

Alumni Newsletter

Welcoming International Students

Issue No 1 Autumn 2015

From Student to Host



Ambrose Isibor first heard about HOST as a student at Newcastle University, when he applied and enjoyed a HOST visit in Northern Ireland. Following his graduation, Ambrose decided that he wanted to give back and signed up as a volunteer host with the charity.

“Being a Host is something I would like people to do more to break barriers and embrace other peoples cultures. I was a beneficiary of HOST in 2003 in Northern Ireland. My hosts and I are still in touch and talk on the phone, exchange emails and send each other presents .”

I believe this is an amazing memory that I will still talk about years later. And if I have the chance, I would definitely be a host in the future to pay it back and let more foreign kid benefit! **Haiteng Ma, Oxford University student from China**

WIN!

Don't forget that you can win a traditional British Hamper as part of HOST's Photo and Video Competition 2015-16. Send in your best photos and visits of your HOST visit for a chance to win. For full details, please visit www.hostuk.org/news.

Send us your updates

We'd love to know what alumni HOST students are doing now. Please contact HOST with an update, and let us know your best memories of your HOST visit.

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Ahmed El-Ashry, Egypt



It had been close to one year since I spent time with my family in Egypt when I had the fortune of participating in the HOST program and forming a new family in a place I have recently come to call home.

This was the first time I spent a weekend with another family and it was one of the best experiences I had. During the day we visited several places at the city and at night we talked about everything. My hosts were so open, understanding, and they were open to answering any questions I had.

My home stay presented me with an opportunity to experience the realities of daily life in the UK. One of the highlights was meeting the Mayor of the city in the market. I told her about HOST and how great it is to introduce young people to the real British culture.

It amazed me how welcoming my host family was and how much hospitality they showed to a complete stranger. I truly believe that our world would be more tolerant if homestay was done regularly amongst people of different cultures. Cross-cultural understanding, communication, and the ability to find cultural similarities and reflect on the differences creates a truly memorable homestay experience.

It is no secret that there is a nationality divide in our universities. Students are often put in accommodation with others from their own country, international student events are separate from home student events, and many lectures are attended by people of the same nationality. It is the main reason that the charity I work for, HOST, was set up and why, after 28 years, it is more popular than ever.

Between 2013 and 2014, the UK saw close to a 20% drop in international student numbers. Whilst this is partly due to certain government policies, such as a tightening-up of VISA regulations, many international students (over 50% of those surveyed in a 2014 NUS study) felt that the UK was unwelcoming towards them.

The above is an extract from 'Encouraging international understanding in our universities and beyond'. To continue reading, please visit [Teacher Support Net](https://www.teachersupport.net).



Kingsley Anyim, from Nigeria with hosts Kate and Ramsay.

This visit was a million dollar worth for me. We spent three days with our host and did remarkable things. I wore a kilt (Scottish dress) on one day and went to a community centre, and met with people who gave a warm welcome to us. I am very happy after this tour and appreciate the effort of HOST. This is a great opportunity. At first I was afraid to go but now I think that if I missed this tour it would be a big mistake of my life. Thanks HOST! **Sohail Muhammad, Pakistan**

Margaret's Bagging Marilyns!



"I celebrated my 70th birthday this year and wanted to mark my 7th decade by climbing 7 Munros (Scottish mountains over 3000 feet). However, health issues have forced me to abandon this challenge. My alternative challenge is to climb 7 Marilyns (hills with at least 500 feet of ascent on all sides). An advantage of this change of direction is that Marilyns are nearer to my home than Munros – but there are none in Oxfordshire where I live!"

Margaret has been a host with HOST since the charity was founded in 1987. She was also an active member of the Board of Trustees for 13 years until her retirement in 2015. After hosting nearly 200 students, Margaret has many stories to tell: from a tipsy Chinese student asking for an explanation of the Trinity over Christmas pudding, to sitting around the table with an Uzbeki teacher, teaching English nursery rhymes for his class back home, Margaret has many fond memories of hosting.

Whilst Margaret is an active walker, hill walking will be much more of a challenge than ambling across the flatter landscape of Oxfordshire!

To donate, please visit uk.virginmoneygiving.com/MargaretHancox.

How you can help

If you would like to give back, so that the HOST scheme can continue to help international students, as it helped you, please consider offering your support in one of the following ways.

Friend of HOST

Become a Friend of HOST and give a regular donation. Find out more on the [HOST website](#).

One-off Donation

Make a one-off donation at HOST's Big Give page: www.secure.thebiggive.org.uk/donation/to/1136

Challenge Yourself

Raise money while completing a challenge. Set up a fundraising page at uk.virginmoneygiving.com/giving

Host

If you have graduated and now live in the UK, sign up to invite international students to your home for a day or a weekend.

Tell us your stories

We want to hear your HOST memories, see your photos, and know what you're doing now. Please get in touch with HOST with your details.

THANK YOU

Thank you for helping to make the world a friendlier place by supporting HOST.