
Aunt/Uncle Family Volunteer Description

Overview

The aunt/uncle family is an extension of the host family and supports both the intern and their host family throughout the intern's stay. This is most successfully achieved when the aunt/uncle family takes the initiative to reach out and communicate frequently with both parties. This effort allows families to build lasting connections with one another and brings a sense of community to the intern. The more involved the aunt/uncle family is with the intern the greater the opportunity is for language learning, cultural exchange and lasting relationships for all.

The Basics

- Role: To be a second support to the Amity intern AND their host family by reaching out to BOTH host family and intern throughout each semester.
- The Aunt/Uncle involvement runs from the intern's arrival in August, to their departure in mid-June.
- Assisting with the interns transportation needs and acting as back-up to the host family are two primary responsibilities of the aunt/uncle family.
- The time commitment is 3+ hours per month.

Aunt/Uncle family benefits:

- Learn about a different culture.
- Develop a "family" relationship with one of our interns.
- Help a young adult learn about the American culture.
- Connect with an individual that assists your child in the classroom.
- Connect with other PSI families.
- Support the Amity Program and build our school community.

Checklist for Aunt/Uncle activities (explained further below):

- Meet your intern at the airport upon arrival if possible.
- Coordinate event with intern and host family within 1st month in each new host family.
- Speak to the host family about recurring transportation needs and your involvement. Best done around 2 week mark with each new host family to allow everyone a chance to figure out new routines and best ways to help.
- Organize 1 event/outing during the year for your intern OR group of interns, such as taking them to a touristic destination.
- Invite the intern to activities with your family on a monthly basis.

Getting the year off to a great start:

- Communicate with the host family of your intern on details of the intern's arrival. Consider greeting the intern at the airport. This is a great way to welcome them to MN!
- Plan your first event, dinner date or activity with your intern before school begins. Get to know the intern and host family right away to help establish a lasting connection.
- Determine the best way to stay in touch with your intern and host family. Text? Call? E-mail? Facebook? WhatsApp message?
- Work with the host family to plan an event that includes the host family, your intern and you. Ideas may include a picnic/barbecue or an outing. The earlier in the school year the better! This recommendation is a key piece of fulfilling the goal of integrating the host family and aunt/uncle family, rather than functioning as two separate entities.
- Learn about your intern's interests and invite them to participate in some family activities. Ideas include kids' sporting events, a meal with extended family, attending a religious service, or an outing to a touristic place of interest. It doesn't have to be spectacular or cost anything. Interns are happy to have options of activities to fill their time and experience a typical activity with your family.
- Assist with transportation to help the intern and host family. Interns are often shy to ask for rides but are thankful to have options. We recommend that you discuss transportation needs with the host family and intern multiple times during the semester as needs can change.

Suggestions for the rest of the year:

- Continue to invite your intern to events throughout the year. Aim for a monthly basis. You are the intern's only year-long match!
- If the intern seems busy and doesn't accept invitations, don't give up! They have a lot going on in the fall with staff events and interest in getting to know the other interns. They will still appreciate invites and come January will be thankful for your persistence when they're feeling a little lonely, tired of the snow, and emotional about the change of host families.
- Remember that culture is more than ethnic food. Punctuality and planning styles are very different from culture to culture. It has been noted in prior years that interns may not understand that a 6:00pm supper invitation means arrive at or before 6:00pm. Their culture may encourage late arrivals. Also, they may not be comfortable with giving you a definite yes or no far in advance. That type of scheduling is often foreign in their cultures. They may also want to remain available for unplanned outings with the other interns. Talk about expectations for arrival time, and try to plan things in a way that works well for the intern and you. Spontaneity is a great option!
- Although you are not the host family, you can act like one! Interns appreciate the warmth and welcoming they feel from the PSI community at large.
- Check on your intern's holiday plans and the host family's vacation plans. You might be able to fill a need, such as offering the intern to stay at your home if their host family is on vacation or out of town.
- Consider planning an event with your intern's 2nd semester host family in January to help with a comfortable and smooth transition. You are the one constant that will already know the intern well. During 1st semester many aunt/uncle families are paired with a host family they live near or knew prior. However, the 2nd semester host family to your intern could be someone you don't know at all. This is a great opportunity to get to know more PSI families and create an enriching second half of the year for all involved.