

## HOST FAMILY GUIDELINES

*The City of Forest Grove and the Sister Cities Committee offers an alternate year program, which began in 1989 - traveling to Nyuzen, Japan, on odd-numbered years and hosting Japanese delegates on even-numbered years. The delegates are members of the Town of Nyuzen, business leaders, citizens, students, or other organizations devoted to the study of foreign cultures and languages, and the benefits of international exchange.*

### **Basic Guidelines:**

**THANK YOU FOR HOSTING!** Being a host family is easy, fun, rewarding, and educational. Just welcome the delegate into your home and treat him or her like one of the family. Family placements are completed as soon as biographical information about the delegates is received. You will be receiving a personal profile from your guest, and you will be asked to submit a profile for your guest. Every effort is made to give host families as much time as possible to correspond with delegates and get to know them before they arrive. Exchanging photographs of family members, pets and your home are a good way to become acquainted. The host family will learn more details about the itinerary and activities planned as soon as the itinerary is completed. In addition, a list of all participating families will be provided, in case carpooling or other matters arise. An emergency telephone number, contact person, is provided on Page 2.

### **Below are guidelines to help you prepare for your guest:**

1. The itinerary will list the day-to-day activities from the day your guest arrives to the day of departure. Please post on your refrigerator or in a place where your guest can see it. The itinerary will let you know when to supply a sack lunch and when and where to pick up your guest. Emergency telephone numbers will also be listed in the itinerary in case of an emergency.
2. Host family provides meals while at home and may need to provide a sack lunch if requested.
3. Host family transports guest to the designated morning location between 7:45 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. and pick up guest between 5:00 p.m. and 5:15 p.m. from the designated pick up location.
4. Host family provides a bed and/or bedroom space for their guest.
5. Be aware, your guest may give you gift(s) when they arrive and/or when they leave. It is not necessary for you to feel obligated to give gift(s), since you are already providing your guest with room and board. If you want to give your guest a gift, it should be small or practical to pack in luggage, such as a collection of postcards, photographs or small items with a logo.
6. In the event of an emergency, the partnering agency, or its agent or representative, carry appropriate medical insurance that may be required.

### **Other Important Points:**

- Be flexible, patient, and willing to communicate both verbally and non-verbally with your guest. Most of the participants will have limited English communication skills. Try learning to pronounce their name.
- When speaking to your guest, allowing them time to hear and to speak English back to you. Even if your guest is shy at first, we encourage you to talk to him/her.
- Culture shock is very common (jet lag and language fatigue go together). Your guest may tire easily and fall asleep in the car (even though the scenery is beautiful).
- Give your guest a tour of your home: Show your guest their bedroom. Explain how the bed works (i.e., sleeping between the sheets). Show your guest how the tub

- and/or shower work – American bathrooms are very different. Ask your guest when they prefer to bathe (or what time works best for you). Remember, the living space in American homes is overwhelming to some guests.
- When your guest arrives, talk to them about what sorts of foods he/she prefers. They usually like noodles, rice, potatoes, chicken, pork, cooked vegetables, and fresh fruit. Remember, however, that they are here to experience American culture and encourage him/her to try new foods.
  - Your guest may not be good at helping himself/herself. Offer food, you may need to do this more than once.
  - Your guest may take many pictures – do not be surprised if they take pictures of your entire house. In addition, looking through photo albums is a great icebreaker.
  - Let your guest know what your daily schedule is especially how the morning is organized.
  - Let your guest know any relevant schedule information, i.e., “We plan to leave Forest Grove/our house at \_\_\_\_\_ time”.
  - Host families are encouraged to participate in any of the planned activities, including Welcome Dinner, tours, and events. If you want to join us on any of the day activities, please let us know in advance, as transportation is limited. We can transport up to 12-14 passengers in the van. If space is limited, you may need to drive your own vehicle.
  - Your guest will bring spending money. He/she should be cautioned not to carry too much around (unless it is in traveler’s check) and be sure it is secured at your home.
  - Pets may be a new experience for your guest. Introduce your guest to your pet by controlling the pet and observing your guest’s reaction. Many people, including American’s do not appreciate dogs, for example, jumping on them or licking their hands and faces. Be sensitive to any anxieties or fears that your guest may display. Respect boundaries that the guest may wish to establish with your pet.
  - Your guest may have allergies. Please check your guest’s profile and see if there is anything in your house that may bother him/her.
  - It is common in Japan for men to smoke and some women may do so as well; though, most guests do not smoke. On occasion, we might have a guest who does smoke. If they do, they are good about letting you know and will ask if it is okay if they smoke outside. Please show them an outside area where they may do so and provide an ashtray or a can where they can put their cigarette buds.

***The best advice is to just relax and have a good time!*** No set rules or guidelines for the American host family can ever be complete. Every guest is unique. Our goal is to promote international goodwill and understanding. The host family experience does not have to end when the delegate returns home. Often, the friendships formed last a lifetime! Host families find that delegates really do become members of the family! We truly hope that your guest enjoys the authenticity of everyday American life! Thank you for your willingness and graciousness in being a host family.

For further information or details call:  
Anna Ruggles, City Recorder  
City of Forest Grove  
503.992.3235 (Office Number)  
503.351.8505 (Emergency Cell Number)  
[aruggles@forestgrove-or.gov](mailto:aruggles@forestgrove-or.gov)

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