

At the end of their AFS exchange in Sweden, we asked some recent AFSers from the USA to answer two questions:

- ❑ What elements of your host culture, compared to US culture, did you find most difficult to adjust to in the areas of family, school and/or social life?
- ❑ Please note any advice you would like to share with AFSers destined for your host country.

## Here are some of their responses:

It was hard to adjust to the reserved nature of the Swedes and how quiet most of my family and classmates were, but by the time I came home, I understood the Swedish culture and appreciated it. Be open to Swedish traditions because at any holiday there will be singing and dancing, which may be a bit strange or intimidating at first, but is actually a ton of fun. Be brave and talk to your family and classmates; they will want to get to know you, but will be too shy to begin a conversation.

**Olivia, Year, 2009**

Speak the language! It's the only way you will be good at Swedish.

**Catherine, Year, 2009**

Get as involved with your class at school as possible; be open, be willing, try anything and everything that is offered!!

**Katherine, Year, 2008**

Swedes speak amazing English but they don't think they do. They are also very friendly people but they are afraid that you might not be. If you make yourself available and easy to approach they will.

**Dylann, Year, 2007**

Don't let the long, dark winters get you down! The spring and summer months are beautiful and light! I had a relatively easy time adjusting to life in Sweden, thanks mostly to my excellent family which I clicked with right from our first meeting... Swedes are, in general, rather shy about getting to know new people (especially teenagers) and so it's really important to take the initiative and ask people to show you things or have a cup of coffee. They will almost certainly be thrilled to be asked!

**Caitlin, Year, 2007**

Just be positive. Positivity will take you a very long way. People want to be around positive people. Be prepared to answer a lot of questions.

**Dylann, Year, 2007**

There is more freedom, especially for younger kids; also, there are behavioral differences such as being more reserved.

**Sarah, Year, 2007**

Speak the language!!

**Leila, Year, 2007**

