

The Homestay Times is published by:

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The Essential Guide For Homestay Students

An important part of any homestay program, The Essential Guide for Homestay Students in North America is a booklet that helps students become oriented to living with North American families. It covers everything from culture shock to rights and responsibilities to making meals. The booklet is available in seven languages – Arabic, Chinese, English, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese and Spanish.

Homestay programs across the United States and Canada have found that the book is an invaluable addition to their program.

For more information about The Essential Guide for Homestay Students, please contact 613-542-9876.

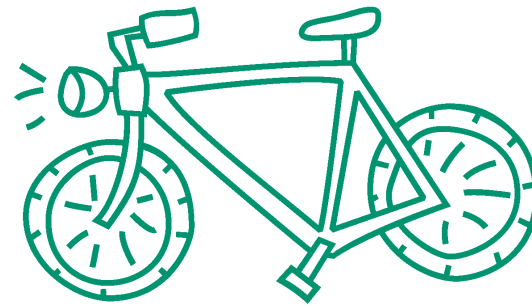
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consultation with the lawyer, programs should determine whether host parents are responsible for enforcing student curfews, school attendance or ensuring adequate medical care. Those expectations should also be communicated very clearly to host parents before they commit to taking in an international student.

Kim Wakeford, Director of International Programs at St. John's-Kilmarnock School in Breslau, Ontario, believes that standard rules for all students are important. For example, there are strict rules against drinking, drugs and driving for all her students. At this rural school, homestay students range in age from 12 to 19 years. She expects her host families to provide a firm, supportive and consistent environment for their international students. "We advise parents to expect approximately two hours of homework per night for their student, and that they shouldn't go out on school nights. We also tell parents that students should expect to have to abide by all house rules."

Another challenge can be ensuring that students get medical attention when required. Unlike many universities or colleges, high schools usually do not have their own medical clinics for internation-



al students. "There are so few doctors in our area taking new patients, having a large group of international students also looking for medical services can put a real strain on the local infrastructure," says Sarah Baud, guidance counselor at Loyalist Collegiate and Vocational Institute in Kingston, Ontario. Sometimes hosts can take their student to their family doctor, but if this is not possible, coordinators should provide host parents with a list of good walk-in clinics in the area. Your school could also make arrangements with local health-care professionals in order to ensure students always have access.

Younger homestay students do need more discipline and attention than their older counterparts. They should understand that they are expected to follow house rules and that many of those rules are meant to ensure their health and safety in their new, sometimes strange environment. Hosts should also understand exactly where their obligations end and the program coordinator's begin. No matter what, says Kim Wakeford, "Your biggest job is to make sure they're safe." Having a clear set of responsibilities and open communication for all parties helps make that happen.

From the Editor

Welcome to the third edition of The Homestay Times. This newsletter tackles a couple of common concerns: how to deal with younger homestay students and food issues. Hopefully there will be something for everyone in these pages.

Earlier this year, ICI Communications started sending a monthly email tip for homestay coordinators. We provide information and share ideas we receive from other coordinators. If you would like to join that list, or have a tip you would like to share, just contact us at 613-542-9876. You can also join the list by accessing the homestay coordinators email list from our website: www.homestayguide.com.

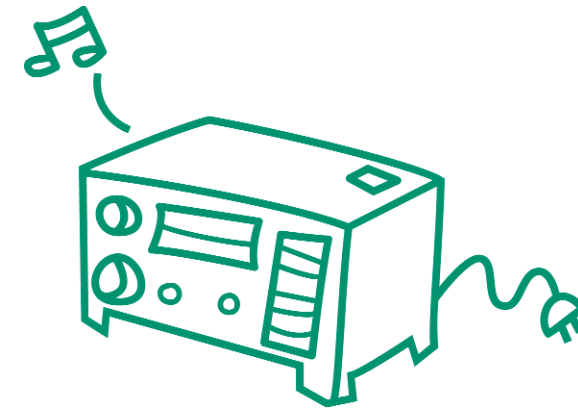
This will be my last edition of The Homestay Times; Sarah O'Leary took over in the position in early May. She will be more than happy to help you with any questions about The Homestay Times and our other publication, The Essential Guide for Homestay Students (see Page 4), or to add anyone to the mailing list for this free newsletter. She will also welcome any suggestions you may have for future articles.

We hope you enjoy this edition of The Homestay Times!

Danielle Aubin, Editor

Homestay for Teens

The younger set can bring different issues to homestay arrangements.



It's 8 a.m. and a 16-year-old homestay student is running around in a panic; he has slept in because he was on the Internet all night and missed his school bus. The host mother sighs and throws some clothes on so she can drive him to school for the third time that week. "Why can't he go to sleep at a decent hour like my kids do?" she wonders. "He has a curfew, but does he need a bedtime too?"

As this situation demonstrates, younger students pose challenges that may not be a factor for more mature students. While hosts are usually prepared to offer safe and comfortable environments to their students, they are not always ready to have an extra child to parent. What kind of rules should they enforce and what kind of legal obligations are they under? Having clear expectations for the hosts and students alike can help.

International students, especially girls, may find that they are given more freedom in North America than they ever received at home. These new freedoms can be especially difficult for younger homestay students, who may not have the maturity to deal with them. Often, this is their first experience away from home for any length of time and homesickness is more pronounced. And, as with any teenager, there is often some hormonal angst involved. Many hosts are concerned about their responsibilities towards their students. They wonder how boundaries should be set and how much nurturing they are required to give. Students may resent having rules imposed on them at all, feeling that they are treated like children. It can be difficult to strike the right balance to keep the student safe and the parents sane. Homestay coordinators must take the lead in establishing rules and expectations.

It is important to ensure that programs involving minors meet legal requirements in your area. A lawyer can help coordinators set rules and draft appropriate contracts. Programs need to have release forms signed by the student's parent or guardian, in order to enable host families and coordinators to make decisions about the student's care. In

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Food, Glorious Food!

Students and hosts need to meet halfway when it comes to meals and snacks.

While it may seem like small potatoes, food can be a trying issue in host-student relationships. Even the best meal intentions can make some students turn up their noses and hosts shake their heads. Good communication and some flexibility on both sides can work wonders and create excellent inter-cultural learning opportunities.

Homestay students face a wide range of challenges at North American dinner tables. They are not used to frozen dinners, fast food and the size or types of meals offered. Many students expect morning and noon meals to include hot foods, meats or rice, unlike North Americans' preference for easy food that can be eaten on the run. Lunches are especially challenging for students not from a "sandwich" culture. "Some of our families really struggle with the student's desire to have a lot of substantial food items available for lunch and then also having to

cook a large evening meal," says Christine Hildebrand, Homestay Coordinator at the University of Manitoba.

Snacks and leftovers also pose problems. For some students, especially those from

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hot countries where food spoils quickly, leftovers are unheard of. As a result, students may refuse to eat what hosts feel are perfectly good leftovers. Just knowing what constitutes snack food can also be a challenge. "It's important for host families to show students what they may or may not eat for snacks," says Odette Larde, Housing



Coordinator at University of California at Berkeley Extension. "Otherwise, the student will either go hungry or will eat food intended for that night's dinner."

Another issue for students can be the manner in which meals are eaten. Not only are breakfasts and lunch often hurried affairs, dinners are usually much earlier and more rushed than many students expect. Asian students in particular often prefer to eat in silence and can find conversing at the dinner table difficult.

So how can hosts and students bridge the gap? Host families should take the lead because they have committed to providing meals and can make certain adjustments to find food their students like. Soon after arrival, the student should take a trip to the supermarket with their hosts, where they can point out likes and dislikes. It is important to be able to see the food because language barriers can prevent students from

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Recipe Tips

Here are a few quick and easy recipes that will please hosts and students alike!

Salsa Chicken

4 Chicken Breasts
1 Jar Salsa
Put chicken in crock pot. Cover with salsa. Cook all day on low (9-10 hours). Good with rice.

Niko Jaga

Sirloin, thinly sliced
Onion, long cut
Sauté, then add hot water (enough to cover)
Add diced potato and carrot
Simmer 1 hour, add salt, pepper and 1 tablespoon soy sauce.

Quesadillas

Butter one side of flour tortilla and put on a griddle. Layer cheddar cheese almost to the edges. Add chopped onions, tomatoes, hot peppers, cooked chicken, etc. as desired. Top with another tortilla, buttered on top side. Cook until brown, then flip over.

Curry Rice

1 tablespoon butter
1 tablespoon curry powder
1 cup rice
1 3/4 cups water



Optional

1/2 teaspoon minced garlic
1 cup chopped tomato
In a medium saucepan with lid, melt butter over low heat. Add curry powder and garlic and sauté for 30 seconds. Add rice to butter mixture and blend completely. Then add water to bring to a boil. Turn heat to low and simmer for 18 minutes. Remove from heat, let stand for 5 minutes and add tomato.

Special thanks to Helen Jackman, Homestay Coordinator, Spring International Language Center, Littleton, Colorado for providing these recipes.

communicating their desires. They should also be given a tour of the kitchen or pantry, so that they know what is fair game for snacking and can point out what they like. Hosts should make a point of leaving out snacks such as fruit, nuts and popcorn on the kitchen table or in the living room. Giving students lots of choices and the occasional treat (chocolate and watermelon are popular) is another way hosts can show that they are making an effort to meet student needs.

Hosts also need to make a point of offering food several times. For North Americans, telling guests to "help themselves" and "make themselves at home" is perfectly natural; for some visitors from other countries, this behavior may be unfamiliar. Emphasize that it is all right to get a snack or a drink any time they need one. "In some homes, students may need to be shown how to help themselves," says Mary Honens, Director of the Orinda Homestay Program in Berkeley. She recommends setting out choices for meals on the counter or kitchen table. For example, in the morning she lays out eggs, coffee, juice, milk and cereal and shows students how to prepare breakfast themselves.

Students need to make adjustments and meet their families halfway. It is important that they know they are expected to try everything, even if it seems strange at first. They should also know they are expected to call home if they will be late and ask hosts to save dinner for them. Finally, they need to learn to speak up to ask for more when they want it, and adapt to more laid-back aspects of North American culture.

While it may be impossible to please all tastes, all the time, being flexible and open to trying new things is important for both students and hosts.

