

A Letter of advice from Senora Nole, former coordinator of exchange trips

What are the benefits of participating in an exchange program?

Exchanges are a powerful way to encourage language learning, to promote knowledge and understanding of other people and their cultures. For our school, it means advertising when we take the students on field trips. Others see first-hand how our students “experience” other cultures. It allows students who do not have the desire or the means to travel to also learn and know people from other places. For our students, it is a REAL reason to study Spanish. If they do not see a use for something many times they are uninterested. However, children are interested in other children.

What are the ground rules?

You should establish ground rules when your guest arrives. They are new here and do not know how things work. Let them know if they may use the phone and if so, when and for how long. Let them know when you will serve dinner, when they are expected to go to bed and when they are expected to be ready for school.

What should you do if you have a problem?

We hope that everything will be perfect when you host but should you have a problem or a concern IT IS IMPORTANT that you call Mr. Greiner or the Spanish chaperone ASAP. We want to stop any misunderstanding or confusion as soon as possible. We will work with the students to make sure that they do understand your expectations and that there is not a communication issue.

Why are they housed in pairs?

Our travelers are young and are very far away from home. For many it will be the first time they have travelled without their families. Housing in pairs gives them confidence, help in translating, and a familiar face in a strange place. When we have an odd number

or students who are really interested in advancing their language skills we have at times housed them singly. It also means that we do not have to find as many homes, which is the biggest job in the whole exchange.

What should we do to entertain our guests?

Students are here to see what life in American is all about and to practice their English. Some of the most successful experiences have been simply staying home and playing your families' favorite board game. Others have taken them fishing. If your family is planning a camping trip or on going to another city that is fine too. Whatever you do just let them be your shadow.