



United States Department of State

*Assistant Secretary for
Educational and Cultural Affairs*

Washington, DC 20522

Dear Student,

On behalf of the U.S. Department of State, welcome to the Secondary School Student exchange program. This program is a great opportunity for you to experience first-hand the culture and diversity that the United States has to offer. As a valued participant in this program, you are among thousands of high school students from around the world serving as your country's citizen ambassador in the United States. We want your experience to be both positive and rewarding.

As a participant in a formal exchange program you will attend an accredited public or private secondary school, while living with an American host family who has opened their home and hearts to welcome you to the United States. We know that with a positive attitude and respect for others you will achieve a close and successful relationship with your host family.

We understand that you may have concerns about leaving your family and friends at home to come to the United States and those are very normal concerns to have. I want you to know that your decision to come to the United States is important to us and that your health, safety and well-being are our highest priority. It is extremely important that you notify your sponsoring organization with any concerns or problems you might have, especially if you find yourself in a circumstance that threatens your personal health, safety or well-being or a situation that makes you uncomfortable. If your sponsor organization is not responsive to your concerns, you should not hesitate to contact the Department of State directly through the phone number or email address provided below. A Department staff person will be available to hear your concerns and assist you.

Your sponsoring organization will provide you with an identification card, which lists your host family placement address and telephone numbers, a telephone number which affords immediate contact with the program sponsor, the program sponsor's organizational representative, and the Department of State's toll free number (1-866-283-9090) and email address (jvisas@state.gov). You should keep this card with you at all times and contact us if you have any concerns about your health, safety or well-being.

Best wishes for a rewarding and fun experience. Welcome to the United States!

Sincerely,

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

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