a new country by travelling, others choose to be host parents or host siblings to an exchange student. Join them and experience cultural exchange in your own home. Every year we welcome students from all over the world; they come to attend high school and live with a host family. By opening your heart and your home to an exchange student, your family will make a significant difference to the life of a young person eagerly waiting to come to your country.

We hope that you will take part in this journey with STS.



# “It’s like travelling every day!”

Hosting an exchange student is a rewarding experience for the whole family. You will gain a wider international perspective, make lifelong friendships, and enjoy the company of an enthusiastic young person. If you have children at home, hosting will reinforce their interest in foreign languages, other cultures and travelling. And you will gain a new family member too! Most of our host families and students keep a lifelong relationship, visiting each other and sharing their life events throughout the years.



## What does it involve?

Your responsibility is to welcome the student as a member of your family and to provide the same care & support you give to your own children. We ask that you provide a bed and two to three meals a day. The student is expected to fully participate in the family's daily life, including participating in the same chores you expect from your own children. The student is responsible for covering costs such as school equipment, transport to and from school, phone calls, Internet, toiletries, clothing and any other personal items, fees for any after school activities, school trips and holiday trips if applicable. STS ensures that all students have comprehensive health, travel and personal liability insurance cover. STS also takes care of all school arrangements and provides local support to all students and their host families.



## Who can be host parents?

Our host families come from all walks of life. What they have in common is an interest in other cultures and a desire to share their family life. A host family can live in a house or in an apartment, in a city or in the countryside. Retired couples, single parents, couples with or without children, couples with primary school children and couples with teenagers are all welcome to apply. Please note that no payment or financial compensation can be provided to our volunteer host families, a common rule for registered student exchange organisations to ensure that selected families want to host the student for the cultural exchange experience only.

## Who can be an exchange student?

STS exchange students are young people who want to live something unique. They dream of new experiences in far flung places and want to make new friends in a different culture. The young people who apply to our exchange programs are aged 15 to 18. They are selected on strict requirements, including school grades, teacher recommendations, personal essay and certificate of health. While on their exchange program, all students are expected to abide by a thorough set of rules and their progress is closely monitored by STS.

### **“One of the family”**

Our students have been prepared to live like a member of their host family and the sooner they get fully involved into their family routine, the better for everyone! They will also make their own friendships through school and after school activities. Your exchange student will simply become one of the family! During the cultural exchange, you will learn about each other’s everyday life and share traditions, food, culture etc. It is fun to show the student your local area and your country, and do lots of activities together, but the student is staying with you to take part in your everyday life. The small details mean a lot and will make the student become a part of your family. To try traditional dishes from your country can be worth more than you think!



# Host family stories:

It is humbling to be entrusted with a precious life, even for a season. It is with pride that we have opened our home. It is with love and consideration we accept and embrace the dissimilarities. There are so many positives to hosting that we could have never envisioned beforehand. So many great moments!

**The Wilkinson family**

We had thought about hosting, but just never got around to making any enquiries, and then we got a phone call from STS, asking us to be a host family. This started us out on a wonderful journey. We have hosted seven students. All have become valued members of our family. I would recommend becoming a host family, it is a life changing experience and I'm so glad we took up the challenge.

**The McGimpsey family**

We had a wonderful year with Peter, and that is mostly thanks to him. It was a lot of fun having him in the family, and he left a big empty space. His mother and father visited us in the summer. They are wonderful people, and we had a great time together. If everything works out, we are visiting the family in New Zealand this winter. Many thanks to STS for an unforgettable experience!

**The Johansson family**

Hosting an exchange student means cultural exchange at home. Imagine speaking a different language at breakfast every morning! It has been a fantastic experience for the family and particularly for our daughter Annie who has gotten a sibling in a different country. Our exchange student Gustav is a part of our family, and we are already talking about visiting him in Berlin.

**The Särka family**

# Exchange student stories:

My exchange to Canada helped me grow, as I became more independent, confident, and pushed myself outside of my comfort zone. Leaving my new family and friends was the hardest part, while the best parts were the truly Canadian experiences, like the ice hockey games, seeing the beautiful Canadian landscapes etc.

**Eleanor, Canada**

The best thing about Sweden is my family here. I love experiencing traditions, and I am so happy that my family and I have so much fun together, and that my host siblings and I are such good friends.

**Elena, Italy**

I gained so much knowledge while I was on exchange. I met so many people and made a ton of friends. My host family was perfect! I was comfortable to go to them if I was upset and could be myself while living with them. My local coordinator was amazing too. She took care of me and made sure things were alright. It was a great and perfect year, and I'm glad I did it.

**Nikkasia, USA**

Going on an exchange is one of the best choices I have ever made in my life, and especially going at such a young age. I think this experience has helped me to grow into a more mature and widely cultured person, and I am now able to appreciate the French culture with more knowledge. I would recommend going on an exchange to anyone I meet.

**Rub, France**

**READ MORE  
STORIES ON  
OUR WEB.**

# FAQ

Becoming a host family is an adventure that brings lots of questions in the beginning. Here we have listed questions that many new host families have!



## **Q: Does the host family get to choose the student?**

**A:** Yes. The host family selects the student that best suits them in terms of interests, sports or activities, personality and values, with the help and guidance of the STS Local Coordinator who will come and meet with them at home. You will find presentations on all our exchange students on our website. If you are curious about a specific student, you are welcome to contact us for more information!

## **Q: What happens if we don't get along?**

**A:** Sometimes it can happen that the personal chemistry is just not right between the student and his/her host family. If this is the case and nothing can be done to improve the situation, STS will find a new host family for the student. There is no contract binding any family to keep on hosting their student if they do not wish so.

## **Q: Can you have an exchange student for less than a year?**

**A:** Yes. You can choose to be a host family for one year (10 or 11 months) or one semester (5 months). You can also choose to be a welcome family for three months to see how it feels before you decide or until we find a new host family for the student.



**Q: We want to be a host family, but we don't have a spare bedroom!**

**A:** Maybe your son or daughter will find it fun to share a room? Many of our students share bedrooms with a host sibling and are prepared for this. We only require that the age difference is not more than 3 years and of the same gender of course.

**Q: All our children have now left home, will this be boring for the student?**

**A:** For some students, it might be better to be 'an only child' in a host family than to have several siblings. They might come from a large family themselves and will get the chance to see what it's like being the 'only' child. Also remember that they will make their friends at school and that they will most probably get involved with your own children too!

**Q: We work full-time. Will we have enough time for a student?**

**A:** The students are prepared for the fact that both parents often work full-time. In the beginning they need a little extra help to get around, but they make friends and create their own social life very quickly.

**Q: Does the host family get compensation?**

**A:** No. It is important that the exchange student is made to feel like a family member. We expect that you become a host family for the personal and cultural exchange, not for financial gain.

**Q: Which school should the student attend?**

**A:** When completing the host family application, STS will ask which school(s) you would prefer your student to attend in your local area. We will enrol the student in your first choice of school, pending on the school approval. If not possible we will work on enrolling the student in another suitable school of your local area.

**Q: We will be going away on a trip while the student is here. What do we do?**

**A:** The student must not sleep alone in the host family's home without an adult being present. In certain cases the student's family will pay for the student to join you. If this is not possible, please contact STS and we will together find a solution where he/she can stay while you are away.

**Q: Do you have to give a guided tour of the country and go on trips with the student?**

**A:** NO. By no means do host families travel around the country with their student. STS arranges activities and trips during the school year that the students can join.

**Q: What about the language?**

**A:** Many people worry about the language barrier, which we understand. Of course, this can be a challenge, and it can be hard in the beginning, but you will have so many great and fun conversations once the student starts learning your language. In our opinion, the language development, and everything that this brings is one of the best parts of the exchange.

**Q: What should you think about as a host family?**

**A:** The student quickly becomes a part of your family, so he or she needs to know the rules that apply in your home and what is expected of him or her. It is important to have open communication and show understanding to avoid misunderstandings. If the student tells you about his or her family and home country, as well as you as a host family tell him or her about your way of life, it will be easier to understand each other's cultural differences.

**Q: How do we become a host family?**

**A:** When you have decided to open up your home to an exchange student and submitted your interest to us on our website or by calling us, we will help you to select a student that you think would fit in well with your family. After that, you will fill out an application form and get a visit from an STS representative.

# How to become a host family:

1

## **Submit your interest**

Submit your interest on [www.sts-education.com](http://www.sts-education.com). We then send you detailed information and a presentation of students who are interested in coming to your country.

2

## **Selecting a student**

You look through the presentations and decide which student you want to invite to your home.

3

## **Application**

You fill out a full application in GoZapp, and complete your application by providing a criminal background report.

4

## **Visit by STS**

Our local coordinator visits you in your home.

5

## **Confirmation**

Once we have approved you as a host family, your student will be informed of his/her placement, and we encourage both you and the student to contact each other.







A big thank you to all of our students and host families who have contributed with pictures and quotes.

**Visit [www.sts-education.com](http://www.sts-education.com)  
for more information**

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