

At the end of their AFS exchange in Honduras, 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:

In the U.S. people are very direct people, but when I went to Honduras, I noticed how people would seem so indirect, the food they ate was hard to adjust to and hardly any woman exercised there, so I really stuck out in so many ways. I would advise [others] to be patient, and understand that host parents are normally a lot stricter than the way we [might be] used to. Be grateful, clean and helpful, and also be careful at night; it is dangerous in some ways. Don't make it obvious you have a lot of money, but enjoy yourself, travel and [take] every chance you get to learn about the culture, and try new things.

**Hanna, Year, 2010**

Connections are everything so make friends and you can do more things in the community, get involved if possible in sports or music. If you go to Honduras, you will be required by law to wear a uniform [in school]. If you know you are going to a public school the uniform for all public schools is navy blue pants and a white top which you can bring with you. All private schools have their own style of uniforms. Hondurans are greatly influenced by the North American culture and their fashion is almost the same. If you don't currently know Spanish, you will learn fast; at first I thought I would never learn Spanish because everyone talked so fast. The first month was the roughest, but from then on I learned really fast and by the time I came back to the US I was speaking relatively fluently. Hondurans are extremely friendly, forgiving, and welcoming people in general so I didn't have too much culture shock. They are much more physical and you might feel that they are invading your personal space, but they mean the best.

**Morgan, Semester, 2009**

I would say that AFSers in Honduras should be open to everything and always introduce themselves and share their own culture.

**Israel, Semester, 2008**

Honduras is a beautiful country that so many people over look due to its poverty. AFS tries is hardest to place you in a family that has a comfortable financial background, sometimes it doesn't happen but that's the whole point of AFS—to learn to live in conditions and in a culture you never thought you could before. Honduras is filled with such nice people who are always willing to say hi and invite you over. The kids are nice and the night life is awesome. I absolutely do not regret picking Honduras and [to] any student who does choose Honduras: it will be completely worth it. The language is the toughest part of the whole adjustment. It is hard to form close bonds, have those ties that you get with people in your own country without speaking the same language. The language learning process can be very slow but...you will learn as fast as you try. Once the language barrier is broken most of the adjustment is pretty easy.

**Justin, Semester, 2007**

Things aren't always as bad as they seem on the surface...Remember that not every day of your living abroad experience will be good. I think that the bad things are just as important as the good things because you learn to appreciate and look at the good things in everything. Also, I know this is hard...but don't judge your trip before it happens...If you go into your trip prepared for everything, the ups and the downs, the good and the bad, then nothing can touch you and you can be happy where ever you go because nothing can disappoint you. At first the language barrier [was extremely difficult for me] because I could barely communicate with anyone unless they could speak English. People told me it would only take weeks for me to start to be able to understand others, but it took much longer than that. However the good thing is, once you get it, you get it and knowing that you learned how to communicate with an entire new population of people is amazing.

**Teresa, Semester, 2007**

