

Amity Intern Program Frequently Asked Questions & Concerns

How are the interns screened so we feel safe with them in our homes? The interns make formal application through The Amity Institute, a San Diego – based organization that maintains international screening offices in the participating countries. Applicants provide personal, professional and educational information, along with recommendations from past employers and/or educators. The screening officer is often a professor in the local University and often knows the applicants personally. A criminal background and credit check is performed in the home country. The intern cannot secure their U.S. visa without this. Then the U.S. embassy performs an international criminal background check. Interns must have a family and checking account in their home country, and bring a certain amount of U.S. dollars with them. In the many years that we have had interns at our school, we have not had any reason to be concerned about the safety or security of our host families and students.

I already have enough kids to worry about! Amity interns are independent adults 20-30 years old, usually in a college degree program. They apply for this program because they like the idea of cultural exchange through living with an American family, but they are fully capable of caring for themselves. Unlike foreign exchange students of school-age, our host families are not required to temporarily “parent” the interns. And they are not guests in your home whom you must serve and entertain. But part of hosting them involves providing them with the benefits of our welcoming and caring family spirits. This may involve showing them the ropes within your home and our community, like helping them learn the local bus system. You will set the tone and expectations within your home, and should communicate your household rules and beliefs to both the Amity Committee and the visiting intern. A Metro bus pass is provided to each intern, they travel to/from school with your student, and any additional transportation needs can be shared among the school community.

We’re rarely home – we both work and the kids are busy. You should closely examine your reasons and expectations for wanting to host. Will you make time to interact with and enjoy the intern living in your home? Cooking and eating together as a family are aspects of American life that we are can share with our interns. Attending children’s and school activities such as dance recitals, science fairs and sports games are also opportunities to be together and experience American life. Visiting your place of business would be a great experience for an intern. The interns are busy too, with school, tutoring, BC classes, activities with other families and potentially, their own social life. During the 3 months the intern lives with you, you may need to plan some evenings and weekend days to spend as a family.

Our family is not affluent. The interns’ expectations are for room and board, along with the gift of cultural exchange. They do not expect expensive outings, spending money, clothing allowance, specialized travel, or financial assistance of any kind from their host family. It is important to keep in mind that the role of the family is to provide the family life, which can be enriching without being expensive.

Our family life is pretty boring. Remember, the interns are already “traveling” while they are here, and by virtue of all the new and different vocational, educational and cultural experiences they have, life is anything but boring. Your warmth, your welcoming spirit, and your willingness to share your home and family life are what provide for not only a safe haven for these lovely young people, but also a sense of excitement in experiencing something different. Also, there are many school families who will invite the interns to their homes, on outings and for activities.

Where can I ask more questions? Check out www.amity.org . You can ask any of the previous host families you may know at Puesta, or contact Mary Fredericksen at maryandjohn4@comcast.net or Paula Francoeur at paula.francoeur@gmail.com). We would love to help you sort out your decision. Call us! Host family application deadline is April 2, 2010.