

A Message to Families in the U.S.

"Thank you for every moment that you've given me, every thought that has broadened my horizon, every example about life for me to follow, every criticism that made me think, every compliment that made me feel good, every advice that made me be a better person, everything that you've given to me all this time."

Syarief from Indonesia,
Hosted in Illinois



"We are honored to have such an incredible person as an exchange student. She delights us with her wit, grace, and kindness every day. Inviting Aqsha into our home has been one of the best things we have ever done."

Cyndee Hildenbrandt, Colorado,
Host mother for Aqsha from Indonesia



Most families have no idea how much they will gain by opening their home and hearts to a YES Student. Sharing and learning happen naturally—in conversations at the dinner table, excitement about the prom or a sports team's victory, sharing a family tradition, or making a presentation in the community. Hosting is a rich and rewarding

experience for all kinds of families and all kinds of families are needed to host! Families provide an exchange student a bed, meals, and the guidance and support that they would to their own child. Say "YES" and bring more understanding into the world, beginning with your own family and community.

"I'm grateful to the U.S. Department of State for giving me the chance to experience a wonderful time in the U.S. This program is working effectively to promote understanding among people around the world."

Kartika from Indonesia
Hosted in Indiana



Make a World of Difference

As a teacher, a mother or father, a community activist, youth worker, grandparent, or teenager, there is a way you can help to build a world filled with greater understanding.

Learn how you can become involved in a grassroots peace movement by sharing your home, your classroom, and your heart with a foreign student who is eager to learn about the U.S.

Learn about the YES program
www.yesprograms.org



The YES Program welcomes the participation of people with disabilities.

YES

Youth Exchange and Study Program



PROMOTING WORLD PEACE
THROUGH HIGH SCHOOL EXCHANGE



YES: Building Bridges of Understanding

"Sometimes a bunch of kids can accomplish more in a very small amount of time than a country can achieve in decades. We YES students started to remove the misconceptions and initiated a movement against prejudice. We have taken a step for world peace."

Emrah from Turkey, Hosted in Washington

The Youth Exchange and Study Program (YES) is an innovative high school student exchange program funded by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. This public diplomacy initiative, authorized by Congress in the aftermath of September 11, builds bridges of international understanding, especially between Americans and people in countries with significant Muslim populations.



In a wonderful exchange of cultures and customs, high school students between the ages of 15 and 18, from Brunei, Egypt, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Malaysia, Mozambique, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Thailand, and Turkey, live as a "son" or "daughter" in an American family and attend high school for a school year or semester.

One of the most exciting and unique aspects of YES is that it joins together five exchange programs that work in partnership to arrange the homestays and support host families and students throughout the exchange—ACES (American Cultural Exchange Service), AFS (formerly the American Field Service), AIFS Foundation (American Institute for Foreign Study Foundation), CIEE (the Council on International Educational Exchange), and PAX-Program of Academic Exchange. Together these programs represent more than a century of experience delivering quality exchange programs.

"Accepting this scholarship meant that I agreed to be an ambassador. It has given me a sense of pride to tell people about Malaysia. I am able to tell Americans about my dear homeland and to forge a bond of friendship between Malaysia and the United States."

Divakaran from Malaysia, Hosted in Oregon

YES Students: Young Ambassadors

Students who participate in the YES Program are selected in an open, merit-based competition conducted by AFS Partner Organizations in the countries where students live. The three-tiered process includes a written application, in-person interview, and final screening by a national selection committee. Students who are accepted are provided a full scholarship to study in the U.S.

Contributing to Family and Community Life

"My host family is like my real family in Indonesia. I love being part of their family. It's the first time I've had little sisters and a little brother. I love them so much."

Fadillah from Indonesia, Hosted in Indiana

YES students share their host families' everyday lives, engage in school activities, and volunteer in their communities. They learn about American society and values while educating Americans about the customs and culture of their homelands. The YES Program focuses on leadership training. Staff and volunteers work with students to help them develop their leadership skills. When students return home, they draw upon their U.S. experience and share their knowledge and memories in ways that help to increase intercultural awareness while dispelling myths and stereotypes that often exist about the U.S.

Contributing in U.S. Classrooms

"Our district enthusiastically welcomes YES students because they enhance our educational programs. Having YES students in school helps American kids to build friendships around the world. It gives them a chance to travel without leaving their classrooms. It provides our teachers with a unique resource on world affairs, cultures and religions."

Clifford Fournier, School Board Chairman
Ralph Mahar Regional High School, Massachusetts



In order to live and work in a global society, young people must embrace other ways of living in order to help them build intercultural skills and knowledge. Nothing replaces the learning from first-hand experience but most U.S. students will not have the opportunity to study abroad.

By participating in the YES Program, educators provide dynamic intercultural learning opportunities in their U.S. classrooms.

YES students enhance the teaching of social studies by bringing alternative perspectives to the study of world affairs and current events. At the same time, these students gain an understanding of American values and explore our models of leadership.

www.yesprograms.org

