SEEKING HOST FAMILIES FOR INTERNATIONAL SBU STUDENTS

Soon hundreds of international students will be arriving at Stony Brook University to begin their academic careers in search of advanced degrees. For most it will be their first time in the United States. They have no family or friends here, and are in a completely foreign and unfamiliar environment. The Host Family Program, a community based organization now in its fourth decade, provides a newly arrived international student with the friendship of a local American family. It is run by volunteers with the cooperation of the University and has been directed by Rhona Goldman since 1974. It is not a home-stay program; students live on or near campus. Host families invite students to share an occasional meal, some local sightseeing or a favorite activity. Both students and host families can enjoy the enriching experience of a cultural exchange and gain a new perspective about the world. A host family may be a retired couple, a family group or a single individual. The only pre-requisite is the desire to make an international student feel comfortable in a strange and new setting.

Students are arriving on campus in late August for the start of the fall semester and are looking forward to meeting an American family. The University will host a reception on campus for the students and the host families to meet each other just before the semester begins. There is always a shortage of local volunteers to host all the students who sign up for the program.

If you would like to find out more about this program, contact Mrs. Rhona Goldman at e-mail:
hostfamilies@stonybrook.edu
What is the Host Family Program?
The Host Family Program (HFP) provides a new international student with continuing friendship and involvement with a family in the United States. HFP was developed to offer hospitality to international students from a diverse group of community residents. Both students and host families are able to have the enriching experience of a cultural exchange and gain a new perspective about world. **This is not home stay program.**

Who are the international students?
International students are enrolled in either undergraduate or graduate programs ranging across a wide spectrum of disciplines. They are bright, talented young people with high academic aspirations and achievements, most of whom are in the United States for the first time.

How are host families involved?
Host families may share family occasions, outings and special holidays with their student(s). They also provide an initial introduction to the community and help the students settle in to adjust to their new experiences and challenges in the U.S. They may also introduce the students to various aspects of U.S. culture or share in their students' celebrations or customs from their native cultures. The Host Family Program is one of friendship. Students live on or off campus, but not with their host families.

Why join the Host Family Program?
Just imagine how you would feel in a foreign country, not being accustomed to the language and the culture! You can fulfill the mission of a private ambassador when international students experience your warmth and acceptance into your community. Many times students who are so far away from home simply need a warm smile and a listening ear. Annually, the host families are invited to a welcoming reception organized by the University’s Graduate Student Office. Lives are enriched by contact with people from other cultures. Long-time host families have often said that some of their fondest memories include time spent with their international students. These students help us to look at our environment with new eyes and an increased sense of excitement. Children who have contacts with international students are more aware of the world around them.

When does the program begin and how long does it last?
You may join the program at any time, but most new international students arrive in August for the fall semester and January for the spring semester. The duration of the relationship depends upon how strong the friendship becomes. Often, friendships continue long after the students graduate and return home. Although you may discontinue participation in the program at any time, we would appreciate knowing why you chose to leave. You may request to host one or more students each year as your schedule allows.

How do families contact new international students?
As assignments are made, the applications are forwarded to the families. It is their responsibility to make the initial contact with the student via email.
**How fluently do these students speak English?**

English proficiency varies greatly among the students, although they must attain adequate scores on standardized English communication tests to study at SBU. They are generally eager to practice their spoken English whenever possible.

**Are all international students included?**

Host families are assigned only to students who request to be a part of the program. Priority is given to those students who have not previously studied in the U.S. and do not have local contacts.

**What level of commitment to the program is expected?**

The number of times you meet with your student depends upon your expectations and those of your students. Some students like frequent contact, while others become so involved with their academic obligations that they do not have time to participate. Every situation is different. Families do what comfortably fits into their schedules. All involvement is voluntary on the part of all participants, and involves no legal, financial or minimum time obligations on anyone’s part.

**It sounds wonderful! How do I join the Host Family Program?**

Please contact us at SBUhostfamilies@gmail.com. An application and instructions will be sent to you. Feel free to contact Rhona Goldman at the same email address with any questions you may have.
HOST FAMILY APPLICATION

Please complete this form and mail it to:  Rhona Goldman, 15 Night Heron Dr., Stony Brook, NY 11790, e-mail it to sbuhostfamilies@gmail.com or faxed to 631 689-7482.

Name:___________________________________________________________

Address:________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Telephone: Work_______________Home_______________E-mail_______________

Family Occupations:_______________________________________________________

Ages of Children:________________________________________________________

Family Interests:_________________________________________________________

Languages Spoken:_______________________________________________________

Travel Experience (outside of U.S.):________________________________________

Preferences (Host families may list preferences such as cultural background, gender, hobbies, family with children. Efforts will be made to match these preferences but cannot be guaranteed.)

How many new students would you like to host?____________________________

Are you willing to participate if a match to your preferences cannot be found? ( )Yes ( ) No

( ) Yes, I am willing to share my contact information for the purposes of acknowledgements, invitations, newsletters, events, etc.

Will you host a student who is a cigarette smoker? ( )Yes ( ) No

Thank you for your interest in this program and, please remember, we are always in need of additional families.