

At the end of their AFS exchange in Russia, 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:

Be prepared to be a celebrity for awhile. I enjoyed it immensely, but some of the kids in my group who were a little shy took some time adjusting to having everyone look at them and want to speak with them. Many of the little kids would ask me for my autograph!

**Wilson, Summer, 2009**

Study the language before hand. It may seem daunting, but even just learning the alphabet would be a huge advantage.

**Shannon, Summer, 2009**

Don't be shy, never be afraid to speak the language. If you speak Russian well, it is very impressive to them because many have never heard a foreigner speak Russian. Always speak up when something is wrong and never be afraid to ask questions or for advice; even if you think it sounds stupid. Make sure to really sink yourself into the culture to the point where you feel like one of them. You will regret it if you don't. Never be afraid to try new things.

**Nicholas, Year, 2008**

