



United States Department of State

*Assistant Secretary for
Educational and Cultural Affairs*

Washington, DC 20522

Dear American Host Family,

On behalf of the U.S. Department of State, I welcome your decision to host a Secondary School Student exchange participant. This is a unique opportunity for you to experience first-hand the richness and diversity of a culture different from your own. Through this program, you are among thousands of American families who volunteer to serve as citizen ambassadors of the United States.

Secondary School Student programs have been a part of U.S. public diplomacy efforts since 1949. Approximately 30,000 secondary school students from around the world participate in this program each year. The good will of American host families in opening their homes to these young international visitors is essential to the success of this program. Thank you!

The health, safety and well-being of the young people who participate in this program are, collectively, our highest priority. A host family has many responsibilities, the most important of which is the care and well-being of a young person from a foreign country for an academic semester or academic year. The foreign student is a guest in your home and in our country and you may be the first "real Americans" this young person encounters. How you interact with this student will create a powerful image about our country and its people.

I hope this will be a positive and rewarding experience for you and the exchange student. It is extremely important that you notify your sponsoring organization if you have any concerns or if the student's personal health, safety or well-being is threatened in any way. If the sponsoring organization is not responsive to your concerns, you should contact the Department of State directly at our toll free number (1-866-283-9090) that has been established for this purpose. In addition, your sponsoring organization will provide your student with an identification card, which lists your address and telephone numbers, a telephone number which affords immediate contact with the program sponsor, the program sponsor's organizational representative, and the U.S. Department of State's toll free phone number and email address (jvisas@state.gov). The exchange student should keep this card with him/her at all times and contact us if they have any concerns about their health, safety or well-being.

The U.S. Department of State is deeply appreciative of your kindness and generosity in making this educational and cultural experience possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Rick A. Ruth".

Rick A. Ruth
Deputy Assistant Secretary
for Private Sector Exchange, Acting